# AN APPROACH TO THE INCORPORATION OF HIP-HOP INTO THE

# UNDERGRADUATE MUSIC THEORY CURRICULUM

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### Introduction

As the general culture in the United States became more inclusive to more diverse groups of people, our educational practices have begun to shift in order to accommodate such necessary changes. Historical figures belonging to non-Western ethnicities and cultures have started to gain their rightful place within the educational canon, and this trend is continuing within the realms of both musicology and music theory. Alternative styles to the Common Practice Period have already been incorporated by a number of educators into their undergraduate theory classroom for several decades. These styles primarily include rock, jazz, and electronic music. Jazz and rock in particular serve the desired outcomes for undergraduate music literacy quite nicely in several ways. First, the fundamental structure of these styles is largely the same as traditional Western classical music. Jazz and rock are both styles that involve a great deal of functional harmony into their textures; even if they exhibit their own language for how the chords function, their governing principles are largely the same. Second, these styles can be analyzed using the same notation as classical music, and thus the process for examining such works does not have to be significantly altered. While exploring jazz and rock can serve our outcomes in harmony, pitch centricity, and notational literacy well, I believe we are missing an opportunity as educators to make use of other styles that better explore the other cognate areas of the theory curriculum.

In the twenty-first century, hip-hop champions itself as one of the most popular styles around the world, and while a lot of scholarly discussion regarding the style'a impact on history, society, culture, and politics exists; there is strikingly very little musical analysis in the academic sphere. One notable scholar of the musical analysis of hip-hop, Kyle Adams, states a possible reason for this: "Hip-hop music resists traditional modes of musical analysis more than almost any other genre. The techniques developed for the analysis of Western art music [...] often leave the analyst without a deeper sense of how hip-hop operates and why it seems to communicate so effectively with such a broad audience. And yet there is no question that hip-hop *does* operate according to some set of musical principles."<sup>1</sup>

Unlike many other popular styles, hip-hop does not comfortably fit our harmony-emphasized curriculum, but where the style often lacks in harmonic study it makes up for in other musical elements, namely rhythm, meter, texture, and form. For the purposes of this paper, I aim to examine possible methods for including hip-hop into the undergraduate music theory curriculum by allowing pieces within the style to serve the same standard educational outcomes as traditional pieces of music. I believe with enough creativity from the instructor, the music of Kendrick Lamar can fulfill the same understanding of various musical elements as the music of Mozart. My purpose for this examination is not to replace or remove the current canon of Western classical music, but rather support the notion that hip-hop can be a source of modern repertoire that further contextualizes the cognate areas for the undergraduate theory student. I have organized this paper into three sections: a brief definition and history of hip-hop, lesson plan samples with in-depth explanations for how they serve the cognate areas (the bulk of the paper), and a discussion on the potential problems with incorporating hip-hop into the classroom along with viable solutions.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Kyle Adams, "The Musical Analysis of Hip-hop," *The Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop*, ed. Justin A. Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015): 118.

### What is Hip-hop?

Before discussing how hip-hop can serve the music theory instructor, we must first have a solid understanding into what hip-hop embodies as a style. According to many sources, hip-hop was born out of various house parties in New York City during the 1970s. Some credit the creation of hip-hop to DJ Kool Herc whose house party on August 11, 1973 sparked the musical practice.<sup>2</sup> Others collectively acknowledge the dozens of talented DJs and MCs who pioneered the style during that decade. Hip-hop culture extends beyond music and originally contained four elements: MCing (the practice of speaking or rapping over the DJ or instrumental beat in order to engage with the audience<sup>3</sup>), hip-hop dance, graffiti, and DJing (the practice of creating the instrumental background of a hip-hop track, originally by means of a turntable, but not limited to one specific technology<sup>4</sup>).<sup>5</sup> Hip-hop is not to be confused with rap, which is specifically a musical practice that is used by MCs in hip-hop. While hip-hop has a specific date attributed to its creation, the tracing of rapping is not so clear and far more extensive. Rap takes its origin from various African spoken-word practices and is generally distinguished from spoken-word poetry by its association with hip-hop's "flow and aesthetic." Its broad and loose definition gives it a certain malleability that allows it to draw inspiration from many spoken-word styles.<sup>6</sup> In its essence, rap, along with its encompassing style, hip-hop, is a black American tradition with deep unlying roots in African culture.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Justin A. Williams, "Introduction: The Interdisciplinary World of Hip-hop Studies," *Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop:* 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Alice Price-Styles, "MC Origins: Rap and Spoken Word Poetry," *Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop:* 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Kjetil F. Hansen, "DJs and Turntablism," *Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop:* 42.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Justin A. Williams, "Introduction," 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Alice Price-Styles, "MC Origins: Rap and Spoken Word Poetry," 13.

For the purposes of my educational approach, I am using the term hip-hop to embody all styles of music that involve the art of rapping to a prominent capacity. The previously mentioned flexibility of the artform allows for many subgenres and hybrid genres, each of which offers their own points of study. In its roughly forty-year run, hip-hop has undergone several widely accepted stylistic eras and subgenres, each of which are worthy of investigation.

#### Lesson Plans and Methodology

In order to best explore the wide stylistic ranges of hip-hop, I have chosen ten pieces spanning from the 1980s to the 2010s, all varying in style and emphasis of different musical elements. Each piece is ordered chronologically based on its commercial release date. I have examined each piece to find which musical elements best serve the narratives of their respective works and created potential lesson plans, labeled as "*sample lesson plans*" throughout the paper, that best explore different educational outcomes. Each sample plan contains one or two learning outcomes, action steps to achieve the outcomes, and an assessment section that ensures the students retain what they were meant to learn in the lesson. These plans should not be taken strictly as a singular approach, rather, they are merely one option of my creation.

While much of the musical analysis of the repertoire is my own, occasionally I will use or draw inspiration from other analytical techniques used by scholars and repurpose them for pedagogical use. Lesson plans are intentionally simplified for broader use in a number of contexts, and I will include analyses and expanded approaches as needed. Due to the lack of visual scores, lesson plans are largely aurally driven with some visual aids such as lyric sheets, charts, or brief instances of notation. My hope is that these lesson plans can spark inspiration and further discussion among educators on how to best include this repertoire into the music literacy classroom. For ease of access, all of the sample plans in this paper are listed again in the Appendix on page 52.

### And You Know That - The Sequence

The earliest stages of hip-hop as a musical art served primarily to accompany party-scenes by creating an upbeat sound that made dancing simple and entertaining. The main job of the MC was to hype the crowd and keep the energy of whatever event he or she was working for. This led to music that was easy for the average listener to digest both rhythmically and metrically. Artists that best represent this style include The Sugarhill Gang, Run-D.M.C., LL Cool J, and DJ Kool Herc. While the genre primarily consisted of men, several influential female artists also came to considerable prominence. After getting signed onto Sugarhill Records in the late 1970s, an all-women hip-hop group called The Sequence released their single, *Funk You Up*, in 1979, making it the first hip-hop track to be released by a female group. The Sequence consists of high school friends, Cheryl Cook ("Cheryl the Pearl"), Gwendolyn Chisolm ("Blondy"), and Angie Stone ("Angie B").<sup>7</sup>

Shortly after the release of *Funk You Up*, Sugarhill Records released the group's debut album: *Sugarhill Presents The Sequence* in 1980. The fifth track, *And You Know That*, is a great representation of the classic late 1970s, early 1980s hip-hop sound. One defining characteristic of this era is its specific use of a groove. In general terms, a groove refers to the repetitive rhythmic motive that drives the works of many popular genres including rock, funk, and hip-hop. Additionally, timbre, texture, and meter serve as secondary elements that establish the groove; therefore, by investigating the mechanisms of a musical groove, one touches upon all of these topics.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Ed Hogan, "The Sequence Biography," *All Music.* (Accessed December 2023).

For my first lesson plan, the educational outcome is for students to identify and isolate instrumental strands from within a musical groove. The concept of a groove is usually reserved for popular styles; therefore, the instructor should provide a viable definition of the term. Here is one possible definition from musicologist Richard Middleton, "the rhythmic patterning that [produces] the rhythmic feel of a piece."8 This was the most concise definition I could find for a groove as the term holds a wide range of meanings depending on the context of its usage. For the purposes of an undergraduate course, a groove is a repeated, underlying gesture that drives a piece which may use rhythmic, metric, timbral, and textual elements in its construction. Once this task is completed, the instructor should play a recording of the piece from 0:00 - 1:32. This excerpt provides enough of the piece for the students to be properly exposed to the groove without spending significant class time listening to the track.<sup>9</sup> For the first listening, the students should isolate instrumental strands from the groove's texture and write them down. After this step, the instructor may discuss the different instruments or sounds used in the groove with the class. Once some of the instruments have been identified, they should be rated by their consistency within the texture. For example, the bassline and drum track are always present in the texture and generally do not change their musical content. Meanwhile, instruments like the piano are used very sparingly, only appearing in brief moments. Other instruments such as the guitar and brass instruments appear rather frequently, but their pitch and rhythmic content are not nearly as consistent as the bassline or drum track. Choosing four or five to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Richard Middleton, "Form," *Key Terms in Popular Music and Culture,* ed. Bruce Horner and Thomas Swiss (Malden: Blackwell, 1999): 143.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Many early hip-hop recordings contain several alternative versions. The version I am using is the roughly four minute version originally released on the album, but longer versions also exist and are edited differently.

focus on, the students should rate these instrumental strands based on their prevalence within the texture.

After spending some time investigating the nature of each instrumental strand, the instructor can explore the second outcome: students will describe how rhythm and meter contribute to the establishment of a groove. The instructor will play the excerpt again, but this time, students will be tasked with rating the instrumental strands they documented previously in terms of rhythmic and metric complexity. The bassline and drum track are highly rhythmically active, but they are performing much simpler rhythms than the brass section. Additionally, instrumental strands like the guitar and brass are performing licks that are much more syncopated against the beat than the other instruments. The division of the beat is also a topic of consideration, and while most of the rhythms in this piece have simple divisions, the occasional compound division does occur. This lesson can be applied to a number of styles, so to assess the student's ability to recognize the components of a groove, the extraction of instrumental strands can be performed on another piece of music. In the sample plan below, I have included some similar hip-hop pieces from the same time period, but the instructor may want to pull from another style completely.

