

Having provided students with their writing prompt, I asked "how are you going to answer this question? how are you going to start?" and then gave them an example using a different piece (Gabriel Fauré's "Après un rêve").

My lecture notes:

1. background on the piece:

Fauré: a French composer, 1845-1924

bridges the time period we're studying—the Common Practice, or the Classical-Romantic period where composers are generally using diatonic and chromatic harm/vl—with the 20th century, developing/expanding a harmonic language that moves beyond it

-a lot like Debussy in that way

-known for his art songs (mélodie); this one is one of the most famous

2. listen to whole piece

3. Discuss my first goal: simply see what's going on—what ideas can I come up with that relate to harmony and voice leading? I'm going to stick to the first page to start.

(talking them through my first impressions of the piece, my first attempts at analysis)

i'm going to start by trying to analyze as diatonic harmony/voice leading, and see how far that gets me:

C minor, first bar 1

let's try to get some big picture harmonies first—so I'll ignore m.2 beat 3.

m.3 FACEbG ??

m.4 BbDFAbC ??? these are some big chords. I can stack them as thirds, but maybe they're 7ths, 9ths, 13ths...cool.

look for a benchmark—a resting place, a cadence.

remembering that m.8 sounded like a stopping point.

m.8 has a G in the bass—is that a V chord in C minor?

yep, a V7. Cool, this could be a half cadence...although I don't want to think about what m.6 chord is yet.

and m.9 goes to a clear i again, for the start of a new phrase.

scanning ahead, in m.16 I see another resting place for the voice, and another V chord in the piano. And then the start of a new phrase in m.17, and a i chord again.

So it seems like there's an overall framework of the basic phrase still working: I've got some potential there.

4. Attempting to make a thesis statement

some potential thesis statements (hypotheses, really) I might make, based on this?

“Fauré uses the start and end of the basic phrase from Classical music, but has different harmonies inside it”

“Fauré uses tonic and dominant function harmonies as in Classical music, but has other harmony types for the predominant harmonies”

5. Reconsidering/revising my analysis in light of these statements:

I want to look at some other options for a sec. What about those stacked third chords in m.3 and 4? are those a thing that happen elsewhere?

m.5: Eb-Ab-Db-F ?? oh, look it's a suspension from Ab-G. So I can make a stacked third Eb-G-(Bb missing)-Db-Fb

m.6 vi chord; then DFAbC—ii7

m.7 is V

hmm, it looks like maybe this is more diatonic than I thought.

potential hypothesis “Fauré uses diatonic harmonies but makes them sound chromatic by adding 7ths/9ths/13ths etc.”

so can I analyze those harmonies with RNs?

m.3 is IV (not iv)

m.4-5 bVII – III ...hmm, these are more chromatic than I expected. I don't really know what to make of that, except that I do notice the stacked thirds continue

6. Making a decision

I think my thesis is going to be ““Fauré uses harmonies that fit into a basic phrase model but makes them sound chromatic by adding 7ths/9ths/13ths etc.”

and my examples could then be

--mm.1-8 overall, how it starts with clear tonic and ends with clear dominant, and a sense of resting

--mm.3 construction (like a IV chord but with alterations)

--mm.5 construction

--the return to more clear PDs in m.6

--and maybe a point about how all of m.3-6 seems like predominant area because of the roots of the chords