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MTO 26.2 Examples: Lee, Climax Building in Verismo Opera: Archetype and Variants

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

<https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.20.26.2/mto.20.26.2.lee.html>

Example 1. Reconstruction of Kerman and Grey's Analysis of Groundswell in Vincenzo Bellini, *Norma*, Act 2, finale (1989, 156)

The musical score is for Vincenzo Bellini's *Norma*, Act 2, finale. It is in 4/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The score is divided into four systems, each with vocal and piano staves. The lyrics are in Italian. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings like *(pp)*, *f*, *ff*, and *cresc.* The structure is marked with letters *a*, *a'*, *b*, and *c*.

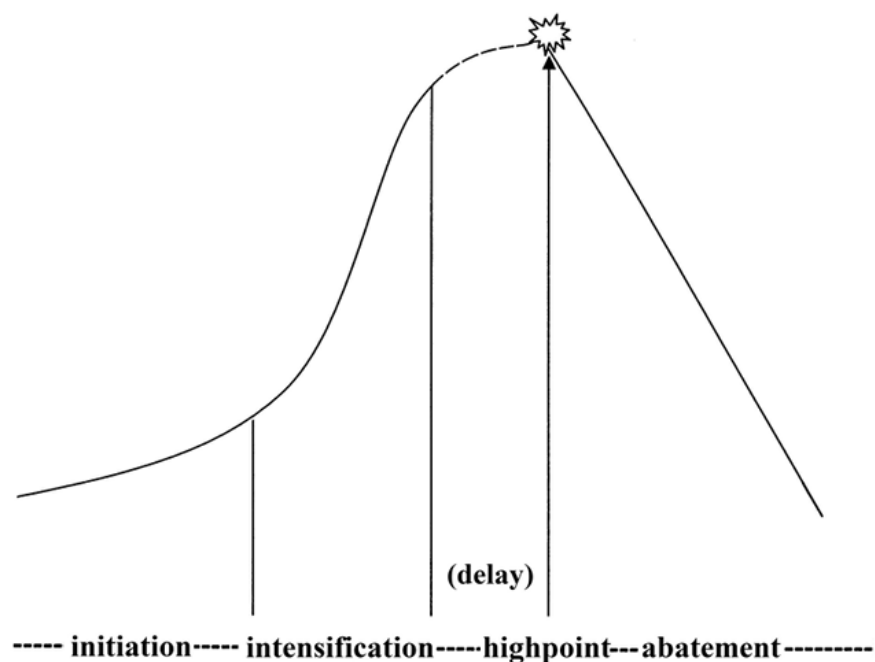
System 1: Norma and Oroveso. Lyrics: Pa - dre, tu pian - gi? Op - pres - so è il co(re), Pian - gi e per -

System 2: Oroveso and Norma. Lyrics: do - na; Ha vin - to a - mor, Oh ciel! Ah tu per - do - ni, Quel pian - to il

System 3: Lyrics: di - ce, Io più non chie - do, Io son fe - li - ce; Ah più non

System 4: Lyrics: chie - do, Ah no, Ah più non chie - do, Con - ten - ta il ro - go io a - scen - de - rò.

Example 2. Tension trajectory in the climax archetype: initiation, intensification, delay (optional), highpoint, and abatement (horizontal axis: climax progress over time; vertical axis: degree of dynamic intensity)



Example 3. Climax archetype stages: features and operational parameters

Climax stage	Features and operational parameters
Initiation	-Onset of dynamic arc; establishes periodic units -Characterized by balance and stability -Regular phrase unit, steady pace, and stationary harmony
Intensification	-Substantial increase of dynamic momentum -Pace acceleration (via unit reduction or dynamic markings), volume increase, and ascending pitches
Delay (optional)	-Temporary sustaining or slowing down of the pace of the intensification -Enlargement of unit size (thematic augmentation or harmonic stasis), performance indications such as <i>ritardando</i> and <i>rallentando</i>, rests, and fermatas
Highpoint	-Zenith of the climax process: the moment of highest energy -Can be an acute point (e.g. a chord) or extend over a longer duration when in the form of a thematic statement, such as in apotheosis-type highpoints -Strongest dynamics, highest pitch, and maximum dissonance or its decisive resolution
Abatement	-Closing of the dynamic arc -Cadential resolution -<i>Decrescendo</i>, descending melodic line, deceleration, rhythmic deactivation, thinning texture, and bare instrumentation

Example 4. Umberto Giordano, *Andrea Chénier*, Act 3, “La mamma morta,” A section: lyric form
(a a' b a'')

p
a G: di - ce: “Vi - vi an - co - ra!