# And You Know That - Sample Lesson Plan

Outcome 1: Students will identify instrumental strands within a musical groove.

Action Step: Define groove for the class, then discuss for a few minutes on what musical elements the students believe may contribute to a groove. Answers may fit into broader categories of texture, timbre, rhythm, or meter.

Action Step: Listen from 0:00 - 1:32 (The beginning to the second chorus). Ask the students to identify the instruments that belong to the groove. After the students make their lists, discuss the findings together and write out a list of the instruments they found.

Outcome 2: Students will describe the nature of each linear strand within a groove in terms of rhythm and meter.

Action Step: Listen again with the class and have them categorize each instrument in terms of consistency within the groove. Which are constant? Which change?

Action Step: Listen to the excerpt again, then have the students make note of the rhythmic and metric complexity of each strand. Which have simpler rhythms? Which have denser rhythms and/or are metrically syncopated? How do the beats divide for each: simple or compound?

Assessment: As a take home assignment, this exercise can be completed with another song. Some examples within the style include *Rapper's Delight -* The Sugarhill Gang, *Hard Times -* Run-D.M.C., and *I Can Give You More -* LL Cool J.

For the more advanced class, another possible assessment could be to have the students compose their own groove by layering different instrumental strands, focusing more on rhythmic and metric complexity with a simple harmonic progression that could be provided by the instructor. The composition could be handwritten or completed in some sort of notation software or DAW. While understanding and analyzing grooves appears centric to popular styles on the surface, the investigation of grooves among many styles provides a modern approach to identifying and understanding key elements that create musical texture. This approach can be harkened back to the Western canon, though such a comparison is not necessary to achieve the desired outcome.

#### Shake Your Rump - Beastie Boys

The late 1980s and early 1990s, otherwise known as the "golden era" of hip-hop, saw a stark shift in the style's production. Rather than creating the instrumental backbeat by means of turntabling, producers took off with the newer practice of sampling: the process of storing recorded sound and placing that sound within a new recording. During their prime, the Beastie Boys realized some of the most extensive uses of this new sampling technique. Two scholars of copyright law, Kembrew McLeod and Peter DiCola, estimated that the group's second studio album, *Paul's Boutique (1989)* would cost roughly twenty million dollars in royalties if all the recordings that were sampled were properly licensed by their respective creators.<sup>10</sup> The second track on the album, *Shake Your Rump*, uses sampling as its primary method of communicating changes in both global and local formal divisions. When focusing on musical form, two outcomes are possible: identifying major formal divisions and identifying smaller formal structures such as phrases.

*Shake Your Rump's* structure involves three verses of text with instrumental breaks after each verse. The overall form may be outlined as such:

Intro: 0:00 - 0:02 - Verse 1: 0:02 - 0:40 - Break 1: 0:40 - 0:58 Verse 2: 0:58 - 1:35 - Break 2: 1:35 - 1:54 - Verse 3: 1:54 - 2:40 Break 3: 2:40 - 3:17

The instructor may give the students as much information about the form as deemed necessary, and with the proper information, the students should be able to easily identify each section with one

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Kembrew McLeod and Peter DiCola, *Creative License: The Law and Culture of Digital Sampling* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011): 203-12.

listening. In order to make the listening directions clear, I opted to inform the students that there were three main sections of text and three significant instrumental breaks. No matter how the instructor wishes to introduce the piece, a lyric sheet should definitely be provided so that the students have something visual to follow along. Depending on how the lyrics are displayed on the sheet, the layout of the verses on the page may cause their identification to be more visually obvious in order to have the students focus on the location of the instrumental breaks. If the instructor wishes to make the distinction of verses more challenging, he or she may remove any spaces between stanzas of text in order to create one large body in which the students will draw lines to separate.

Once the listening is completed, the instructor can ask the students to listen for any musical signifiers that align with or support the major formal divisions of the piece. Points of discussion may include changes in rhythmic density or timbre within the backbeat and changes in the rate at which each rapper of the trio takes over the text. The lyric sheet may provide information on which rapper(s) are rapping the text. Personally, I like how the website, *Genius*, indicates who is singing or rapping. On the lyric page for *Shake Your Rump*, MCA's lyrics are presented in normal text, Ad-Rock's are Italicized, Mike D's are bolded, and combinations of all three are bolded and Italicized.<sup>11</sup>

The second outcome, identifying phrases within large formal sections, serves as a nice complement to the first. With the major formal divisions known to the students, the instructor should ask them to count measures as they listen. On the lyric sheet, some measure numbers should be given to keep the student grounded because keeping track of measure numbers over several minutes is quite a challenge for some students. The given measure numbers also reduce the need for too many listenings,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> "Shake Your Rump," Genius, 2020, https://genius.com/Beastie-boys-shake-your-rump-lyrics.

which can eat up class time. For my sample plan, I provided the students with the introduction and the first verse. Each section contains the following number of measures: Introduction (1), Verse 1 (16), Break 1 (8), Verse 2 (16), Break 2 (8), Verse 3 (20), Break 3 (8). For Verses 1 and 2, the phrase divisions are straightforward as the students should be able to divide them into two eight-bar phrases with little trouble. Further divisions into four-bar sub phrases are also possible. Verse 3 presents an interesting situation by containing twenty bars. For the sake of simplicity, I decided to tell the class that each verse contains two phrases, thus the phrases of Verse 3 must be imbalanced. After the listening, the instructor will introduce a discussion about which musical elements the Beastie Boys used to highlight the phrase structure. For Verse 3, the instructor can provide two options of division: (12+8) or (8+12). The phrase containing twelve measures will consist of an eight-bar phrase with some sort of four-bar extension. While the case for (12+8) is stronger, there is enough validity in the other interpretation to justify discussion. Students should once again use the backbeat and the changes in rappers as criteria for the beginnings and endings of phrases.

### Shake Your Rump - Sample Lesson Plan

Outcome 1: Students will recognize and identify the major sections of a piece of music.

Action Step: Hand out lyric sheet for *Shake Your Rump* to the class.

Action Step: Explain to the class that there are 7 sections: a one-bar introduction, three main sections containing text, two instrumental breaks, and the outro.

Action Step: Listen to the piece once and have the students draw lines where the major formal divisions occur on the lyric sheet. Also, if they are not provided, have the students write where the instrumental breaks occur. Assessment: Discuss the primary musical devices that the Beastie Boys use to highlight the major divisions. Listen from 0:00 - 0:58 to discuss the nature of the instrumental breaks.

Outcome 2: Students will identify phrases within larger formal sections.

Action Step: With the major formal divisions available to the students, listen to the piece and have the students count measures for each section. The introduction is 1 bar, and the first verse is 16 bars.

Action Step: Once the measures of each section are documented, listen again and create phrases within the Verses. Each Verse should contain two phrases.

Assessment: Reveal the phrase structure to the class and discuss how the Beastie Boys distinguish phrases through texture. Discuss the phrase structure of Verse 3 which contains 20 bars instead of 16. Is the division for Verse 3 (12+8) or (8+12)?

While *Shake Your Rump* differs from classical music in many stylistic ways, it shares a striking resemblance in phrase structure. For the purposes of harkening back to the standard music literacy canon, the instructor may find some use in comparing this work to a piece by a classical composer. In relation to the third verse, unproportional phrase structures were used to great effect by composers such as Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.

### Stop in the Name ... - Public Enemy

During the golden era, hip-hop's style morphed from its origins as party music into a more absolute musical artform. Artists such as Rakim and A Tribe Called Quest began creating more intricate and virtuosic displays of rapping, namely through their use of rhythm. The rhythmic element of rapping is commonly referred to as *flow*. MCs distinguish themselves through their own rhythmic expression by very subtly altering the placement of their words. Because these discrepancies are so slight, they are not easily represented with standard notation.<sup>12</sup> Chuck D, the frontman for Public Enemy, exhibits a freestyle verse in their 1994 song, *Stop in the Name...*, that showcases both rhythmic and metric complexities.

*Stop in the Name...* features an interesting relationship between the phrasing of the text and the musical meter. Chuck D's flow creates a metric syncopation between himself and the backbeat by allowing his lyrics to carry over the bar lines, making many of the downbeats unclear. Thus, the first outcome is for students to use the contrast between text phrasing and musical meter to recognize and explain metrical syncopation. The first stanza of text contains five lines that are performed within four measures of music:

# Stop in the Name... First Stanza<sup>13</sup>

2 1 3 Full fledgin' never said I'm a legend No shuf-fle or shoul-der shruggin' 2 3 Uncle Tommin' nickel and dime \_ rhymin' 2 3 4 1 \_This renegade rip-pin' rugged tracks, I love it 2 3 Sorta black owned like the Den-ver Nuggets

These five lines of text divide into a two-bar subphrase containing lines one through three and a two-bar subphrase containing lines four and five. This division is determined by moments where the downbeat corresponds with the beginning of a line of text (not including pickup gestures). In contrast,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Ben Dunker, "Functions of Expressive Timing in Hip-Hop Flow," *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 34, no. 1 (March 2022): 90.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Numbers indicate beats. Underscores indicate that the beat occurs between words.

the third stanza also contains five lines, but its division consists of a subphrase of lines one and two and a subphrase of lines three through five.

Stop in the Name... Third Stanza

The logical, sorta psychologi-cal brother like butter \_ Spread to one another, Lord have mercy! Thicker the blunt and got sicker Once upon a rhyme all bigger Meant was for bigga cotton picker

By analyzing a lyric sheet with the metrical beats provided, students can visualize the

syncopation between the steady 4/4 meter and Chuck D's five-line verses. While not all of the stanzas in this piece contain five lines, they still evoke metrical syncopation by shifting the number of beats within a given line. In the second stanza, the first and fourth lines contain five beats while the second and third lines only contain three:

# Stop in the Name... Second Stanza

\_Pow pow the o-riginal hard hitter is back in black On deck \_ with a trou-bleneck Uh ha you can drink \_ all you want But hard don't make the li-quid mat-ter you in-take

With this information, the students can investigate the syncopation through a few exercises. First, the instructor can ask the students to conduct a four pattern while listening to the piece with the lyric sheet at hand. The entire work is under two minutes, so this can be repeated as necessary. Next, the students can be asked to provide a new time signature for each line of the text. For example, the first line in the first stanza contains three beats, so that line will be marked as 3/4. Once this task is complete, the students can listen to the piece again, only this time they will conduct patterns in accordance with their newly notated time signatures. Another method to highlight the syncopation is to draw bar lines before each downbeat. This will point to moments where the beats emphasized by the text contrast with the strong beats of the meter.

