



Romantic Piano Music of Chopin, Brahms and Grieg

A Level AQA Set Work Analysis

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Teacher's Introduction

This resource has been created as a guide to the rewarding study of piano music of the 19th century. It is a Level A resource for AQA: Appraising Music, Section B, Analysis and Context. It is Stravinsky's classical tradition 1650–1910). It counts for 34 of the 120 marks in the exam.

For this study, two pieces each by Chopin, Brahms and Grieg are nominated for study. They have been chosen as representative works of Romantic piano music and demonstrate a new style. Clearly, the study of six works cannot cover the whole scope of Romantic piano music, but attendance is encouraged.

You will need a piano score and a good recording for each work. Live performances will give students deeper appreciation of the works. For this resource the following editions are recommended:

- Grieg: Peters edition
- Chopin: Ballade: Breitkopf und Hartel; Nocturne: Peters edition
- Brahms: Urtext, Könnemann Music, Budapest

Although the title of this resource is The Romantic Piano Music of Chopin, Brahms and Grieg, then Chopin and finally Brahms as I felt this progression would be helpful for accessibility and growth. I felt that the Grieg set works were the easiest to understand, followed by Chopin and then Brahms. Teachers may present the works in any order.

For each composer, a brief biography is provided as well as contextual and background information. There are 'Do It Yourself' exercises for the student to discover elements about the works. Analysis is given. Thereafter, full analysis is provided with many music examples. At the end of each set work there are consolidation exercises, such as:

- Questions to test understanding of form
- Questions to test understanding of compositional techniques
- Performance exercises to reinforce themes
- Discussion questions
- Mind-mapping tasks

Exam information and revision tips will help students score good marks and practice questions can be used in class, as projects or in tests. For each set work exam-style practice questions, one 5-mark question and one 10-mark question.

A glossary is given for reference to terminology and answers are provided for all tasks.

Your role as the teacher is:

- to facilitate the study of the set works
- to allow students to discover for themselves the riches in the music
- to set the pace for working through this resource
- to supervise all tasks and activities
- to use the practice questions to assess your students' learning and understanding
- to provide constructive feedback to your students
- to foster appreciation for the piano music of the Romantic period



A web page containing all the links listed in this resource is conveniently available on Zig Education's website at [zzed.uk/6751](https://www.zzed.uk/6751)

You may find this helpful for accessing the websites rather than typing them in.

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Students' Introduction

This is an A Level student-friendly resource introducing you to six wonderful pieces. This resource deals with all you need to know for the study of Strand C: the piano music of the Romantic period.

You will study two pieces by each of these composers – pieces that have been carefully chosen to give you a cross-section of Romantic piano music.

You will be given background and contextual information and a full analysis of each piece. In each analysis there are activities called 'Do it yourself' which enable you to personalise your understanding of the music yourself, before studying it formally.

You will be guided through the piano works in an organised, systematic way with explanations that are clear and easy to understand.

After each analysis there are consolidation activities where you will engage further with the music and have grasped essential points.

Explanations of unfamiliar terms are given in call-out boxes and a full set of definitions is provided in the glossary, which you can refer to any time.

There is a revision summary of each set work, with key points tabled under the headings of the elements. Use this when you revise, and for anything that is unfamiliar, refer to the glossary.

There are four exam-style practice questions for each set work to aid you in your revision for revision or in tests or exams. For each work, there are two 1-mark questions, two 3-mark questions and one 10-mark question.

Answers to all tasks, exercises and practice questions are provided, showing you how to approach them in order to score well.

At the end of the study, you will have an in-depth well-rounded knowledge and understanding of the piano works. LISTEN to your recordings as much as possible, watch performances on YouTube and attend a live performance if you can.

Good luck!

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Romantic Music

There are a number of characteristics of Romantic music that you will encounter. In some cases your attention will be drawn to them through text in dashed border but it will be good to introduce you to them.

Lyrical melodies	Romantic composers were masters at creating beautiful, lyrical, melodies free of the more formal and contained melodies of previous centuries. They often created dramatic musical climaxes.
Irregular phrasing	Most Baroque and Classical phrasing follows the pattern of 2-bar or 4-bar phrases. Romantic composers freely used 3-bar and 5-bar phrases or irregular patterns.
Rhythmic patterns	A new freedom of rhythm developed during the Romantic period. In the 19th century, a greater variety of rhythms are found within single pieces, (e.g. 11 notes to the beat), use of simultaneous contrasting rhythms (e.g. 3/4 and 2/4), and more free use of note values such as demisemiquavers.
Wide range	Romantic composers used the whole range of the piano, not just the middle range often used in octaves, enriching and emphasising the bottom notes, which were frequently heard. Composers often used the <i>8va</i> signs above or below the staff to indicate an octave of space on the stave.
Wide range of dynamics	Baroque music often has no dynamic markings as these would have been controlled by performers, and instruments such as the harpsichord had limited dynamic range. Romantic composers extended beyond <i>pp</i> and <i>ff</i> , but Romantic music uses <i>ppp</i> and <i>fff</i> (even <i>pppp</i> and <i>ffff</i>) and the gradations of tone (<i>crescendo</i> , <i>diminuendo</i> , etc.) are more frequent.
Rich harmonies	During the Romantic period the chords used by Romantic composers were more complex than those used in previous years. Chords with added notes (7 th s, 9 th s, 11 th s) were used, and dissonance is heard and chromaticism was used to add new sounds. The development of expressive, advanced harmony was a gradual process, starting in a more subtle way and developing into a more expressive, advanced harmony.
New textures	The time of the more formal Baroque polyphony was over, as was the time of the more formal Classical period. Romantic composers placed their melodies in the middle part of the texture, moving it around for interest and accompanying it with a free use of harmonic textures.
Expression of emotion	The nineteenth century saw an outpouring of emotion in all fields of art, including music and literature – and this was echoed in music. This is seen in the tone of the music and operas and is evident in all instrumental music. There was opportunity for composers to put their own personal expression into their playing. Many character pieces have emotional titles, reflecting emotions such as joy, sadness, longing or love.
Sense of fantasy	There was an intense interest in the supernatural and unseen. This was reflected in music with fairy tales, magic and fantasy topics. Weber's opera, <i>Der Freischütz</i> , and Berlioz wrote his <i>Symphonie Fantastique</i> .
Nationalism	Some Romantic composers were intensely patriotic and proud of their own country. They incorporated national folk tunes, dance styles and rhythms into their music.
Rubato	<p>This freedom in composing also brought about a freedom in performance. Performers were not bound by the prescribed in the written score. This is an important aspect called <i>rubato</i>, which allows the performer to put his or her own stamp on to the music. <i>Rubato</i> literally means 'robbed of time' and is allowed to take some liberties for the sake of musical expression. A note might be pushed forward, or a note might be slightly anticipated or delayed. This is a very personal choice.</p> <p>The piano was the ideal expressive instrument for Romantic composers. The piano was invented by Cristofori in Italy in 1709 and it underwent many changes and adaptations to become the instrument we know today. Its full name, <i>pianoforte</i>, means soft-loud. It has a much wider range of dynamics than its forerunner, the harpsichord. It was made of wood, felt and other materials to keep it in tune and fully resonant for years. Unlike the harpsichord, produced by a hammer hitting a string, the piano is classified as a <i>percussion</i> instrument. It can come in many sizes, from full concert grand pianos to small, compact upright pianos. The grand piano keyboard is standard.</p>

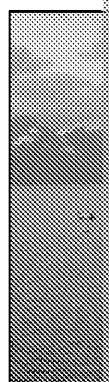
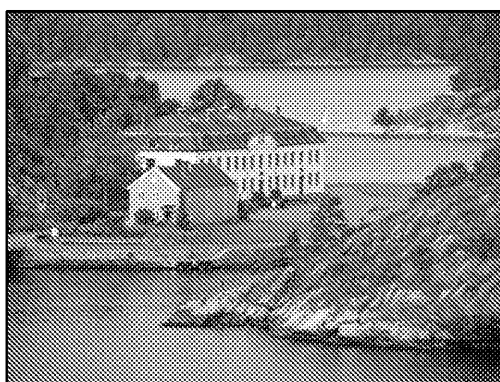
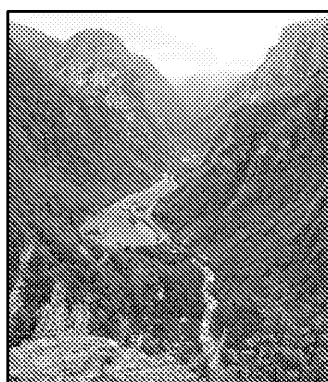
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Grieg: Contextual Information

Edvard Hagerup Grieg (1843–1907) was a Romantic composer from Norway, although his great-grandfather was Scottish. He is said to be Norway's greatest composer. He used his native country's folk music in much of his music, which can be heard in his melodies, his rhythmic patterns and the titles of many of his pieces. This is reflected in his use of modal melodies and harmonies, particularly the Lydian and Aeolian modes. He was profoundly influenced by the history, legends, scenery and beauty of Norway. He also wrote arrangements of national songs and dances.



Some Norwegian scenery

Grieg was a proficient pianist who was taught by his mother. He was able to create music in his songs and piano works. These piano works, on a fairly small scale, were very popular. When he studied at Leipzig Conservatory, he did not take his studies very seriously and wrote few works, except for his piano concerto, which is still popular today. His best works were his piano pieces. After his death, his music was considered old-fashioned and dated, but his music was rediscovered by French composers of the early twentieth century. Ravel felt a close affinity to Grieg.

He wrote incidental music to a play by Henrik Ibsen, called *Peer Gynt*. The character of the Norwegian peasant and the play is full of Norwegian folklore. Two famous pieces frequently in movies and even advertisements are *In the Hall of the Mountain King* and *The Morning Mood*. Another piece showing the Norwegian influence was Grieg's **Holberg Suite**, a set of eighteenth-century dances that celebrate the anniversary of the birth of another playwright, Ludvig Holberg.

Incidental music

Music written as accompaniment to a play, film, television programme, etc.

You have two set works by Edward Grieg: **Norwegian March** and **Notturmo**. Originally part of Grieg's *Lyric Pieces*, Book V. He wrote 66 *Lyric Pieces* between the years of 1868 and 1906, published in 10 separate volumes. They are all pieces of varying length for solo piano, often with rhythms associated with folk songs and dances. His harmonies, which are typically Romantic, were considered new in his day as he made use of extended chords, chromaticism and modality. Later, four of the six pieces from Book V were orchestrated by both Grieg and Johan Sebastian Seidi, and they were called *Lyric Suite*. Your set works are found in this Suite. Not only is it interesting for you to listen to both the solo piano versions and the orchestrated versions, but it is also required to study the piano work.

Book V is categorised as Opus 54. He wrote this set of pieces after his annual return to his native Norway in summer 1891.

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Norwegian March

You need to have a copy of the score and a good recording.

You can listen to a good performance of this work on: <http://youtu.be/TjRZTcrJF8>

You can download a free copy of the score at: http://imslp.org/wiki/Lyric_Pieces. Grieg's *Lyric Pieces*, Books 5–7, can be purchased on iTunes, on the Naxos label, or

DO IT YOURSELF!

Form some of your own opinions before formally analysing the music.

Listen to your recording while following the score a few times and complete the questions below.
Answers to questions 1 and 2 on page 59.

1. The dynamics range from **ppp** to **fff**. Sketch out a plan of how the dynamics progress. You can create a diagram, a graph or a list.
2. How many different types of articulation can you find in the score?
3. The first eight bars contain a theme, which is found throughout the work. Clap the treble part accurately, observing the tied notes, the accents and the ornaments.
4. Do you think it has the feel of a march? Discuss and give reasons for your answer.

The title

Perhaps you decided (Question 4 above) that this is not a typical march. Marches are usually in 2/4 time, and this piece is in 6/8 time, which is still duple, but not as rigid. The clue lies in the title – in some editions it is called '**Norwegian Rustic March**' and in some '**Gangar**'. This is a dance with the stepping close to the ground and fairly weighty movements. So the piece is about marching and dancing. The performance indication, **allegretto marcato** (fairly fast), confirms the composer's intention of an energetic, rhythmic mood.

Nationalistic element

Grieg is a nationalistic composer, one whose music is rooted in the traditions of his native Norway. He uses folk melodies, rhythms and dances in his works.

Genre

Grieg's *Lyric Pieces* fall under the genre of **character pieces**. The expressive nature of the piano is the ideal instrument for these descriptive works.

Character piece A short, self-contained piece, usually with a descriptive title, depicting a scene, mood, image. Many involved aspects of nature, or the Romantic period.

The first eight bars introduce important elements that are the structural foundation of the piece.

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Norwegian March, bars 1–8:

The melody in the example above is very typical of Grieg's style, reflecting

Take good note of these:

- The **key** is C major
- The **texture** consists of a right-hand melody with accompanying slower-moving held bass pedal point and a stepwise tenor register
- Throughout the piece, many phrases start with a 2-quaver **anacrusis**
- The mordent **ornament** is used throughout, except when playing in octaves
- The staccato crotchet and accented quaver are a rhythmic motive throughout
- Regular use is made of **sequences**
- **Pedal point** (either held or repeated notes) is used throughout the piece
- The open interval of a **perfect 5th** is consistently used in the accompaniment
- The **mood** of the melody is simple and folk-like
- Note the **phrase structure** of 2 + 2 + 4 bars
- Bar 8 ends on chord V, creating an imperfect **cadence**

Bars 9–16 are an exact repeat of bars 1–8.

From bar 17 onwards the first two bars of the theme are treated **imitatively** and chromaticism. The first two phrases end on an E major chord and the next two on

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Norwegian March, bars 17–25:

The regular balanced phrases are not typical of much Romantic music.

Note these factors:

- Each phrase begins with the 2-quaver anacrusis
- The melody is imitated between the hands (shown by arrows)
- Each phrase ends on a major chord
- The continued use of perfect 5th intervals
- The dynamics alternate between fortissimo and piano

From the end of bar 25, the second motif of the piece appears. It is a very short motif and is only ever played by the pianist's right hand.

Norwegian March, bar 25:

This motif is immediately developed through the use of repetition, sequence, and an extended diminuendo from bars 26–37, accompanied continually by open perfect 5th intervals in the bass.

This is a good section for analysing chords. The 5ths in the bass act as a type of pedal point, creating some interesting harmonies in the treble. In each case, the second of the notes in the treble is a perfect 5th above the bass note.

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Norwegian March, bars 28–35:

Musical notation for bars 28–35 of Norwegian March. The notation shows two staves with chords and notes. The chords are labeled as D⁷, Dm⁷, D⁷, Dm⁷, Dm⁷, Bdim+⁷, Bdim+⁷, and Bdim+⁷.

The chords above are typical of those used in the Romantic period, which also saw the use of augmented and diminished triads with 7ths added.

Labelling Chords Revision

Fill in the blanks in the table below for bars 31, 33 and 34. **Answers on page 59.**

Bar	Notes of chord	Chord symbol	Chord name
27	DF#AC DFAC	D ⁷ Dm ⁷	Regular dominant 7 th D minor chord with a
28	DF#AC DFAC	D ⁷ Dm ⁷	Regular dominant 7 th D minor chord with a
29	DFAC BDFA	Dm ⁷ Bdim+ ⁷	D minor chord with a B diminished chord w
30	CEGB	CΔ ⁷	C major chord with ad
31			
32	BDFA	Bdim+ ⁷	B diminished chord w
33			
34			
35	FACE	FΔ ⁷	F major chord with ad

Three bars of perfect 5th staccato crotchets in a low register form a satisfying link material. The use of the damper pedal is indicated together with the staccato chord effect.

