CHAPTER 2: Elements That Structure Music: Key, Texture, Form

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Key
   Tonality
      The relationship of tones to a central tone called the tonic. See also "key." (Do – a Deer...)
   Scale
      a series of notes differing in pitch according to a specific scheme (usually within an octave) (Do-Re-Mi, etc)
   Key Signature
      The group of sharps or flats placed at the beginning of each staff to indicate which notes are to be raised or lowered a half step. The particular combination of sharps or flats indicates the "key" of a composition.
   Modulation
      Gradual or rapid change from one key to another within a composition. (ex. The Star Spangled Banner)
   Chromatic Scale: A scale that includes all the notes (black and white piano keys) on the piano in order

Texture
   Monophony
      A musical texture consisting of a single melodic line without accompanying material, as in Gregorian chant.
   Homophony
      Music in which a single melody predominates, while the other voices or instruments provide harmonic accompaniment.
   Polyphony
      Many voices. A texture combining two or more independent melodies heard simultaneously; generally synonymous with counterpoint.

Form
   Repetition
      Music is played again, or repeated.
   Contrast
      Something different from what came before.
Variation
A modified version of something previously performed in which some elements of the original remain.

Ternary Form
A musical form that consists of three sections, ABA, in which the final section (A) is a repetition of the first section (A), and the middle section (B) contrasts with A.

Binary Form
A basic musical form consisting of two contrasting sections (AB), both sections often being repeated (AABB).
OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER 2

The elements studied in Chapter 1 interact to create structure. Chapter 2 begins by exploring the concept of tonality. This chapter also explores how composers combine melodies to create denser textures. Also explored is how harmony and melody combine to create the concept of key or tonal center.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. Understanding the concept of tonality requires a great deal of experience as well as study. The major and minor scales depend on more than a certain pattern of whole and half steps. They establish a hierarchy of pitches, some of which are more important than others. The keynote (tonic) is one pole and the dominant (fifth scale degree) is the other. All the other pitches gravitate toward one or other of these two pitches. A composer’s understanding of this polarity helps him or her create moments of tension and resolution. You can demonstrate this by playing a simple melody like “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” or “Mary Had A Little Lamb” and ending on a wrong note. What makes the “other” note wrong (especially if it is a note from the scale)?

2. Studying musical texture--monophony, polyphony, and homophony--presents a mini-chronology of notated Western music. Monophonic plainchant appears first, and then around the tenth century polyphonic works appear. Polyphony becomes the preferred texture throughout the Renaissance. The final texture, homophony, introduced in the early seventeenth century, becomes the common texture of most folk and popular music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

3. As students listen to longer and more complex works, they need to become more attentive to signals that composers provide to indicate important events in the music. Sudden dynamic changes, held notes (a slowing of the rhythm), repeated notes, changes in instrumentation, or changes of register, are techniques that composers have at their disposal to map out formal designs.

4. Some additional listening examples to illustrate formal plans are:
   - The “Flinstones” Theme--ternary (AABA) form
   - Mozart, “Variations on Ah vous dirai-je maman”--theme and variations
   - “Greensleeves”--binary (AB) form
FURTHER TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What do the terms *piano* and *forte* mean? How does the composer indicate dynamics between and beyond these two levels?
2. What are the components of rhythm? How does beat differ from meter? How do beat and meter differ from note values (duration)?
3. How does a listener recognize the end of a melodic phrase?
4. What is an arpeggio? How does it relate to a chord?