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and the World Focus

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91)

Piano Concerto no. 21 in C major, K467 (first movement)

Candidates are not expected to know every detail of the following, but should focus on:

- structure and terminology
- themes and their transformations
- key centres and modulations
- identification of chords
- instruments and texture
- the relationship between the soloist and the orchestra
- alto clef
- score markings, performance directions, instrumental effects
- background information about the context and genre of the work.

1 Background

Mozart was born in Salzburg, Austria, the son of the composer and violinist Leopold Mozart. He began learning the keyboard (harpsichord and piano) from the age of three and quickly became a very accomplished child prodigy. From the age of six, he travelled with his family around Europe, performing to nobility and in public concerts, so that Leopold could show off his child genius. Mozart met and played for some of the world's most powerful figures, including Louis XV in France and George III in England. During this time, he also learned to play the violin and began composing. The early compositions reflect the fact that he was exposed to a wide variety of contemporary Classical music by other European composers on his travels, and he imitated features that he liked. Mozart's earliest piano concertos were arrangements of keyboard sonatas by J C Bach and other composers, begun at the age of 11.

In 1773 the Mozart family settled in Salzburg again. However, it was not long before Mozart began travelling once more, as he was unable to find a position in Salzburg to his (and his father's) liking. He had two periods of working for the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg, but found this unsatisfactory. The cycle of travelling and returning to Salzburg continued until 1781 when Mozart settled in Vienna, playing, conducting, teaching and composing. In 1782 he married Constanze Weber.

During his relatively short life Mozart composed in all the contemporary genres: concertos, chamber music, operas, sacred music and symphonies, producing a huge number of works. The pieces that are now most often heard date from his later years, when he had assimilated all the influences from his early life (including music from England, Germany, Italy and France).

The peak of Mozart's piano concerto composing career is often seen as the years 1784 to 1786, when he was at the height of his fame in Vienna and was in great demand as a composer and performer. During these three years he composed twelve piano concertos, alongside many other works. The autograph score of Piano Concerto no. 21 is dated February 1785, but Mozart entered the concerto in his own list of works on 9 March. This was just one month after his previous piano concerto, K466.

The period of Lent in the weeks before Easter was usually very busy for Mozart, as operatic performances were prohibited. This allowed him to put on concerts in various venues in Vienna. The concerts often included a newly-written piano concerto, performed with Mozart at the keyboard. Piano Concerto no. 21 was written for just such

a concert. On 10 March 1785 Mozart held a 'benefit concert' (from which he would receive all the profits) at the Burgtheater (National Theatre) in Vienna. The flyer for this concert announced that Mozart would perform a just-finished piano concerto and that the concert would include some improvising using a large piano pedal. The other pieces in the concert were announced on the day. It is thought that the Burgtheater orchestra used for this concert would have numbered around 32 players. Mozart directed the première of the concerto from the keyboard.

When Mozart died this piano concerto had still not been published, though it had been performed in Salzburg, as Mozart sent the music to his father there. In 1800 parts were issued by Bretitkopf and Härtel, followed by another set by the publisher André, who had bought the autograph score from Mozart's widow Constanze. No cadenzas by Mozart exist for this concerto, since Mozart improvised his own, so performers today have to compose their own or use a cadenza written by another composer.

This piano concerto is sometimes referred to as the *Elvira Madigan*, because the second movement was used in the 1967 Swedish film of the same name.

The number K467 given to the concerto refers to a catalogue of Mozart's works by the Austrian Ludwig Ritter von Köchel. The chronological catalogue was published in 1862 and the numbers are still used today to identify individual works.

2 Instruments

Mozart's Piano Concerto no. 21 is scored for solo piano, flute, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns in C, two trumpets in C, timpani and strings. C major was a key in which Mozart often used trumpets and drums.

The keyboard instrument Mozart would have used for the première of this concerto would have been very different from a modern grand piano. He used a fortepiano, with a range of about five octaves and with a much lighter touch than pianos of today. The sound produced would have been softer and less sustained. The pedal referred to in the flyer for the première was something Mozart arranged to have made. This was placed underneath the fortepiano, was longer and very heavy and was used to reinforce bass notes, rather like the pedalboard of an organ. The flyer does not specifically mention its use in the concerto, but if it was on stage, ready to be used for improvising, Mozart may well have used it at certain points.

Though most scores do not have a part for the piano until b74, the Bärenreiter score has the piano left hand doubling the bass line from the beginning of the concerto. In the autograph score the piano staves are near the bottom of the page, just above the bass line, with the instruction CoB, meaning *col basso* (with the bass line). This is a continuation of the use of basso continuo in the Baroque period, where somebody playing harpsichord or organ would play the bass line with chords over the top. There are no figured bass numbers in the score (numbers indicating which chords should be played), but Mozart would not have needed them to add chords to fit with the harmony. Performances on modern pianos do not usually have the pianist playing along with the orchestra, as today's piano would stand out too much, but a fortepiano would have blended with the orchestral sound.

The Bärenreiter score has some bars of the bassoon parts written in the tenor clef (e.g. b7–8). However, candidates will not be expected to write any of this part in the bass clef.

The trumpets in C sound as written, while the horns in C sound an octave lower than written (candidates will not be expected to transpose any of this part). At this time they did not have valves and therefore had a restricted number of notes which they were able to play. For this reason their music is mostly based on notes of the tonic and dominant chords. The timpani are tuned to the tonic and dominant (C and G).

The parts for strings are usually written on four staves, with the cellos and basses sharing the bottom staff. However, at one point Mozart indicates that the two parts should be independent. In b305 the marking *Violoncello* indicates that only the cellos should play the printed music, with the double basses re-joining at the *Bassi* indication in b313. By writing some independent music, Mozart was moving towards a later development, when double basses would have their own part. The double basses sound an octave lower than written but candidates will not be expected to transpose any of this part.

The viola is written in the alto clef (where middle C is on the middle line). Candidates should practise writing small fragments of this part in the treble clef.

Some scores contain Tutti and Solo markings (e.g. Solo b109, Tutti b194). It is possible that Mozart had these markings in the orchestral parts, to indicate that the number of string players was to be reduced in the Solo sections.

3 Directions in the score

Markings in the score are in Italian. Just one tempo indication is given for the whole of the first movement: *Allegro maestoso*, meaning fast and majestic. This tempo marking does not appear on the autograph score, but is written in Mozart's own catalogue of his works. There are no other tempo indications in the movement.

Candidates will also need to be familiar with other markings found in the score:

The abbreviation *a2* (or *zu 2* in some scores) in the woodwind and brass parts means that both instruments written on a single staff should play the note or phrase (e.g. the bassoon part in b108). *1.* (e.g. oboe b136) indicates that the part is to be played by just one instrument.

At b12–19 in the violins, the minims and crotchets have double lines on the stems. This means that each note is to be played as semiquavers, sometimes referred to as tremolo.