#### Stop in the Name... - Sample Lesson Plan 1

Outcome: Students will recognize and explain metrical syncopation by comparing text phrasing and metrical beats.

Action Step: With a lyric sheet containing the metrical beats, listen to the piece and have the students conduct a four pattern.

Action Step: Have the students draw bar lines before each downbeat. Circle downbeats that occur first in their respective lines. (These are moments when the text and music agree on the downbeat.)

Action Step: For each line, write in a new time signature that corresponds with the number of beats within the line. Line one is 3/4, line two is 2/4, etc.

Action Step: Listen to the piece again and have the students conduct the changing patterns suggested by their new time signatures.

Assessment: Provide the students with another piece of music that contains metrical syncopation. Have the students draw bar lines before the suggested downbeats and have them use information in the score to justify their choices. Part of the disorienting nature of Chuck D's verse is his flow, which seems to constantly shift. Another lesson plan for *Stop in the Name...* can focus on the changes in rhythmic density and how patterns in more and less dense moments contribute to the form of the piece. Since the primary force of rhythmic variety occurs in the voice, the lyric sheet provides a very efficient, non-notational resource for charting rhythmic density since it contains both the content of the rhythm in question and the metrical beats of each bar. To identify the rhythmic density of a line, students can simply count and write out the number of syllables next to each line of text. The piece's brevity allows for several listenings, so the first of these can be used to have students follow along with their lyric sheets and the subsequent listenings can have them focus specifically for the changes in density. Once this is complete, the instructor can allow the students to take some time to analyze the global form of the piece. Each stanza of text constitutes a formal division of the piece. The instructor may ask the students to label the total number of syllables per section as well as keep track of the number of lines within each section. Shown below is a brief chart containing this data:

Stanza 1: 50 syllables/5 lines - Stanza 2: 41 syllables/4 lines - Stanza 3: 51 syllables/5 lines

Stanza 4: 43 syllables/4 lines - Stanza 5: 30 syllables/4 lines

On the surface, labeling each of these sections seems straightforward. The first and third stanzas both contain roughly fifty syllables within five lines, while the second and fourth lines contain roughly forty syllables within four lines. Being much shorter in length, the fifth stanza could be considered as some sort of closing section or an extension of the fourth. Using this criteria, the form could be labeled as ABABC or ABABB'; however, this analysis does not consider the organization of syllables between lines within the stanzas. As previously mentioned, the first and third stanzas differ in their division of subphrases. While a conversation on conflicting labels may warrant a great discussion, I have opted to instead keep the focus on the relationship of rhythmic density with the form. Using a graph, students can chart the number of syllables per line. This provides the students with a visual to follow along as they listen to the piece again:



Stop in the Name... - Syllable Graph

Once the listening is complete, the instructor may spark a discussion regarding the relationship between rhythmic density and the form of the piece. There are a number of correlations here. First, the established normal range of syllables per line spans from around ten to twelve syllables. The first section almost exclusively hovers around this range with the exception of the second line. Considering the metric syncopation between three lines of text against two bars of music, the stretching of rhythm makes sense in creating that syncopation. The second section is much less stable with both high and low extremes in density. We reach a peak in density at the start of the third section with sixteen syllables, and then the density rapidly declines. The fourth section stabilizes by averaging ten to twelve syllables, and the final section slowly decreases in density before Chuck D fades into the background. By establishing the discussion, the instructor allows the students to come to most of these conclusions on their own.

### Stop in the Name... - Sample Lesson Plan 2

Outcome 1: Students will recognize changes in rhythmic density.

Action Step: Using a lyric sheet with stanzas and metrical beats provided, have the students write the number of syllables within each line of text next to the line.

Action Step: Listen to the piece and have the students focus on the density of Chuck D's rapping while following along with the syllable counts.

Outcome 2: Students will correlate rhythmic tension with formal divisions of a piece.

Action Step: Have the students identify the major sections of the work by drawing lines to separate formal divisions of text.

Assessment: Provide the students with a blank graph and have them fill in the number of syllables for each line. Listen to the piece again with the graph and discuss moments where the density is significantly higher or lower. Discuss how this correlates with the form of the piece.

In some situations, the instructor may want to investigate the specific nature of a rapper's flow. Ben Dunker uses traditional notation that shows the slight misalignment between the flow of the rapper and the instrumental backbeat. While I believe his use of notation is a bit complex for the undergraduate classroom, I do think that Dunker's three categories of expressive timing could be used in discussion to describe the nature of flow. Dunker categorizes flow as falling under *swung timing* (uneven divisions of the pulse), *lagging timing* (the patterned delay of the flow rhythm in relation to the backbeat), or *conversational timing* (flow performances that mimic speech patterns through rhythm and stress). *Stop in the Name...* can best be described as having *conversational timing*.<sup>14</sup>

# Guess Who's Back - Rakim

One distinguishing feature of hip-hop as a genre is its primary emphasis on rhythm and meter rather than pitch, and artists successfully keep the listener engaged through the manipulation of these aforementioned elements. A method that hip-hop artists use to create musical tension is the creative placement of rhymes on different beats within the meter. Rakim is credited by many scholars and artists alike as one of the pioneers of internal rhyme: the use of several simultaneous rhyme schemes within the same body of text.<sup>15</sup> *Guess Who's Back,* the eighth track on Rakim's 1997 album, *The 18th Letter,* features Rakim's ability to create metrical syncopation through the specific placement of his rhymes. Thus, the primary outcome for this piece is for students to identify and explain the relationship between the rhyme scheme and changes in metrical emphasis.

Using a lyric sheet with the beats provided, the students can begin highlighting different rhymes in the first verse. For the purposes of this exercise, rhymes will not be taken too strictly; instead, students should search for significant repetitions of vowel sounds with similar if not the same consonant sounds. Two listenings of the first verse (0:00 - 0:45) should be provided to the students so that they have a chance to hear the rhymes that are not as obvious on paper, such as "embedded" and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Dunker, "Functions of Expressive Timing of Flow," 91.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Alice Price-Styles, "MC Origins: Rap and Spoken Word Poetry," 15.

"wouldn't let it." For clarity, the instructor may provide the first significant rhyme which is presented in orange in the chart below and provide a listening of the first verse in order to hear how Rakim pronounces specific rhymes. Once these rhymes are identified, the lyrics create a clear four-line phrase structure, each containing their own primary rhyme.

# Guess Who's Back - Verse 1

1234It's the re-turn of the Wild Style fashionistSmashin'	1 2 3 4 Straight off_ the top, _ I knew I'd be forced to rock
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
hits, make it hard to <mark>a-dapt to this</mark> _	Dance _ floors just stop, the spot's scorchin' hot
1234Put pizz-azz and jazz in this, and cash in this Mastered	1 2 3 4 <mark>Hopin</mark> ' I'll <mark>o-pen</mark> Rakim <mark>Al-lah sem-i-nars</mark>
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
this, flash this and make 'em clap to this _	Mas-sage at the bar, <mark>smokin'</mark> ten-dollar ci-gars
1 2 3 4 DJ's throw on cuts and o-bey the crowd _	1 2 3 4   While I ad-mire MIDI, _ with more _ vision than T-Vs
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Just <mark>pump</mark> the vol _ ume <mark>up</mark> , _ and <mark>play it loud</mark>	I find it <mark>easy</mark> catch- <mark>in' diabetes</mark> _ from fly <mark>sweeties</mark>
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Hip-hop's _ <mark>embedded</mark> , _ before I said I would <mark>n't let it</mark>	Sit _ back and wait to hear a slammin' track _
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
But me and the mi-crophone is still mag-netic	Rockin' jams, by popular de-mand, I'm back

After the students complete their rhyme charting, the instructor can ask the students to keep track of which beats the rhymes occur by circling the beat that each highlighted lyric is most closely associated with. The first two lines establish beats one and three as the strong beats. This emphasis shifts in the third and fourth lines to beat two, which is emphasized as a stronger beat until the sixth line where beat four gains emphasis until the end of the first half of the verse. In part, metric syncopation is created by the juxtaposition of four-bar phrases and overlapping beat emphases.

Students may be tasked with drawing lines to create formal divisions of four lines each and drawing brackets beside lines that emphasize similar beats.

### Guess Who's Back - Sample Lesson Plan 1

Outcome 1: Students will create formal divisions using changes in rhyme scheme.

Action Step: Provide the students with a lyric sheet of Verse 1. The sheet should include beats above the syllables at which they occur.

Action Step: Listen to Verse 1 (0:00 - 0:45) twice, then have the students highlight each significant rhyme. Rhymes need not be perfect on paper, but they must be heard as significantly similar sounds.

Assessment: Have the students use lines to divide the first verse into four sections using rhyme as the criteria.

Outcome 2: Students will recognize shifts in metrical emphasis based on rhyme.

Action Step: Have the students circle beat numbers that are most closely associated with a rhyme.

Assessment: Have the students use brackets to divide the piece into collections of lines that emphasize the same or similar beats.

Rakim's use of rhyme can also highlight shifts in rhythmic density, which leads to the second outcome: students will hear and identify increases and decreases in rhythmic activity within an established meter. Unlike in *Stop in the Name..., Guess Who's Back* is much more metrically stable. While the rhythmic complexity of Chuck D's lyrics were, in part, a product of its asymmetrical phrase structure, Rakim's flow is usually carefully placed to build or release tension at appropriate moments within *Guess Who's Back's* larger and more even phrase structure. By comparing the number of rhymes within a line with the number of syllables, one can find some correlations between the rhyme scheme and the rhythmic density of the text.

I split the next sample lesson into two outcomes. The first is for students to recognize changes in rhythmic density. To begin, the instructor will provide a similar lyric sheet as the first exercise, only this time the rhymes that will be investigated are already highlighted for the students. From there, the instructor should allow the students to listen to the excerpt of the first verse twice with the lyric sheet. During both of the listenings, the instructor should request the students to mark the lines containing significantly faster rhythms from Rakim's rapping than average. Then, the students will document the number of syllables per line. When this task is finished, the instructor will play the excerpt again, and the students should listen for significant changes in rhythmic density.