5
a' I - o son la vi - ta!

9 f un poco allargando
b Ne' miei oc - chi è il tuo cie - lo!

13 p a tempo
a'' Tu non sei - so - la!

Example 6. Climax variants: deformations and operational parameters

Climax variants		Deformations and operational parameters
Initiation-intensification		-Integration of initiation and intensification through simultaneous use of parameters for each stage
Fusion		
High region		-“A stretch of music of high activity, prepared in the same way as other highpoints, but prolonged over a significant period” (Agawu 1984, 170) -Can continue to accumulate energy and reach its own highpoint.
Highpoint frustration		-Highpoint realized with parametric deviation
Highpoint absence		-Complete silence in place of sounding highpoint or highpoint frustration
Compound structure	Climax succession	-A series of climaxes
	Climax nesting	-A climax containing a smaller climax(es)

Example 5. Umberto Giordano, Andrea Chénier, Act 3, “La mamma morta,” A’ section

Beginning of A’
INITIATION (4+4 mm.) *rit.*

Piu mosso della 1^a volta

48 I - o - so - no - il -

Piu mosso della 1^a volta
mf

G major: I V_3^4/V

50 di o che - sovra - il mon - do -

anim, sempre più

anim, sempre più

V7 I V_2^6/ii ii

INTENSIFICATION (1+1+1+1 m.)

54 *ossia* scen - de - da - l'em pi - re - o fa - del - la ter - ra un

cres.

scen - de - da - l'em pi - re - o fa del la ter

5 6 5 6

V7 $b7$ $\#7$ $\#7$ $\#7$

* 5-6 chain between the voice/uppermost melody and bass

DELAY HIGHPOINT ABATEMENT

59 *ossia* ciel!

ra un ciel! Ah! lo son l'a -

f *rit.*

col canto

5 *ff* ii6

V7/III $\#$ III $\#$

cadential resolution

64 *affrett.* *rit.* **Sostenuto**

mo - re, io son l'amo - re

Sostenuto

sf *p*

V7 vi ii7 V7 I

Note: The regular grouping, shown with brackets in mm. 1–8, applies to the initiation only

Whole-tone ascent in the bass (A B Db Eb F)

(V+/Db)

(Fr.+6)

F

Butterfly *cresc.*

11 par - te ri - guar - dar! ——— pai fir - ma - men - ti, via pei li - di, via pel

Pinkerton

Vien, vien sei mi - a ah! vie ni, guar - da: dor - me o - gni

cresc.

ABATEMENT (cadential resolution)

Butterfly *p*

14 ma - re...

Pinkerton *con calore* (135)

co - sa!... Ti ser - ro pal - pi - tante. Ah, vien!

pp

V7 I

Example 8. Giacomo Puccini, *Madama Butterfly*, Act 1 duet, R134, harmonic progression and 5–6 chain, mm. 1–9.1

m.1 3 5 7 9

RH: 5 - 6 5 - 6 5 - 6 5 - 6 5

A F#+ B G#+ Db Fr6 Eb C+ F

Example 9. Giacomo Puccini, *Il tabarro*, Luigi and Giorgetta's duet, R69/10–71
 Note: The regular grouping, shown with brackets in mm. 1–4, applies to the initiation only

FUSION of INITIATION and INTENSIFICATION

LUIGI

frir, non più sof-frir che un al-tro ti toc-cas-se, e, per sot-

p *con calore*

(A major) C#m:

2

sostenuto

trar-re a tut-ti il cor-po tuo di-vi-no, lo te lo

sostenuto *cres.*

4

HIGH REGION (four two-measure phrases)

Sostenendo

giu-ro, lo giu-ro, non tre-mo a vi-brare il col-

f *Sostenendo*

ostinato bass

I V7

7

allargando molto *movente rapido* **HIGHPOINT**

tel-lo, e congo-cce di san-gue fab briciartiungio-iel-lo!

allargando molto *ff*

I V7 I V7 I

12

ABATEMENT
 (Luigi fugge rapidamente spinto da Giorgetta)

m.s. *tremolo*

15

p

17

sostenuto *rall.* *rall.*

p espressivo

20 *sempre*

pp ppp

GIORGETTA (sospirando)

23

ppp

Example 10. Pietro Mascagni, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Santuzza and Turiddu's duet

INITIATION (2+2 mm.)