4 Techniques

As a Classical work, the concerto uses functional tonal harmony, in which the tonic, dominant and subdominant are particularly important. There is also modulation to other keys, which are closely related to the tonic and modal shifts (between major and minor versions of keys on the same note). Mozart uses some chromaticism and some chromatic chords including the diminished seventh and augmented sixth. Dissonance is also used fleetingly, including false relations; the extent of its use alarmed Mozart's father, who wrote about the 'unconventional harmonies'. There is also use of sequence, imitation and antiphony.

5 Structure and Form

The first movement of the concerto combines elements of Classical sonata form (used in the first movements of sonatas and symphonies) and Baroque ritornello form, as used in Baroque concertos.

Ritornello form has recurring ritornellos played by the full orchestra, in different keys and of differing lengths, but often using the same musical material, interspersed with episodes featuring the soloist playing new material.

Sonata form movements usually have:

- An Exposition section, with a 1st subject in the tonic, a transition modulating to the dominant (or relative major if the work is in a minor key) and a 2nd subject in the dominant (or relative major). In a sonata or symphony the Exposition section is repeated, while in a concerto an Orchestral Exposition is followed by a Solo Exposition, which may use some themes from the Orchestral Exposition and introduce some new ones.
- A Development section, where themes from the Exposition are developed (fragments of themes are manipulated and heard in a variety of keys).
- A Recapitulation section, with the 1st subject in the tonic, a transition (which does not modulate) and the 2nd subject in the tonic. In a concerto elements of the Orchestral and Solo Expositions would be selected and/or combined.
- The movement may also have an introduction and/or a coda.

Classical concertos also retained the three-movement structure of Baroque concertos (fast-slow-fast), rather than the four movements found in Classical sonatas and symphonies.

The structure and keys of the first movement of Mozart's Piano Concerto no. 21 could be summarised as below (many of the themes and sections overlap by one beat, with one theme finishing on the first beat of a bar, while the next theme starts).

| ORCHESTRAL EXPOSITION / OPENING RITORNELLO | | |
|---|---------|--------------------------------------|
| Orchestra 1st subject / march theme | 1–19 | C major |
| Link | 20–28 | C major |
| Orchestra 2nd subject / horn call theme | 28–36 | C major |
| Orchestra 1st subject / march theme | 36–43 | C major |
| Closing themes | 44–68 | C major |
| Link | 68–79 | V in C major |
| SOLO EXPOSITION | | |
| Orchestra 1st subject / march theme | 80–91 | C major |
| Solo 1st subject, theme 1 | 91–97 | C major |
| Transition | 97–107 | C major to G major |
| Tutti | 107–109 | G major |
| Solo 2nd subject, theme 1 (and passagework) | 109–127 | G minor to V ⁷ in G major |
| Solo 2nd subject, theme 2 | 128–143 | G major |
| Solo Codetta | 143–194 | G major |
| ORCHESTRAL RITORNELLO | | |
| Orchestra 1st subject / march theme | 194–205 | G major, G minor |

| | | |
|--|---------|---|
| Closing theme 2 (ascending chromatic scale) | 205–222 | G major to V in E minor |
| DEVELOPMENT | 224–274 | E minor, circle of fifths, V in C major |
| RECAPITULATION | | |
| Orchestra 1st subject / march theme | 284–313 | C major, F major, F minor, V in C minor, V in C major |
| Solo 2nd subject | 313–328 | C major |
| Solo codetta | 328–351 | C major to V in C major |
| Orchestra 2nd subject / horn call theme | 351–359 | C major |
| Solo codetta | 359–384 | C major to V in C major |
| ORCHESTRAL RITORNELLO | | |
| Orchestra 1st subject / march theme and link | 384–396 | C major to Vc in C major |
| Cadenza | | |
| Closing themes | 397–417 | C major |

6 Commentary

ORCHESTRAL EXPOSITION / OPENING RITORNELLO (b1–79)

1st subject (b1–19)

The movement opens with the strings playing the march theme in octaves at a *piano* dynamic. The rhythm and melodic shape of the first two bars features prominently throughout the movement. Six bars of string music are answered by two bars of wind, brass and timpani. The strings return in b9–10 with a decorated version of b5–6, followed again by the wind. Many features of the opening twelve bars point to a march feel: the common time signature, brisk but not too fast tempo, use of only tonic and dominant chords, melodies with a triadic shape and dotted rhythms in the wind and brass, which are used as a section.

From b12 the march idea is moved to the bass (bassoons, violas, cellos and basses) while other instruments add a countermelody over the top. The march idea is extended for four more bars, using chords other than the tonic and dominant. B12 marks the point at which the whole orchestra is playing together for the first time, at a *forte* dynamic.

Link (b20–28)

A dominant pedal (a held or, in this case, repeated dominant note) begins at b20, over which the flute and violins play an ascending sequence based on the music from b2. This leads to an imperfect cadence and then a descending scale in b26–27.

2nd subject (b28–36)

B28 marks the start of a new melody, shared between the brass and woodwind. This has the air of a second subject as it is a contrasting theme, but since it is the opening ritornello / orchestral exposition it is still in the tonic. The sighing falling third in the horns in b28 is answered by flute and oboes (and then bassoon). Unlike the opening of the concerto, where the melody is in octaves, this melody includes much playing in thirds. However, like the opening, there is alternation of tonic and dominant chords. From b32 the previous four bars are repeated, with the horns and trumpets adding another sighing falling third, but at a higher pitch, in b33.

1st subject (b36–43)

At b36 the march theme returns in imitation, alternating between tonic and dominant chords: 1st violins are followed by violas, 2nd violins, cellos and basses, and then woodwind and brass. As more instruments enter the dynamic increases until the whole orchestra is present from b42 playing *forte*.

Closing Theme 1 (b44–52)

The first closing theme of the ritornello / orchestral exposition introduces a menacing rising and falling semitone figure. The feeling of unease is increased by the fleeting dissonance heard in b49: the 2nd violins move to E flat on the first beat of the bar, but the flute does not move to E flat from D until the second quaver.

Closing Theme 2 (b52–64)

This features a (nearly complete) rising chromatic scale figure in the flutes, accompanied by oboes and bassoons, answered by strings. This pattern is repeated from b56, with the string answer extended, leading to a perfect cadence in b63–64. There is also a German augmented sixth chord at b60³.

Closing Theme 3 (b64–68)

The final closing idea is based on b1 of the movement, with the triadic melody heard in the brass and woodwind and imitated by the strings. The later dotted rhythm from the opening is then heard immediately, leading to another perfect cadence in the tonic in b67–68.

Link (b68–79)

After such a strong tutti perfect cadence, audiences may expect to hear the entry of the soloist. However, Mozart delays this by adding a woodwind link, with phrases passed from 1st oboe to 1st bassoon and then the flute. Each phrase ends on the dominant. The soloist then seamlessly picks up the dominant offered by the wind with a turn motif in semiquavers, answered in simplified form in repeated quavers by the strings. Ascending semiquavers in the piano over a dominant seventh chord in the wind lead to a pause on the seventh of the dominant seventh chord (F), a very high note on the *fortepiano*. The pause in the score indicates that Mozart may have expected the soloist to perform a small cadenza-like passage at this point, known as an *Eingang* (lead in).

