



## **MTO 8.4 Examples: Holm-Hudson, Your Guitar, It Sounds So Sweet and Clear**

(Note: audio, video, and other interactive examples are only available online)

<http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.02.8.4/mto.02.8.4.holm-hudson.php>

**Example 4.** Transcription of the introduction to the Carpenters' "Superstar," with annotated sign-functions after Tagg (2000)

The image displays a musical score for the introduction to the Carpenters' "Superstar," annotated with sign-functions. The score is divided into two systems, each containing staves for Lead Vocal, Backing Vocals, Oboe, 3 Horns, (Kurzweil) Bass, 2 Trumpets, Electric Piano, Harp, Strings, Piano, Bass, and Drums. The score is in 4/4 time and features several annotated elements:

- Lead Vocal:** Measures 1-4 and 5-9.
- Backing Vocals:** Measures 1-4 and 5-9.
- Oboe:** Measures 1-4, featuring "GENRE SYNECDOCHE ('classical' arioso-style oboe)" and "GENRE SYNECDOCHE (Baroque 'turn')".
- 3 Horns:** Measures 1-4, featuring "GENRE SYNECDOCHE (Romantic-era horn chorale)".
- (Kurzweil) Bass:** Measures 1-4, featuring "GENRE SYNECDOCHE ('Tamerlano' bass line—after Cooke)".
- 2 Trumpets:** Measures 1-4, featuring "GENRE SYNECDOCHE (Baroque 'turn')".
- Electric Piano:** Measures 1-4, featuring "GENRE SYNECDOCHE (Baroque 'turn')".
- Harp:** Measures 1-4, featuring "EPISODIC MARKER: GENRE SYNECDOCHE (thematic)" and "gliss.".
- Strings:** Measures 1-4, featuring "GENRE SYNECDOCHE (Baroque 'turn')".
- Piano:** Measures 1-4, featuring "GENRE SYNECDOCHE (Baroque 'turn')".
- Bass:** Measures 1-4, featuring "GENRE SYNECDOCHE (Baroque 'turn')".
- Drums:** Measures 1-4, featuring "closed hi-hat", "rim click", and "kick drum".
- System 2 (Measures 5-9):**
  - Oboe:** Measures 5-9, featuring "GENRE SYNECDOCHE (Romantic-era horn chorale)".
  - 2 Trumpets:** Measures 5-9, featuring "GENRE SYNECDOCHE (Baroque 'turn')".
  - Electric Piano:** Measures 5-9, featuring "GENRE SYNECDOCHE (Baroque 'turn')".
  - Harp:** Measures 5-9, featuring "EPISODIC MARKER (opposite of harp gliss.) (brando)".
  - Drums:** Measures 5-9, featuring "EPISODIC MARKER (accent, change of pattern)".

**Example 5.** Transcription of the introduction to the Carpenters’ “Superstar,” with annotated sign-functions after Tagg (2000)

The musical score is arranged in a multi-staff format. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Lead Vocal:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. Measures 10-14. Measure 10 has an annotation *(rubato)*. Measure 12 has a triplet annotation *3*.
- Oboe:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. Measures 10-14. All measures are marked with a dash, indicating no part.
- 3 Horns:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. Measures 10-14. All measures are marked with a dash.
- 2 Trumpets:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. Measures 10-14. All measures are marked with a dash.
- 3 Trombones:** Bass clef, 4/4 time. Measures 10-14. All measures are marked with a dash.
- Electric Piano:** Treble and Bass clefs, 4/4 time. Measures 10-14. An annotation *GENRE SYNECDOCHE (Alberti chord figuration)* is placed above the treble staff. The treble staff contains a continuous eighth-note figure.
- Harp:** Treble and Bass clefs, 4/4 time. Measures 10-14. All measures are marked with a dash.
- Strings:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. Measures 10-14. All measures are marked with a dash.
- Piano:** Bass clef, 4/4 time. Measures 10-14. An annotation *GENRE SYNECDOCHE ("lamentoso" bass line—after Cooke)* is placed above the staff. The bass line consists of a series of quarter notes.
- Bass:** Bass clef, 4/4 time. Measures 10-14. The bass line consists of quarter notes.
- Tambourine:** Measures 10-14. Measures 10-11 are marked with a dash. Measures 12-14 have a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.
- Drums:** Measures 10-14. The drum part includes hi-hat, snare/tom, and kick drum. Annotations include *hi-hat*, *closed*, *snare/tom*, and *rim click*.

Lead Voc. 15 16 17 18 19

Oboe

3 Horns

2 Trpts.

3 Trbs.

Elec. Piano

Harp

Strings

Piano

Bass

Tamb.

Drums

EPISODIC MARKER (cessation of arpeggiated texture)

GENRE SYNECDOCHE (imitative texture)

EPISODIC MARKER (sudden octave reinforcement, drop in register)

*Sua bsa.*

EPISODIC MARKER (drum "fill")

cymbal (tom-toms)

Lead Voc. 20 21 22 23 24

Oboe

3 Horns

2 Trpts.

3 Trbs.

Elec. Piano

Harp

Strings

Piano

Bass

Tamb.