The opening theme appears at the end of bar 40 at a very high register and simple melodic pattern is repeated in the right hand against staccato Gs in the left hand. Over the right hand, playing even higher Gs, and in bar 44 the left hand takes over the extended sequential pattern from 44 to 60. The right hand follows suit with sequential dotted crotchet rhythm. A crescendo begins in bar 53, gaining in strength (molto).

The intensity builds as the theme is played sequentially in octaves in the bass clef, marked with accent signs (end 60–68).

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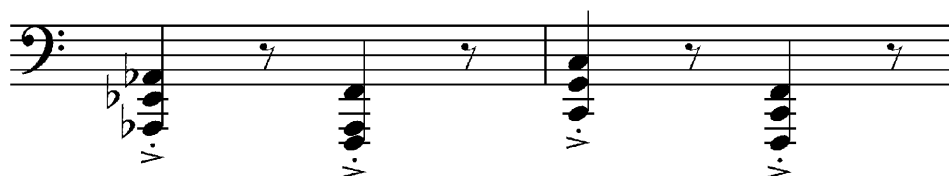
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The next eight bars are the most dramatic, building from *ff* to *fff*. The theme is played in the bass clef, and chordal notes are added to the octaves, and the left hand plays

Analyse these bass chords by labelling them with chord symbols. **Answers on page 70**

Norwegian March, bars 72 and 73:



These chords with open 5ths are typical of Grieg's folk-like style.

From bar 77 there are three bars of repeated chords, with a fragment of the theme

The sensation at bar 80 is that there is a return to the opening material, but in fact there are differences:

- (a) the theme starts an octave lower than the opening
- (b) the phrase ends on C and not D

Norwegian March, opening phrase:



Norwegian March, bars 80–82:

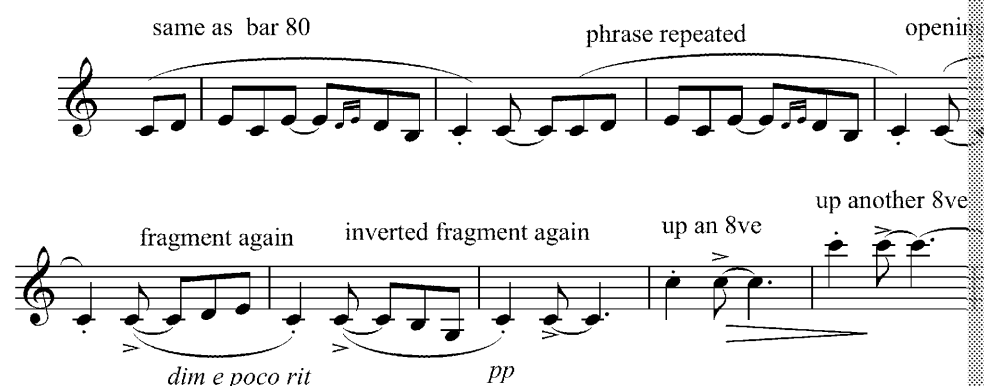


The phrase above is heard twice.

The use of mordents in Romantic music is different from that in Baroque music. In Baroque music the first of the small notes would be played **ON** the beat, but in Romantic music it is played **before** the beat.

Thereafter, the music from the end of bar 84 right up to bar 146 is an exact repeat of bars 80–84, and bars 152–159 consist of fragments of the same theme. The music is played (calmly) and the piece ends very quietly and gently.

Norwegian March, codetta:



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Activities to Consolidate Grieg's *Norwegian March*

Answers on page 59.

1. It can be said that this whole piece develops out of the music of the first phrase. Grieg uses and develops this theme.
2. Watch a demonstration of the *gangar* on <http://youtu.be/HQHvSiaAetg> to understand your piece.
3. On an unmarked score, find an example of each of the following:
 - ☐ Sequence
 - ☐ Imitation
 - ☐ Inversion
 - ☐ Syncopation
 - ☐ Pedal point
 - ☐ Ornament
4. Below are some characteristics of Romantic piano music. In a class discussion, identify which are present in Grieg's *Norwegian March*.
 - Freedom in composing
 - Expression of emotion
 - Sense of fantasy
 - Lyrical melodies
 - Rich harmonies
 - Discords
 - Irregular phrasing
 - Dense textures
 - Wide range of pitch
 - Wide range of dynamics
 - Dramatic musical contrasts
 - Recurring themes
 - Nationalism

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Notturmo

You can watch a performance of this piece on: http://youtu.be/_dDz-bvV2DM played in Rome in March 2010.

You can download a free copy of the score at: http://imslp.org/wiki/Lyric_Pieces.

DO IT YOURSELF!

Form some of your own opinions before formally analysing the music.

Listen to your recording while following the score a few times and complete the questions below.
Answers on page 59.

1. Look at the overall structure of this piece. The opening, peaceful section lasts from bar 1 to bar 14. A contrasting middle section lasts from bar 15 to bar 32. A final section of material starts at bar 33. A gentle closing section starts at bar 34.
2. The key of the piece is
3. The meaning of *Notturmo* is, like 'nocturne', a gentle end-of-the-day piece. What musical elements can you see and hear in the music that supports this meaning?

The title

Notturmo is an alternative version of *nocturne*, derived from *nocturnal*, meaning of the night. In music composition, it is a piece inspired by the evening mood after the busy-day, calm and tranquil, lyrical and expressive. Chopin's nocturnes are probably the best known. Others also written by Debussy, Fauré, Field and Poulenc. Schumann called his by the German name *Nachtstücke*. He wrote one nocturne.

The genre

Like *Norwegian March*, Grieg's *Notturmo* is classified as a **character piece**.

A section

This is the opening section, bars 1–14, setting the peaceful tone of the nocturne.

The piece starts with the time signature of 9/8. It changes to 6/8 for bars 21–32 and 61) of silence with the time signature 3/8.

9/8 (compound triple metre) and 6/8 (compound duple metre) both have a dotted quarter note (simple triple metre) has three quaver beats.

Bars 1 and 3 require the pianist to cross the right hand over the left hand to reach the notes.

Bars 2 and 4 both begin with an acciaccatura or grace note, an ornament much favoured by Chopin. Bar 4 is a variation of bar 2.

The left hand has two features in the first four bars: (a) repeated and tied quavers and (b) descending dotted crotchets.

These first four bars function as the introduction, before the main melody starts in bar 5.

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Notturmo, bars 1–4:

Andante

Right hand crosses over

acciaccatura

repeated notes

descending bass line

variation of bar 2

The first melodic theme starts in bar 5 and the pianist meets a rhythmic challenge: the left hand plays three quavers (triplet feel) to the beat and the right hand two (duple feel). The melody rises by step to a strong dissonance on the first beat of bar 6 – this C# is a half note and resolves on to the D on the second beat. At the same time, the lower right-hand part moves from G to Ab.

Notturmo, bars 5–6:

This 'two against three' rhythm is found in much Romantic music. Other common rhythms like 'two against four' are also common.

The next two bars follow the same pattern, forming a sequence one tone lower.

The next six bars **develop** this musical motif. The phrase builds towards an E flat (natural) in bar 12 – this rise of a semitone increases the intensity in the music. Bar 12 ends with an imperfect cadence – this cadence is eventually reached despite a suspension of it.

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B section

A change is evident in the music at bar 15 and another change is seen at bar 21 with a *mosso* (more movement) indication and new melodic and rhythmic patterns.

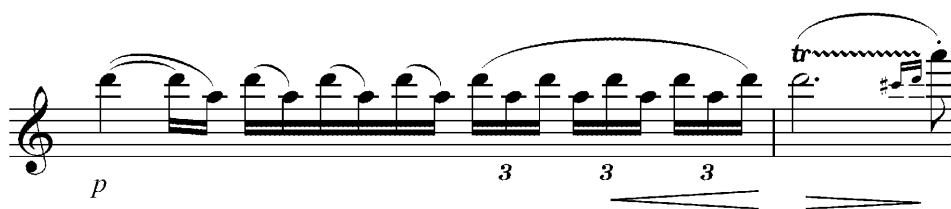
Bars 15–20 can be analysed in two ways:

- (a) EITHER as the beginning of the B section
- (b) OR as a link between the A section (1–14) and B section (21–33)

You could justify both of these interpretations. I prefer (b) as the left-hand accompaniment changes against a new right-hand melody, which is not used again until the end of the piece.

Bars 15–17 introduce a bird-like trilling, which could be likened to the song of a nightingale, pitched at a high register, with semiquavers, which slip into triplets and then into dotted notes (right hand crossing over again). Bars 18–20 are a sequence of 15–17 a minor third higher.

Notturmo, bars 15–17 melody:



The extended range of the right-hand part here is a feature found in much of Grieg's music. The three bars cover four octaves on the piano.

A further contrast is heard in bars 21–33. The rhythmic pattern below is heard 10 times against a flowing arpeggio accompaniment.



This is heard at ever-increasing higher pitches, culminating in the most intense passage in the piece, bar 31.

This is clear programmatic writing, using music to depict a scene in nature. We can imagine a busy day in a city, but the dramatic build-up in tone, register and dynamics suggest perhaps the final activities of a busy day. The slower notes in bars 31 and 32 and the silence of bar 33 suggest darkness descending.

Grieg uses harmonies typical of the Romantic period:

- Bars 21 and 22: E–G#–B–D–F# E⁷ chord with added 9th
- Bars 23 and 24: E–G#–B–D–F#–A E⁷ chord with added 9th and 11th
- Bars 25 and 26: A♭–C–E♭–G♭–B♭ A♭⁷ chord with added 9th
- Bars 27 and 28: D–F#–A–C–E D⁷ chord with added 9th
- Bars 29–32: D–F–A–C–E Dm⁷ chord with added 9th

Bars 31 and 32 demonstrate a release from the tension, with slower-moving quaver notes (slow down a little) followed by a 3/8 bar of total silence in 33. This brings to an end the piece.

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A section (return)

The music returns with an exact repeat of the opening. Bars 34–42 are identical to the first A section.

From bar 43, the music continues in the same style of ‘two against three’ but with a stronger dynamic level than in the first A section. See how Grieg achieves tension of different non-harmonic tones on the first beat of the bar.

Notturmo, bars 43–50:

appoggiatura *cresc. molto* *f* appoggiatura

accented passing note appoggiatura accented auxiliary note

The use of non-harmonic tones on strong beats is typical of Romantic music, then released in the harmony.

From bar 51 the triplet-feel accompaniment becomes sparser, fading into dotted four bars 51–54, the harmonic rhythm changes, from one chord per bar to two or three chords per bar (53 and 54). All the harmonies are chromatically descending, coming to rest on V^7 of C. Note how some chords are arpeggiated (chord notes played bottom to top, rather than sounding simultaneously), indicated by the vertical sequence of notes.

Notturmo, bars 51–54:

dim sempre *f*

E_b^7 D^7 D_b^7 C^7 B^7 B_b^7

This use of chromatically descending dominant 7th chords is typical of both Romantic and Impressionist music. There is a sense of progression until the required V^7 chord is reached.

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Coda

After the beat's rest in bar 54 (above) the piece starts to wind down. Grieg makes in this coda, or tailpiece:

- He uses the music of bar 1, up an octave and without the first C on the first b
- He uses the trilling motif from bars 15–17, even higher than before (bars 56–57)
- He uses the bar's 3/8 silence from bar 33 (bars 58 and 61)

The first bird-like trill is heard against an A minor chord and the second against an

The coda starts with an a tempo indication, showing a return to the original speed (away') in bar 59 and the last two bars are marked *adagio* (slow) with the arpeggio slowing even further. The last chord is held for a full 9/8 bar with a fermata.

Note the chords used in the final cadence:

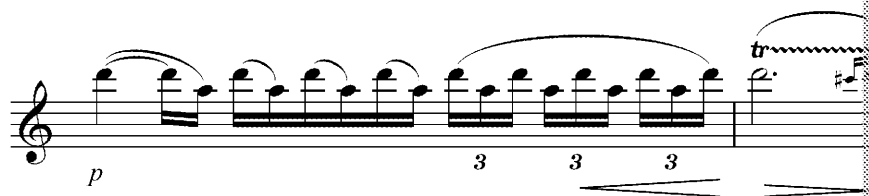
- Bar 62, beats 1 and 2: chord i in root position, used as an approach chord
- Bar 62, beat 3: chord iii in first inversion. Because iii shares two notes with i, it is sometimes used as an alternative to the dominant in perfect cadences, and it
- Bar 63: chord i in root position, arpeggiated and held

Activities to Consolidate Grieg's

Answers on pages 59–60.

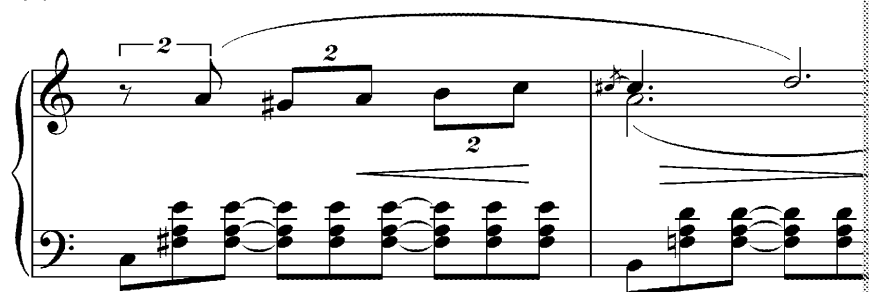
- Without referring to your score or notes, identify these fragments visually.
 - In which section are they heard?

(i)



Section:

(ii)



Section:

(iii)



Section:

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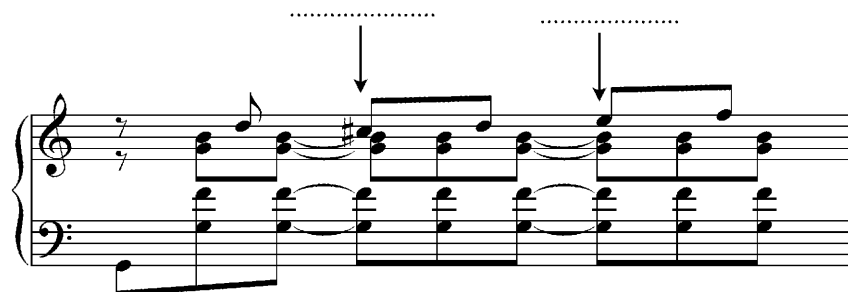




Section:

(b) In which order are these fragments heard?

2. In the key of C major, identify the chord used in the bar below by writing the name of the chord and name the type of non-harmonic tones used for the C# and the E.



Chord.....

3. Name three features of the melody in bars 21–32.

(a)
 (b)
 (c)

4. Do you think the coda provides an effective ending to this piece? Give reasons for your answer.

5. Below are some characteristics of Romantic piano music. In a class discussion, discuss which of these are present in Grieg's *Notturmo*.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Freedom in composing | • Dense textures |
| • Expression of emotion | • Wide range of pitch |
| • Sense of fantasy | • Wide range of dynamics |
| • Lyrical melodies | • Dramatic musical contrasts |
| • Rich harmonies | • Recurring themes |
| • Discords | • Nationalism |
| • Irregular phrasing | • 'Two against three' rhythms |

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Chopin: Contextual Information

Frédéric François Chopin (1810–1849) was unique in that he wrote almost exclusively for the piano, but he is recognised as one of the great composers of the Romantic period. He wrote orchestral parts for his two piano concertos and a few other orchestral and chamber works, but his reputation rests on his piano compositions.