SOLO EXPOSITION (b80–194)**Orchestra 1st subject** (b80–91)

The march theme returns, played by the strings in octaves, as heard at the beginning of the concerto, but now underneath a long piano trill on the dominant. However, the piano takes over the answering phrase on its own, adding decoration to the original wind fanfare and the following bars. This is the only point in the solo exposition that the piano refers to material originally presented by the orchestra; most of the piano's solo exposition material is new. The wind return with their fanfare in b90, while the piano continues with semiquavers. This statement of the theme is therefore shared between the orchestra and the soloist. Very little of the orchestral exposition is heard again in the solo exposition; it is nearly completely limited to these bars.

Solo 1st subject, theme 1 (b91–97)

The piano introduces a new theme in the tonic, which strongly features the subdominant chord, a contrast to the tonic and dominant heard in the orchestral exposition. The melody also features appoggiaturas and turns and has minimal string accompaniment.

Transition (b97–107)

A sequential passage of semiquavers from the piano, with left-hand and string accompaniment moves the music to the dominant key of G major. B105–106 are a decorated version of the previous two bars, with added string accompaniment.

Tutti (b107–109)

A very brief tutti confirms the key of G major with a decorated rising G major arpeggio (the decorations filling in the notes so that it is actually a scale).

Solo 2nd subject, theme 1 (b109–127)

Despite the orchestra's firm confirmation of G major, the soloist immediately launches into a G minor melody (a modal shift from G major to G minor). The melody anticipates Mozart's Symphony no. 40, written three years later. From b122 the piano lapses into pure passagework (a virtuoso display of technique) of rising and falling chromatic scales, ending on the dominant seventh in G major in b126–127 with a rising chromatic scale. The string accompaniment in b122–123 creates some fleeting dissonance with false relations between the 1st violin C sharp and piano C natural in b122³ and again in the following bar.

Solo 2nd subject, theme 2 (b128–143)

Since this theme is in the dominant major (G major) it can be seen as the real 2nd subject. A lyrical piano melody is accompanied by the piano's left hand Alberti bass and the strings, with off-beat chords in the upper strings. From b136 the theme is repeated by the woodwind, with an antiphonal effect between the piano and wind in b137 and 139. From b140 the piano takes the main melody again, with the E flats serving as a reminder of the earlier G minor theme.

Solo Codetta (b143–194)

The orchestral 1st subject is present in G major in imitation; the piano is imitated by the upper and then the lower strings. Piano broken octaves in b145–146, rather like the string semiquavers from b12, lead to virtuosic arpeggios from b147 and broken chord figuration from b148. The upper and lower strings accompany by alternating just the first bar of the march theme. Over the top the flute and oboes have held chords; the changing in alternate bars results in suspensions. The piano part here is quite dissonant, though only fleetingly as it is so fast moving. Mozart's father Leopold was probably referring to this passage (among others) when he wrote that he was not sure the copyist had copied the part correctly! B154–157 are a descending sequence. A short piano solo from b163 leads to a cadential trill in b168, but it is too short to end the section, so the piano continues.

There is another descending sequence in b171–173, which is a varied repetition of b154–157, and another short trill in b177. B178–185 are a repetition of b169–176, but with the left and right hands swapped over. As if keen to bring the section to a close, the piano part becomes increasingly wide-ranging and more chromatic, with diminished seventh chords in b186–187. The music finally reaches a G major chord in 2nd inversion in b192, then a dominant seventh in G major in b193, together with a full bar of trill in the piano, meaning that the ritornello can finally begin.

ORCHESTRAL RITORNELLO (b194–222)**Orchestra 1st subject** (b194–205)

As would be expected, the march theme (orchestra 1st subject) returns in the dominant. However, it is played immediately in the countermelody form, with the theme in the bass (from b12). The music also touches on G minor from b198, as heard in the solo exposition from b109 and at b140. However, G major returns with a perfect cadence at b204–205.

Closing Theme 1 (b205–222)

This statement of the ritornello then skips straight to the first closing theme from b52, now also in the dominant. As before there is a German augmented sixth chord at b213³. The theme is extended to finish on chord V in E minor (a B major chord at b221–222), with another augmented sixth chord en route at b218.

DEVELOPMENT (b222–274)

As implied by the preceding B major chord, the development section begins in the key of E minor, with the piano presenting a new theme. However, the rhythm of b223 is taken from b2 and there are similarities to the horn call theme at b28, in the sighing, falling figures. From b231 the wind present a simplified version of the preceding new piano theme (where the link to b28 can be seen more easily), while the piano begins 42 bars of passagework. The strings provide the supporting harmony.

There is part of a circle of fifths with V in A minor at b237 (subverting the expected E minor perfect cadence), V in D minor at b241, V in G minor at b245 and V in C minor at b249. From b259 there is a (mostly chromatic) ascending scale over a C pedal note in the 2nd violins and violas, reaching a high E flat on the piano at b264, followed by a very virtuosic descending scale. From b266 the piano figuration of right hand broken chords recalls the passage in the codetta of the solo exposition (b147 onwards). Yet again there are hints of G minor with the piano alternating between D and E flat on the first beat of each bar and a G pedal in the horns and violas. From b270 the pedal is also played by the trumpets, cellos, basses and piano left hand, while the piano right hand decorates a descending C major scale. The G pedal is in preparation for the recapitulation, which follows in the tonic.

The development section features the piano throughout; it plays in every single bar.

RECAPITULATION (b274–384)

Here Mozart can choose themes from the two expositions. He therefore selects material, omits some passages which are heard elsewhere and changes the order in which the themes are heard.

Orchestra 1st subject / march theme and link (b274–313)

The first 19 bars of the recapitulation are virtually identical to the opening of the concerto (the orchestral exposition). The only difference is that the horns are added in b282–283, with a reference to the horn call theme. Throughout these bars the piano is silent.

From b293 of the music there are changes to the orchestral exposition, with a modulation to the subdominant key. The horn call theme (orchestral second subject) is omitted (perhaps Mozart felt that it had already been alluded to enough in the development) and the music continues with the march theme in imitation, as at b36. However, this time the piano also plays a role, so the instruments enter in the order 1st violins, 2nd violins, piano (right hand then left hand), flute and oboe. By b300 the music is heading towards F minor, probably reflecting the use of G minor in the solo exposition. B304 and the following piano chromatic passagework have clear ties to the music found at b121–127. V in C minor at b305 quickly becomes V in C major two bars later and an ascending chromatic scale in the piano leads to the 2nd subject from the solo exposition.

Solo 2nd subject (b313–328)

From b313 the music is an almost exact repetition of the theme from b128, but a fifth lower as it is now in the tonic, not the dominant. When the orchestra take over the melody from b321 the oboes initially have the top line as the flute doesn't enter until b323, doubling an octave higher.