The second outcome ties rhyme into the conversation by having students understand the use of rhyme as a tool for creating density. Looking back at the lyric sheet, students can make note of lines that contain three or more of the same rhymes. With the placement of rhymes in close proximity in mind, the students can hear the excerpt again and listen for the relationship between rhyme and density. Following the listening, the instructor can prompt a discussion on this relationship.

### Guess Who's Back - Sample Lesson Plan 2

Outcome 1: Students will recognize changes in rhythmic density.

Action Step: Provide a lyric sheet with the rhyme schemes highlighted to the students, then listen to the first verse (0:00 - 0:45) twice. For both listenings, have the students place a marking next to lines that have a significantly higher rate of rhythm than average.

Action Step: Ask the students to document how many syllables are in each

line, then listen to the excerpt again for significant increases or decreases in density. Outcome 2: Students will understand rhyme as a tool for creating rhythmic density.

Action Step: Have the students mark lines containing three or more of the same rhymes within them.

Action Step: Listen to the excerpt, then discuss with the students the correlation between rhyme and density. How does the number of rhymes in a line affect how the listener perceives rhythm? Where in the phrase does Rakim tend to use more condensely placed rhymes?

Assessment: Complete this lesson with the second verse of this piece, or use a similar example.

### In the End - Linkin Park

Due to its rather loose criteria, hip-hop as a style can manifest itself in a number of ways. Elements of hip-hop such as rapping and the characteristic rhythmic grooves of the genre are able to exist in a number of contexts without losing its identity with hip-hop. In the late 1990s to early 2000s, rock musicians began fusing these elements of hip-hop with rock and metal styles, creating what many fans and scholars alike refer to as "nü metal."<sup>16</sup> Among the many nü metal bands from around the world, Linkin Park is celebrated by many as one of the subgenre's most popular and prominent groups. Throughout the band's history, they have experimented with fusing numerous styles to great success with their audience. Their first album, *Hybrid Theory (2000)*, took the rhythmic drive of rap and combined it with the harmonic and timbral qualities of metal and 90s grunge. Thus, this repertoire provides an opportunity to examine the harmonic language of rock music along with various stylistic tendencies of hip-hop.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Chris McDonald, "Nü Metal," Grove Music Online. (September 2014): 1.

From its initial release to the present day, Linkin Park's In the End hails as one of the band's greatest hits. The harmonic progression used in the piece reflects many standard rock progressions, but by using a score,<sup>17</sup> one can find enough complexities to warrant some further study; therefore, the first outcome for In the End is for students to identify and label harmonies with lead-sheet notation. First, the instructor should distribute the score to the class. Then, either individually or in small groups, the instructor will ask the students to complete a lead-sheet analysis. Non-chord tones should be slashed in the score. Depending on the class's skill level, seventh and ninth chords may either be reduced to whichever triad or seventh chord the student wishes (for example, two triads could be pulled from the seventh chord C-Flat Major 7: C-Flat Major and E-Flat Minor), or if the class is familiar with extended tertian harmonies, they may be identified as they are. For the sake of both time and simplicity, the students may be informed that every measure contains one harmony aside from the following measures which contain two: twenty-eight, thirty-two, forty-six, and fifty-one. After this step, the instructor can discuss the harmonic progression with the class. If seventh and ninth chords were reduced to a single triad, the instructor can ask the students to defend their choice of triad within the context of the music. For more advanced classes that understand these extended harmonies, the instructor may investigate the voiceleading between chords or simply move onto the next outcome: students will recognize tonic and dominant harmonies.

The second outcome of this lesson is more of an add-on to the first. *In the End's* harmonic progression uses lots of tonic triads, but saves dominant harmonies for specific transitional moments:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> The score I used was purchased from https://www.musicnotes.com.

Intro:	[E-Flat Minor - D-Flat Major - C-Flat Major7 - D-Flat Major] x 2
Verses:	[E-Flat Minor 9 - G-Flat Major/D-Flat - C-Flat Major - D-Flat Major 9] x 2
	[E-Flat Minor - D-Flat Major - C-Flat Major 7 - D-Flat Major] x 2
Choruses:	[E-Flat Minor - G-Flat Major - D-Flat Major - C-Flat Major, D-Flat Major]
	[E-Flat Minor - G-Flat Major - D-Flat Major - C-Flat Major, <u>B-Flat 5th]</u>
Bridge:	[E-Flat Minor - D-Flat Major - C-Flat Major 7 - D-Flat Major] x 2
	[E-Flat Minor - G-Flat Major - D-Flat Major - C-Flat Major, D-Flat Major]
	[E-Flat Minor - G-Flat Major - D-Flat Major - C-Flat Major, <u>B-Flat 5th]</u>

Since the lead-sheet analysis will have been completed by this point, the students can simply label all of the tonic and dominant harmonies. In this piece, dominant harmonies still function as expected and resolve to tonic, though the quality of the dominant here is slightly ambiguous. Here, the instructor can play a recording for the class as they follow along with their scores. After the listening, he or she can ask the questions laid out in the assessment of the sample plan shown below:

# In the End - Sample Lesson Plan 1

Outcome 1: Students will identify harmonies using lead-sheet notation.

Action Step: Hand out the score for *In the End* and have the class do a lead-sheet analysis (There is one harmony per bar with the exception of bars 28, 32, 46, and 51).

Action Step: Have students draw slashes through non-chord tones. For extended harmonies like 7ths or 9ths, allow the students to pull whichever triad or seventh chord they wish. Later discussion will look into which is a better choice. *This is dependent on the abilities of the class to identify 7th or 9th chords. If 7ths and 9ths are*  familiar, these can be identified as such.

Assessment: Once the task is complete, briefly discuss the students' analyses to make sure the harmonies were labeled correctly. For the aforementioned 7th and 9th chords, ask the students to defend their choice of harmony.

Outcome 2: Students will recognize tonic and dominant harmonies.

Action Step: Once the lead sheet is done, have the students identify all tonic and dominant chords.

Assessment: Listen to the piece, then ask the class the following questions:

- The tonic harmonies during the Chorus (starting at bar 24) are missing the mediant. Why do we still hear the harmony as being minor?
- 2. There are two instances of a dominant harmony in this piece. Are the B-Flat chords major or minor dominant harmonies? The third is lacking, so how do we know which one?
- 3. What is the most regular harmonic rhythm of the piece? When it changes, how does it change the feeling of the music?

Many styles of popular music are intentionally produced and mixed to maintain a consistent amplitude and balance. While this works great for its intended purpose, the downside is a dwindling number of popular songs that make great use of dynamics. This is especially true in hip-hop, but *In the End* is an exception that uses dynamic contrast to great effect. The relationship between the formal divisions as well as points of high and low tension and dynamics is relatively easy to hear in this piece. To represent this relationship, the outcome for my second sample plan is for students to recognize dynamics as a tool for musical progression.

While the first lesson plan was based more on what was seen on the score, this plan will begin with two listenings. With the score at hand, the student will write in *piano, mezzo-forte,* and *forte* 

indications throughout the piece. For ease of navigating the piece, the instructor should have the major sections of the piece labeled for the students. After both listenings, students will either individually or in pairs investigate and explain the musical devices that Linkin Park used to evoke dynamic contrast.

#### In the End - Sample Lesson Plan 2

Outcome: Students will recognize dynamics as a tool for progression in a piece of music.

Action Step: Students will listen to the piece and add *piano, mezzo-forte*, and *forte* markings to the score. Sections of the piece will be provided.

Action Step: After a second listening, the students will explain different musical devices used to increase or decrease the dynamics.

Assessment: Questions:

- 1. Where do notable changes in dynamics occur?
- 2. What devices are used to increase/decrease volume?

While this lesson is a bit shorter, it allows for some flexibility with the allocation of class time. The discussion on the musical elements that contribute to dynamics may evolve into a broader discussion on the relationship between dynamics and texture since orchestration plays a considerable role in the piece.

# Liquid Sovereignty - Eyedea & Abilities

Eyedea & Abilities was a duo consisting of MC, Mike Larsen (Eyedea), and DJ, Gregory "Max" Keltgen (Abilities). The pair began competing in various rap battle circuits in 1997 and gained notoriety after winning freestyle battles in the 1999 Scribble Jam and 2000 Blaze-Battle World Championships.<sup>18</sup> *Liquid Sovereignty* is the seventh track on their first album, *First Born*, which the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Marisa Brown, "Eyedea & Abilities Biography," *All Music*. (Accessed December 2023).

duo released in 2001. In regards to the stylistic norms of hip-hop during the early 2000s, the piece is strikingly minimalistic in a number of ways. First, the track contains a one-rhyme structure throughout its entire five and a half minute run. Second, the texture is very scarce, containing only a bassline, a light drum track, the ambient sampling of rain, Eyedea's lyrics, and the occasional guitar riff. Each of these strands repeats the same rhythm for the entire duration of the work. Just about every aspect of this piece is minimal, making every slight change in lyrics or texture hold a great deal of weight. The simplicity of the work also makes it an easy choice for pedagogy.

The piece's strict treatment of rhythm within each of its voices makes it a great candidate for rhythmic dictation; therefore, the first outcome is for students to isolate and transcribe these rhythms by listening. The instructor should provide the following information to the students: the four different linear strands in question (Eyedea, the hi-hat, the guitar riff, and the bassline) and the fact that each strand repeats the same rhythm for the entirety of the work. Using a lyric sheet with the sections clearly laid out, listen from 0:00 - 2:02 and ask the students to listen for Eyedea's line and transcribe four bars worth of the rhythm. Listen to the same excerpt again for the hi-hat, then again for the remaining parts. Depending on the level of the class, the instructor may choose to provide the bassline to the class due to how difficult it might be to hear beat two. For the more advanced students, the instructor may foreshadow which lines the subsequent listenings will cover in case they wish to work ahead. The transcription should be done on a handout containing four staves stacked on top of each other. This will allow for students to practice vertically aligning different rhythmic strands properly.

The second outcome for this lesson is for students to recognize simple and compound divisions of the beat. Once all of the rhythmic strands are notated, the instructor may ask the students to

identify which strands contain beat divisions of two and three. Then, the students can rate each beat of a measure in terms of rhythmic complexity. As shown in the figure below, the order of beats from most complex to least complex is 2, 3, 4, 1.