He was born in Poland and had strong patriotic feelings for his homeland, although he lived most of his life in France. He felt a powerful loyalty for Poland, strengthened by the Russian oppression of the time. When he heard of the revolution in Poland and the Russian capture of Warsaw, he wrote his *Revolutionary Etude*, a powerful and passionate work with a dramatic left-hand part, well worth listening to. When he left Poland he was given a small casket of Polish soil, which he kept all his life and which was sprinkled on his grave when he died. Like Grieg, he is considered a nationalistic composer and the traditional melodies and rhythms influenced his writing.

He had piano lessons from a very young age and was performing in public from the age of seven. He was considered a child prodigy and received invitations to perform for royalty and aristocratic families. He also performed in the villages, where he heard traditional *mazurkas*, *polonaises* and *krakoviaks*.

He was never physically strong and severe bronchitis developed into tuberculosis at the age of 39.

His piano music involves mostly small-to-medium length works in the following styles: piano concertos (2), piano sonatas (3), scherzos (4), rondos (3), ballades (4), polonaises (11), mazurkas (24), preludes (25) and nocturnes (19). Although many of these are dance forms, used for dancing – instead they are concert works reflecting the characteristics of the dances.

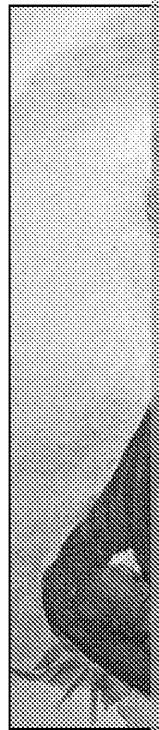
Chopin was a superb creator of lyrical melody and his personal style is very distinctive. His harmonies were considered harsh by some of his contemporaries, although not so in the twentieth-century dissonance. He uses many chromatic notes, especially in runs, to add colour and interest. His strength lies in his complete originality.

Chopin's Ballades

He wrote four ballades and your set work is No. 2, written between 1836 and 1841. It requires a high level of technique and interpretation from the performer. Chopin told Schumann that **Mickiewicz** was the inspiration for his ballades. No. 2 is said to be inspired by *Le poète et le soldat*.

The pianist Anton Rubenstein interpreted the different sections of Ballade No. 2 as 'a windstorm, the wind caressing the flower, stormy fight of the wind, pleading of the broken.' This ballade was dedicated to Schumann, who in return dedicated his *Klavierkonzert* to Chopin.

Chopin was a pioneer of the ballade as a new musical form, and he in turn influenced Brahms who also wrote ballades. Ballade No. 2 has been performed and recorded many times. It was featured in the *Ruskie Business* episode of the US television series, *Veronica Mars*.



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Chopin's Nocturnes

Chopin wrote 19 nocturnes in total. It is thought that your set work was his first, written in 1827, although it is categorised Opus 72 and was only published after his death in 1849. He was studying theory and composition with Józef Elsner. This was also the year that Chopin died and some have attributed the sad mood of this nocturne to his sorrow. Chopin's mastery in lyrical melodies is perfectly suited to the dreamy, peaceful mood of a nocturne. It is very pianistic – although the melodies are so beautiful, they are not essentially 'sad'. They are not even as effective when played on other instruments, but are shown to their best with its percussive nature and use of damper pedal. He often uses wide-ranging accompaniments (triplet quavers in your set work), providing a rich harmonic support.

Nocturne Op. 72, No. 1 featured in one episode of *Star Trek Voyager*, the movie *The Secret Garden* (1987).

Ballade No. 2, in F Major

You need to have a copy of the score and a good recording.

You can listen to a good performance of this work on: <http://youtu.be/Wslm1ZLS9> by Krystian Zimerman.

A track of this work can be purchased on iTunes, played by Ivo Pogorelich from the album *Masterpieces*.

You can download a free copy of the score at: <http://imslp.nl/imglnks/usimg/0/0a/Chopin-Op38eMikSch.pdf>

DO IT YOURSELF!

Form some of your own opinions before formally analysing the music.

Listen to your recording while following the score a few times and complete **Answers to questions 2 and 3 on page 60.**

1. Discuss: this piece contains strongly contrasting sections. Do you think of it as a unit or are the sections too different from one another? Answer in terms of musical elements.
2. The piece starts in the tonic key of F major.
Name the key of bars 24–25 (first beat)
Name the key of bars 36–37 (first beat)
3. Look at the tempo changes. What do the following mean?
Andantino (beginning)
Presto con fuoco (bars 46 and 140)
Tempo primo (bars 82, 115 and 196)
Stretto più mosso (bars 107 and 132)
Aitato (bar 168)

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The title

There are two different connotations for 'ballade'. One is *ballete* from the Italian like the English/French *ballet*. The other is from the medieval *ballad* (=story) with work has both dance-like and dramatic elements.

Genre

This piece is categorised under the general term *character piece* (like your two G category it can be classified under the subgenre of *ballade*.

Form

- Bars 1–45: A section, quiet and reflective
- Bars 46–81: B section, fast and energetic, slipping back into
- Bars 82–139: A section with some significant differences, building to
- Bars 140–167: B section with new material added
- Bars 168–196¹: C section, only heard once, *Agitato*
- Bars 196²–203: Very short codetta, using material from A section

Interestingly, this piece begins in F major, but ends in A minor.

A section

Rhythmically this section consists of two different rhythmic patterns:



This extended passage of limited rhythms is not a Romantic trait.

The metre is 6/8, compound duple, with an anacrusis starting on the third quarter. The instruction is *sotto voce*, meaning literally 'under the voice' or in an undertone. The range of this section is small, just utilising the middle section of the piano marked with very long phrase marks, often extending over definite cadences or repeats, indicating that Chopin wanted the sense of a long, smooth line of music.

The music starts with gentle repeated C octaves, C being the dominant note of F. As notes of the tonic chord are added and we hear mostly four-note chords for the first few measures, notes per hand.

Dissonance is a feature of this section (see below) and the first cadence is heard in the 3rd of chord i at the top, which always makes for a less final-sounding cadence than below.

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Ballade, bars 1–4:

Andantino

sotto voce

E/F dissonance

IIV Ib

The use of repeated notes, similar but not quite the same as pedal point, causing tension with the dissonance created.

The phrases in the opening section are very regular, all four or two bars long and follow a pattern in the table below.

Bars	Chords	Type
5	V ⁷ –I	Perfect in F major
8–9	V ⁷ –I	Perfect in F major
13	V ⁷ –I	Perfect in F major
16–17	V ⁷ –I	Perfect in F major
18–19	V–i	Perfect in A minor
20–21	V–I	Perfect in C major
24–25	V ⁷ –I	Perfect in C major
29	V ⁷ –I	Perfect in F major
32–33	V ⁷ –iii ^b	Inverted cadence, gives
36–37	V ⁷ –i	Perfect in A minor
38–39, 40–41, 41–42, 42–43	iii ⁹ –I	Alternative perfect cad

- Two features common in Romantic piano music are found in bars 18, 20 and 40:
- (a) a grace note, or acciaccatura
 - (b) a squiggly line placed vertically before a chord, indicating that the chord is to be played from the lowest note up to the highest note

Ballade, bar 18, acciaccatura and arpeggiated chord:

The Romantic composers made frequent use of arpeggiated chords, some extending over the range of the keyboard.

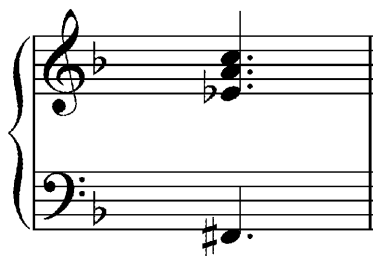
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Look at the chord on the second beat of bar 37:

Ballade, bar 37:

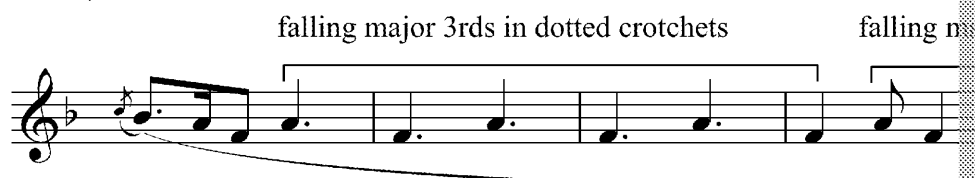


This is a chord called a diminished 7th [F# A C E \flat] – all the notes are a minor 3rd apart. Try playing/singing these chords on other notes and play/sing them to become familiar with the sound.

This diminished 7th chord was a favourite with many Romantic composers, and it is used frequently in the music.

Look at the melody of bars 40–44 and see how Chopin uses the compositional technique of diminution to end off this section.

Ballade, bars 40–44:



Many Romantic composers made frequent use of diminution (and augmentation) in their composing.

Bar 45, with its slow arpeggio and repeated As, serves as a link into the B section.

B section

From bar 45 to 46 there is a sudden and dramatic change involving these elements:

- A vastly different tempo (presto = very fast)
- A change of mood (con fuoco = with fire, fury)
- A change of dynamics (suddenly *ff*)
- A change of register (from the centre of the piano keyboard to the extremes)
- A change of notes values (from gentle crotchets and quavers to energetic semibreves)
- A change of mode (from F major to A minor)

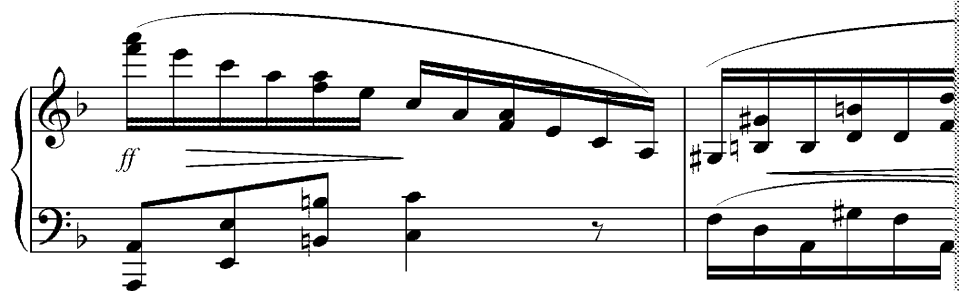
The melodic movement is mainly disjunct for the next 12 bars. The right hand plays ascending broken chord figures, followed by ascending broken chord figures. The left hand plays ascending semibreves alternating with semiquavers.

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Ballade, bars 46–47:



These two bars demonstrate a few Romantic characteristics: the wide register, powerful dynamics, complex chords, dissonance and chromaticism.

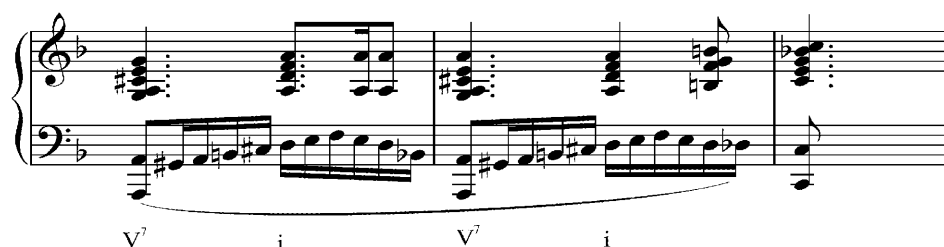
The more 'traditional' choice of key would be either the relative minor (D minor) or Chopin chooses A minor. One of the characteristics of the Romantic period is modulation to distant keys.

The key of A minor is established in the opening five bars through repeated tonic

- Bar 46: A minor, I
- Bar 47: A minor, vii⁹ [G[♯] B D F A]
- Bar 48: A minor, I
- Bar 49: A minor vii⁹
- Bar 50: A minor I

Bars 52 and 53 contain the same diminished 7th chord heard in bar 37 (A C E[♭] F[♯]), modulation to G minor on bar 54. Bars 54–59 consist of a sequence of bars 46–51 in G minor to G minor. Bars 60 and 61 (same music, repeated) comprise the chord E–G preparation for a new musical idea starting in bar 62 – a two-bar dominant-to-tonic (62–63), then F minor (64–65) and then A[♭] minor (66–67). Here is the first one.

Ballade bars 62–63:



Bars 70–77 see an extended diminuendo with right hand descending chords in the left hand **ostinato** pattern.

Ostinato A repeated melodic and/or rhythmic pattern used as a component of a musical composition.

These bars (and those following) show a Romantic way of using an ostinato pattern that is both rhythmic and flowing.

The last chord in the second bar above is worth mentioning as it is a chord that is not in the key of A minor. Despite the accidentals, it is not a modulation. It is called a secondary dominant because it is the dominant 7th chord of the next chord, i.e. V⁷ (G B D F) of C.

Secondary dominant A dominant (or dominant 7th) chord which resolves to the prevailing tonic. The most common is the dominant of the dominant (V of V). IV, vi or vii are possible.

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A section

The music returns to the opening material. Bars 82–87¹ are the same as 2–7¹. Bar IV followed by a rest with a fermata.

From bars 88–94, there is development of the A section material with modulation (92–93) and a hint of G minor in 93–94.

Bars 94 and 95 contain the same diminished 7th chord heard in bar 37 (F[#] A C E^b) and a chromatic passage. Bars 98–107¹ have many flats notated – the keys suggested are minor, although modulations to these keys are not established.

Bars 107²–109 contain many sharps, but again no key is firmly established. Instead dotted rhythms builds the intensity of the music, together with a four-bar crescendo (increase in tempo).

Bars 111–114 develop the A section material, but with big chords in an extended dotted rhythm heard in the treble in the A section is now transferred to the bass.

A *ritenuto* in bar 114 returns us to tempo primo and a quieter section. The two rhythms



are used in imitation and sequence.

From bar 132² a section similar to 107² is heard – *stretto*, *crescendo*, rising dotted rhythms, although a semitone lower this time.

A chromatically descending and accelerating bass in bar 139 leads to the next section.

Ballade, bar 139, bass:



As seen as a typical Grieg feature, Chopin also uses chromatically descending bass lines.

B section

Again the tempo changes to *presto con fuoco* and the musical material of bars 140–155, the only difference being the keys used. Chopin uses D minor for bars 140–155.

From bars 156–167, there is a linking passage, marked *sempre* (always) *forte* and *accented*). The right hand plays rapidly alternating chords in close position and the left hand takes up the dotted rhythm of Section A.

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Ballade, bars 156–157:

sempre forte

marcato

┌ Melodies in Romantic music may be found in the top part, low in the bass
└ the melody is emphasised and in the bass.

Bars 166 and 167 contain powerful, descending trills in both hands, with crescendo.

C section

Unlike the A and B sections, the C section is only heard once in this piece. It is marked *Andante* and is the climax of the work.

The right hand plays mostly two-note semiquaver chords, while the left hand leaps between centre chords.

A new rhythmic pattern is heard in bars 178, 179, 182 and 183 with half-bars of sixteenth notes.

Ballade, bars 178–179:

syncopation

descending inner part

leaping bass

The music builds to an even more intense level from bar 184 onwards with a further increase in chromaticism and rising sequences until most of the keyboard is being used in leaping patterns.

Bar 196 has an arpeggiated chord – B D# A over F in the bass (B7 with flattened 5th) – so that this chord should resolve to E minor or C major, but instead Chopin moves to the next section.

Codetta

The piece comes to an abrupt end after the agitato section. There is a very brief opening bars – this time octave As (tonic of A minor) instead of octave Cs (dominant of A minor) – a two-bar statement of the A section theme.

After seven quavers’ silence, the piece ends gently with a perfect cadence in A minor.