Solo Codetta (b328–351)

As in the solo exposition the 2nd subject leads straight into the codetta, with the first two bars of the march theme in imitation, then reduced to just one bar while the piano has broken chord figuration, again with many dissonant notes. As before the flute and oboes have suspensions, but the bassoons now add an imitative figure from b2 of the march theme.

Orchestra 2nd subject / horn call theme (b351–359)

The descending scale in the wind, as at b27 leads into the recapitulation of the horn call theme, but with generally thicker scoring (bassoons double the flute and oboes in b353–354). The piano plays the consequent phrase, with orchestra accompaniment; at the point at which the theme was introduced in the exposition the piano had not yet entered.

Solo Codetta (b359–384)

Mozart then makes a sudden leap again, to music from the solo codetta (b171). This was originally in the dominant but is now in the tonic. Diminished seventh chords are heard once again in b373–374 and as before, a bar of piano trill over chord V in C major leads into the final ritornello.

ORCHESTRAL RITORNELLO (b384–417)

Orchestra 1st subject / march theme (b384–396)

This begins once more with the music from b12, but from b388 the E flat in the bass leads the harmony in a different direction. As would have been expected, the orchestra stop on a second inversion tonic chord in b396 and the pause indicates a solo cadenza.

Cadenza

At this point the orchestra stops and Mozart would have improvised a piano solo, based on some of the main themes and including great virtuosic display. He would have ended on the trill shown in the score, indicating to the orchestra that they were to continue the final ritornello.

Closing Theme 1 (b397–405)

The orchestra resume the closing ritornello and Mozart copies the end of the opening ritornello, with very small changes.

Closing Theme 2 (b405–409)

This is now just four rather than twelve bars long, using just the first four bars from b52.

Closing Theme 3 (b409–413)

This is as in the orchestral exposition.

New Closing Theme (b413–417)

Like much of the music in this movement, this is based on the first two bars of the march theme. Though the whole orchestra play, they are at a *piano* dynamic.

Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868)

William Tell Overture

Various scores are available for this work. The Dover score (which is a reprint of an early Breitkopf and Härtel edition) is not recommended as there are several mistakes, which have been corrected in scores produced later. The Eulenburg Audio+Score edition uses a repeat for 24 bars of the final section, resulting in a reduced number of bars in total. Bar numbers used here reflect editions without a repeat, giving a total of 477 bars.

Candidates are not expected to know every detail of the following, but should focus on:

- structure and terminology
- themes and their transformations
- key centres and modulations
- identification of chords
- instruments and texture
- clarinet transposition and viola alto clef
- score markings, performance directions, instrumental effects
- background information about the context and genre of the work.

1 Background

Rossini was born in Pesaro, Italy, the son of a horn player and an (untrained) operatic soprano. His parents invested in his musical and general education and in his early years Rossini explored much of the music of Mozart and Haydn. Due to his father's unpredictable income, his mother worked as a soprano and Rossini also began appearing in performances from a young age, singing and accompanying on the keyboard. Rossini was therefore exposed to opera during his childhood. When Rossini was aged 12 the family moved to Bologna and two years later he began studying at the Liceo Musicale there. During his childhood he produced a number of pieces, including an opera at the age of 15.

Rossini's adult career began with Italian opera commissions from Venice and Milan and in 1810 he secured a contract with the Teatro San Carlo in Naples. This theatre also incorporated casino gambling tables and Rossini's contract included a share of the profits; this proved to be a shrewd investment. He wrote many Italian operas for this and other theatres; his first big success was *Tancredi* in 1813 and *The Barber of Seville* appeared in 1816 (for a theatre in Rome). Rossini was legendary for producing compositions at a great rate and at the last minute. In Naples Rossini met Isabella Colbran, a soprano, whom he married in 1822 when they were on their way to Vienna.

By this time Rossini was the most important contemporary operatic composer. In Vienna he briefly met Beethoven, travelled on to Paris where contract negotiations began, and then continued on to London. Whilst in London Rossini signed a lucrative contract with the French government, providing him with an annuity in return for writing two works in French: a short comic opera and a new grand opera.

In autumn 1824 Rossini moved to Paris, where he took up the post as director of the Théâtre-Italien, a theatre which produced operas in Italian. Rossini produced versions of his earlier Italian operas for this theatre and also those by other composers. In 1828 Rossini finally produced the shorter French opera, as required by his contract. This was *Le Comte Ory*, a comic opera, which borrowed a great deal from his earlier works. The promised French grand opera, *Guillaume Tell* was finally first performed on 3 August 1829 at the Paris Opéra (also known as the

Académie Royale de Musique). *William Tell* was Rossini's first completely original French opera, but was his 39th overall. It was very well received and was produced all over the world. Even Berlioz, who was normally not a huge fan of Rossini, commented favourably about *William Tell*.

William Tell was also Rossini's final opera. Shortly after the première, he moved back to Bologna, where he began a much more leisurely life, producing fewer compositions over the next 40 years. With the overthrow of Charles X in France in 1830, at the July revolution, Rossini's contract with the French government was annulled. Rossini engaged in several years of litigation before being allowed to continue to receive his annuity. Ill health and a steady income from the French and his gambling investments, probably played a part in his semi-retirement at the age of 37. In 1855 Rossini returned to Paris and in 1868 *William Tell* was performed for the 500th time, with Rossini present. It was performed regularly in Paris until 1932, but it is now rare to hear the opera performed at all, due to its length (without cuts it lasts over five hours) and the demanding high tenor part of the character Arnold. However, the overture is frequently heard in concerts and the final section has been used many times in adverts, films, television programmes and cartoons.

The four-act opera relates the legend of William Tell and is based on the play by Schiller. The libretto was written by Jouy, with some alterations made by others, including Rossini himself. It tells the story of the 13th-century hero William Tell in Switzerland, then occupied by Austria. After Tell famously shoots an apple from the top of his son's head, the Austrian oppressors are eventually defeated and the people are freed. The revolutionary nature of the plot led to changes being made before the opera was produced in some countries. The themes of nature, a hero and revolution would have appealed to nineteenth-century audiences.

The first published edition of *William Tell* was produced in 1829, by Troupenas in Paris, who paid thousands of Francs for the rights. However, since the process of publication had been started before the first performance (when changes were being made in rehearsals) it was not completely accurate.

Rossini died a very wealthy man in Paris in 1868. His estate passed to his second wife, Olympe and after her death the money allowed a new Liceo Musicale to be founded in Pesaro. Rossini was originally buried in Paris, but in 1887 was moved to Italy.

2 Instruments

William Tell is scored for a large orchestra of piccolo, flute, two oboes (one doubling cor Anglais), two clarinets in A, two bassoons, two horns in G, two horns in E, two trumpets in E, three trombones, timpani, triangle, bass drum, cymbal and strings.

The cor Anglais is like a large oboe, sounding a fifth lower than written. It is used extensively in the third section of the overture. Candidates will not be expected to transpose any of this part.

The clarinets are 'in A' so the music sounds a minor third lower than written. Candidates will need practice in transposing fragments of the clarinet part down a minor third.

