

Chopin - Prelude No. 15 in Db major. Composed in 1839.

The Elements of Music

Melody



Rhythm



Texture



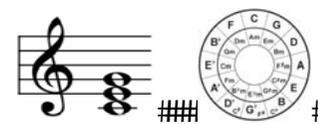
Instruments



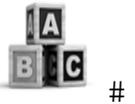
Genre



Harmony & Tonality



Structure



MELODY

Starts with a lyrical melody in the right hand.

Decorated with ornaments (acciaccatura and a turn)

Melody features dotted rhythms and chromaticism.

Section B - melody moves to the bass. Narrower range of notes and made up of some longer notes.

Mostly made up of four and eight bar phrases.

RHYTHM

4 crotchet beats in a bar.
 Interesting septuplet bars 4 and 23 (seven notes in the space of one beat)
 Dectuplet in bar 79 (10 notes)
 Played **legato** (smoothly)
Rubato (flexible tempo for expressive effect. Play some bits quicker and then some slower)
 Repeated quavers - throughout the piece
 Melody begins with a dotted rhythm (repeated throughout)

TEXTURE

Homophonic (with the exception of 2 bars)

Section A: melody in right hand, broken chord in left hand.

Section B: melody in the left hand. Repeated quavers in the right hand (dominant pedal*) Pedal is inverted, which just means it's played in the top part. More chordal than section A.

Section A: back to the opening texture. 2 bars of monophonic texture in the coda.

INSTRUMENTS

Piano! (It's not going to be quite that simple though is it...)

Most of the prelude is in the lower/middle register of the piano.

Chopin concentrates on creating a legato sound rather than showing off what the piano can do.

Lots of use of the sustain pedal helps to achieve a legato sound.

GENRE

One of 24 preludes written by Chopin.
 Likely to be performed in a small space (home, recital room, small concert hall)
 Romantic music in general:
 More expressive and emotional.
 Rich, chromatic harmonies.
 Modulations became more adventurous.
 Technical advances in instruments.
 Programme music (descriptive)

STRUCTURE

Ternary form: A B A (with a little coda)

HARMONY AND TONALITY

Section A = Db major. Mainly diatonic harmony (belongs to the key) with a bit of chromaticism.

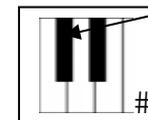
Section B = C# minor, which is the (wait for it) tonic minor.

Section A = back to Db major.

A and B end with an imperfect cadence.

Prelude ends with a perfect cadence.

Dominant pedal throughout. (Section A this is an Ab, Section B is a G#)



This is Db and C#.

*repeated quavers might sound like raindrops, and yes, that's how it got its nickname. However, in an exam you would need to say pedal note. By all means say it gives the impression of raindrops, but 'raindrop effect' in itself will not be enough.