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Activities to Consolidate Chopin

1. Complete the table below, giving valid points in each box.

	A section	B section
Melodic features		
Rhythmic features		
Harmonic features		

2. Analyse the chords below in the key of G minor, and identify any non-harmonic

Nocturne in E Minor, Op. 72

You need to have a copy of the score and a good recording.

You can listen to a good performance of this work on: http://youtu.be/h5_V-d8H

You can follow the score on the screen as the music is played.

You can purchase a track of this work on iTunes – Track 11 of *Horowitz Plays Chopin*

You can download a free copy of the score at: http://petrucci.mus.auth.gr/imglnks.html?imglnks=PMLP02313-Chopin_Klavierwerke_Band_1_Peters_Nocturne_Op.72_No.1_600dpi

DO IT YOURSELF!

Form some of your own opinions before formally analysing the music.

Listen to your recording while following the score a few times and complete
Answers to question 3 on page 61.

1. There are two main themes in this work, both of which are varied as the piece progresses. Here they are in their original forms, bars 2–4 and 5–8. Play them on your instrument and get to know them well.

Theme A:



Theme B:



2. Notice that the triplet quavers are played continuously throughout the piece. Consider the effect of these on the listener and their role in providing the support for the main melody.
3. (a) Bars 1 and 2 comprise the tonic chord of which key?
(b) Bars 22 and 23¹ comprise the tonic chord of which key?
(c) Bars 46 and 47¹ comprise the tonic chord of which key?
(d) In which key does the piece end?

The title

Nocturne is a night-time piece, with the same meaning as the Grieg *Notturmo* you studied in Unit 1. Nocturnes are pieces that reflect the calm of the evening after the activities of the day. They are peaceful, with a slow beat.

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Genre

This piece is categorised under the general term *character piece* (like your two Gs) and within that category it can be classified under the subgenre of *nocturne*.

Form

The two main themes of this work dictate the structure. It unfolds like this:

- Theme A
- Theme A, varied
- Theme B
- Theme A, heavily ornamented
- Theme B
- Very short codetta

Like the Ballade, the piece starts in one keys and ends in another – this Nocturne major.

Theme A

The piece starts with a one-bar introduction to set the key, tempo and mood. The left hand alone and is based on the tonic triad of E minor, with two middle C appoggiaturas. The tempo is Andante (walking pace) with the metronome speed of 69 crotchets per bar given.

Nocturne, bar 1:

Andante ♩ = 69

appoggiatura

appoggiatura

triplet accompaniment, E minor chord

This type of accompaniment – wide-ranging and arpeggio-like – is found in many of Chopin's Nocturnes.

When the melody starts, further instructions: *espress* (expressively) *dolce* (sweetly) (very, much) *legato* (smooth, joined), showing Chopin's intentions.

The piece is full of dynamic changes, with a crescendo or diminuendo in almost every measure. The first few measures of Theme A show these indications.

Nocturne, Theme A indications:

espress.

p dolce sempre molto legato cresc. p cresc.

The harmony supporting this melody is rich and full, using a wide range of notes and chords. Note how it starts in E minor and modulates to B minor via a **pivot chord** and the (F#) chord) twice to add colour and warmth.

Pivot chord A chord used in modulation. It is a chord that is common to both keys, allowing for a smooth transition to the new key.

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Nocturne, bars 2–9 harmony:

E min:

E min: iv } pivot chord
B min: vi }

Bars 10–18¹ contain the first variation of Theme A. Note the differences:

- The theme is marked *mf* instead of *p*
- The theme begins with octaves in the melody
- The dotted quaver/semiquaver rhythm of bar 3 is replaced with triplets in bar 10
- The quavers in bar 4 are replaced with triplets in bar 12
- Bars 5–7 are quite different from bars 13–15 melodically
- The two crotchets of bar 7 are used in diminution (smaller note values) in bar 16 and 17, making the theme one bar longer in total.

From the middle of bar 18, there is a quiet interlude for four bars, in preparation for the next theme. The key remains B minor until the introduction of D# in bar 22, setting the key of D major.

Theme B

Theme B is marked *aspiratamente* (meaning breathy/flowing/smooth) and consists of a four-bar phrase, followed by a similar four-bar phrase, but with variation.

Theme B melody:

1st phrase

aspiratamente

cresc.

2nd phrase

f

poco dim.

Phrases of different length are common in Romantic music and Chopin uses this to make his music interesting and unpredictable.

The left-hand accompaniment to this passage continues with the rolling triplets, the same for each four-bar phrase, along with a tonic pedal on the first and second bars of each phrase.
B major: I–ii⁷–vii⁷–I

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Theme A

Theme A returns from bars 31–38, but heavily decorated with ornaments (acciaccato and irregular groupings (6, 8, 10, 11 notes to the beat). The underlying chord pattern is played in quaver triplets. Look at your score and identify all the ornamentation.

As before there are two statements of Theme A. The second one is from bar 39–46, but louder and more intense, forming the climax of the piece. Again the tempo is *allegretto* and the tone is more assertive. The only significant change is in bar 41, where the triplet movement changes to a dotted quarter note triplet movement than bar 12.

Link

Bars 43–46 are slightly different from the rest of the piece. The mood quietens, the tempo slows down, and the bass and the melody is simpler, with slower-moving minims and crotchets. The key signature change in bar 45 is a modulation to the key of E major, the tonic major of the original key.

Bar 45 is where the modulation takes place. The B⁷ chord is a pivot chord as it can function as the dominant of E minor or E major. And it then resolves on to an E major chord in bar 46. This gives the aura of a key change, but the piece remains in E major until the end, so it is actually a modulation.

Nocturne, bars 45–46 modulation to E major:

Annotations in the score:

- G_b, so still E minor* (points to G_b in bar 45)
- A#s are chromatic auxiliary notes* (points to A# in bar 45)
- dim.* (diminuendo marking in bar 45)
- p* (piano marking in bar 45 and 46)
- E major: V7* (below the bass line in bar 45)
- I* (below the bass line in bar 46)

Theme B

Theme B makes a final appearance before the piece ends. It was originally in B minor but is now in E major. The tone is lighter and more gentle, marked *dolce* (*sweetly*). It is very much like the first statement of Theme B in bars 51 and 52, which are different from bars 27 and 28. In 27/28 there were strong accents, but here there are gentle piano triplets.

Bars 53 and 54 are like 29 and 30, but in the new key.

From bar 46 to the end (57) a low E sounds at the beginning and middle of every bar.

Codetta

The piece ends with a three-bar rounding off section, almost too short to be called a codetta or tailpiece.

It simply consists of a pianissimo perfect cadence in E major with a *calando* (dying away) marking.

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Activities to Consolidate Chopin

Answers on page 61.

1. You have two nocturnes as set works – Grieg’s *Notturmo* and Chopin’s Nocturne. Compare the two pieces by stating similarities and/or differences under the given headings.

Rhythm and metre	
Melody	
Tonality	
Form and structure	

2. Analyse the chords in the extract below, in the key of E minor, and identify at least two different types of chord.



3. Listen to a recording of Chopin’s Nocturne without having the score in front of you. Identify the sections in the recording when each of these sections start:

- Theme A
- First variation of A
- Theme B
- Second variation of Theme A (ornamented)
- Third variation of Theme A
- Theme B
- Codetta

4. Below are some characteristics of Romantic piano music. In a class discussion, identify which of these are present in Chopin’s Nocturne.

- Freedom in composing
- Expression of emotion
- Sense of fantasy
- Lyrical melodies
- Rich harmonies
- Discords
- Irregular phrasing
- Dense textures
- Wide range of pitch
- Wide range of dynamics
- Dramatic music
- Recurring themes
- Nationalism
- ‘Two against the one’

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Brahms: Contextual Inform

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) was taught by his father, who was a double bass player, but he showed such a flair for the piano, that his parents thought he was a child prodigy, like Mozart. At the age of 17, however, his interests changed from piano to composition, although he made money by playing in bars at night.

He fell in love with a number of women, but never married – probably because his independence was important to him. In his later years, he became more harsh and gruff and was notoriously rude to people, although he loved children. He was stingy with his own expenses, but was generous in secret to his family and other musicians.

He met Joachim and Liszt when he was a teenager, but the musician who had a profound influence on him was Schumann. Schumann promoted Brahms' music through his magazine, *Zeitschrift*, and Brahms remained indebted to Schumann.

For four years Brahms was Musical Director to a North German prince while continuing with composing and a few concert tours. By 1860 (aged 20) he had established a reputation as a composer in Hamburg and later moved to Vienna, but only produced his first symphony in 1876. In 1877 Carl an honorary Doctor of Music degree, but he did not want to make the journey to received a Doctorate of Philosophy from Breslau University. In 1897 he died from

Brahms used the traditional Classical forms in his compositions, but was Romantic. Perfection and balance of form was his continual aim. He shunned certain Romantic symphonic poem (or tone poem) and the newer orchestral techniques. He was not experimental direction that was beginning to interest other composers at the time. Romantic trend of linking his music to literary or programmatic ideas. His style was which is music that exists for the beauty of the music itself and does not illustrate scene or story or poem. He loved folk song and his *Hungarian Dances* are based on

Brahms often wrote for a particular instrument and then changed his mind, resulting in He also arranged music of other composers into new works.

He is thought to be the first composer to use double slurs, indicating slurred notes is from your set work:



He was successful in most types of composition – symphonies, concertos, overtures piano.

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He wrote some shorter works for piano, often entitled *Intermezzo* or *Capriccio*. Of the 28 works of Opus 76, 117, 118 and 119. He wrote Op. 118 in 1893 and dedicated set works are Nos. 2 and 3 from Op. 118, entitled **6 Klavierstücke**.

- 1. Intermezzo
- 2. **Intermezzo**
- 3. **Ballade**
- 4. Intermezzo
- 5. Romance
- 6. Intermezzo

This set of six pieces can be categorised in two groups of three pieces. Nos. 1 and 4 are in major keys and quite short; Nos 2 and 5 are slower and more lyrical and both in the tonic minor. Nos. 3 and 6 are more heroic and on a larger scale, and both in minor keys. All except No. 4 are in 3/4 time. Note the structure of the keys:

No. 1	No. 2	No. 3	No. 4	No. 5	No. 6
A minor	A major	G minor	F minor	E major	D minor

—tonic major→ —down a tone→ —down a tone→ —tonic major→

All six pieces from Op. 118 were orchestrated by Nathan Kelly and are often performed by the orchestrator Jonathan Tunick.

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Intermezzo Op. 118 No. 2, in

You need to have a copy of the score and a good recording.

You can listen to a good performance of this work on: <http://youtu.be/VZ5A4ffW>

You can purchase a track of this work from iTunes – Track 12 of Brahms: Fantasies and 6 Piano Pieces, Op. 118, played by Wilhelm Kempff.

You can download a free copy of the score at: http://petrucci.mus.auth.gr/imglnk/Brahms_-_Op.118_-_Sauer.pdf

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DO IT YOURSELF!

Form some of your own opinions before formally analysing the music.

Listen to your recording while following the score a few times and complete the following tasks.

1. Various moods are heard in this beautiful piece by Brahms. Using your own words, describe what comes to your mind in these sections. List as many as you can. There is no right or wrong answer, but rather it is your own first impression.

Bars 1–16²

Bars 16³–30

Bars 48³–56²

Bars 56³–64²

2. Learn this melody by singing or playing it on your instrument until it is comfortable. It is given here in its original key and transposed for a more comfortable range.

Theme in original key, A major



Theme in transposed key, D major



The title

The word intermezzo literally means a piece that fits between two things, possibly between two bigger works, and it is a term commonly used in opera. In the Romantic period the intermezzo was a short piece, complete in itself. They generally contain beautiful, lyrical melodies.

The genre

Like your other set works, Brahms' Intermezzo is classified as a character piece.

The form

The structure of this work is a clear ternary (ABA) form. The A section has two main themes.

Unlike your Chopin set works, this piece starts and ends in the same key, A major. The first theme begins with a crotchet anacrusis and is marked andante (walking pace) teneramente (tenderly).

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Section A

Right from the start, Brahms sets the tone for the whole piece with a lyrical, rich melody. Of two complementary phrases, the first ending with an imperfect cadence in A major and the second ending with a perfect cadence in the dominant key, E major.

The melodic leap of a 7th is a feature in this work. Find three of them in the passage below.

Intermezzo, opening theme:

1st phrase2nd phrase

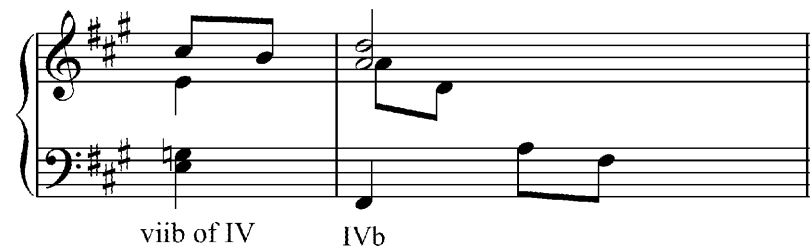


The use of exquisite, memorable melodies is one of the most important characteristics of the Romantic period.

The accompaniment is wide-ranging, with foundational bass notes and harmonies in the upper register, often using quavers.

Note the use of a secondary leading note chord from bar 4³–5. The G natural does not resolve to the dominant chord IV of A major (a D major chord) in bar 5 is preceded by the leading note chord in bar 4.

Intermezzo, bars 4–5:



From bar 8³ to 16² the theme is repeated in a slightly varied form at a pianissimo (pp) dynamic. The harmonic movement in bars 11 and 15.

From bar 16³ a second theme begins, more ominous and serious-sounding than the first. The first phrase is heard once, twice and then extended over two bars, with an internal melodic leap of a 7th and a sudden key shift to C major.

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Intermezzo, second theme:

3 note motif repeated extended

C major chord A7 chord back to A major

Brahms was a master at building a phrase out of a motif.

From bar 20³ the second theme is again transposed up a perfect 4th and ending on

From bar 25 the melody climbs slowly and mostly chromatically, heading to a top by arpeggio quavers shared between the hands and also rising in pitch.

Intermezzo, melody bars 25–30:

The next four bars prepare the listener for the return of the main theme through

- The opening three notes of the main theme in the bass
- Syncopation in the upper part of the left hand
- Short three-note phrases heard first in the major, and then in the minor
- Calando (dying away) indication in bar 3

The opening three-note phrase is shown below.

Intermezzo, bars 30–31:

syncopation

opening motif

The main theme returns at the end of bar 34 with the opening two bars in exact inversion. It is a theme which is as beautiful in inversion as it is in its original form. The 7th.

Inversion was not as common in the nineteenth century as in the Baroque period, often involving only a few notes, rather than a whole phrase.

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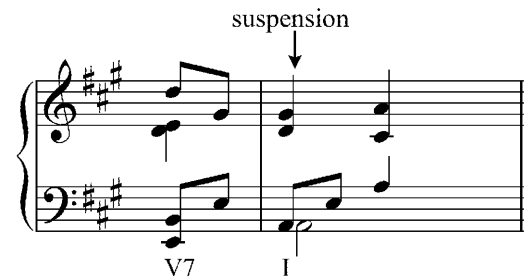


Intermezzo, theme inverted, bars 34³–36:



Note the upward-resolving suspension, sometimes called a **retardation**, in the ca

Intermezzo, suspension, bars 37–38:



Retardations, or upward-resolving suspensions, were more common in Baroc

From bar 38³ the second theme is heard again at the same pitch as bars 20–22 and a little more animated, lively).