The bassoons occasionally use the tenor clef, where middle C is on the fourth line from the bottom, when playing higher notes in their range (e.g. b70). However, candidates will not be expected to write any sections in tenor clef in the bass clef.

The horns in G sound a perfect fourth lower than written, while the horns in E sound a minor sixth lower than written. In contrast, the trumpets in E sound a major third higher than written. Candidates will not be required to transpose any of the brass parts. Although the valve system was in its infancy at the time the overture was written, the parts here are for instruments without valves, so they are restricted mainly to tonic and dominant notes. The timpani are tuned to E and B (the tonic and dominant of the first and fourth sections).

The first section of the overture features five solo cellists, each written on a separate staff, with the other (ripieno) cellos and the basses on the bottom two staves. After the opening section, the parts for strings are written on five staves, with the cellos and basses usually having separate staves. If they share a staff (as in Eulenburg Score 616), then Vlc. indicates that only the cellos should play, while Bassi shows where the basses join in again. The double basses sound an octave lower than written but candidates will not be expected to transpose any of this part.

The viola is mostly written in the alto clef (where middle C is on the middle line). Candidates should practise writing small fragments of this part in the treble clef. Where the viola part is particularly high (e.g. b64) then it is written in the treble clef.

In some scores the high cello parts in the opening section are written in the tenor clef, where middle C is on the fourth line from the bottom. However, candidates will not be required to write any tenor clef notes in the bass clef.

When one section of the strings plays two different notes, half the players take the top note and the other half play the bottom note. The abbreviation *div.*, for *divisi*, meaning divided appears in some scores (e.g. violas b92). At other times some of the strings are required to play two notes at once (e.g. 1st violin b176). This is known as double stopping.

3 Directions in the score

Markings in the score are usually in Italian. The start of the overture is marked *Andante*, at a walking pace / a moderate tempo.

At b17 the ripieno cellos and basses are told to play *pizz.*, short for *pizzicato*, meaning plucked. The *arco* in b33 indicates that they are to return to using the bow.

Sotto voce at b46 literally means 'below the voice', so quietly.

B48 is marked *Allegro*, meaning quick and lively.

The notes written at b54 in the strings are minims or semibreves (depending on the score) with two lines crossing the stems or below the notes. This indicates that repeated semiquavers at the notated pitch should be played. Where there are notes which look like minims but are beamed together like semiquavers, the two notes are to be alternated as semiquavers (e.g. b80).

At b56 some scores have the marking *a2* or *zu 2*, indicating that both instruments written on a single staff should play the notes (so here both clarinets and both bassoons play). When only one instrument of the two sharing a staff is to play, then sometimes Solo is used. Confusingly, in some scores this is also used where the instrument is playing the melodic line alone.

Rinforz., at b89 is short for *rinforzando*, meaning that the note should be played with greater force or strength.

The abbreviation *smorz.* at b139 is short for *smorzando* meaning dying away.

B176 is marked *Andantino*, meaning slightly faster than *Andante*.

The final section of the overture (b226) is marked *Allegro vivace*, meaning very fast.

Tutta forza at b299 means literally 'full power', so as loud as possible.

Dolce at b317 means sweetly.

String. at b399 is short for *stringendo* meaning hurrying (i.e. getting faster).

G.P. at b454 stands for general pause, indicating an unmeasured period of silence for the whole orchestra.

4 Techniques

Like the Classical composers Mozart and Haydn, whom Rossini so admired, the overture uses functional tonal harmony, in which the tonic, dominant and subdominant are particularly important. There is also modulation to other keys, some of which are closely related to the tonic and others which are not. Rossini also uses modal shifts (moving between major and minor scales on the same tonic, E minor and E major in the first section), chromaticism and chromatic chords including extended chords (sevenths, ninths and elevenths), borrowed chords (from the parallel minor) and diminished sevenths (e.g. b137). There is also use of sequence, imitation and much use of repetition and pedal notes. A pedal note is a held or repeated note in the bass, such as the dominant pedal in the timpani, cellos and basses from b78. Here the dominant pedal is preparation for the emphatic tonic chord at b92 (from which point there is a tonic pedal note).

5 Structure and Form

The purpose of an operatic overture, which was played immediately before the curtain rose, was to give the audience time to settle and to prepare them for the music which was to follow. For most of his other operas Rossini suggested merely the mood of the opera, but for *William Tell* he introduces some ideas which are heard later (the *ranz des vaches* appears towards the end of Act IV) or refers to scenes (such as the storm) which will be part of the opera. Rossini did not publish a programme for the overture to *William Tell*, but contemporary audiences were quick to suggest what each section represented.

The overture divides into four sections, each with a different mood and tempo. Berlioz suggested that it was a 'symphony in four parts', but it does not use any of the standard structures found in a symphony and none of the ideas is developed. Each of the four parts has a free-flowing structure, sometimes with much repetition, but not adhering to any standard musical form.

6 Commentary

SECTION ONE (bars 1–47)

This section paints a relaxing picture of the Swiss landscape, possibly as the sun rises, and serves as a slow introduction to the rest of the work. It is relatively virtuosic for the 1st solo cellist, reaching some high notes and with five solo cellists plus accompanying cellos and basses has the feel of chamber music.

The overture begins in E minor, with an ascending E minor arpeggio in the 1st cello, who is answered by the other four cellists in b3. The opening five bars, which use chords I and V in E minor are followed by five bars with the progression V7 to I. Appoggiaturas (e.g. 2nd cello b4) and falling diminished intervals (2nd cello b12–13 and 4th cello b13–14) make the music sound very expressive.

At b17 the music turns to E major rather than E minor, with a more legato and extended melody in the 1st cello, with *pizzicato* accompaniment in the ripieno cellos and basses. The timpani roll in b22–23 hints at the thunder and the storm which will arrive soon.

In b24–27 the 5th cello, ripieno cellos and basses have a dominant pedal while the 1st and 2nd cellos play in imitation, the 1st cello with a version a 5th higher and more decorated in b27.

There is repetition of the melody from b17–22 at b28–33, but this time it is harmonised in C sharp minor (the relative minor of E major). The A major chord heard at b22² now becomes an A minor chord with the C natural in the 1st cello and leads to imitation between the 1st and 2nd cello in b34–35.

B36 sees a return to the structure of the opening: a rising arpeggio in the 1st cello, joined by other solo cellists in the following bars. There is a further rumble of thunder from the timpani in b39–41. B40–41 are a perfect cadence in E major and the final seven bars of this section are all on tonic harmony, with the 1st solo cello outlining two more rising E major broken chords. The syncopated falling chromatic lines in the 3rd, 4th and 5th solo cellos in b40–42, including playing in thirds in b41 and sixths in b42 are very expressive. The final note in the solo cello is a very high E, often played as a harmonic, where the string is not pressed down, but just touched lightly.

SECTION TWO (bars 48–175)

Commentators agree that this section describes a storm, presaging the storm heard later in the opera. Though the section begins with an E major chord from the cellos, it is in E minor and is at a much faster tempo than the first section.

