

# Decide Early, Gain Clarity

- Mood
- Why does it matter?
- What is your role?
- Zoom Out

1. Listen for ONLY rhythm. This is important because you are able to observe where time is taken, and what tools they use to ground the piece rhythmically.
2. Listen again for ONLY sound/vibrato. Describe their sound. How do you think they created that sound? Experiment and record yourself to find the solution! Where exactly does the performer use vibrato, and how does it function in the phrase?
3. Listen again for ONLY dynamics/phrasing. Where is the focal note in their phrase? Are there any mini-crescendos or gestures they add to make the phrase more interesting/compelling?
4. Listen again for ONLY articulation. What kind of articulation are they using? What are they doing to get such clarity? How does this differ from your articulation? How do their note lengths compare to yours in length?

- What kind of analysis does this work entail? (roman numeral, set-class, twelve-tone, etc.)
- Is the harmony functional/conventional? — Then actually analyze the piece! - How does this effect your role, the overall mood, etc.?
- What is the form of the piece? How does the function of a conventional form impact your interpretation of the music? Ex. a Coda doesn't have new phrase function, it is a "tail" and therefore should not be played as though it is a new important phrase/idea.

- Where do the chords change? What is your role in the chord? Write in any chord changes of large significance (changes that cause the mood to shift for example).
- What time period/style was this piece written? Do you know how this piece would sound on a period instrument? Did they use vibrato or conventional back then? What does this inform about your interpretation now? - Listen to a recording on a period instrument if applicable.
- Are there unexpected chords, where the audience may expect something different to happen? If so, how can you make this moment special?

- Where are the dissonances? Should we lead to or emphasize the dissonance?
- What kind of image does the rhythm in the piano/your part create? (flowing, vertical chords, arpeggios, long line, etc.)
- How can we fit into the sound of the piano based on what they are playing? Is there a frequent change in melodic character?
- Should we be thinking in bigger beats? (Always try this to see if it flows more easily) Should we always be thinking in one type of beat pattern? (big/small) or should we change it up?

- Are there smaller gestures such as motives that the piece highlights? Does this or the main melody come back in a different context or key? Does the piano do the same thing when the melody/motive repeats?
- Are there times when the piano has the melody and your part should be in the background?
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- Are the pianist's dynamic's and your dynamics the same always? If not, why did the composer do this?

# Andersen: Etude No. 2, Op. 15

Allegro con brio. M.M. ♩ = 69.

*p con garbo*

*mf*

*cresc.*

This is a helpful tool for any passage, but particularly very technical ones. These structural notes organize the phrase.

compound meter

note groups

focal note

big beats

# LISTENING BACK

When you listen back you want to follow the same four-step process we did earlier and write down EVERYTHING. Just to review:

1. Listen for ONLY rhythm. Is your rhythm super solid? If not where is there room for improvement?
2. Listen again for ONLY sound/vibrato. Is the sound consistent on every single note? Do some notes sound weaker? Is your vibrato consistent? Is it placed with intention to serve the phrase you decided on?
3. Listen again for ONLY dynamics/phrasing. Can you tell from your recording where the focal note is? Do you follow all of the dynamic markings on the page diligently?
4. Listen again for ONLY articulation. Is there clarity of articulation on every single note? Are there any that don't come across as clear?