Section A ends with two gentle perfect cadences in A major, marked *più lento* (the motif is heard once more in the lower part of the right hand. Here is the final cad

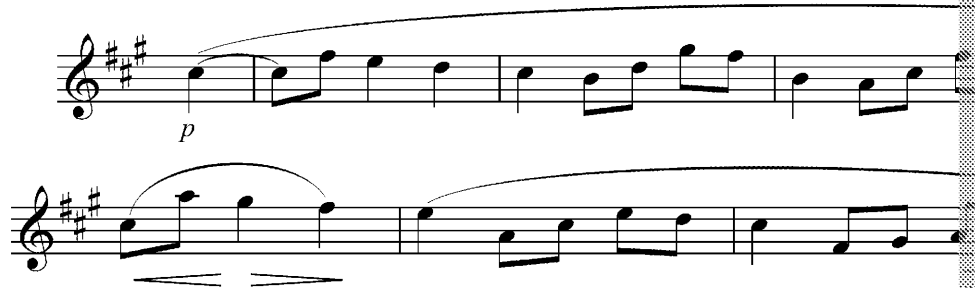
Intermezzo, final cadence of Section A:



Section B

Section B begins immediately in the key of F# minor, the relative minor of A major. The new theme does not appear immediately. A new theme is introduced, played simply by the right hand in the left hand – the same ‘2 against 3’ rhythmic pattern we encountered in Grieg’s Nocturne. The new theme starts with a crotchet anacrusis tied to a quaver in the

Intermezzo, Section B theme, bars 48³–56²:



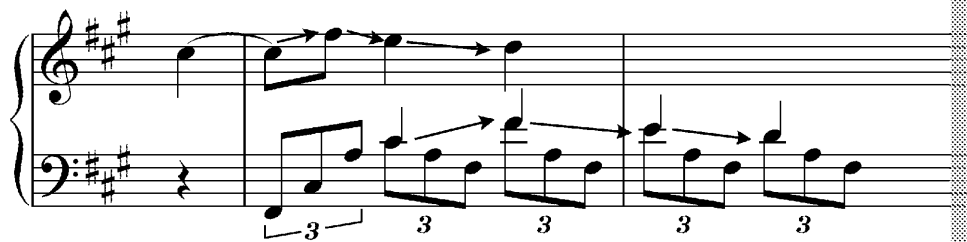
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Note the use of **augmentation** (the theme in longer note values) in the upper part 50.

Intermezzo, augmentation, bars 48-50²:



Bar 56 closes with an imperfect cadence in the key of F# minor. This section (49–

Bars 57–64 are marked *più lento* (more slowly) with a *ritenuto* in bars 60–61 and beat 2 of bar 64. This section is also marked *una corda*, indicating the use of the

These eight bars form an oasis in the middle of this piece. The texture changes to key changes to F# major, the tonic major of the preceding eight bars.

Thematically, however, there is a connection to the Section B theme. It is somewhat crotchets, as below.

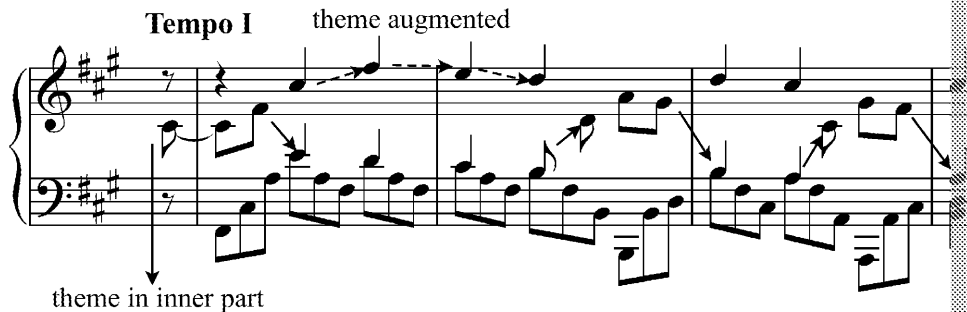
Intermezzo, bars 57–60:



This phrase is heard again in bars 61–64 with some small variations of notes and *ritenuto* and a fermata on a dominant seventh chord.

The melody of Section B is heard again, this time in an inner part. The top part no augmentation (longer note values) and the bass resumes the triplet arpeggio accompaniment. This variation of the theme shows a change in the parts.

Intermezzo, bars 65–69:



The example above shows the Romantic characteristic of moving the melody to

From bar 69 the theme from Section B is heard for the last time, back in the top part ending with a perfect cadence in F# minor in bars 72–73.

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The next three bars comprise a short link made up of ascending triplet arpeggios with this dissonant, expectant chord with fermata.

Intermezzo, bar 76 dissonant chord:



Section A

The music returns to the opening material from bar 76³. The main theme is stated more intense than the beginning. The descending dotted pattern is slightly extended in

Bar 84³ to the end is an exact repetition of bars 16³ to 48. This perfect balance shows symmetry.

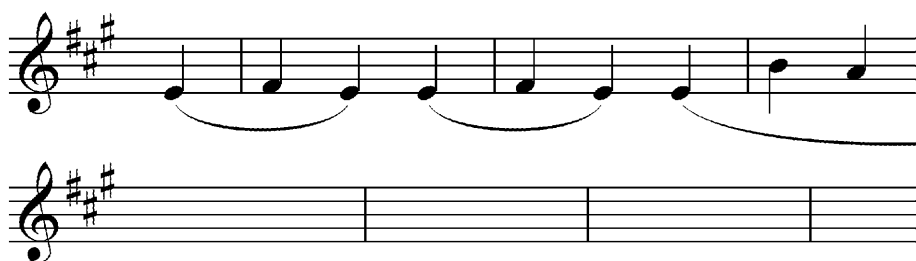
Activities to Consolidate Brahms'

Answers to questions 1 and 2 on pages 61–62.

- Below are six chords from your set work in the key of A major. Analyse each chord, giving a chord numeral, indicating whether the chord is in root position or an inversion and the stave in guitar chord format. The first chord is done for you.



- We noted that Brahms inverted his opening melody in bars 34³–36². Look at the original from bar 16³–20² and invert it on the empty stave below.



- Below are some characteristics of Romantic piano music. In a class discussion, discuss which are present in Brahms' Intermezzo Op. 118 No. 2.

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Freedom in composing | • Dense textures |
| • Expression of emotion | • Wide range of pitch |
| • Sense of fantasy | • Wide range of dynamics |
| • Lyrical melodies | • Dramatic musical contrasts |
| • Rich harmonies | • Recurring themes |
| • Discords | • Nationalism |
| • Irregular phrasing | |

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Ballade Op. 118 No. 3, in G

You need to have a copy of the score and a good recording.

You can listen to a good performance of this work on: <http://youtu.be/lky27JBcAt>

You can purchase a track of this work from iTunes – Track 13 of Brahms: Fantasies and 6 Piano Pieces, Op. 118, played by Wilhelm Kempff.

You can download a free copy of the score at: http://petrucci.mus.auth.gr/imglnk/Brahms_-_Op.118_-_Sauer.pdf

DO IT YOURSELF!

Form some of your own opinions before formally analysing the music.

Listen to your recording while following the score a few times and complete
Answers on page 62.

- Find an example of each of these musical elements:
 - an indication to use the soft pedal
 - an accented note
 - a section in B major
 - a note with a double sharp sign
 - a section where the speed builds gradually to the original tempo
 - a perfect cadence
 - an imperfect cadence
- Write out the triads of each note in G harmonic minor, labelling them with guitar chord symbols. Use these as a reference when analysing chords in the piece.
- Write out the triads of each note in B major, labelling them with Roman numeral chord symbols. Use these as a reference when analysing chords in the piece.

The title

As discussed under Chopin's Ballade, there are two different meanings for 'ballade', one meaning a story. Brahms' Ballade has the dramatic, sometimes tragic, narrative meaning.

Genre

Like your other set works, the Ballade is a character piece, which can also be classified as a *ballade*.

Form

Like Brahms' Intermezzo, the structure of this work is a clear ternary (ABA) form with three themes, each with its own key signature.

This piece has a cut-common time signature, meaning 2/2, with two minims per bar. It starts with a crotchet anacrusis. The tempo indication is Allegro energico and the dynamic is forte.

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Section A

Brahms starts immediately with a wonderfully strong, energetic and powerful melody. The first phrase (antecedent) ends with a perfect cadence. The second phrase (consequent) ends with a perfect cadence. Phrases of irregular length are common in Romantic music.

Note the use of the ascending and descending melodic minor in the opening notes.

Ballade, bars 1–10 melody:

Allegro energico 1st phrase

Romantic composers tended to be very specific in the scores of their works, often indicating articulation and dynamics.

The harmony in these bars is also rich and powerful with raised and flattened 6th notes, creating a sense of interest. Bars 3–4 contain a secondary dominant progression:

- Bar 4² = V of V (the dominant of the dominant – A C# E)
- Bar 5 = V (D F# A)

From the end of bar 10 the key changes to E \flat major (the subdominant of the relative major). (a) the opening three notes and (b) the dotted figure from bar 3. From bar 10³ the melody builds to a climax, aided by syncopation in bars 21 and 22.

Ballade, bars 10–22:

development of opening 3 notes

more development of opening 3 notes

poco cresc. *cresc.*

Brahms shows again that he is a master of the technique of developing material.

This prepares the listener for the return of the opening material, beginning with a series of quavers.

The second phrase (bars 27–32) is more intense with new notes and harmonies, including a G minor chord. The second phrase ends on a G major chord (bar 32).

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The next few bars (32nd–40) form a **link** or transition to Section B. As the music sustains the harmonic pattern: (a) G⁷ chord resolving to a C minor chord, (b) F[♯] diminished 7th chord and (c) tonic pedal point Gs in both treble and bass.

Ballade, bars 32–40:

Chords: G⁷ Cm F[♯]dim⁷ G

dim molto

dim

rolling arpeggio accompaniment

Section B

Section B is a contrast to Section A in the following ways:

- Different key signature
- Change from minor to major mode
- Different accompaniment style
- Different dynamic level (*pp*)
- Use of soft pedal (***una corda***)
- Duet texture in melody

Una corda An instruction to depress the soft pedal. It means 'one string' as the keyboard shifts slightly so that the hammer hits one string. The instruction to release the soft pedal is *tre corde* ('three strings') as the hammers move closer to the strings, making the sound softer.

Brahms uses the **rhythm** from bar 3 as the rhythmic basis for most of this section.

It starts simply in the key of B major, but chromaticism is present from bar 43 onwards in two four-bar phrases.

The two right-hand notes form a duet texture, mostly in 3rds and 6ths, smooth consonance is heard in the semitones E[♯]–F[♯] in bar 45.

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Ballade, bars 41–48:

1st phrase

2nd phrase

5

The part-writing of the first phrase (smooth, consonant 3rds and 6^{ths}) is not
The second phrase above, with the 2^{nds}, 7^{ths}, etc. is completely different from

The next phrase starts in a similar way to the first phrase, but in the fourth bar the
main theme from Section A, but still in the quiet, hushed character of Section B.
relative minor of the dominant of B major. Here is the melody line:

Ballade, bars 49–56:

1st phrase starts as in bar 41

long F #

melody of Section A

This only lasts four bars and then a beautiful melodic three-quaver figure reintroduces
marked dolce (sweetly).

Ballade, bar 56 three-quaver figure:

dolce

The theme from Section B is heard again. Bars 57–64 are identical to bars 41–48.
is similar to the one starting in bar 49, but without the digression of the Section A

Bars 69–72 close Section B with gentle dissonance, a quiet dynamic and wide-spaced
imperfect cadence on a fermata (F# major chord over B) ends the section.

For the next four bars there is a **link**, preparing the listener for the return of Section
three notes from the opening of the work in sequence, crescendo and a gradual
poco ...a tempo – a little sustained, little by little back to speed) to the original tempo

Ballade, bars 73–76:

poco sostenuto

poco a poco

p *cresc.* *f*

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Section A

Instead of the two-quaver anacrusis heard at the beginning, Brahms uses an augmented 4th interval for the return of the A theme.

Ballade, comparison of opening and bar 76:



original opening



return

Thereafter, bars 77–107 are identical to bars 1–31.

Bar 108 is different from bar 32 in that the phrase ends on a G minor chord, not a G major chord, for the ending of the piece.

In bar 110 a short coda begins. The bass confirms the G minor tonality and chord sustained chords for three bars, followed by two bars recalling the Section B melody. The last four bars are marked *una corda* again, and the last two bars have the instruction *dim.* (diminuendo damper pedal). The piece ends quietly and reflectively.

Activities To Consolidate Brahms

Answers to questions 1 and 3 on page 62.

1. You have studied two Ballades – Chopin’s Ballade in F, Op. 38 and Brahms’ Ballade in F major, Op. 10, No. 3. Compare these two works, noting similarities and differences under the headings below.
2.

	Chopin: Ballade in F	Brahms: Ballade in F major
Melody		
Rhythm/metre		
Tonality		
Form/structure		

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3. Make a mind map of Brahms' Ballade in G minor. Create as much information as you can, including aspects such as:
 - Melodic features
 - Rhythmic features
 - Harmonic features
 - Accompaniment styles
 - Dynamics
 - Tempo changes
 - Texture
4. Analyse each chord change in the bars below in the key of G minor, indicating positions/inversions.