Grandioso con sempre cresc. passione.

ff

Ah! no, Tu - rid du, ri -

va ti ri - pe to non te

ff *Grandioso*

Ab:

3

ma - ni, ri - ma - ni an co ra, an -

diar - mi, pen - tir - si va no, do po l'of -

INTENSIFICATION
(1+1+1 m. +1+1+1 beat)

5

cor.

fe - sa pen - tir - si e va - no, do po l'of -

V/vi -

7

(gridando) no! no! no!

fe - sa. va! va! va!

incalz.

HIGHPOINT FRUSTRATION

Andante molto sosten. (supplichevole)

9

la tua San-tuz - za piange e t'im - plo - ra,

Violini

Andante molto sosten.

pp subito

V7/V

Example 11. Riccardo Zandonai, *Francesca da Rimini*, Act 3 duet, R66–68

**CLIMAX A
INITIATION (4+4 mm.)**

FRANCESCA *Largo molto* $\text{♩} = 50$

66 lic re che non ar -

B.I

FRANCESCA

3 di - sce di fa - re di più

IV I I

FRANCESCA

6 Lo ser ra tra le brac - cia e lun - ga -

IV 7

INTENSIFICATION (1+1+1 m.)

FRANCESCA *rit. - - - a tempo*

8 men te lo bacia in boc - ca

rit. a tempo mf espress.

I I

DELAY

10 *cres. accel. molto e cres-*

ii⁴ I VII⁶ IV

**CLIMAX A, HIGHPOINT
CLIMAX B, INITIATION (2+2 mm.)**

Piu mosso $\text{♩} = 120$

67 *allargando - - -*

ff I⁴

CLIMAX B, INTENSIFICATION

15 *accelerando - - -*

ii⁶ 16 ii⁶

INTENSIFICATION (cont.) **HIGHPOINT ABSENCE** **ABATEMENT**

Largo $\text{♩} = 50$

18 Sopra - ni (lontanissimo) Ah! *cres. molto*

Tenori (lontanissimo) Ah!

Bar. e Bassi Ah!

68 *Largo* $\text{♩} = 50$

acc. - - - - - pp

(bII) v7 IV

20 Pri - ma ve -

Pri - ma ve -

Ah! Ah!

dim.

V

ABATEMENT (cont.)

FRANCESCA (con la voce spenta)

22 No, - - - - -

PAOLO

France - sca!

perendosi

ra! ra!

Violin solo espress. pp p

bII

FRANCESCA *allarg* *Piu lento*

25 Pa - o - lo!

Sop. Ah! *perendosi*

Ten. Ah!

allargando

ppp Piu lento ppp

I 6 4

Example 12. Umberto Giordano, *Andrea Chénier*, end of the Act 2 duet for Chénier and Maddalena

The musical score for "L'Espresso" by Luciano Berio is presented in two columns. The left column contains measures 151, 155, 158, 160, 164, and 167. The right column contains measures 169, 171, 173, 177, and 184. The score is written for voice (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano. Key performance instructions include "INITIATION (4+4 mm.)", "Poco più mosso della 1ª volta.", "S/intensification (1+1m.)", "S/delay", "HIGHPOINT (apotheosis)", "INTENSIFICATION (1+1+1+1 m.)", "DELAY", "S/initiation (2+2 mm.)", "ABATEMENT (cadential resolution)", and "allargando". Dynamic markings such as *pp*, *ppp*, *mf*, and *ff* are used throughout. The piano part features complex rhythmic patterns, including arpeggiated chords and dense textures. The vocal part includes lyrics in Italian, such as "Ah! O - ra so - a - ve, su - me!...", "bli - me o - ra d'a - mo - re!...", "l'a - ni - ma sfi - da il ter -", "ro - re! Mi fai pu - ro il cuo -", "re... Non te - mo la mor -", and "te - mo la mor -".