

## Analysis #2: The string quartet

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This essay will be started in class on December 4, revised at home, and handed in on December 11 with a process letter and following all submission formatting requirements from previous assignments in Mu 101 with regard to . Late essays will be accepted up to December 18, losing one point per day.

### Overview

Musical analysis, like all analysis, is made up of two things:

Analysis = Description + “So what”

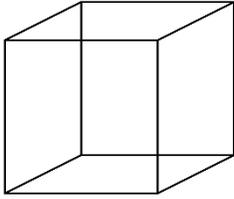
As with all analysis, there are multiple ways to look at and describe a topic—different perspectives yield different interpretations and different insights. The goal with this in-class essay is to flex and strengthen your ability to regard the same idea from multiple perspectives.

In this class, you’ve learned several ways that people think about and understand music:

- Musical elements
- Being an attentive listener of the soundscape
- Music history (style and trends in various periods of music history)
- How music affects the brains of people who play it, create it, and listen to it (physiology and musicking)
- How music is learned and taught (education)
- The skills of executing music (auditions, ensemble skills, singing)
- How music is funded (economics)
- How music is consumed
- How music is used (dance, religion, violence)
- Listener bias (age, gender, background)
- Music criticism
- Careers of musicians, especially composers
- Issues of authenticity in various genres
- Ethnomusicology and social context
- Arts administration and teamwork skills

### In-class process

For this writing, you’re going to explore different ways of thinking about a piece of music written for string quartet, George Crumb, *Black Angels* (1970), using a brainstorming technique called “cubing” to get you started.



We often think about a topic from only one or two ways, and the more we think about it from those perspectives, the more focused our brain becomes, and we blind ourselves to other ideas because it's difficult to break out of that rut.

However, a cube has *six* sides—that's how many distinct ways you're going to think about this piece of music today. Draw upon the different ideas you've learned in this class to add depth and variety to your work.

The cubing process for this essay:

First, watch the video for this piece of music.

- (1) Describe. Use your five senses. Adjectives. What do you see and hear?
- (2) Compare and Contrast. What is it similar to? What is it dissimilar to?
- (3) Associate. What memories or thoughts come to mind as you think about the piece?
- (4) Analyze. Ask (open-ended) questions. How do the parts of the piece work together?
- (5) Apply. How could this piece be used or applied? In what contexts?

Watch the video once more before completing side 6.

- (6) Argue for and against. What are the piece's strong suits? What are its weaknesses? Who would see something positive in this piece? What would they react to positively? Who would interpret this piece negatively? What would they react to?

Thesis statement. Distill all of your ideas into a thesis statement. A thesis statement is an interesting opinion that you can defend and support using your brainstorming ideas.

**At-home revision**

Using your thesis statement as a guide, turn your brainstorming into a polished essay about Crumb's string quartet. This essay may take any format or point of view that you choose, as long as it demonstrates meaningful insight and analytical interpretation of Crumb's work. The end result should consider Crumb's work from multiple angles, drawing upon the range of brainstorming ideas you came up with in class.

You'll be graded on your ability to come up with as many meaningful and varied ideas about this piece and your ability to turn those varied ideas into a coherent essay about the work.

Analysis 2 – Rubric (staple to the front of your first draft)

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Section: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Title</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>O.K.</b>	<b>Weak</b>	Points: ___/10
A strong/good title is engaging, accurate, avoids clichés, and is not too long.					
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>O.K.</b>	<b>Weak</b>	Points: ___/10
A strong/good introduction frames the essay’s topic in a clear and focused manner. A strong/good essay contains a thesis statement, which is clearly stated and interesting.					
<b>Musical descriptions and use of technical vocabulary</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>O.K.</b>	<b>Weak</b>	Points: ___/20
A strong/good essay prioritizes specific musical details to describe that are interesting, relevant, specific, and sufficient. Strong/good descriptions use discipline-specific vocabulary and/or evocative language to accurately, thoroughly, and vividly capture the sensation of hearing the musical feature being described. A strong description goes beyond mere description to say why a musical feature is significant. An OK/weak description is a chronological play-by-play of several details or is not vivid/evocative.					
<b>“So what”</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>O.K.</b>	<b>Weak</b>	Points: ___/20
Strong/good analysis shows what ideas are communicated by the musical details described. Strong/good analysis is insightful rather than vague or superficial and goes beyond the superficial by thoughtfully incorporating comparison, contrast, and/or synthesis; strong/good essay analysis the implication of the ideas under consideration.					
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>O.K.</b>	<b>Weak</b>	Points: ___/10
A strong/good/ok assignment includes a conclusion, and that conclusion is not a restatement of the introduction or a summary of ideas previously stated in the assignment. A strong/good conclusion broadens the scope of the essay by relating its ideas to other topics, new questions, or contexts.					
<b>Structure</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>O.K.</b>	<b>Weak</b>	Points: ___/10
A strong/good essay presents a logical flow of ideas and avoids straying or meandering. A strong/good paragraph remains focused on a single main idea, and all sentences within a paragraph support its main idea.					
<b>Written skill</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>O.K.</b>	<b>Weak</b>	Points: ___/10
A strong/good essay is well-organized and generally contains correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling; a strong/good essay demonstrates appropriate and effective word choice and style. Whether the writing is essay-like or creative, in a strong/good assignment the prose is easy to follow, precise, and clear; a strong/good assignment avoids both vagueness and redundancy; a good/strong assignment avoids inaccuracies.					
<b>Requirements and process letter</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>O.K.</b>	<b>Weak</b>	Points: ___/10
A strong/good essay follows the formatting instructions for all Mu 101 writing (font size, margins, spacing). A strong/good essay includes a process letter in which the author describes how they revised their brainstorming and what they learned in the process of creating this essay.					

Total points \_\_\_/100

Letter grade: \_\_\_