Creative Arts Stage 6 – Music 2

# Listening - musicology

## Answers for listening (music 2) Eliza aria

These answers are written to assist teachers with providing feedback to students completing the online module of Eliza Aria at home.

[Listen to Eliza Aria (string quartet version)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEX2S9pm80M) (video duration 3:14) and answer the questions below:

1. **What is the rhythmic character of the piece?**

The tempo is fast due to the continuous quaver pulse, although is technically only moderate when counting in 2/2. The melodic lines are syncopated. Repeated rhythms used throughout.

1. **How is repetition employed in the piece?**

The 4 bar harmonic progression is repeated as is the rhythmic ostinato throughout. The opening material returns at various times in different voicings/textures/timbres. The staccato articulation is also featured throughout providing unity.

1. **How is variation in tone colour achieved?**

The cello (bass) contrasts with the treble strings in relation to pitch and timbre. Arco is contrasted with the pizzicato which provides contrasting colours. Various registers are employed throughout.

1. **How do the four instruments interact?**

The roles of the instruments are shared. The violin opens with the melody whilst other instruments provide harmonic accompaniment. The viola then takes over the melodic line from bar 40 onwards. Occasionally the violins work in unison to provide a harmonised melody, whilst viola and cello accompany as one layer of interlocking arpeggios and block chords. Accompaniment is often delineated from melody by playing pizzicato.

1. **Describe the overall structure of the piece.**

Intro – 5 bars

A – bars 6-32 repeat 4 bar passage with textural variation.

B – bars 33-57 new themes introduced over cello pedal. Bars 58-74 introduce chromatic harmonies over clearer texture.

A – bars 74-84 brief reprise of theme A

C – bars 85 – 114 new theme in violin climaxing in double stops

Coda – bars 115 – 120 in D major

1. **How does the end recall the opening?**

The opening pizzicato syncopated motif is fragmented and repeated in violin 2 over pedal notes.

### Using the first two pages of the score for ‘Eliza Aria’, answer the questions below.

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1. **What is the key?**

A minor

1. **What is the metre?**

2/2 – 2 minim beats per bar

1. **What dynamic level is used?**

Mezzo forte – moderately loud

1. **What happens to the pulse in bar 5?**

The pulse ceases due to the fermata.

1. **Describe the role of each instrument within the texture.**

Violin 1 – melody

Violin 2 and Viola – harmonic support/accompaniment

Cello – bass line outlining chord tones

1. **Describe the articulation, rhythm and contour of the melody in bars 5 – 9.**

The articulation is consistently staccato due to the pizz. The rhythm is syncopated through the use of quaver rests in the violin 1 part, utilising a short repeated rhythmic motif. The violin 2, viola and cello provide rhythmic stability as their rhythms are all played on the beat with an emphasis on beat 1 with simple crotchets and minims used. An anacrusis is also utilised in the violin and cello which further emphasises the down beat.

1. **How is the melody made prominent against the accompanying instruments?**

The melody is played arco and the accompanying parts pizzicato allowing for the melody to prevail acoustically. This is further supported by the high register of the violin 1.

1. **Complete the table of harmonies used in bars 6-9.**

6 – A minor root position i

7 – C major, 1 st inversion IIIb

8 – F major, 1 st inversion VIb

9 – A minor, root position i

### Eliza Aria – comparative analysis

#### Listening/Musicology (Music 1 or 2)

[Listen to the ‘Eliza Aria’ Dubstep Version by Metaphi](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YloEiYC_sN8) and answer the following questions:

1. **How has the original theme presented in the intro of this version?**

The opening consists of a string quartet playing the bass drone and harmonic accompaniment pizzicato whilst a piano plays the repeated syncopated motif in the treble clef. Gradually, electronic textural layers are added starting with soft percussive sounds that utilise triplets, and then a sub bass is added playing a drone with a drop bass added before the start of the A section. The voice enters singing a fragment of the motif repeatedly using a crescendo into the A section. The overall dynamic is soft and the texture is thin.