Liquid Sovereignty - Rhythm Chart<sup>19</sup>

To assess the students' understanding, the instructor can recreate this exercise with another piece of music, be it hip-hop or not. Alternatively, he or she may opt to compose a short exercise that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> The "X" noteheads in Eyedea's part indicate approximate pitch.

accomplishes the same task.

### Liquid Sovereignty - Sample Lesson Plan 1

Outcome 1: Students will recognize and notate rhythmic linear strands within a complex texture.

Action Step: Provide the students with these four linear strands that are present in the texture:

- Eyedea (voice)
- The Hi-Hat
- The Guitar Riff
- The Bassline

Action Step: Listen from 0:00 - 2:02 and have the students notate four bars worth of Eyedea's part. Listen to the same excerpt for the hi-hat, and the guitar riff (bassline is optional). Inform students that they may work ahead if they succeed early in notating a strand.

Outcome 2: Students will recognize simple and compound divisions of the beat.

Action Step: Have the students identify which strands are simple and which are compound. Then, rate each beat in terms of complexity.

Assessment: Have the students complete the same exercise with another musical example.

Another lesson allows for focus on the form of the piece. *Liquid Sovereignty's* global structure is obscured to the listener due to the similarities between each section, but it does have a clear form. One interpretation is to diagram the piece as a seven-part rondo (ABACABA). For this lesson, the outcome is for students to examine the reasons for labeling major formal divisions. To begin, the instructor will provide a lyric sheet containing the formal labels and instrumentations of each section. The figure below represents the sheet with the lyrics removed for space:

Intro -		Hook <b>(A)</b> -	Verse 1 (B) Guitar Riff
Hook <b>(A*)</b> Guitar Riff	-	Instrumental Break <b>(trans)</b> <sup>20</sup> ·	- Verse 2 (C) Drums Re-enter
Hook <b>(A)</b> Guitar Riff	-	Verse 3 (B') Guitar Riff -	Hook <b>(A)</b> - Outro

In my analysis, the use of orchestration played a large role in the labeling process. Verse 2 is labeled as its own section rather than as a variation of the first verse for two main reasons. First, the only instrumental break in the entire piece occurs immediately before this section, making the entrance of the second verse stick out compared to the entrance of the third. Second, the instrumentation is strikingly different than anywhere else in the piece. The break introduces the glassy chords which carry over into the second verse. Once the third hook enters, these chords disappear. The disc spin sound that only occurs during the Intro returns as well. The second verse is also the only section that drops the backbeat for a considerable amount of time. Other labeling concerns include the asterisk next to the second A section and the B'. The second hook has slightly different text towards the end of its section, but since it begins the same way as the others lyrically, I avoided the prime indication. For Verse 3, the distinction of B' as opposed to D refers to its nearly identical treatment as the first verse. While the second verse stands out orchestrationally, the third verse is quite similar to the first, differing only in lyrical content.

Once the handout is provided, the instructor will play the piece and simply ask the students to follow along with their lyric sheets. Before giving a second listening, the instructor will task the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Contains the disc spin sound, glassy chords, and omits the drum backbeat. These also apply to Verse 2.

students with answering questions that regard specific aspects of this analysis. Some potential questions are outlined in the following sample lesson plan:

### Liquid Sovereignty - Sample Lesson Plan 2

Outcome: Students will examine the reasons for labeling major formal divisions within a piece of music.

Action Step: Using a lyric sheet with the formal sections and orchestration provided, students will listen to the piece.

Action Step: Listen to the piece again and ask the students to consider the following questions:

- 1. What characteristics define the A sections? Why does the second Hook contain an asterisk?
- 2. Why are Verses 1 and 3 labeled as B, but Verse 2 is labeled as C?
- 3. What parts of the texture make defining sections somewhat difficult?

Assessment: Using the same piece, either as homework or a brief discussion, provide another formal analysis of *Liquid Sovereignty* and have the students defend the new analysis. Examples: AAAAAA, ABA, ABABABA.

The piece's sparse texture and heavy use of repetition allow for a number of formal interpretations. Different analyses rely on focusing on different aspects of the music - some focus only on the general rhythm and texture with no consideration for text, such as AAAAAAA. Others focus entirely on the Verse/Hook relationship (ABABABA) or group collections of hooks and verses (ABA). The goal for these exercises is not for students to speculate their own formal analyses, but rather to use objective arguments to support various labels.

### Sawt Nsaa - Soultana

Hip-hop did not take long to become an international phenomenon after its initial conception in the United States. In a similar fashion to many artists in the United States, hip-hop became an outlet for political activism for a diverse array of cultures around the world. In particular, the Middle East saw a rise in hip-hop artists such as Malikah, Shadia Monsour, and Eslam Jawaad; all of whom appropriated the style to promote political and societal change within their respective cultures.<sup>21</sup> Yusra Oukaf, born in 1986, was brought up in Casablanca, Morocco and goes by the stage name, Soultana. Soultana stated in a presentation given in 2012 that in her country, it was not socially acceptable for women to sing or dance during her upbringing, and her art originally aimed to speak out against these social norms.<sup>22</sup> She has since achieved considerable notoriety, both nationally and globally.

Soultana's 2010 single, *Sawt Nssa*, combines pitched and non-pitched linear strands within its texture. Throughout the piece, there is a repeating melodic gesture in the instrumental backbeat that is easily identifiable, making it a good choice for the first outcome, melodic dictation. The melodic gesture is consistently performed by the piano from the beginning to around 2:02. Before the lesson begins, the instructor will provide the students with a blank staff containing eight bars with some courtesy pitches available. Then, the students will listen from 0:00 - 2:02 twice and notate eight bars worth of the piano melody. Following this exercise, the students can then dictate the violin's melody which occurs from 0:52 - 1:15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Angela S. Williams, *Hip Hop Harem* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2020): 45-53.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Institute for Public Diplomacy and Global Communication. "Soultana on Life as a Female Artist," YouTube, February 20, 2015, video.

After both melodies have been dictated, the instructor can shift focus to the second outcome of the lesson. Since most of the melodic content is similar, the second outcome for this lesson will have students describe how timbre and rhythmic alteration construct a heterophonic texture. First, the instructor should define or review the concept of heterophony. One way to define the term is by describing heterophony as "a melody with its variation," which I find quite fitting for this specific exercise, though any standard definition of the term will work. With the previous dictation examples at hand, the instructor can ask the students to compare and contrast the two examples and defend the notion that these two melodies create a heterophonic texture. For their defense, the students may use timbre and slight differences in rhythmic content. Later in the piece, a synth line appears in the texture with melodic material that is slightly more varied than the violin melody. To assess the student's understanding of heterophony, the instructor can play the recording and ask the students to defend both for and against the case for heterophony between the synth line and the original piano melody.

#### Sawt Nssa - Sample Lesson Plan

Outcome 1: Students will notate melodies aurally.

Action Step: Hand a sheet containing a blank staff with eight bars provided to the students. Listen to the piece from 0:00 - 2:02 twice and ask students to notate the melody performed by the piano.

Assessment: Ask students to notate the melody in the violin from 0:52 - 1:15. Outcome 2: Students will describe the relationship between layers in a heterophonic texture by means of timbre and rhythmic alterations.

Action Step: Define/review the term, heterophony, for the class.

Action Step: After notating both the piano and violin melodies, ask the students to analyze the two side by side and defend their relationship as a heterophonic texture. What elements make the two melodies similar? What makes them different?

Assessment: Provide the students with the notated melody of the synth line that enters at 2:05. Listen to the entire piece and have the students defend for and against this melody as an example of heterophony against the piano melody. Is the melody completely different, or is it a variation of the piano melody?

# Now or Never - Kendrick Lamar

When discussing hip-hop in the twenty-first century, one finds it almost impossible to avoid mentioning Kendrick Lamar. He is the winner of many awards, some of which include thirteen Grammy awards, seven BET awards, seven NAACP awards, and the Pulitzer Prize in 2017 for his album, *DAMN*.<sup>23</sup> Kendrick's ability to layer many complex musical ideas at once makes his music an excellent resource for exploring texture. Texture is the primary force driving the form and narrative in his 2012 song, *Now or Never*. The piece contains prominent musical lines that can be easily identified by any level of musician without significant effort, and the depth in which the instructor chooses to explore can produce three outcomes for lesson planning.

The first outcome is for students to identify the major formal sections using obvious textural shifts as the focal point of change. Listening to the piece with a timer, students will document time-stamps when they believe the piece has progressed to a new section. The criteria for a change of formal section will be notable changes in orchestration or linear strands. For further clarity of the action step, the instructor may give the class the first shift at 0:23 when Kendrick exits the texture and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Lauron Kehrer. "Lamar [Duckworth] Kendrick." Grove Music Online (December 2019): 1.

Mary J. Blige enters. An additional action step involving the documentation of which instruments the students hear could be implemented for a more advanced exercise.

The second outcome for examining this piece is for students to be able to identify and distinguish specific linear strands within a texture. After completing the action step for the first outcome, the instructor can have the students list which instruments or voices they heard. After a discussion, the instructor can provide the class with a graph containing the formal divisions and the linear strands of the work. I have chosen to recognize the seven distinct lines shown in the graph below with the following time-stamp divisions. Using the graph, students can listen to the track and identify which strands are present, which are absent, and which only appear partially:

Kendrick										
Kendrick doubling										
Mary J. Blige										
Female Chorus										
Synth										
Piano										
Drum/Bass										
[Time stamps]	0:00 - 0:23	0:23 - 0:41	0:41 - 1:00	1:00 - 1:35	1:35 - 1:53	1:53 - 2:11	2:11 - 2:48	2:48 - 3:18	3:18 - 3:55	3:55 - 4:15

Now or Never - Texture Chart

Shaded: Voice is present Not shad

Not shaded: Voice is absent

Lightly shaded: Partial use of voice

Depending on the level of the class, this task may be divided among groups. Whether the student is asked to complete the task partially or entirely, a discussion will be held after this action step is completed. The class discussion of this piece should serve two purposes. First, the instructor should guide the class through the progression of *Now or Never* through textural means. The shifts in linear strands create formal divisions of the work, and there are patterns present that show related material in the piece. One striking moment is the eighth time stamp, (2:48-3:18). Here, the texture does not follow the pattern and features a few special groupings that do not occur anywhere else. This is the only section in the piece where both Mary J. Blige and the female chorus occur. The synth and the drum and bass track are also only absent during this section.

