AoS C Musical Theatre (Six representative composers)

MUSIC AND LYRICS

- importance of lyric setting (syllabic/ melismatic)
- word painting / use of recitative.

STRUCTURE/FORM

- strophic
- recitative
- 32 bar song form
- 12 bar blues
- verse/chorus
- middle 8 / bridge
- intro/outro
- instrumental.

TONALITY

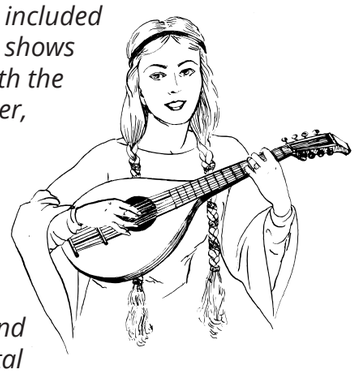
- major/minor
- modal
- pentatonic
- modulation.

TEXTURE

- monophonic
- homophonic
- polyphonic
- layering.

RICHARD RODGERS (1902-79)

Two distinctive periods of work: 'Book' Musicals with lyricist Lorenz Hart and work with lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II. Many of Rodgers' musicals became films.



Stylistic features: *Work with Hart included many 'jazz' influenced songs, these shows would include saxophone along with the traditional 'pit' orchestra. Like Porter, frequent use of AABA form. Use of leitmotif and recurring musical themes, inclusion of ballets, love songs, comic, serious songs written as solos, duets and chorus numbers. Very melodic style. Style adapted to suit setting ('The King and I' uses pentatonic scales and oriental percussion, a cappella female chorus in 'The Sound of Music').*



Recommended listening: Rodgers with Hart: On Your Toes, Babes in Arms, Pal Joey Rodgers with Hammerstein: Oklahoma, Carousel, Allegro, South Pacific, The King and I, Flower Drum Song, The Sound of Music.

LEONARD BERNSTEIN (1918 - 1990)

His best known musical work is *West Side Story* based on the Shakespeare story of Romeo and Juliet.

Stylistic features: *blending of different musical styles, using techniques from other genres, use of tritone to represent conflict and drama, concerned with how the music physically made you feel, eclecticism.*

Recommended listening: West Side Story, Candide, On the Town, Peter Pan, Wonderful Town.

STEPHEN SONDHEIM (1930 - 2021)

He is one of the most credited composers and lyricists in musical theatre.

Stylistic features: *influences of jazz and impressionism, polyphonic vocals, angular harmonies, intricate melodies.*

Recommended listening: Sweeney Todd, Into the Woods, Merrily We Roll Along, West Side Story (lyrics).

CLAUDE-MICHEL SCHÖNBERG (1944-)

Stylistic features: *through sung musicals, use of recitative as well as a range of different types of songs. Traditional harmonic progressions, step wise melodies, use of perfect 4th and 5th intervals in melodies. Male roles tend to be high baritone/tenor with a mixture of vocal styles from rock/opera and falsetto. Female lead roles are often written for altos belting in the higher register. Traditional chorus used more as an ensemble with many solo lines within larger songs. Some pastiche of style, jazz in 'Margeurite'; 'Miss Saigon': use of pentatonic scales and ethnic instruments including oriental flute and gong; 'The Pirate Queen' shows its Celtic influence with pentatonic melodies and the use of pipes, whistles, Gaelic harp and Bodhran.*



Recommended listening: La Révolution Française, Les Misérables, Miss Saigon, Martin Guerre, The Pirate Queen, Marguerite.

STEPHEN SCHWARTZ (1948 - PRESENT)

Stylistic features: *predominant use of leitmotifs, echoes of chords and melodies that are well-known.*

Recommended listening: Wicked, Godspell, Pippin.

ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER (1948-)

Stylistic features: *through sung musicals, use of recitative as well as a range of different types of songs. Pastiche of different styles in 'Joseph' including calypso, country, rock and roll etc. Operatic style in 'Phantom of the Opera', including pastiche of 18th Century opera, 'rock' opera style with riffs and high rock style male voices and electric guitars in 'Jesus Christ Superstar'. Use of Synthesisers and heavy rock, blues, country and rap styles in 'Starlight Express.' Use of interesting time signatures: ('Skimbleshanks' 13/8, 'Who's the Thief?' 7/8, 'Everything's Alright' 5/4).*

Recommended listening: Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Jesus Christ Superstar, Evita, Tell Me on a Sunday, Cats, Starlight Express, Phantom of the Opera, School of Rock, Cinderella.



USE OF PIT ORCHESTRA

Traditional orchestra from early musicals: strings (violins, violas, cellos and double bass); woodwind (flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon); brass (trumpets, trombones, French horn); piano/guitar/ harp; percussion (including drum kit).

MELODY

- stepwise / leap
- repetition
- scalic / arpeggio
- arch like
- vocal range.

HARMONIC LANGUAGE

- added chords (7ths, 9ths etc.)
- blues notes
- sus4 chords
- diminished chords.

DYNAMICS

- piano / forte / mezzo piano / mezzo forte
- contrasts
- can link with texture.

TIMBRE: (instruments and effects) traditional orchestra for early musicals. Jazz influenced musicals incorporate saxophones; rock opera style musicals use electric guitar, electric bass; 1980s musicals onwards include synthesisers/keyboards.

Voice: falsetto, belt, vibrato, operatic style, rock style, clarity of words important.

TEMPO / METRE / RHYTHM: (adagio, andante, allegro).
Time signatures (changes?).
Dotted rhythms, syncopation, triplets, scotch snap.