Rossini establishes a pattern in the first ten bars, which he then repeats twice more at different pitches. Semiquavers in the 2nd violins and violas (alternating two notes and partial descending and ascending scales) are joined by a held clarinet and bassoon C#⁷ chord from b50. The three staccato crotchets in the wind in b52–53 and again in b56–57 could be the first raindrops to fall. These are separated by repeated semiquavers in the upper strings playing an F# minor chord, with the 1st violins having an unprepared suspension (the B, falling to the A in b56).

When this pattern is repeated from b58 a wind F#⁷ chord is followed by a B minor chord in the strings (with an E falling to a D in the 1st violins). The final statement of this pattern begins at b68, the woodwind chord is B⁷ and there are two unprepared suspended notes, this time in the viola, leading to a B⁷ chord in b76. All this section is at a dynamic of *pp*, including *sotto voce* markings and has only a relatively small number of instruments playing at any one time; the storm is still some way off.

From b78 the storm begins to build and Rossini uses ideas from the opening bars of the storm section, but all at the same time; there are continuous string semiquavers, held notes in the bassoon and horns and crotchet raindrops in every bar, but now on the offbeats. A timpani roll on the dominant is also added.

The dynamic begins to build from b86, together with thicker orchestration; the semiquavers are no longer passed between the 2nd violins and violas, they play together and all the upper woodwind play offbeat crotchets. A dominant 9th (and 11th) chord is heard in b86–87. B78–91 take place over a dominant pedal in the timpani, cellos and basses, preparing for the *ff* E minor chord in b92.

At b92 the whole orchestra, including the bass drum, is heard together for the first time, creating the climax of the storm. Descending chromatic scales in the upper woodwind and strings for two bars are answered by ascending scales in the bassoons, trombones and lower strings, accompanied by off-beat woodwind and brass chords.

B96 begins a repetition from b92, but with higher piccolo, flute and violins. The same four-bar pattern is also used from b100 (based on chord IV, rather than chord I) and again this is repeated from b104, with some instruments playing higher.

From b108 the scales are based on chord V and the repetition from b112 has some instruments playing higher and the scale in the bassoons, trombones and lower strings continues to rise, rather than rising and then falling back.

From b116 Rossini uses much the same melodic material, but the phrases are shortened to one bar, they all descend and also follow a descending sequence. This takes place over an almost complete circle of fifths: E minor – A minor – D major – G major – C major – F# minor – B major – E minor in b116–123.

B123–130 makes great use of the descending pattern G–F#–F–E, from b127 played by half the orchestra. This is part of the descending pattern first heard in b92, now cut down to just half a bar and beginning on a different note.

From b131 the storm begins to die away; fragmented ideas from earlier in the storm section are heard over a very long dominant pedal at an increasingly quieter dynamic and with fewer instruments playing simultaneously. There is use of some very dissonant chords: b137 is a diminished seventh chord (the notes A#, C#, E and G), made even more dissonant with the dominant pedal underneath.

The single drops of rain reappear in b148 but are still on the offbeats. From b155 the furious chromatic scales have become smoothed out in the bassoons and cellos, imitated by the clarinets and violas, in legato minims and repeated an octave lower from b159.

From b160 the flute introduces rising shapes from the dominant chord, over a *pp* accompaniment, still including the rumbling dominant pedal. This finally ceases in b171 (having lasted 40 bars) and the flute is left alone to finish the storm section, ending on the note B.

SECTION THREE (bars 175–226)

This section is often known as a *Ranz des vaches*, which is a 'call to the cows'. This was the music played on an alpine horn by a cowherd in Switzerland wanting to move the cows from one place to another. In the overture Rossini uses the cor Anglais to represent the Alpine horn. Other ways in which Rossini conveys the pastoral atmosphere are the slow harmonic rhythm (the chords change at a slow rate), the triple time combined with triplets (giving a compound triple feel), the use of major chords and held chords in the accompaniment, almost like a drone. The flute, which combines with the cor Anglais to play the melody, was also traditionally a pastoral instrument.

The flute's B at the end of the storm section becomes the third of the new section in G major and the cor Anglais plays a lilting five-bar melody over three tonic and one dominant chords. At b181 the flute repeats the melody an octave higher, with the same harmonic accompaniment, but now played by clarinets and bassoons rather than bassoons and horns.

The cor Anglais takes over the melody at b186, starting a note higher than at b176 and again the flute repeats this an octave higher from b191, with the same harmony but different accompanying instruments.

At b196 the cor Anglais begins a more extended melody and is joined one bar later by the flute playing an ornamental countermelody including repeated notes, broken chords and scale passages, possibly evoking birdsong. This coincides with the entry of the triangle, playing on the first beat of each bar.

B202 begins as a repetition of b196 onwards, but changes to move towards the relative minor (E minor) from b205 and ends on the dominant of E minor in b206–207. However, the music moves straight back to G major in b209 with the cor Anglais playing the melody from b176, now with added flute decoration and repeated from b213.

The section ends with a cadential two-bar phrase played twice and extended the second time over the repeated tonic chord, while the flute decorates with G major broken chords above.

Most of this section uses tonic and dominant (seventh) chords, but there are occasional chromatic chords, including a diminished seventh at b211³. The thinner orchestration, with just woodwind, horns, triangle and strings makes for a significant contrast with the preceding storm section.

SECTION FOUR (bars 226–477)

This section is probably the most famous of the overture and has been used frequently to accompany films and television programmes. The fast duple tempo emulates the *galop*, which was a popular nineteenth-century dance, named because it emulated the galloping movement of horses.

Introduction (bars 226–242)

The final section begins with a trumpet fanfare in E major, which the 3rd and 4th horns imitate from b230. The 1st and 2nd horns and timpani join with a dominant pedal note from b234 and b236 respectively and the introduction ends on a held dominant chord in E major, followed by a short silence. The section clearly refers to the assembling of the troops, ready to go into battle to liberate Switzerland.

A (bars 243–251)

This is the most famous theme from the overture, introduced first by clarinets, bassoons and strings at a *pp* dynamic, as if the soldiers are in the distance. The timpani and lower strings simply play tonic and dominant notes, as the theme is harmonised with tonic and dominant chords. It is eight bars long, with an imperfect cadence in the middle and a perfect cadence at the end and has the internal structure abac as b243–245 are repeated in b247–249, with varied material in between. There is a sudden dynamic change to *ff* in b249.

A (bars 251–259)

The theme is repeated from b251 with thicker orchestration (all the woodwind and brass now play).

B (bars 259–267)

This is a very similar theme to A, particularly in the rhythms used, but it begins in the relative minor (C# minor). The end of b263 suggests it is going to repeat from the beginning of the theme, but the music moves in a different direction, to end on a B major chord in b267. Rossini adds cymbals for this theme, an instrument often used to suggest military connections.

B (bars 267–275)

The theme is repeated.