The second purpose of the discussion is to incorporate other musical elements into the conversation. Differences in texture can be manufactured through a number of other musical elements, such as pitch, rhythm, timbre, articulation, and dynamics. *Now or Never* uses all of these to distinguish each musical line. For example, Kendrick's voice is distinguishable from Blige's through differences in pitch (both by register and melodic content) and timbre. With specific regards to hip-hop, the distinction between Kendrick's spoken word and Blige's singing is an important one. When the two voices occur together in the fifth section (1:35-1:53), they are also distinguished by having different rhythms.

#### Now or Never - Sample Lesson Plan 1

Outcome 1: Students will identify major formal divisions by hearing changes in texture.

Action Step: Discuss with the class what constitutes a change in texture:

- Changes in which instruments or voices are present.
- The first change occurs at 0:23, give the students this information

Action Step: Listen to the piece twice with a timer visible and have the students write timestamps for when the texture changes.

Assessment: Discuss the class's findings, then clarify what the divisions are: *Final Timestamps:* 

0:23 0:41 1:00 1:35 1:53 2:11 2:48 3:18 3:55 4:15 Outcome 2: Students will identify different linear strands within a texture.

Action Step: Define "linear strand" as a single instrument or voice within a texture.

Action Step: Provide one of the strands to the class, for example: the female chorus.

Action Step: Listen to the piece once and have the students write down which strands they heard. Discuss the findings with the class then proceed to the next action step.

Action Step: Provide the following seven strands: Kendrick, Kendrick doubling, Mary J. Blige, female chorus, synth, piano, and drums/bass. Then, have the students listen again and shade in which strands are present for each timestamp.

Action Step: Discuss with the class which strands were shaded and how it affects the progression of the piece.

Assessment: Perform the same task on another piece that utilizes texture in a similar way.

For a more advanced class, a second lesson plan can be used for students to identify, distinguish and explain different types of textures, such as heterophony, melody-and-accompaniment, homophony and polyphony. Different strands within the texture of the piece engage with other voices in very specific ways. For example, Kendrick and Blige's lines are melodies, and they create a melody-and-accompanimental texture against the drum and bass track and piano. The repetitive nature of the latter two strands make them more accompanimental to the more dynamic strands in the singers. The female chorus on its own creates a homophonic texture, but serves as a single idea when juxtaposed against the piano and synth. Kendrick's doubling to his own voice creates a heterophonic texture.

#### Now or Never - Sample Lesson Plan 2

Outcome: Students will identify and explain heterophonic, homophonic, melody-andaccompaniment, and polyphonic textures.

Action Step: Define or review each texture for the class.

Action Step: With the shaded chart from the second lesson, assign students or pairs of students specific pairs of strands. For example: Kendrick and Kendrick doubling; Mary J. Blige and the piano; the drum/bass track and the chorus; etc. Listen to the piece and have each student/pair identify the texture as heterophonic/homophonic/melody-and-accompaniment/polyphonic.

Assessment: Discuss each student's/pair's findings with the class.

For a broader discussion on texture types, students may benefit from assigning "melodic," "harmonic" or "rhythmic" roles to each linear strand. I am arbitrarily defining these terms based on their relationships with the overall texture of the piece. Melodic roles apply to strands that contain a single line and are considered the primary lines of their respective sections. The clear melodic strands are Kendrick and Blige, though melodic characteristics also occur in the piano and synth when they double the main melodic motive. Having students listen for moments when these instruments double the melodic lines is a good exercise for hearing their shift in textural function. Harmonic roles apply to strands that provide harmonic support to melodic strands through the use of chords. These include the piano and the chorus, though there is also room for discussion on the bassline's harmonic role in the texture. Finally, rhythmic roles are strands that, while possibly pitched, serve a primarily rhythmic function. This most notably includes the drum and bass track, but the rhythmic nature of rapping could be interpreted as being primarily rhythmic instead of melodic. My purpose for this discussion is not to reinvent established musical terms, but rather to provide a loose template to discuss how the linear strands interact with each other inside a dense texture. Knowing the piano serves a harmonic role can help students identify its position within a melody-and-accompaniment texture, or defining Kendrick's voice as a "melodic" role rather than a supportive "rhythmic" role despite not using definite pitch can help contextualize the role of the rapper within the texture.

# XO Tour Llif3 - Lil Uzi Vert

Since the turn of the century, hip-hop began seeing faster and more diverse shifts in style and artistic vision. While rappers of the golden era placed their focus on intricate rhyme schemes and word play, many rappers of the 2000s and 2010s shifted their focus to create specific types of sound. Lil Uzi Vert came into international acclaim after the release of 2015 album, *Luv is Rage*, which garnered the rapper a record deal with Atlantic Records. Lil Uzi's music incorporates a fusion of hip-hop with a punk rock aesthetic, commonly referred to as "emo rap." The artist regularly fluctuates between rapping and singing in the "emo" style which is similar to the singing styles of pop-punk groups like Panic! at the Disco or My Chemical Romance. Lil Uzi creates musical tension through the many types of sound they produce in their 2017 song, *XO Tour Llif3*, which warrants investigation.

The alteration between pitched singing and "non-pitched" rapping challenges preconceived notions on what defines a melody, so for the first outcome, students will identify melodies in both traditional and nontraditional contexts. First, the instructor must define "melody" for the class. This definition must be universal to all styles of music. After providing a definition, the instructor should follow up with conventional stylistic tendencies of a melody in the Western classical tradition. I have provided a list of these in the sample lesson plan. My choices specifically focus on melodic conventions for part writing, but broader conventions could be used instead.

Once this step is complete, the instructor can administer lyric sheets and allow the students to listen to the piece. Then, for two more listenings, the students should mark each line of text under one of three categories: 1. conventionally melodic, 2. partially conventionally melodic, and 3. not conventionally melodic. Next, the instructor can spark discussion on the students' analyses. From there, the instructor can go line by line and select moments for discussion. Perhaps there will be some disagreement on the melodic content of a line, or the instructor may want to highlight how Lil Uzi controls their melody in a particular passage. The assessment for this lesson could go in a number of different directions. For my sample plan, I chose to study another piece of music in the same way as *XO Tour Llif3*. This plan can work with any vocal piece, such as another hip-hop piece in a similar style or a contemporary classical work that uses non-standard vocal techniques. The *sprechstimme* technique found in the works of Alban Berg or Arnold Schönberg could add a new layer to the expansion of what constitutes a melody.

### XO Tour Llif3 - Sample Lesson Plan

Outcome: Students will identify melodies in both traditional and nontraditional contexts.

Action Step: Define melody for the class and provide traditional conventions of melodic writing in classical music. General tendencies of melodic writing include:

- Conjunct motion, mostly stepwise
- If skips or leaps do occur, they are usually followed with a step in the opposite direction
- Mostly diatonic
- Rhythmically consistent
- Within a specific range (usually does not exceed an octave)

Action Step: Provide lyric sheets to the class, then listen to the piece.

Action Step: Listen to the piece two more times. For these listenings, have the students mark each line of text as belonging to one of three categories:

- 1. The line is conventionally melodic
- 2. The line contains some conventions of melody
- 3. The line contains little to no conventions of melody

Action Step: Discuss each student's findings. Choose a handful of moments throughout the piece and have the students defend their categorizations for lines. For lines that fall under the second category, have students defend as both conventional and non-conventional melodies.

Assessment: Choose another piece that challenges the conventions of melodic writing. This could be another hip-hop piece, or it can be a contemporary classical piece, such as a work containing *sprechstimme*.

By investigating the nature of melody in a piece like this, the students can gain a deeper and more fundamental understanding of what constitutes a melody. With music in the current age evolving further and further beyond the conventions of the past, the students can remain grounded in their understanding of melody in any style.

### Lift Yourself - Kanye West

Kanye West is undoubtedly one of today's most highly regarded yet most controversial rappers. His contributions to the style throughout his nearly thirty-year career cannot be understated, though the artist has experienced quite a bit of backlash for both his political leanings and more recent anti-semetic remarks. While I do not believe his controversies cannot, and should not, be ignored, I do believe that if we can separate the music of Richard Wagner or the theoretical contributions of Heinrich Schenker from the behaviors and beliefs that they held, then we as educators should be able to do the same for Kanye.

Possibly one of Kanye's least offensive works is his 2018 single, *Lift Yourself*. While likely intended as some form of musical joke, the piece is quite cleverly crafted, notably in his use of both metric and beat syncopations. I have created two sample plans for this piece to explore both types of syncopation by means of rhythmic dictation.

The first outcome is for students to identify syncopation against the beat. The recurring bassline is the focus for this exercise, so for the first action step of my sample plan, I force the students to engage with the bassline by specifically listening for when it is and is not present in the texture. After the first listening, the instructor should ask the students if they heard the recurring bassline figure, then provide the instructions for the second listening. For listening number two, the students are tasked with marking time stamps for the entering and exiting of the bassline. Students should easily identify the following events:

After this step, the students should be well acquainted with the bassline, and the instructor can ask the students to notate the rhythm. For simplicity, I decided to provide the students two potential options that could easily be confused as one another:

The difference between these two rhythms is subtle, but displaying both provides the instructor a chance to engage the students with some thorough dictation. By counting sixteenth note subdivisions, the second rhythm can be identified. From there, the students can be asked to identify which beat the figure syncopates and which note within the figure is accented.

# Lift Yourself - Sample Lesson Plan 1

Outcome 1: Students will notate rhythmic figures aurally.

Outcome 2: Students will hear and identify syncopation against the beat.

Action Step: Listen to the piece with the class. After the listening, familiarize the class with the bassline.

Action Step: On a second listening, have the students listen to the piece with a timer present. Then have the students write timestamps for events where the bassline figure either enters or exits the texture. Tell the class that there are five events of this nature.

Action Step: On the board, provide two options for the bassline. Discuss which one the students heard. If there is disagreement, listen to a section containing the bassline and ask students to hear it as both options. Ask the students to internally count 16th notes to identify the correct option.

Assessment: Have the students answer the following questions:

- 1. Which beats does the bass track syncopate?
- 2. One of the three notes within the bassline is accented. Which one, and how does it impact the syncopation of the figure?

