

MUSIC COMPOSITION OVERVIEW

Consciously or not, many composers from a variety of musical styles have similar concerns when composing, such as how to balance continuity (flow) along with contrast (change). They want a piece to evolve and grow (like a story), but in a way that makes sense and feels natural and cohesive. They want some predictability, but also some surprises—just not too many.

While a certain composer's process might be unique or even mysterious, the results are often clear and logical. We can't always know what exactly composers were thinking, but we can hear how their results are similar, even when the styles are very different.

By understanding similarities in the procedures and results of different composers' works, we can feel more connected to their music. As performers we might learn and perform pieces in new and better ways. As composers, we might acquire new tools to aid in and refine our own creative process.

One way to gain insight into a composition is to outline it by drawing a timeline or diagram in the same way a writer might outline a story.

A timeline (diagram) of *Here Comes The Sun* by The Beatles could look like this:

| Intro. w/chorus| Verse¹ | Chorus | V² | Ch. | Bridge | V³ | Ch. (X2) | Coda (from bridge) ||

It shows an overview of the song that lets us see where things are similar and where they are different. If we wanted to identify more features that make the song easy to follow on one hand, but special and unique on the other, we could then compare elements of the song to the basic elements featured below.

These basic elements are divided into five different categories, but they all interconnect and blend. A given composition will combine some or all of these elements in different ways:

