

High Storrs Sixth Form

2024 Bridging Work

Subject: Music

Name: _____



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Bridging the Gap

Music

Task 1. Prepare, practice and record a performance on your instrument/voice.

The piece you choose to perform should be a piece that you can perform confidently and fluently, and should be at least 1 minute 30 seconds long.

Bring the recording to your first y12 music lesson.

Task 2. Write a 400 word written analysis of the piece that you have performed.

Name the composer/performer/title of the piece and instruments included in the performance and write an analysis that describes the composers use of each musical element: Melody, Harmony, Rhythm, Texture, Timbre & Structure. For instance you could include...

- Describe the pieces structure. Where does each musical idea occur and repeat within the piece. Give minutes:seconds or bar numbers of where ideas start.
- What key is the piece in? Does it change key at any point? What is the chord sequence?
- Take a short section of the piece and analyse the chords using Roman Numerals and add any additional notes evident in the chords (for example Vsus4).
- Describe the melodic, textural and rhythmic interest in the piece, using as much detailed musical language as possible.
- What are the technical demands for the instrument / voice in this piece. Are there any interesting performance techniques that change the timbre of your instrument? What are the most difficult section to perform and why?

Try to use correct musical terminology as much as possible.

Finally describe why you chose this piece to perform (favourite genre/suits your voice or instrument/mood etc.)

Example essay:

I chose to sing 'Halo' by Beyonce for my performance. I chose this piece as it is one of my favourite songs, but also because it features a virtuoso vocal performance and is an expressive piece.

Halo is in typical song structure with a verse (0:24), pre-chorus (0:49) and a chorus (1:00), followed by a repeated hook (1:24). This full structure then repeats, with some textural variation. At 3:00 there is a break, before the chorus & hook return for the final time. The song is in A major, is in 4/4 time and has a mid-paced, moderato tempo.

It is harmonically very simple which puts more emphasis on the vocal melody to keep the listeners interest. The entire song is based on the same four chord sequence: A, Bm, F#m, D. In A major these chords are chords I, ii, vi and IV. The chords are entirely diatonic, with no extensions or suspensions. The movement from D (chord IV) to A (chord I) is a plagal cadence.

The vocal melody starts at quite a low pitch (0:24), but rises in the following sections until it reaches her upper range for the 'Halo, halo, halo' hook (1:24). Beyonce uses word-painting with the melody rising for 'remember those walls I built' (0:24) but falling for 'baby they're tumbling down'. The melody is mostly conjunct and scalar. Beyonce sings melismatically at a number of points, such as the 'Halo' at 3:06. In the final chorus (3:29) the melody is sung with additional harmonies. The only part other than vocals that plays melodically is the piano in the intro (0:11) and the break (3:00). In these sections it plays arpeggiated chords with additional ornaments to add melodic interest.

The beat has a very steady, straight rhythm with kick on beats 1 and 3, and handclaps on beats 2 and 4. Beyonce's melody features syncopation throughout. A synthesizer in the pre-chorus and arpeggiated piano in the introduction both play repeated 16th note semi-quaver patterns, giving rhythmic momentum to the song. The hook of 'halo halo halo' (1:24) uses a slower quaver rhythm than much of the rest of the song, and the accent of every word is on the beat, giving it a powerful feel.

The texture of the piece is melody and accompaniment. There are multiple overdubs of Beyonce's voice, which interact in different ways. In the first chorus (1:01) the melody is sung in octaves. The hook (1:24) features 'Halo' being sung in antiphonal call and response between Beyonce and her backing vocals. For the final chorus at 3:29 chordal vocal harmonies are added, rather than just octaves.

This is a technically demanding grade 6 piece, due to Beyonce's range and powerful vocal style. As mentioned before, the accompaniment is quite simple which puts more pressure on the performer to be expressive. The ad libs towards the end are difficult, and correct breathing is necessary due to the fast rhythm of much of the melody, and the way that the song builds in power and intensity throughout.