Based on the smaller scope of the first lesson, the second may be used as a second part to the first. The second outcome is for students to identify syncopation against the meter. Kanye performs a short eight-bar verse towards the end of the piece (1:57 - 2:17). The length and limited use of rhythmic figures render it a great example to use for rhythmic dictation. To begin, the instructor can provide a chart containing all of the rests, lyrics, and bar lines of the verse. A table of possible rhythms can be provided to keep the action step from being too advanced. For my sample plan, I chose to provide a table containing all the rhythms used in the figure. Shown below is a representation of the completed rhythm for this section:

# Lift Yourself - "These bars"



The triplet eighth notes serve as a recurring upbeat motive in this passage. The metric placement of this motive shifts regularly which in turn emphasizes different beats as the downbeat. In

bar one, the triplet emphasizes beat three, but in bar two, the motive shifts and emphasizes beat two. By shifting this motive, Kanye obscures the downbeat. By drawing bar lines before each quarter note (most of which occur after the triplet eighths), the students can see the new downbeats that are created through metric syncopation. One element of feeling metric syncopation having the rhythm reflect a meter that differs from the written meter. One exercise that the instructor can assign is to have the students notate these new bar lines and write in the implied time signatures of the new bars. Shown below is the end result:



*Lift Yourself* - "These Bars" with syncopated bar lines<sup>24</sup>

In this example, dotted rhythms are related to the triplets by functioning as upbeats to the quarter notes. I added the final bar line based on how I heard the final two eighth notes, but this could be framed as a discussion with the class. Regardless of the details that the instructor may or may not

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Dashed bar lines indicate the original meter of 4/4

agree with in my analysis, this exercise can be fruitful for the students to visualize how syncopation against the meter suggests other meters to create metric tension.

# Lift Yourself - Sample Lesson Plan 2

Outcome 1: Students will notate rhythmic figures aurally.

Action Step: Provide the students with a chart containing the eight measures of Kanye's verse (1:57 - 2:17), rests, and a table of rhythmic units. (The one instance of a dotted sixteenth with a thirty-second may also be provided).

Assessment: Listen to the piece and have the students notate the rhythm of this 8 bar passage.

Outcome 2: Students will hear and identify syncopation against the meter.

Action Step: With their chart filled in, have the students draw new bar lines after every triplet. Once completed, have the students write in new time signatures to account for the new barlines, ignoring the original barlines.

Assessment: Discuss: How does the metrical placement of the triplet affect how we hear the meter?

This particular piece can be used as a great example of using humor to keep the class engaged with the subject material.

#### Potential Issues with Hip-hop in the Classroom

While I have made the case that hip-hop is a style that can fulfill the educational outcomes of music theory courses to the same level as the traditional canon, the style is not without its faults. First and foremost, the genre is infamous for its explicit content. There are many staples of the genre that I could not include in my sample lessons simply due to the lack of appropriate content. I do not wish to undermine the many great artists that serve as the pillars of hip-hop and rap, such as the Wu Tang

Clan, the members of N.W.A., Tupac, Notorious B.I.G., Eminem, Jay-Z, and many others.

Additionally, I omitted entire subgenres due to their proclivity of not only foul language, but highly mature lyrical content. As language restrictions lightened on releases in the last decade, more modern subgenres like trap metal or drill rap became too vulgar for classroom use, but they explore their respective artforms in very innovative and fascinating ways. Perhaps in the right context, these works can receive their proper attention, but for the undergraduate classroom, those options are more limited. However, many "clean" versions of these pieces are readily available online, provided the example in question merely has a few bad words.

The second issue that arises with using hip-hop is a similar problem that exists when using any popular style in the music theory classroom. At the time of writing this paper, very few aspiring hip-hop musicians are attending music schools at the collegiate level, opting instead to learn from peers or obtaining degrees and certificates in sound engineering or pursuing other areas of study. In regards to performance, music schools in the United States focus heavily on classical and jazz styles. Since the majority of the repertoire being assigned to students for performance falls into one of these two styles, the emphasis on this repertoire in the music theory classroom is logical. While at this point in time, I am not pushing for a radical shift in the canon, I do believe that representation from various styles is important for several reasons. First, just as studying the familiar repertoire can reinforce the study of particular outcomes, the same is true for its opposite. By incorporating a style that is so fundamentally different like hip-hop, the student can explore the same outcomes in a new context. Furthermore, hip-hop may serve specific outcomes stronger than classical music, and by studying these elements, they can be harkened back to the canon. While we tend to focus on harmonic analysis when dealing

with the music of Mozart or Beethoven, these composers were just as well crafted in their use of rhythm, texture, and timbre. By studying a style that uses these elements as its primary mode of musical progression and narrative, the works of the canon can be appreciated for their secondary elements.

### Conclusion

The benefits of incorporating hip-hop into the classroom definitely outweigh the potential faults. First, hip-hop is a highly popular style, so its presence in the classroom can spark interest from the students. Second, students can use the tools they are learning to analyze classical music and apply them to different styles. Third, students can gain a stronger understanding of the traditional repertoire by recontextualizing the learning outcomes with music that, on the surface, seems entirely unrelated.

As scholars and educators of music, we are obligated to dive deeper into the musical analysis of hip-hop. There remains a significant population that continues to disregard the genre as a legitimate style of music. It is not up to the musical academics to determine what is and is not "music," rather it is our responsibility to investigate and explain the mechanisms of how different musics operate. By pushing for further study and incorporating the repertoire into the music theory classroom, we can give hip-hop the dignity and respect it already deserves. Studying styles of music that are fundamentally different from what we are used to hearing in the classroom further reinforces the outcomes in ways that provide students with new perspectives. While the focus of this particular approach was hip-hop, my hope is that the methods used here may be used universally for any style of music.

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### Appendix of Sample Lesson Plans

1.	And You Know That	9.	Liquid Sovereignty 1
2.	Shake Your Rump	10.	Liquid Sovereignty 2
3.	Stop in the Name 1	11.	Sawt Nssa
4.	Stop in the Name 2	12.	Now or Never 1
5.	Guess Who's Back 1	13.	Now or Never 2
6.	Guess Who's Back 2	14.	XO Tour Llif3
7.	In the End 1	15.	Lift Yourself 1
8.	In the End 2	16.	Lift Yourself 2

# 1. And You Know That: Sample Lesson Plan

Outcome 1: Students will identify instrumental strands within a musical groove.

Action Step: Define groove for the class, then discuss for a few minutes on what musical elements the students believe may contribute to a groove. Answers may fit into broader categories of texture, timbre, rhythm, or meter.

Action Step: Listen from 0:00 - 1:32 (The beginning to the second chorus). Ask the students to identify the instruments that belong to the groove. After the students make their lists, discuss the findings together and write out a list of the instruments they found.

Outcome 2: Students will describe the nature of each linear strand within a groove in terms of rhythm and meter.

Action Step: Listen again with the class and have them categorize each instrument in terms of consistency within the groove. Which are constant? Which change? Action Step: Listen to the excerpt again, then have the students make note of the rhythmic and metric complexity of each strand. Which have simpler rhythms? Which have denser rhythms and/or are metrically syncopated? How do the beats divide for each: simple or compound? Assessment: As a take home assignment, this exercise can be completed with another song. Some examples within the style include *Rapper's Delight* - The Sugarhill Gang, *Hard Times* - Run-D.M.C., and *I Can Give You More* - LL Cool J.

#### 2. Shake Your Rump: Sample Lesson Plan

Outcome 1: Students will recognize and identify the major sections of a piece of music.

Action Step: Hand out lyric sheet for *Shake Your Rump* to the class.

Action Step: Explain to the class that there are 7 sections: a one-bar introduction, three main sections containing text, two instrumental breaks, and the outro.

Action Step: Listen to the piece once and have the students draw lines where the major formal divisions occur on the lyric sheet. Also, if they are not provided, have the students write where the instrumental breaks occur.

Assessment: Discuss the primary musical devices that the Beastie Boys use to highlight the major divisions. Listen from 0:00 - 0:58 to discuss the nature of the instrumental breaks.

Outcome 2: Students will identify phrases within larger formal sections.

Action Step: With the major formal divisions available to the students, listen to the piece and have the students count measures for each section. The introduction is 1 bar, and the first verse is 16 bars. Action Step: Once the measures of each section are documented, listen again and create phrases within the Verses. Each Verse should contain two phrases.

Assessment: Reveal the phrase structure to the class and discuss how the Beastie Boys distinguish phrases through texture. Discuss the phrase structure of Verse 3 which contains 20 bars instead of 16. Is the division for Verse 3 (12+8) or (8+12)?

### 3. Stop in the Name...: Sample Lesson Plan 1

Outcome: Students will recognize and explain metrical syncopation by comparing text phrasing and metrical beats.

Action Step: With a lyric sheet containing the metrical beats, listen to the piece and have the students conduct a four pattern.

Action Step: Have the students draw bar lines before each downbeat. Circle downbeats that occur first in their respective lines. (These are moments when the text and music agree on the downbeat). Action Step: For each line, write in a new time signature that corresponds with the number of beats within the line. Line one is 3/4, line two is 2/4, etc.

Action Step: Listen to the piece again and have the students conduct the changing patterns suggested by their new time signatures.

Assessment: Provide the students with another piece of music that contains metrical syncopation. Have the students draw bar lines before the suggested downbeats and have them use information in the score to justify their choices.

#### 4. Stop in the Name...: Sample Lesson Plan 2

Outcome 1: Students will recognize changes in rhythmic density.

Action Step: Using a lyric sheet with stanzas and metrical beats provided, have the students write the number of syllables within each line of text next to the line.

Action Step: Listen to the piece and have the students focus on the density of Chuck D's rapping while following along with the syllable counts.

Outcome 2: Students will correlate rhythmic tension with formal divisions of a piece.

Action Step: Have the students identify the major sections of the work by drawing lines to separate formal divisions of text.

Assessment: Provide the students with a blank graph and have them fill in the number of syllables for each line. Listen to the piece again with the graph and discuss moments where the density is significantly higher or lower. Discuss how this correlates with the form of the piece.

### 5. Guess Who's Back: Sample Lesson Plan 1

Outcome 1: Students will create formal divisions using changes in rhyme scheme.