5. Below are some characteristics of Romantic piano music. In a class discussion, discuss how each of these characteristics is present in Brahms' Ballade Op. 118 No. 3.
- Freedom in composing
 - Expression of emotion
 - Sense of fantasy
 - Lyrical melodies
 - Rich harmonies
 - Discords
 - Irregular phrasing
 - Dense textures
 - Wide range of pitch
 - Wide range of dynamics
 - Dramatic musical contrasts
 - Recurring themes
 - Nationalism
 - Contrasting rhythmic patterns

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Revision Summary

Grieg: *Norwegian March*

Date	Composed in 1891
Melody	Simple, folk-like with development, decorated with mordents
Harmony and compositional techniques	Use of sequences, imitation, pedal point, open perfect 5th, development of motifs
Tonality	Key: C major, touches of A♭ major, chromaticism
Structure	A character piece, one main musical idea, changed and repeated, semiquaver motif used intermittently.
Sonority	Written for piano, begins in midrange and grows to use extremes. Use of the damper pedal is indicated.
Texture	Mostly homophonic; melody mostly in right hand, a few notes against slow-moving chords
Tempo, metre and rhythm	Written in 6/8 metre, marked Allegretto marcato, many anacrusis, repeated use of syncopation
Dynamics and articulation	Dynamics range from <i>ppp</i> to <i>fff</i> , with sudden alternation, staccato syncopation at ends of phrases, melody played with staccato passages
Typical/atypical features	Nationalistic composer, and this piece has element of Norwegian qualities
How music affects the mood	Steady bass and duple metre emphasises the walking/marching, varied use of melody emphasises the folk element

Grieg: *Notturmo*

Date	1891
Melody	Section A: slow lyrical melody with acciaccatura ornaments and passages
Harmony and compositional techniques	Rich Romantic harmonies, use of 7 th and 9 th chords, bass line of bars, followed by chords, chromaticism, sequences
Tonality	Starts in C major, very chromatic in Section B
Structure	A character piece, in ternary (ABA format, with coda)
Sonority	Written for piano, with some crossing of hands to include middle section and coda use higher extremities of keyboard
Texture	Mostly homophonic, melody accompanied by chords; arpeggiated in middle section
Tempo, metre and rhythm	Mostly 9/8 tempo, changes to 6/8 in middle section, a few Andante, '2 against 3' rhythm used extensively in A section
Dynamics and articulation	Starts piano, builds to <i>ff</i> in middle section, Section A returns then ends very softly. Articulation predominantly legato with some staccato articulation.
Typical/atypical features	Typical early Romantic melody, rhythm and harmony
How music affects the mood	Slow tempo and lyrical melody suggest the calm feeling of a night

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Chopin: Ballade

Date	Between 1836 and 1839
Melody	A section: many repeated notes, small range in midsection, acciaccaturas B section: wide-ranging, built on chords and arpeggios, dramatic C section: alternating chords in semiquavers
Harmony and compositional techniques	Modulations and chromaticism throughout, sequences, arpeggiated chords, diminished 7 th s, diminution, second endings
Tonality	Begins in F major, sections in A minor and D minor, suggests A minor throughout
Structure	A B A B C codetta, not traditional ternary or rondo structure, contrasted
Sonority	Written for piano, uses much of the piano's expressive range
Texture	A section: homophonic B section: elements of polyphony with the two hands playing in parallel motion
Tempo, metre and rhythm	6/8 metre; changing tempo throughout A section: rhythmically limited and repetitive; B section: more movement Use of syncopation and stretto
Dynamics and articulation	Starts sotto voce, contrast with <i>ff</i> in B and C sections, ends with <i>pp</i> Legato throughout
Typical/atypical features	Typical: modulation to more distant keys
How music affects the mood	The contrasting sections reinforce the dramatic component

Chopin: Nocturne

Date	Probably 1827, only published after 1855
Melody	Slow-moving, lyrical, marked dolce, sempre molto legato, acciaccaturas, mordents, slides, trills, irregular groupings (e.g. 3 notes to a beat), uses piano's full upper register
Harmony and compositional techniques	Chords expressed in triplet quaver movement throughout, 7 th chords, rich Romantic harmony, use of diminution, pedal
Tonality	Begins in E minor and ends in E major, modulations to B minor and D minor
Structure	Two main themes, A–A(varied)–B–A(very ornamented)–Coda
Sonority	Written for piano, using many of the instrument's expressive resources, pedal indicated
Texture	Homophonic, melody in right hand throughout with accompaniment in left
Tempo, metre and rhythm	C metre, Andante, ♩ = 69, '2 against 3' rhythmic pattern in B section
Dynamics and articulation	Very prescriptive dynamics, indications in most bars Legato throughout
Typical/atypical features	Typical Romantic features: character piece, lyrical, rich harmony
How music affects the mood	Peaceful, calm mood expresses evening atmosphere

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Brahms: Intermezzo

Date	1893
Melody	Lyrical, slow-moving melody marked teneramente, prominent in inversion, uses melodies in inner parts
Harmony and compositional techniques	Rich Romantic harmony, complex chords with added notes, accompaniment, secondary chords, use of variation, suspension
Tonality	A major, brief modulations to other keys, B section in F# minor chromaticism
Structure	Clear ternary form (ABA)
Sonority	Written for piano, using its expressive qualities to the full, pedal indicated
Texture	Mostly homophonic, melody usually in top part, occasionally accompanied by chordal quavers (A section), triplets (B section)
Tempo, metre and rhythm	3/4 metre, Andante, with a few fluctuations of tempo, contrast against 3' rhythms
Dynamics and articulation	Begins quietly, builds to forte once, ends gently. Mostly legato
Typical/atypical features	Typical qualities of a nineteenth-century C intermezzo, slow, lyrical. Typical Romantic melody, harmony and rhythm
How music affects the mood	Lyrical, memorable melodies in both sections add to the mood

Brahms: Ballade

Date	1893
Melody	Energetic melody with strong rhythmic basis, changing to a new section
Harmony and compositional techniques	Rich, full chords with low bass notes and jumping chords, diminished 7 th chords, pedal point, chromaticism, augmented chords
Tonality	Begins in G minor, modulates to E♭ major, references to other keys, starts in B major with one phrase in D# minor Use of harmonic and melodic minor notes in opening melody
Structure	Clear ternary form (ABA) and coda
Sonority	Written for piano, using its full, rich timbre, use of damper pedal indicated
Texture	Mostly homophonic, with melody in top part. Middle section more complex
Tempo, metre and rhythm	Alla breve metre, marked Allegro, few changes of tempo, long length, syncopation
Dynamics and articulation	Starts forte and strong with contrasting <i>pp</i> middle section. Mixture of staccato, accents and legato in A section, middle section
Typical/atypical features	Typical Romantic melodies, rhythm and harmony
How music affects the mood	Contrasting moods emphasise dramatic elements of a ballade

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Exam Information and Revision

The A Level written exam consists of three sections:

Section A: Listening 56 marks

Section B: Analysis and Context 34 marks (Assessment Objectives AO3 and AO4)

Section C: Essay 30 marks

This makes a total of **120 marks**, for which you have a **2 hours and 30 minutes** period.

Section B consists of three strands:

Strand A: Baroque the solo concerto

Strand B: Classical the operas of Mozart

Strand C: Romantic the piano music of Chopin, Brahms and Grieg

In Section B, there are three sets of questions, each with an extract of music taken from a set work. You are required to answer two of these sets of questions. You will have access to section C of the exam paper for the purpose of this section.

You will be assessed on your ability to **analyse** and **evaluate**, using your knowledge of the vocabulary used to describe music.

Your short-answer questions will test your ability to recognise features such as cadences, non-harmonic tones, etc.

A **5-mark question** will focus on one aspect of the composer's style and ask you to explain how this aspect is typical of that composer.

A guide for the assessment of your 5-mark question

Full marks an answer that shows in-depth knowledge of the subject matter and is presented in a way that is logically and clearly put together

3–4 marks an answer that covers the content, expressed in a way that is clear and logical

1–2 marks an answer that is limited in content, lacking some vital facts or not logically presented

0 marks EITHER the question is not answered OR answer is incorrect/incomplete

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A **10-mark question** will focus on one or more aspects and ask for your comment on the piece.

A guide for the assessment of your 10-mark question	
9–10 marks	an answer that shows a confident and complete knowledge of the question, expressed clearly and logically
7–8 marks	an answer that mostly covers the scope of the question, expressed generally logical and clear
5–6 marks	an answer that gives some relevant facts, but also some inaccuracies and has weaknesses in logic and clarity
3–4 marks	an answer that shows limited knowledge, with significant inaccuracies and lacks both logic and clarity
1–2 marks	an answer that is rudimentary in all aspects
0 marks	EITHER the question is not answered OR answer is incorrect/incomplete

You need to know your set works **thoroughly**. These tips will help you:

1. Know what each section of your works **sounds** like. **Listen** repeatedly and intensively (‘with and without music’) and listen sometimes with the score and sometimes without it.
2. Know what each section of your works **looks** like. Recognise themes visually. Know the differences between variations of themes, e.g. in the Chopin No. 1 section **looks** and **sounds** different.
3. Use the techniques that work best for **you**. Some people revise well with music, some need an extra score that they can cut up and paste themes on posters.
4. Use the revision summaries, which contain lots of information in a condensed form. The section for the Brahms’ Ballade says: *Rich, full chords with low bass notes, dominant, diminished 7th chords, pedal point, chromaticism, augmentation*. Write down each of these features in your piece.
5. Complete all consolidation exercises provided at the end of each set work.
6. Complete all practice questions. If you do not score a satisfactory mark, see the teacher and reanswer the question.

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Practice Exam Question

Below are four exam-style questions on each set work, comprising:

- Two 1-mark questions
- One 5-mark question
- One 10-mark question

Grieg: *Norwegian March*

You will need a blank score of Grieg's *Norwegian March* in front of you from bars 0:52 to 1:41. If you don't have one, you can listen to the music at the YouTube link <http://youtu.be/pmdHLx2hqq0>

1. Name the rhythmic device heard in bars 42, 44, 46, 48, etc.
2. What chord is found on the first beat of bar 69?
3. Analyse Grieg's approach to melody writing as seen in bars 40–60, discussing what is typical of Grieg.
4. Grieg was a nationalistic composer, like some other composers in the Romantic period. What does this mean and how nationalistic elements are displayed and developed in the *Norwegian March* as a whole.

Grieg: *Notturmo*

You will need a blank score of Grieg's *Notturmo* in front of you from bar 1–32, and 33–64. If you don't have one, you can listen to the music at the YouTube link below from http://youtu.be/_dDz-bvV2DM

1. Name the interval between the two notes in the bass of bar 11 (excluding first and second endings).
2. Name the ornament used in the treble part of bars 2 and 4.
3. Analyse Grieg's approach to programmatic composing in bars 1–14 of this excerpt, explaining which of these elements is typical of a nocturne.
2. Discuss Grieg's use of structure and form in this excerpt, and explain how the *Notturmo* as a whole.

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Chopin: Ballade

You will need a blank score of Chopin's Ballade in front of you from bars 132–154, 5:54. If you don't have one, you can listen to the music at the YouTube link below
<http://youtu.be/Wslm1ZL9EI8>

1. Explain the term *stretto*.
2. Give a Roman numeral for the chord heard on the second beat of bar 132, in notation below for convenience of reading.



3. Discuss how Chopin's use of different compositional devices in this extract is characteristic of character pieces.
4. Discuss Chopin's use of tempo, dynamics and register in this extract and in relation to the whole piece.

Chopin: Nocturne

You will need a blank score of Chopin's Nocturne Op. 72, No. 1 in front of you from 0:00–1:24. If you don't have one, you can listen to the music at the YouTube link below
http://youtu.be/h5_V-d8HjhU

1. Name the non-harmonic tone that describes the F# in the treble part of bar 2.
2. Name the cadence that occurs from bars 8–9 in the extract.
3. Analyse Chopin's approach to harmony and modulation in this extract, discussing ways that are typical of the genre.
4. Discuss the way Chopin uses different variation techniques in his treatment of the melody in this extract and in the piece as a whole.

Brahms: Intermezzo

You will need a blank score of Brahms' Intermezzo Op. 118, No. 2 in front of you from 0:00–1:29. If you don't have one, you can listen to the music at the YouTube link below
<http://youtu.be/VZ5A4ffWVuw>

1. In the key of A major, describe fully the chord heard on the first beat of bar 1.
2. Describe the interval between the first two notes in the treble part of bar 23.
3. Analyse Brahms' approach to melody writing in this extract, discussing ways that are typical of Brahms.
4. Although Brahms used Classical forms, he was a Romantic by temperament. Discuss this with reference to this extract and in relation to the whole piece.

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Brahms: Ballade

You will need a blank score of Brahms' Ballade Op. 118, No. 3 in front of you from 1:08–2:11. If you don't have one, you can listen to the music at the YouTube <http://youtu.be/lky27JBcAbE>

1. What key is found at the beginning of this extract?
2. What non-harmonic tone describes the C# in the treble part of bar 67?
3. Analyse Brahms' approach to texture and its effect in this extract, discussing typical or atypical of the Romantic style.
4. The piano is an ideal vehicle for the expression of Romantic music. Discuss how it uses the timbre of the piano in this extract and in the piece as a whole.

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Glossary

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Absolute music Music that exists for itself alone, for its melody, rhythm, structure etc. and does not aim to describe anything.

Accented passing note [See **Passing note**]

Acciaccatura A type of ornament, sometimes called a grace note, played almost simultaneously with the note that follows.



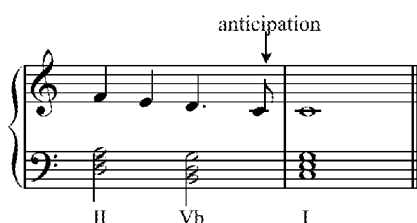
Accompaniment The musical material that supports the melody being played. It can be harmony. The term is used to describe the supporting texture. (see **Homophony**)

Alla breve The time signature of two minim beats per bar (2/2).

Anacrusis Also called an **up-beat**, it refers to notes of an incomplete bar before the first full bar of a piece, e.g. opening bars.



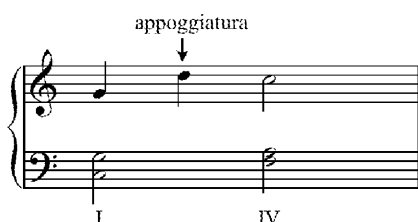
Anticipation A note of anticipation is usually a short-duration note played before the chord is sounded, common at cadence points.



Appoggiatura (i) A type of ornament, sometimes called a leaning note, before a normal note, they are played. The small note is not part of the harmony and causes a dissonance.



(ii) A non-harmonic note, which is usually heard on a chord. It is approached by leap and quickly resolved to a harmony note.



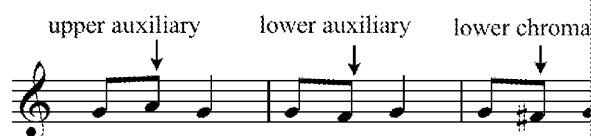
Arpeggiated chord A chord that is split or rolled, usually from the lower notes. It is indicated by a squiggly line placed vertically before the notes.



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Articulation	Direction for how notes are to be played – legato,
Augmentation	A compositional device where the note values of a melody are made longer, so that it is heard more slowly.
Auxiliary note	A non-harmonic note heard between two repeated notes. The movement may be upwards or downwards. The lower auxiliary is sharpened, creating a chromatic auxiliary note .




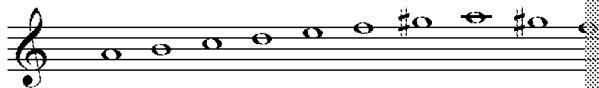
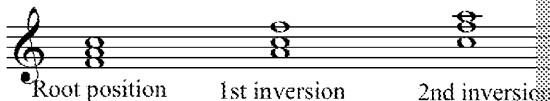
Ballade	There are two different connotations for 'ballade'. The French word <i>balata</i> , which is a dance, like the English/French word <i>ballad</i> (=story) with narrative content and dance-like and dramatic elements.
Cadence	Chord progressions that signify the end of a musical phrase in language. There are four main types: Perfect: V–I progression, a final ending Plagal: IV–I progression, more gentle 'Amen' sound Imperfect: I/II/IV–V progression, a non-final sound Interrupted: V–VI progression, a 'surprise' sound, but V–VI is heard instead
Cadential 6/4	A harmonic progression where I ^c (I 6/4) is heard before the final I, creating a dissonance which needs to be resolved.
Character piece	A short, self-contained piece, usually with a descriptive title, scene, mood, image. Many involved aspects of nationalism emerged in the Romantic period.
Chromatic	A general term referring to notes outside of the diatonic . In C major, all the black notes on a keyboard are chromatic, while white notes are diatonic.
Chromatic auxiliary note	[see Auxiliary note]
Chromatic passing note	[see Passing note]
Coda/codetta	From the word meaning 'tail', the tailpiece or final section of a work. Its purpose is to round off or complete the work. A section of music that is repeated at the end of a piece.
Compound time	In compound time, the beat divides naturally into three parts, giving a triplet feel. The beat is still duple, triple or quadruple. A useful comparison:

Number of beats	Simple time signatures
2 – duple	2/2, 2/4
3 – triple	3/2, 3/4, 3/8
4 – quadruple	4/4, C

Diminished triad	A three-note chord consisting of two minor 3 rd s and a major 2 nd .
Diminution	A compositional device where the note values of a melody are made shorter, so that it is heard more quickly.
Disjunct	A melody containing leaps.
Dissonance	A dissonant chord is unstable and needs to be resolved by V. Dissonance may also refer to notes that are not in the same interval.
Dominant	A dominant note is the fifth note of the scale. A dominant chord is the fifth note of the scale. A dominant key is a key signature with one sharp or one less flat than the tonic key. A dominant note is the fifth note of the scale. A dominant key is a key signature with one sharp or one less flat than the tonic key.