Link (bars 275–283)

With a *fp* the dynamic suddenly drops and over a decorated dominant pedal in the 1st (and later the 2nd) violins, the clarinets and 3rd and 4th horns begin a four-bar fanfare, joined by oboes when it is repeated. Underneath the bassoons, cellos and basses play a rising scale (E major, but dominant to dominant) and the trumpets and then the 1st and 2nd horns emphasise the two semiquavers – quaver rhythm.

A (bars 283–291)

This is a repeat of b243–251, with the sudden change to *ff* as before.

A (bars 291–299)

A is repeated as at b251 onwards, with thicker orchestration.

C (bars 299–315)

A new very loud, forceful theme is introduced, in the tonic. This theme is twice as long as A and B, lasting 8+8 bars, with an imperfect cadence in the middle and a perfect cadence at the end. It is played by the whole orchestra. When most of the instruments have detached quavers (b303–307) the violins play a decorated version in semiquavers. The second eight bars of the theme are almost a repetition of the first eight bars, with a changed ending to reach a perfect cadence.

D (bars 315–343)

As with Themes A and B, the music moves to the relative minor, this time with a sudden decrease in dynamics to *pp* again and a reduction in orchestration. 1st violins continue their scurrying semiquavers, while other instruments play much more calmly: detached quavers in the lower strings and held chords in the woodwind and brass. With the addition of F double sharps, the music moves towards G sharp minor in b326–327, but quickly reverts to the tonic in b328. Here the 1st clarinet has the main melodic interest and the melody is repeated from b336.

C (bars 343–359)

This is a repetition of b260–275.

B (bars 359–367) and **B** (bars 367–375)

The relative minor melody is played twice again.

Link (bars 375–383)

As before

A (bars 383–391)

This is a repetition of the music from b243.

A (bars 391–398)

The A theme is repeated as before, with the whole orchestra, but the piccolo is now an octave higher than any of the previous appearances and the bass drum is added playing on every crotchet.

CODA (bars 399–477)

As the excitement increases the music gets faster and higher in pitch. The full percussion section (timpani, triangle, cymbals and bass drum) play throughout. B423 begins a repeat of the material from the beginning of the coda. From b447 the first two bars of A are played first by woodwind and horns, joined by strings when the two bars are played again, followed by three repetitions of the 2nd bar of A (b245).

After the general pause at b454 there are six bars of alternating tonic and dominant chords and then simply tonic chords in different inversions to the end of the overture. The off-beat chords in the brass (and later the bassoons) from b461 keep the momentum moving forward.

Introduction: Arabic Music

Arab or Arabic music is a general term for the styles and genres of music of all the peoples who make up the Arab world today, which includes Turkey, Egypt, countries in the Arab peninsula (e.g. Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia) and many parts of North Africa (e.g. Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco). The music of the countries in this region has had a long history of interaction, resulting in the development of many regional musical styles. For several millennia, the region has been a cradle of great civilisation and cultures. Music is highly theorised and written music treatises have been influenced by ancient Greece, Egypt and India. The Islamic empire that emerged in the seventh century C.E. was a huge force dominating the entire region, with the Arabic language and Islam being a unifying force. Under the Islamic caliphates and courts, Arabic classical music developed. Poetry and music are closely related and form an important part of the vocal tradition. Arabic musical instruments, many of which were later introduced to Europe and the Far East, also form an important part of the musical tradition.

With the fall of the Islamic empire from the fifteenth century and the decentralisation of power, different styles of secular music emerged in various regions. Classical art song and instrumental ensembles developed alongside Islamic and Sufi religious music. The system of melodic modes, known as the *maqam*, is an important basis for music in this region, and at the 1932 Congress on Music in Cairo, at which authoritative Arabic music scholars and composers from the Arab world and Europe gathered, the classification and codification of the *maqamat* (plural of *maqam*) was accomplished.

Candidates do not need to study music from the whole of the Arab world, but should be taught about the instruments and musical features of *Takht* instrumental music and Egyptian *Shaabi* music, which are described in the following sections. The instruments or terms specific to this world focus with which candidates should be familiar are printed in bold. Information has been provided on the history and socio-cultural context of this music for the benefit of teachers; candidates should have a general awareness of the background to each style, but will not be tested in detail on this.

1 *Takht* Instrumental Ensemble

The most typical secular instrumental ensemble is the ***Takht*** ensemble; music played by this ensemble is considered the art music of the eastern Arab world. Traditionally, it is a small ensemble consisting of four melodic instruments and a percussion instrument. It can play on its own as instrumental music, or can be used to accompany singing or dancing. When vocals are added, there can be one male or female soloist and a group of three to six singers. In more recent times, the number of performers in the ensemble is not fixed; there could be more, or sometimes fewer, performers.

The following instruments are typically found in a traditional *takht ensemble*:

Ud (also spelled *Oud*) This is a pear-shaped plucked lute which has a short, unfretted neck. It has five strings in double courses tuned to low G, A, D, G and c. It is played with a plectrum held in the right hand. The main body of the instrument has a rounded back and a flat face.

Violin / Kaman In the mid-nineteenth century, an indigenous spiked lute (called *kaman* or *kamanja/kamanga*) was replaced in *Takht* ensembles by the western violin. In Arabic music the violin (which is now also called *Kaman*) is tuned to low G, D, G and d.

Qanun (also spelled *kanun*) This is a trapezoidal zither that is placed either across the performer's lap or on a small table in front of the seated performer. It has 25 to 27 sets of strings stretched across the face of the instrument; each set of strings contain 3 strings tuned to the same note. The strings are plucked by a short plectrum attached

to the index finger of each hand. Tiny levers placed under each course of strings (on the left side of the instrument) allow the player to change the length and tune the strings. The instrument has a range of over three octaves.

Nay (also spelled *Ney*) This is an end-blown flute made from a piece of hollow reed, which comes in different sizes. Each *nay* has nine segments with six holes on top and one thumbhole on the underside. The instrument is open at both ends; the player rests their lips on one end and blows across the rim (rather like blowing over a bottle) to produce the sound, holding it obliquely to the right side of the body.

Riqq This is a tambourine with 5 sets of cymbals mounted around the rim. The face of the tambourine is traditionally made from goat or fish skin and is mounted on a circular wooden frame.

2 Musical Features

Maqam

The **maqam** (pl. *maqamat*) is a **melodic mode** in Arabic music. A *maqam* is built from a scalic system comprising 24 notes per octave. It includes all of the 12 semitone steps per octave of Western music, but a further division into quarter steps gives it the total of 24 notes. The whole step C to D, for example, is divided into 4 quarter steps. The notes one-quarter step below the Western natural notes are labelled as '**half-flats**'. In notation, this is designated with a flat sign with a slash through it: \flat . Similarly, the notes one-quarter step above the Western natural notes are known as '**half-sharps**', written as follows: \sharp . Thus within the 24-tone Arab scalic system, there are seven half-flats and seven half-sharps, but E half-sharp and F half-flat are theoretically the same note, as are B half-sharp and C half-flat.