Action Step: Provide the students with a lyric sheet of Verse 1. The sheet should include beats above the syllables at which they occur.

Action Step: Listen to Verse 1 (0:00 - 0:45) twice, then have the students highlight each significant rhyme. Rhymes need not be perfect on paper, but they must be heard as significantly similar sounds. Assessment: Have the students use lines to divide the first verse into four sections using rhyme as the criteria.

Outcome 2: Students will recognize shifts in metrical emphasis based on rhyme.

Action Step: Have the students circle beat numbers that are most closely associated with a rhyme. Assessment: Have the students use brackets to divide the piece into collections of lines that emphasize the same or similar beats.

#### 6. Guess Who's Back: Sample Lesson Plan 2

Outcome 1: Students will recognize changes in rhythmic density.

Action Step: Provide a lyric sheet with the rhyme schemes highlighted to the students, then listen to the first verse (0:00 - 0:45) twice. For both listenings, have the students place a marking next to lines that have a significantly higher rate of rhythm than average.

Action Step: Ask the students to document how many syllables are in each line, then listen to the excerpt again for significant increases or decreases in density.

Outcome 2: Students will understand rhyme as a tool for creating rhythmic density.

Action Step: Have the students mark lines containing three or more of the same rhymes within them. Action Step: Listen to the excerpt, then discuss with the students the correlation between rhyme and density. How does the number of rhymes in a line affect how the listener perceives rhythm? Where in the phrase does Rakim tend to use more condensely placed rhymes?

Assessment: Complete this lesson with the second verse of this piece, or use a similar example.

#### 7. In the End: Sample Lesson Plan 1

Outcome 1: Students will identify harmonies using lead-sheet notation.

Action Step: Hand out the score for *In the End* and have the class do a lead-sheet analysis (There is one harmony per bar with the exception of bars 28, 32, 46, and 51).

Action Step: Have students draw slashes through non-chord tones. For extended harmonies like 7ths or 9ths, allow the students to pull whichever triad or seventh chord they wish. Later discussion will look into which is a better choice. *This is dependent on the abilities of the class to identify 7th or 9th chords. If 7ths and 9ths are familiar, these can be identified as such.* 

Assessment: Once the task is complete, briefly discuss the students' analyses to make sure the harmonies were labeled correctly. For the aforementioned 7th and 9th chords, ask the students to defend their choice of harmony.

Outcome 2: Students will recognize tonic and dominant harmonies.

Action Step: Once the lead sheet is done, have the students identify all tonic and dominant chords. Assessment: Listen to the piece, then ask the class the following questions:

- 1. The tonic harmonies during the Chorus (starting at bar 24) are missing the mediant. Why do we still hear the harmony as being minor?
- 2. There are two instances of a dominant harmony in this piece. Are the B-Flat chords major or minor dominant harmonies? The third is lacking, so how do we know which one?
- 3. What is the most regular harmonic rhythm of the piece? When it changes, how does it change the feeling of the music?

### 8. In the End: Sample Lesson Plan 2

Outcome: Students will recognize dynamics as a tool for progression in a piece of music.

Action Step: Students will listen to the piece and add *piano*, *mezzo-forte*, and *forte* markings to the score. Sections of the piece will be provided.

Action Step: After a second listening, the students will explain different musical devices used to increase or decrease the dynamics.

Assessment: Questions:

- 1. Where do notable changes in dynamics occur?
- 2. What devices are used to increase/decrease volume?

# 9. Liquid Sovereignty: Sample Lesson Plan 1

Outcome 1: Students will recognize and notate rhythmic linear strands within a complex texture.

Action Step: Provide the students with these four linear strands that are present in the texture:

- Eyedea (voice)
- The Hi-Hat
- The Guitar Riff
- The Bassline

Action Step: Listen from 0:00 - 2:02 and have the students notate four bars worth of Eyedea's part. Listen to the same excerpt for the hi-hat, and the guitar riff (bassline is optional). Inform students that they may work ahead if they succeed early in notating a strand.

Outcome 2: Students will recognize simple and compound divisions of the beat.

Action Step: Have the students identify which strands are simple and which are compound. Then, rate each beat in terms of complexity.

Assessment: Have the students complete the same exercise with another musical example.

# 10. Liquid Sovereignty: Sample Lesson Plan 2

Outcome: Students will examine the reasons for labeling major formal divisions within a piece of music.

Action Step: Using a lyric sheet with the formal sections and orchestration provided, students will listen to the piece.

Action Step: Listen to the piece again and ask the students to consider the following questions:

- 1. What characteristics define the A sections? Why does the second Hook contain an asterisk?
- 2. Why are Verses 1 and 3 labeled as B, but Verse 2 is labeled as C?
- 3. What parts of the texture make defining sections somewhat difficult?

Assessment: Using the same piece, either as homework or a brief discussion, provide another formal analysis of *Liquid Sovereignty* and have the students defend the new analysis. Examples: AAAAAAA, ABAA, ABABABA.

#### 11. Sawt Nssa: Sample Lesson Plan

Outcome 1: Students will notate melodies aurally.

Action Step: Hand a sheet containing a blank staff with eight bars provided to the students. Listen to the piece from 0:00 - 2:02 twice and ask students to notate the melody performed by the piano. Assessment: Ask students to notate the melody in the violin from 0:52 - 1:15.

Outcome 2: Students will describe the relationship between layers in a heterophonic texture by means of timbre and rhythmic alterations.

Action Step: Define/review the term, heterophony, for the class.

Action Step: After notating both the piano and violin melodies, ask the students to analyze the two side by side and defend their relationship as a heterophonic texture. What elements make the two melodies similar? What makes them different?

Assessment: Provide the students with the notated melody of the synth line that enters at 2:05. Listen to the entire piece and have the students defend for and against this melody as an example of heterophony against the piano melody. Is the melody completely different, or is it a variation of the piano melody?

#### 12. Now or Never: Sample Lesson Plan 1

Outcome 1: Students will identify major formal divisions by hearing changes in texture.

Action Step: Discuss with the class what constitutes a change in texture:

- Changes in which instruments or voices are present.
- The first change occurs at 0:23, give the students this information

Action Step: Listen to the piece twice with a timer visible and have the students write timestamps for when the texture changes.

Assessment: Discuss the class's findings, then clarify what the divisions are:

Final Timestamps: 0:23 0:41 1:00 1:35 1:53 2:11 2:48 3:18 3:55 4:15

Outcome 2: Students will identify different linear strands within a texture.

Action Step: Define "linear strand" as a single instrument or voice within a texture.

Action Step: Provide one of the strands to the class, for example: the female chorus.

Action Step: Listen to the piece once and have the students write down which strands they heard.

Discuss the findings with the class then proceed to the next action step.

Action Step: Provide the following seven strands: Kendrick, Kendrick doubling, Mary J. Blige, female chorus, synth, piano, and drums/bass. Then, have the students listen again and shade in which strands are present for each timestamp.

Action Step: Discuss with the class which strands were shaded and how it affects the progression of the piece.

Assessment: Perform the same task on another piece that utilizes texture in a similar way.

### 13. Now or Never: Sample Lesson Plan 2

Outcome: Students will identify and explain heterophonic, homophonic, melody-and- accompaniment, and polyphonic textures.

Action Step: Define or review each texture for the class.

Action Step: With the shaded chart from the second lesson, assign students or pairs of students specific pairs of strands. For example: Kendrick and Kendrick doubling; Mary J. Blige and the piano; the drum/bass track and the chorus; etc. Listen to the piece and have each student/pair identify the texture as heterophonic/homophonic/melody-and-accompaniment/polyphonic. Assessment: Discuss each student's/pair's findings with the class.

14. XO Tour Llif3: Sample Lesson Plan

Outcome: Students will identify melodies in both traditional and nontraditional contexts.

Action Step: Define melody for the class and provide traditional conventions of melodic writing in classical music. General tendencies of melodic writing include:

- Conjunct motion, mostly stepwise
- If skips or leaps do occur, they are usually followed with a step in the opposite direction
- Mostly diatonic
- Rhythmically consistent

• Within a specific range (usually does not exceed an octave)

Action Step: Provide lyric sheets to the class, then listen to the piece.

Action Step: Listen to the piece two more times. For these listenings, have the students mark each line of text as belonging to one of three categories:

- 1. The line is conventionally melodic
- 2. The line contains some conventions of melody
- 3. The line contains little to no conventions of melody

Action Step: Discuss each student's findings. Choose a handful of moments throughout the piece and have the students defend their categorizations for lines. For lines that fall under the second category, have students defend as both conventional and non-conventional melodies.

Assessment: Choose another piece that challenges the conventions of melodic writing. This could be another hip-hop piece, or it can be a contemporary classical piece, such as a work containing *sprechstimme*.

### 15. Lift Yourself: Sample Lesson Plan 1

Outcome 1: Students will notate rhythmic figures aurally.

Outcome 2: Students will hear and identify syncopation against the beat.

Action Step: Listen to the piece with the class. After the listening, familiarize the class with the bassline. Action Step: On a second listening, have the students listen to the piece with a timer present. Then have the students write timestamps for events where the bassline figure either enters or exits the texture. Tell the class that there are five events of this nature.

Action Step: On the board, provide two options for the bassline. Discuss which one the students heard. If there is disagreement, listen to a section containing the bassline and ask students to hear it as both options. Ask the students to internally count 16th notes to identify the correct option.

Assessment: Have the students answer the following questions:

- 1. Which beats does the bass track syncopate?
- 2. One of the three notes within the bassline is accented. Which one, and how does it impact the syncopation of the figure?

# 16. Lift Yourself: Sample Lesson Plan 2

Outcome 1: Students will notate rhythmic figures aurally.

Action Step: Provide the students with a chart containing the eight measures of Kanye's verse (1:57 - 2:17), rests, and a table of rhythmic units. (The one instance of a dotted sixteenth with a thirty-second may also be provided).

Assessment: Listen to the piece and have the students notate the rhythm of this 8 bar passage.

Outcome 2: Students will hear and identify syncopation against the meter.

Action Step: With their chart filled in, have the students draw new bar lines after every triplet. Once completed, have the students write in new time signatures to account for the new barlines, ignoring the original barlines.

Assessment: Discuss: How does the metrical placement of the triplet affect how we hear the meter?