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Dominant 7th	A four-note chord built on the dominant note, composed of a perfect 5 th and minor 7 th , e.g. G–B–D–F
Dynamics	The volume of the music, ranging from very soft to very loud. Italian terms piano and forte are generally used (piano and forte). Other terms such as crescendo also apply.
Fermata	A pause on a note or chord, its length held at the discretion of the performer. Indicated by the symbol below.
	
Fugal	An imitative entry of a voice or instrument.
Gangar	A type of Norwegian 'walking' dance with the steps and movements fairly weighty.
Glissando	A slide over a series of notes, commonly found in piano music.
Harmonic minor scale	A version of the minor scale, where the 7 th note is raised when descending.
<p>A harmonic minor scale</p> 	
Harmonic rhythm	The rate of chord change in a piece, usually expressed in terms of measures. It can be described as regular, irregular or static.
Homophony	A musical texture where there is a melody supported by chords, called homophony .
Imitation	An entry by a voice or instrument that 'copies' the melody that has been heard. An exact copy can also be called fugal.
Imperfect cadence	[see Cadence]
Incidental music	Music written as accompaniment to a play, film, television or radio production.
Intermezzo	The word literally means a piece that fits between two parts of a play or movements of bigger works, and it is a term used in the Romantic period the term meant an individual piece. Intermezzi generally contain beautiful, lyrical melodies.
Interrupted (deceptive) cadence	[see Cadence]
Intervals	A system of measuring the exact distance between two notes.
Introduction	The opening section of a piece, setting the key, mood and tempo. A few bars are sometimes heard before the main part begins.
Inversion	<p>(i) A musical device where the melody is turned upside down, so that the intervals are reversed (e.g. ascending stepwise movement becomes descending stepwise movement)</p> <p>(ii) When a chord is inverted, the note names remain the same but the chord has a new bass note</p>
	
Melodic inversion	[see Inversion]

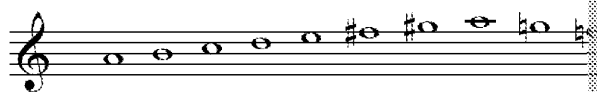
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Melodic minor scale

A version of the minor scale where the 6th and 7th cancelled descending.

A melodic minor scale

**Modulation**

Change of key during the course of a piece. Commonly between closely related keys: dominant (= key with one more sharp or one less flat) or subdominant (= key with one more flat or one less sharp) or minor (same key signature).

Monophony

A musical texture where one single melody is heard.

Mordent

A type of ornament where a note is played as quickly as possible above or below.

**Motif**

A short melodic or rhythmic fragment that recurs throughout a piece and/or as a unifying device.

Nationalism

A strong feeling of connection to one's homeland. For example, Grieg is a nationalistic composer, one whose music is deeply rooted in his homeland and who uses its melodies, rhythms and folk songs. Chopin had an affinity to his birthplace, Poland, although he lived in France.

Natural minor scale

A version of the minor scale, which has the same notes as the harmonic or melodic minor scale but without the altered notes.

A natural minor scale

**Nocturne**

Notturmo is an alternative version of *nocturne*, derived from the Latin *nocturnus* (night-time). When applied to a music composition, it refers to a piece of music in an evening mood after the busy-ness of the day. Nocturnes are typically slow, tranquil, lyrical and expressive. Chopin's nocturnes are the most famous, but nocturnes were also written by Debussy, Fauré and Liszt. Liszt called his by the German *Nachtstücke*. Grieg only wrote one.

Octaves

A musical texture (a type of **monophony**) where a single melody is played at different octaves simultaneously.

Ornament

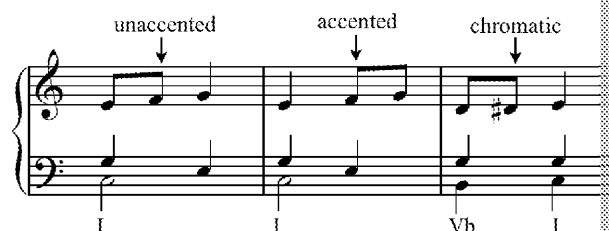
A general term for various types of musical decorations. Examples include **mordents**, **acciaccaturas** and **appoggiaturas**.

Ostinato

A musical idea, melodic and/or rhythmic, that is repeated continuously. It is often heard as a unifying device.

Passing note

A non-harmonic note, approached and quitted by diatonic notes. They may be unaccented (off the beat) or accented (on the beat) or chromatic (using notes outside the key).



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Pause	[see Fermata]
Pedal point / pedal note	A sustained or repeated note, usually tonic or dominant, against changing harmonies. It is normally in the bass, but is called upper part.
Perfect cadence	[see Cadence]
Pivot chord	A chord used in modulation. It is a chord that is common to both the old and new keys, allowing a smooth transition to the new key.
Plagal cadence	[see Cadence]
Polyphony	A musical texture containing two or more independent melodic lines, each described as contrapuntal .
Polyrhythm	A musical texture containing several independent rhythms.
Programme music	Music that depicts non-musical ideas such as scenes, stories, or literary ideas, etc.
Relative major/minor	The relationship between two keys with the same key signature.
Retardation	An alternative term for a suspension that resolves to the tonic.
Rhythmic augmentation	[see Augmentation]
Rhythmic diminution	[see Diminution]
Root position	A chord with the root note in the bass.
Secondary dominant	A dominant (or dominant 7 th) chord which resolves to a non-tonic chord, usually the prevailing tonic. The most common is the dominant of the dominant (V of V). Others possible are V of ii, iii, IV, vi or vii.
Sequence	A musical device where a melodic pattern is repeated at a constant interval.

sequence (one note)



Triad	A three-note chord, consisting of root, 3 rd and 5 th .
Tre corde	See under una corda .
Trill	A type of ornament with repetitive quick alternation ending with a change of direction. There are many ones shown below.
	<p>Symbol Played Symbol</p>
Turn	A type of ornament, where a four-note pattern follows a symbol.
	<p>Symbol Played</p> <p>If the turn is placed between the notes, it will be notated like this:</p>
Una corda	An instruction to depress the soft pedal. It means that on a grand piano the keyboard shifts slightly so that the hammers strike only three. The instruction to release the soft pedal is <i>tre corde</i> . On an upright piano, the hammers move closer to the strings.
Unison	A type of musical texture where a single melody is played by more than one voice or instrument. It can also be used for accompaniment.

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Answers

Grieg: *Norwegian March*

Do it yourself:

- In a diagram, graph or list, these elements should be present:
 - ffp* (very loud, then immediately soft) twice
 - alternating *ff* and *p*
 - dim* to *ppp*
 - molto crescendo to *fff*
 - very soft ending
 } twice
- Slurs, staccato, accents, tied notes

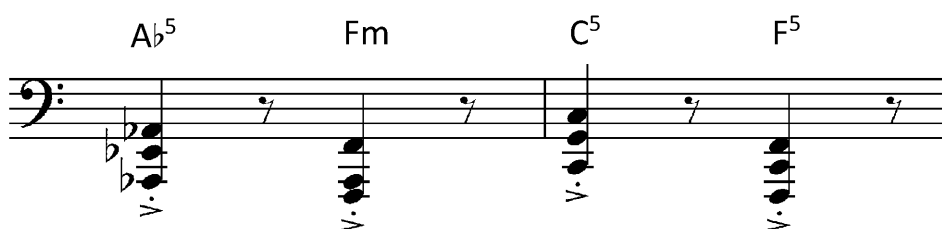
Labelling chords, bars 31, 33 and 34

31: ACEG = Am⁷

33: GBDF = G⁷

34: ACEG = Am⁷

Analysing chords, bars 72 and 73



Consolidation *Norwegian March*

- Possible answers: theme used in different keys, in imitation, in sequences, in different levels, in octaves, with chords added, in fragments.
- Many other answers are possible, but examples are suggested below:
 - Sequence: 49, 50, 51
 - Imitation: 17–24
 - Inversion: 151–154
 - Syncopation: 3
 - Pedal point: tonic 1–5
 - Ornament: 2

Grieg: *Notturmo*

Do it yourself:

- First section: 1–14
Contrasting middle section: 15–33
Return to first section: 34–54
Closing section: 55–63
- C major
- Fairly slow **tempo**, gentle, slow-moving **melody**, peaceful gentle accompaniment providing **dynamics**, trilling birds providing **programmatic** element, bars of silence, very slow concluding two bars.

Consolidation *Notturmo*:

- (i) bird-like trill found at beginning of B section (OR link between A and B)
 - (ii) main A section melody, heard after intro
 - (iii) intro, beginning of A section
 - (iv) B section
 - Order: (iii) (ii) (i) (iv)

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2.

Chord V7

accented auxiliary note

accented passing note

The image shows a musical score for a piano. The right hand (treble clef) plays a sequence of chords: a triad of G4, B4, D5 (F#), followed by a dyad of G4 and B4, then a triad of G4, B4, D5 (F#), and finally a dyad of G4 and B4. The left hand (bass clef) plays a sequence of chords: a triad of G3, B3, D4 (F#), followed by a dyad of G3 and B3, then a triad of G3, B3, D4 (F#), and finally a dyad of G3 and B3. The right hand's sequence is marked with an 'accented auxiliary note' (G4) and an 'accented passing note' (B4). The left hand's sequence is marked with an 'accented auxiliary note' (G3) and an 'accented passing note' (B3).

3. Any three of these: melody built on rhythmic motif, use of sequences, gradually ascending intensity, motif used once per bar six times, developing into twice per bar and then modulation, use of soft pedal (*una corda*) into release of soft pedal (*tre corde*)
4. Valid opinion if justified. Points to consider: use of previously heard material, dynamic register, bars of silence, last cadence and last chord.

Chopin: Ballade

Do it yourself:

2. Bars 24–25: C major
Bars 36–37: A minor
3. Andantino: Not as slow as Andante, which means "walking pace", so a brisk walking
Presto con fuoco: Very fast, with fire or fury.
Tempo primo: Return to original speed/tempo.
Stretto più mosso: Stretto means getting faster and più mosso means more movement
Agitato: Agitated, restless.

Consolidation:

- 1.

	A section	B section
Melodic features	Simple melody, small range, repetitive, heard in top part of right hand	Wide-ranging, soaring melody, built on arpeggios and chordal figures
Rhythmic features	Very repetitive, consisting of only two rhythmic patterns, compound duple metre	Fiery semiquaver runs in LH accompanied by strong bass in octave quavers. Second half changes to semiquaver in LH and chords in RH.
Harmonic features	Starts in F major, passes through A min, G maj, C maj. Chordal accompaniment mostly diatonic, use of 4 th and 5 th intervals in chords.	Starts in A minor, lots of chromaticism, use of ostinato
Structural features	A section is simple and uncomplicated, but because it returns during the course of the piece and is used in the coda, it brings unity through familiarity	The B section is also heard twice and so also brings unity through familiarity

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2.

ib i VI V i

passing note

3.

Chopin: Nocturne

Do it yourself:

1. E minor; B major; E major; E major

Consolidation:

1.

Rhythm and metre	Both are marked Andante, Grieg in compound triple metre, Chopin in 9/8. Both have triplet-feel accompaniment, both have '2 against 3' rhythmic contrast.
Melody	Both have beautiful, lyrical slow-moving melodies, mainly in the upper register with higher notes in the middle sections.
Tonality	Grieg starts in E minor and ends in E major, Chopin starts and ends in E major. Both use chromaticism. Chopin makes more use of modulation.
Form and structure	Grieg has a clear ternary structure (ABA) followed by a coda; Chopin has a more complex structure with four themes, with much use of variation, and a B theme heard twice and a very short codetta.

2. The triplet effect is relaxed and soothing, suitable for a nocturne. The effect of 9/8 bar is long and, therefore, also more peaceful.

ic V7d ib ii°

3. The middle C notes in beats 2 and 3 are both appoggiaturas.

Brahms: Intermezzo

Consolidation:

1.

IV V7d Ib ii Ic V
- 2.

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Brahms: Ballade

Do it yourself:

- 1. (a) any una corda indication
- (b) any > sign
- (c) bars 41ff
- (d) any x sign before a note, e.g. bar 52
- (e) bars 73–76
- (f) many more acceptable answers, bars 9–10 is one
- (g) many acceptable answers, bars 4–5 is one

2.

Gm A^{dim} B^ba^{ug} Cm D

i ii[°] III⁺ iv V

3.

B C[#]m D[#]m E F[#]

I ii iii IV V

Consolidation:

1.		Chopin: Ballade in F	Brahms: Ballade in F
Melody	Chopin's Section A is simple, repetitive and with small range	Brahms' Section A is simple, repetitive	
	Chopin's Section B is fiery, built on arpeggio figures and very wide-ranging	Brahms' Section B is a duet	
	Chopin has a Section C built on alternating chords with little melodic material		
	Both have short coda sections, recalling earlier themes		
Rhythm/metre	Chopin: 6/8 metre, Section A built on two simple rhythmic motifs, Sections B and C built on semiquaver passages	Brahms: 2/2 metre, Section A is simple and driving, Section B is a duet of crotchet/quaver	
Tonality	Chopin: starts in F major for Section A, modulated to A minor at beginning of Section B the first time and to D minor the second time, Section C strongly chromatic, piece ends in A minor	Brahms: starts in G major, ends in G major, modulates to D# minor, returns to G major in the coda	
Form/structure	Chopin: A B A B C coda	Brahms: A B A C coda	

3.

ii V⁷/III III⁷ VI⁷ ii⁷ V i VII^b i

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Practice Exam Questions

A number of possible answers are given for Questions 3 and 4 for each set work. Answers should be marked using the indicative content provided in conjunction with the levels of response grid below. This is based on the AQA materials but you should always refer to the AQA mark schemes for up-to-date criteria for this section of the examination

5-mark questions:

5	Answer is assured, and always clear and structured
3–4	Answer is wide-ranging, and usually clear and structured
1–2	Answer is limited and unclear, and there are errors and omissions
0	Nothing worthy of credit

10-mark questions:

9–10	Answer is assured and comprehensive, and always clear and structured
7–8	Answer is confident and wide-ranging, and usually clear and structured
5–6	Answer is relevant and sometimes clear and structured, though there may be errors and omissions
3–4	Answer is limited and unclear, and there are errors and omissions
1–2	Answer is basic
0	Nothing worthy of credit

Grieg: *Norwegian March*

1. Syncopation [1]
2. A flat major [1]
3. **Indicative content: [5]**
 - Balanced phrases of equal and regular length, like that of a national folk song
 - Folk-like melody, evoking the folklore and culture of Norway
 - Singable, like that of a folk song
 - Narrow range, like that of a folk song
 - Simple, like that of a folk song
 - Motif of interval of a 3rd, found in the original melody and developed throughout
 - Use of sequence – the original melody is used in both rising and falling sequences
 - Use of imitation – the melody is shared between the hands
 - Diatonic, like that of a folk song

The main nationalistic elements in the piece are (i) that of a folk-like melody, (ii) use of sequence, (iii) the rhythmic use of open 5^{ths} on the beat

4. **Indicative content: [10]**

Nationalistic composer – profoundly influenced by the history, folklore, legends and myths of Norway. Grieg's inspiration for this work was his annual retreat to the mountains and fjords of Norway.

Title of work:

Norwegian March or *Gangar*, a rustic 'walking dance' of Norway, shown in the steady 2/4 time.