Drums

GENRE SYNECDOCHE (Baroque "lull")

EPISODIC MARKER (increase in rhythmic intensity)

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for a symphony with vocal soloist. The score is written in a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a common time signature. The instruments listed on the left are Lead Voc., Oboe, 3 Horns, 2 Trumpets, 3 Trombones, Elec. Piano, Harp, Strings, Piano, Bass, Tambourine, and Drums. The vocal line (Lead Voc.) starts at measure 20 with a melodic phrase, including a triplet of eighth notes in measure 22. The instrumental parts for Oboe, Horns, Trumpets, and Trombones are mostly silent in this section. The Elec. Piano part features a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 21, labeled 'GENRE SYNECDOCHE (Baroque "lull")'. The Harp part is silent. The Strings part consists of sustained chords. The Piano and Bass parts provide a rhythmic accompaniment. The Tambourine part is silent. The Drums part features a complex rhythmic pattern with many 'x' marks indicating specific drum hits, labeled 'EPISODIC MARKER (increase in rhythmic intensity)'.

25 *(tempo rubato)* 26 27 28 29

Lead Voc.

Oboe

3 Horns

2 Trpts.

3 Trbs.

GENRE SYNECDOCHE ("blues" inflections suggestive of guitar pitch-bends)

GENRE SYNECDOCHE ("Tijuana Brass" trumpets)

Elec. Piano

Harp

Strings

Piano

Bass

25 EPISODIC MARKER (leap in bass line, increased rhythmic density)

GENRE SYNECDOCHE ("gospel" tambourine)

26 29

EPISODIC MARKER (drum "fill")

Drums

Lead Voc. 30 31 32 33

Oboe

3 Horns

2 Trpts.

3 Trbs.

Elec. Piano

Harp

Strings

Piano

Bass

Tamb.

Drums

EPISODIC MARKER, GENRE SYNECDOCHE (cinematic)

gliss.

EPISODIC MARKER (borrowed bVII harmony, cessation of rhythmic drive)

## Example 16. The “semantic range” of the introduction to the Carpenters’ “Superstar”

**Example 16.** The “semantic range” of the introduction to the Carpenters’ “Superstar”

SURVEY OF UNDERGRADUATE MUSIC MAJORS:

(No affective response)

[1] "I get nothing from this."

[2] "That had no effect on me."

(Contrast of genres)

[3] "The Cleveland Orchestra accompanies Barry White."

(Emotion: depression/loneliness)

[4] "Feeling down, depressed, missing someone."

[5] "Something that's got you down because of the instrumentation and minor key."

(Emotion: love)

[6] "Passionate, romantic. As if preparing or in the middle of a soulful revelation to a loved one."

[7] "Slow dance/love song."

[8] "I would call this a cheesy love song - the singer's been done wrong but it was good while it lasted kind of thing."

[9] "Admiration. Adoration. Caught in a daze and not being able to think."

[10] "love song definitely - any popular piece w/oboe is a love tune."

[11] "Sounds romantic, like it's a love song."

(Cinematic connotations)

[12] "Sounds like one of those really cheesy sections on 'Something About Mary' when Ben Stiller is in slow motion running in a big poppy-seed field."

(Genre)

[13] "Sounds early 80's"

[14] "Elevator/dentist music. Reminds me of Florida."

[15] "Sounds like modern church music. I guess the increased use of electric keyboards and other such 'technology' ruins anything considered music."

(Love; genre: cinematic connotations; reference to Tagg's "episodic marker")

[16] "Heavy metal power love ballad, this is serious. Hollywood gliss. to the opening melody? Wow."

SURVEY OF UNDERGRADUATE NON-MUSIC MAJORS:

(Emotion: sadness)

[17] "At the beginning of the song the horn makes it sound like the song is going to be about something emotional. Towards the end, the drum and/or bass, whichever it is, give the song a somber turn, setting up for a mournful or sorrowful song."

[18] "I'm thinking it's about some kind of past relationship gone sour or the singer misses someone...maybe. The woodwind at the beginning has a mournful tone, as do the horns[:] the bassy "boom boom boom" sounds pretty dark, mournful or angry. Lastly there's the chimes which represent dreams or past in just about everything. Of course these associations are learned and might not be consistent across listeners, but there [sic] are still there."

[19] "The strings and harp along with an easy drum beat make me think that it is an easy going song, but then at the end of the clip, the cord [sic] change almost makes a darker tone. Maybe is [sic] going to be a sad song. I feel like it's going to tell a story though."

[20] "I think the song is probably some sort of sadness piece. The high note running at the beginning, before it gets deeper[,] seems to bring on an upsetting tone."

(Emotion: affection)

[21] "I believe the song is trying to communicate a sense of affection. This is b/c [because] of strings and slow tempo."

(Genre)

[22] "The way the song brings the bass, clarinet [sic - oboe], and horns, it conveys a melow [sic] type of music. As a listener, I am expecting to hear a deep soft voice, with loving & slow lyrics. The harp at the beginning makes it almost a sappy love song."

(Reference to Tagg's "episodic marker"; perhaps also cinematic connotation)

[23] "The harp struck me most giving it a nostalgic feel - transitional into a dream - the deep drum beat indicates to me that the body of the piece is about to begin. I think I've heard it before but can't place it."