In performance, however, not all the 24 notes will be played. The fundamental scale usually consists of seven pitches to the octave, making it heptatonic. But the great variety of possible notes per octave provides scope for the great number of melodic modes that exist in Arabic music. Thus, a *maqam* will contain a specific choice of pitches, intervals, and specific melodic patterns; but it also gives the music its distinctive characteristics, moods and emotions. It is the basis upon which musical improvisations and compositions are carried out. Each *maqam* has its own name; for example, the *maqam* from C to c is named *Maqam Rast*. This *maqam* is the most preeminent *maqam* as it consists of the notes of Arabic music's fundamental scale. Of the seven tones in this scale, five of these notes (C, D, F, G, A) are tuned to those in the Western major scale, while two (E half-flat and B half-flat) are non-Western.

Candidates will not be expected to identify any specific maqamat, but should understand and be able to describe the general principle of how these melodic modes are constructed.

Rhythm

Time in Arabic music is organized in a system of **rhythmic modes** called *iqa'at* (singular *iqa'*). Each mode consists of a succession of beats, with a unique structure, character and mood. Each beat is verbalised using different mnemonic sounds. The first sound is *dumm*, the lowest sound possible on a drum, made when it is struck toward the centre of the drumhead. The second is *takk*, a short high-pitched sound played at the rim of the drum. Using these two sounds, a variety of drum rhythms can be spoken.

One of the most widely used pattern in Arabic music is the *maqsum*, an 8-beat rhythm. The pattern is as follows (D = *dumm*, t = *takk*, – = *rest*):

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| D | T | – | T | D | – | T | – |

In performance, the drummer is expected to **ornament** the basic rhythmic patterns by adding to the *takk* strokes. The drummer is able to freely vary any given rhythm by improvising on the skeletal structure.

Melodic Texture

In eastern Arabic music, a single melodic line is presented in performance; this is the case whether there is one or many performers. Traditionally, there are no chords or harmony in this music. Melodies are performed using a variety of textures. The texture of **monophony** is common when there is a solo voice or solo instrument. Solos may also be accompanied by a melodic **drone**, or melodic or rhythmic ostinato patterns. A solo voice or instrument may also alternate with a responding group of instruments.

In ensemble performance, the texture of **heterophony** is common; multiple instrumentalists and singers perform a melody together, but each performer may play variations of the melody according to the idiom of their instrument. When one or more instruments accompany a solo voice, the instrumentalists may also spontaneously create simultaneous imitations of the vocalist's melodic line, resulting in rich heterophonic textures.

Musical Form

The repertoire of the *takht* ensemble is based around a **suite** form consisting of about 10 to 12 pieces based in the same *maqam* with different rhythmic modes. Most pieces begin with an *ud* improvisation, known as **taqsim**, to establish the mood and mode of a performance. Following the improvisation, short instrumental compositions and several pre-composed songs may follow. Improvisatory solos (*taqsim*) on other instruments may be added in between the compositions.

If there are vocals, **unmetred** vocal improvisation known as **layali** could also be used (the Arabic word *layl* (pl. *layali*) means night). Its role is similar to that of the *taqsim* instrumental improvisation. In the *layali*, the singer improvises melodically by using combinations of 'ya *layli* ('O my night') or *ya layl* ('O night'), or *layali* ('nights'). These words are sung more for their enchanting lyrical effect rather than their literal meaning. The *layali* generally serves as an introduction to the vocal genre. The vocal genre also usually concludes the suite.

Performance Contexts

During the late nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, performances of *takht* ensembles were hosted by the rich elite and local government officials in private homes or courts and palaces. These were exclusive events attended mostly by patrons and their families and friends, in contexts such as wedding parties, religious holidays and receptions of the elite and officials.

Public performances often took place in the open courtyards of a home, attracting audiences from surrounding neighbourhoods. Performances also took place in coffeehouses, but these were considered less prestigious and tended to be frowned upon due to the totally public nature of the event and the possible consumption of alcohol.

In the twentieth century, following the introduction of concert halls and opera houses by the Europeans, *takht* ensembles began to play in these venues. Radio, television and film also became the media through which art music was disseminated to a wide audience.

While earlier generations of musicians were often self-taught or had studied with one or more master musicians, the new generation of musicians are trained in music conservatories and music colleges, which were established at the end of the nineteenth century.

3 Egypt: *Shaabi* Popular Music

Background

By the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, modern universities and schools had been established in Egypt; a number of music academies and conservatories were set up to teach both Western music and the country's classical art music. Thus, music in modern-day Egypt reflects influences brought by European colonisation, with traditional instruments and art music genres juxtaposed with Egyptian folk and popular music.

In the 1970s, following the death of Egypt's president Gamal Abdel Nasser, the new government that followed opened its doors to the West. Tourism in particular helped to boost the country's economy. The working class people were finally able to rise up against the oppression of the moneyed society and its conservative codes and to speak out against the political rule and corruption. At this time, the emergence of affordable music technology to the populace also led to grassroots movements that changed the music scene. The introduction of **cassette tape** recorders and boom boxes made music production cheaper and more widely available to the working class. As a result of such changes, a new popular music and dance genre ***Shaabi*** (which means 'folk' – the people) came to the fore. Known as *al-musiqa-al-shaabi*, it literally means 'people's music'. The genre and its music became the voice of the street, of the ordinary working class people, with its social commentaries on the government and its policies. Today, *shaabi* music continues to evolve.

Instrumentation

Shaabi music combines the folk music tradition from the countryside with urban classical traditional instruments and modern Western instruments. Western instruments used in *shaabi* include electric keyboard, synthesizers, accordion, saxophone, trumpet and drum machines. Traditional instruments such as the *nay* may be included, and the ***darbuka***, a single-headed goblet-shaped drum is used.

Musical Features

Shaabi songs often begin with a free-rhythm ***mawwal***, a vocal improvisation whose poetic form is characterized by wordplay in colloquial Arabic, breaking free from the strict constraints of classical Arabic. In this sung improvisation, the singer expresses his/her sorrowful complaints. It introduces the beliefs and feelings of the singer and sets the emotional mood of the song. The singer's voice often has a low, raspy and rough edge; a high-pitched, nasal 'crying' intonation expresses plaintiveness and melancholy. The *mawwal* may be accompanied or answered by the traditional *nay* or the accordion, saxophone or keyboard.

Following the *mawwal* and before the actual song, a fast upbeat rhythm is played by the *darbuka*. The song that follows is short and fast, often repetitive, creating a hypnotic and trance-like effect. Simple lyrics that contain slang or street talk are sung to the melody, and may contain commentaries on issues such as alcohol, poverty, work, money, love, marriage, and everyday life and problems.

Performance Contexts

Since *Shaabi* songs originated as the voice of the ordinary people expressing resistance, its performance was often censored in government-supported media, unlike the classical art traditions that were promoted on television, radio and in concert halls. Through cassette technology, these songs were passed around and sold in street kiosks and then circulated among the working class. In more recent times, the genre is disseminated via mobile phones and the internet. The genre has rapidly spread to become the music of today's urban youth, and it is also often played at weddings.

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