Melody:

- Built on Norwegian-style folk tune
- Used as basis for whole piece
- Melody stated and then developed and varied
- Heard in treble and bass
- Heard at different registers

Rhythm:

- Steady pulse heard throughout
- Dance-like syncopation used as motif
- No change of tempo until the last six bars (*poco rit*)

Harmony:

- All reminiscent of a folk dance
- Walking bass notes
- Pedal point
- Open 5th intervals

Dynamics:

- Extreme range (*ppp*–*fff*)
- The alternation of dynamics (as well as parts) reminiscent of alternating movements

Timbre:

Percussive quality of piano used

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Grieg: *Notturmo*

1. minor 7th [1]
2. acciaccatura [1]
3. **Indicative content [5]**

Programmatic writing = the use of music to depict a non-musical idea, such as a scene

Melody:

- Slow, lyrical melody typical of a nocturne (evening piece) – bars 1–14
- Song of a bird (nightingale?) through the use of fast notes at a high register turning on two different pitches – bars 15–19
- Faster, sweeping melody depicting a dramatic sunset or the last activity of the day
- This rush of semiquavers is followed by more sedate, descending quavers with a bar of 3/8 silence – as darkness descends – bars 31–33

Metre, rhythm and tempo:

- 9/8 metre and Andante used to express calm of evening
- 6/8 metre and piu mosso used for busier section
- Gentle '2 against 3' typical of nocturne

Timbre:

- The piano with its expressive quality is an ideal instrument for programmatic writing
- Wide register of keyboard used to depict mood

Harmony:

- Warm major mode chosen
- Many chords with added 7^{ths} used for colour
- Suspensions and appoggiaturas used at ends of phrases to express mood
- Sweeping left-hand arpeggios used in more energetic section

Articulation:

Predominant legato used to express calm and peace

4. **Indicative content [10]**

This extract:

- Elements of contrast: slow and lyrical [1–14], bird-like trills [15–20] more rushed sections are not equal in terms of length.
- He starts in C major, and immediately starts a chromatic descent in the bass. This chromaticism, suggesting modulations but not arriving with strict cadences – the music is fluid, supported by the use of non-harmonic tones.
- 1–14: starts with fragments and builds to two- and then four-bar phrases, becoming more unified and rises sequentially
- The B section is a strong contrast, using the full range of the piano with much more energy. The change of time signature and tempo add to the contrast
- 15–20: contrast in terms of register, dynamics, melody; similar in terms of texture
- 21–33: contrast in terms of metre, rhythm, melody, dynamics and mood, building to a climax and work

Whole piece:

- Ternary form: shown by return to A section in bar 34
- Sections are not equally balanced
- Second A section is harmonically more adventurous
- Last four bars (51–54) have sense of winding down through series of descending notes and material
- Coda uses bird-like trilling material to end piece, and return to tonic key; last two bars are a final cadence
- Grieg uses the vehicle of ternary form (ABA) in a more relaxed, creative way than the Classical periods. He is not bound by strict balance in terms of length or key signature. The sense of balance and satisfaction.

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Chopin: Ballade

1. Gradually increase speed/tempo [1]
2. $vii^{\circ}d$ or $vii^{\circ} 4/2$ [1]
3. **Indicative content [5]**

Compositional devices used:

- Modulation to distantly related keys [modulation is more free in Romantic work]
- Chromaticism, shown strongly in opening four bars of extract, typical of Romantic music
- Sequences, shown strongly in opening bars of dotted rhythm [found also in Baroque and Classical music]
- Dissonance, creating tension [found in other periods, but used more freely in Romantic music]
- Arpeggiated chords, seen in bars 140ff [found in other periods, but used more frequently in Romantic music]
- Diminished 7th chords [used frequently in Romantic works]
- Repetition [found in all periods of music]
- Stretto, changes of tempo [frequent in Romantic works]

4. **Indicative content [10]**

Tempo:

In this extract: *stretto più mosso* [increase tempo, more movement] in bar 132 shows tempo has been reached
bar 139 indicates further increase in tempo, *presto con fuoco* (very fast) tempo has been reached

In whole work: many changes in tempo throughout work, starting *Andantino*—*smorzando*—*rallentando*—*tempo primo*—*stretto più mosso*—*ritenuto*—*tempo primo*—*con fuoco*—*agitato*—*tempo primo*

Dynamics:

In this extract: extreme dynamic shades stipulated *f–ff* in opening bars; bars 140–150 *ff* in every bar.

In whole work: extreme of dynamics used throughout work, alternating between *pp* of the opening (and each *tempo primo* section) is quiet and understated; *ff* is loud with clearly indicated hairpins; extended diminuendo passages; *stretto* sections are accompanied by crescendos; *agitato* section is *ff* shading. The work ends very quietly, in balance with the opening.

Register:

In this extract: the climb in register matches the increase in tempo and dynamics in *stretto* section has a very wide register, using the full scope of the keyboard (extensive use of ledger lines)

In whole work: the register of each section closely matches the tempo and dynamics; *tempo primo* sections use middle range, *presto* sections use wide register

Chopin: Nocturne

1. Accented passing note [1]
2. Perfect cadence [1]
3. **Indicative content [5]**

Modulation:

- Starts in E minor
- Modulates to B minor in bars 8–9 (dominant key)
- Returns to E minor in bar 10
- Modulates to B major (tonic major of dominant)
- *These modulations are typical of the genre, modulating first to a closely related key*

Harmony:

- Starting diatonic, quickly progressing to chromaticism
- Use of secondary chords, e.g. bar 5: $V-vii^{\circ}b$ of $V-V$ and bar 64–7: $v^{\circ}7$ of $V-V$
- Use of non-harmonic tones, e.g. bar 4: appoggiatura and passing notes; bar 8: passing notes
- *Harmony is typical of the genre, especially with more complex chords and more variation of the opening theme.*

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4. Indicative content [10]

Variation techniques used in this extract:

- Theme heard doubled in octaves
- Changes in notes values (quavers to triplets)
- Change of dynamics (*p* to *mf*)
- Diminution (crotchets in bar 7 to quavers in bar 17)
- Extension (bars 16–17)
- Variation techniques used in piece as a whole
- Use of trills (bars 31, 35, 36, 37)
- Use of mordents (bars 32 and 33)
- Irregular groupings (6 in bars 32 and 33, 8 in bar 34, 10 in bar 35, 11 in bar 37)
- Extended register (bars 33 and 34)
- Slide (bar 35)
- Extended triplet movement (bars 40 and 41)
- Modulation to new key (E major in bar 46)
- Added melodies in inner parts (bar 41)

Brahms: Intermezzo

1. IVc or IV6/4 [1]

2. Augmented 4th [1]

3. Indicative content [5]

Melodic characteristics typical of Brahms:

- Irregular phrase lengths
- Ability to create beautiful and memorable melodies
- Subtle variations
- Placing melody in different parts, e.g. in bass (bars 30–34)
- Inversion of melody (bar 35ff)
- Ability to develop a melody out of a motif
- Detailed articulation and expression indications
- Use of sequence
- Climbing in semitones to reach climax
- Sense of balance and direction

4. Indicative content [10]

Classical features in this extract:

- Structured and balanced four-bar phrases
- Repetition (from bar 8) at softer dynamic
- Modulation to closely related dominant key
- First phrase ends with clear imperfect cadence, second phrase with clear perfect cadence
- Two musical themes expressed in this extract (1–16 and 17–42) balanced in length

Romantic features in this extract:

- Beautiful, lyrical melody
- Rich harmony
- Chromaticism
- Modulation to C major, more distant key (bars 16–17)
- Detailed dynamic indications

Classical features in relation to whole piece:

- Clear ternary structure
- His main sections are mini ternary forms themselves, with the macro ternary structure
- Mainly homophonic texture
- Modulation to relative minor for beginning of B section (bars 49ff)
- Second A section almost identical to first

Romantic features in relation to whole piece:

- Surprise modulation to F# major (bars 57–64)
- Fluctuations in tempo (39: *un poco animato*; 46: *piu lento*; 49: *in tempo*; 57: *piu mosso*)
- Inner melodies (e.g. bars 49–50 and 65ff)
- Big contrast to chordal texture (bars 57–64)
- Use of fermatas to create anticipation and expectation
- Rich chromatic harmonies throughout

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Brahms: Ballade

1. B major [1]
2. Accented auxiliary note [1]
3. **Indicative content [5]**
 - Duet texture in bars 41–44 in consonant 3rds and 6ths – not typically Romantic
 - Effect is gentle and calm, creating contrast – not essentially Romantic
 - Strict homophonic texture of opening four bars of extract – not essentially Romantic
 - Duet texture in 7ths, 2nds, 4ths with dissonance and gentle syncopation – typical
 - Accompaniment in wide-ranging arpeggio movement – typical
 - Cadence points with rich internal melodies (e.g. bar 48) – typical
 - Accompaniment shared between the hands (bars 51–52) – not essentially typical
 - Texture of A theme interruption (bars 52–56) – very Romantic in style with melodic accompanying chords
 - Effect has energy of A theme, but with hushed character – typically Romantic
 - Arpeggiated split chords (bars 69 and 70) – typical
4. **Indicative content [10]**

Timbre in this extract:

 - Bar 41: *una corda* stipulated, timbre immediately affected by use of soft pedal
 - Bar 53: *espr.* calls for top melody notes to be played more expressively
 - Bars 56 and 68: *dolce* calls for a sweet tone, where player needs to express the tone
 - Because of the piano's sensitivity to touch, melody notes can be brought out at will
 - Even the quavers on the fourth quaver of the bass part on bars 41–44 where they receive slightly more emphasis
 - Low bass notes (bars 53–56) providing harmonic support can be supported
 - All the nuances of dynamics (hairpins in 47–48, 50–52, 54–56, etc.) can be given

Timbre related to whole piece:

 - Four different types of articulation, all suited to the timbre of the piano, are used: (a) staccato bass notes and chords, (b) legato melody notes, (c) accented notes, (d) damper pedal where required for fullness of tone
 - Extended crescendos and diminuendos, e.g. 18–21 and 35–40, are possible and effective
 - Subtle nuances of tone throughout
 - Sforzando indications showing that the tone must be 'forced' more than an accent
 - Last two bars: *senza Ped* indicated showing that damper pedal should not be used, resulting in a clear and sparse tone
 - This piece eminently shows the expressive and varied timbres available on the piano

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Appendix: Sample Essay

Discuss Chopin's use of tempo, dynamics and register in this extract and in relation to the whole work.

Answer 1

The following essay would be awarded 9/10 or 10/10 as it covers the full scope of the question, all the elements asked for are clearly understood and the material is presented in a structured and logical way.

Chopin demonstrates his unique ability to manipulate tempo, dynamics and register in this extract as well as in the whole work.

[Opening paragraph sets out plan for the essay]

*Regarding tempo, Chopin uses both sudden changes of speed and gradations of tempo. In the given extract, Chopin starts with the indication *stretto più mosso* to show that he wants a gradual increase in tempo over the next seven bars. Furthermore, he instructs *accel.* in bar 139, showing even further acceleration leading up to the section marked *presto con fuoco* in bars 140 to the end of the extract. This section of tempo, to be played with fire and fury.*

*The changes of tempo in the given extract are a portrait of the tempo changes in the whole work. These dramatic changes occur more than once. The piece starts off at a gentle tempo, but a section is introduced quite suddenly. A four-bar *rallentando* brings the music back to the original tempo, which the first *stretto* is heard, similar to that in the given extract, but instead of a gradual increase, another passage at the original tempo is heard. A second *stretto* builds to a *presto* section, similar to the extract. More intensity is found in an extended *agitato* section and the final section returns to the original tempo.*

[This shows an understanding of the given extract as well as its place in the overall work]

*Regarding dynamics, Chopin uses the full range of expressive dynamics in this extract. In the whole work, composers, Chopin shows his intentions through prescriptive indications. The given extract shows the loudest extremes of the piece, starting *forte*, and a three-bar crescendo building to *fortissimo*. This section shows hairpin dynamic indications in almost every bar. These hairpins apply to the bass, but small hairpins in bars 146 and 147 apply to the right hand only. The given extract shows the loudest extremes of the piece, starting *forte*, and a three-bar crescendo building to *fortissimo*. Bars of bars 142, 144–145, 148 and 152–153 have hairpins which apply to the right hand only.*

*Other extremes of dynamics are found in the whole work. The beginning is marked *pianissimo*, the music is to be played in an undertone, with few fluctuations in the opening section. The *presto* section is played *ff*, followed by an extended *diminuendo* lasting 12 bars, leading through two *stretto* and *crescendo* passages to the second *presto* section and the final *pianissimo* 8 bars.*

[This shows the understanding of the role of dynamics in the given extract and in the whole work]

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Regarding register, it is significant that the register of the music is closely in line with dynamics. As a general observation, the narrower registers match the softer dynamics and the wider-ranging registers match the faster and louder sections. In the given extract, speed and dynamics rise for the first eight bars. Even in the presto section, the rise and fall of the register and range of the melody in both treble and bass.

In the opening section the register stays in the middle range of the keyboard as dynamics are soft. In each presto section the register immediately expands as dynamics change to a higher level, sometimes necessitating the use of 8va signs to avoid repetition. The extended diminuendo coincides with the descending right-hand chords. Even in register as the tempo and dynamics rise. Interestingly, the agitato section also stays in register, except for a few bars (173–178 and the last few bars). The final section returns to the original tempo, the original dynamic and the original register.

[This demonstrates an understanding of the place of register within the wider context of the work]

Answer 2

The following essay would be awarded approximately 6/10. Although the point of progression is not always clear and/or structured and there are some errors and omissions.

Chopin uses lots of changes of tempo, dynamics and register in this work.

[Lacks substance as an opening statement, although correct in general]

He has many changes of speed, ranging from slow to very fast. The given extract starts slow and then play very fast. In the rest of the work, Chopin starts between slow and fast tempos, reaching fast speeds three times in all. He ends with a slow tempo.

[These statements are all correct but do not demonstrate an understanding of the link between tempo and the structural sections of the work]

He also has many changes of dynamics. The given extract starts f and gets even louder. The rest of the piece shows alternations between loud and soft dynamics. The piece ends softly.

[Again, this paragraph does not show that the student understands the role of dynamics in different sections or even in which order they are heard]

Chopin uses different parts of the piano keyboard for different sections. Sometimes the register is narrow and sometimes a much wider range. The given extract shows a rise in register and then a fall. The rest of the piece alternates between high and low registers, ending with a high register.

[This paragraph is correct in the facts it states, but does not say nearly enough about which sections are loud or soft and the student has not grasped the vital link between register and dynamics in this work]

[There is an attempt to differentiate between the given extract and the whole work, but the analysis is shallow and not specific enough]

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Answer 3

The following essay would only be awarded 4/10. The response to the question is too general and contains omissions of facts.

[No opening paragraph or sentence]

Chopin has lots of changes of tempo and dynamics and register. Sometimes he writes fast passages. The one in the given extract is fast, but he sometimes he writes fast passages. The one in the given extract is fast, but he

Sometimes he wrote loud passages and sometimes he wrote soft passages. The player must get louder. The piece begins and ends softly.

Sometimes Chopin wrote high notes and sometimes he wrote low notes. The given piece has high and low notes in both hands. He begins and ends in the middle of the range.

[Although the statements are correct in a very general way, they apply to thousands of pieces and are not linked to the piece in question nearly enough. There is no connection made between the changes of changes in tempo, dynamics or register, or recognition of how they are used in the given piece. The statements are general with no application or specific detail. There is no overall appreciation of the elements or of the work.]

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