1. **Describe the use of textural layers and their rhythms in the A section (0:29-1:50)**

The vocals are providing the melody utilising quavers and crotchets with syncopation created with a quaver rest in the main theme. The piano and strings provide harmonic accompaniment and rhythmic stability through arpeggiated broken chords using crotchets over a 4 bar chord progression. The beat is firmly established by the electronic drums who are playing a half time shuffle feel with an accent on beat 3 on the snare drum. The drums play a combination of short note values such as crotchets, quavers and semiquavers. The percussive triplets still remain creating a polyrhythm against the straight quaver feel of the rest of the ensemble. Beat 1 is heavily emphasised by the bass drum and the 4 bar chord progression. Additional vocal layers and electronic flute sounds are added imitating the main vocal line creating a hocketing effect as the parts are rhythmically independent from one another. The texture is much thicker due to the increasing rhythmic complexity and polyrhythms. A wub is then added which emphasises the bass line and creates timbral variety with subbass frequencies. The sound is manipulated rhythmically to create a repeated rhythmic pattern consisting of crotchets and quavers.

1. **List the most defining dubstep musical characteristics found in this piece and how they are used.**

Bass Drops – to emphasise bass line and used as a transition into new sections

Subbass frequencies – to emphasise the bass line

Wub – to create rhythmic and timbral variety

Sparse syncopated drum and percussive patterns – rhythmic interest, polyrhythms, capture the shuffle feel

Electronic performing media – used in combination with acoustic voice, timbral interest

Fast tempo and shuffled rhythms – helps to drive propulsive rhythms and maintain momentum

Minor tonality – contributes to the typically dark sound/atmosphere found in dubstep

1. **How is interest achieved in this piece?**

Interest is achieved through the contrasting timbres explored within the electronic music context of high frequency and low frequency sounds. For example, the sub bass frequencies which have a booming timbre in contrast with the high frequency sounds of the electronic drumkit highhat which is more dry. The acoustic voice and strings provide warmth in their tone which further differentiates the timbres employed. Rhythmic interest is maintained through the continuous (albeit slow) development of rhythmic ideas with the rhythms throughout becoming more complex in the accompanying parts. Syncopation is also evident in the vocal line and wub contributing to polyrhythms against the more rhythmically stable strings and piano. The gradual layering of performing media creates interest which in turn extends the range and registers employed. Dynamic interest is created through the layering of parts coupled with the busyness of the rhythms.

1. **What are the unifying musical elements sustained throughout?**

The most significant unifying element is the melodic motif itself, which is developed through a range of compositional techniques such as fragmentation, repetition and imitation. The 4 bar chord progression is also a unifying element in its relentlessness, which is further emphasised by the wub bass and sub bass frequencies. The constant 4/4 metre with no change in tempo and almost consistent dynamic throughout, further contributes to the sense of unity within the piece.

1. **Comparing the two versions, discuss the use of tone colour and texture.**

The performing media in the string quartet version consists of 2 violins, a viola and a cello all off which have a similar warm and light timbre due to their acoustic properties. Articulatory variances such as staccato achieved by pizzicato and legato thorough arco alter the timbre accordingly. The roles of the instruments are shared throughout, although it begins with the violin 1 holding the melody whilst the accompanying strings provide harmonic support. In the dubstep version, the performing media is almost entirely electronic except for the vocals, piano and strings. Sounds are created using synthesizers and computer, and are manipulated with effects that change the pitch, tone and dynamic. This creates a wide range of timbral variance as the range of frequencies explored is far greater than the string quartet version. Also the contrast of both acoustic and electronic sounds create further tone colour contrast. The roles are more defined throughout with the vocals retaining the melody throughout, and the electronic sounds, piano and strings providing the bass line, harmonic support and rhythmic interest.

The texture of the string quartet is considerably thinner due to the limited number of textural layers with only 4 instruments playing. It remains homophonic throughout with the violin playing the melody to begin with, and then it is shared with viola and cello. The remaining accompanying instruments provide harmonic and rhythmic accompaniment. Contrasts in texture are achieved through dynamic contrast, articulation and expressive techniques such as pizzicato.

In the dubstep version, the texture begins quite thin with just the piano, strings and vocals before additional electronic layers are added which makes the texture considerably thicker. The texture here is homophonic throughout with the vocals providing the melody and the rest of the instruments provide accompaniment.