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S. Schwartz: Defying Gravity

Instrumentation

- Large orchestra
- All 4 sections of the orchestra
- Percussion includes drum kit, tubular bells & timpani
- Synthesisers, piano/keyboard, guitar & bass guitar

Texture

- Mostly Homophonic
- Sparse texture at the start with a few monophonic bars
- Homophonic texture clear in the verses
- Singers sing in unison or harmony (usually 3rds)
- Tutti- when all instruments & voice sound together
- Contrapuntal in tutti section

Melody

- Both characters deliver the text Spoken, part spoken/part sung or entirely sung
- Music is notated with crosses when part spoken/part sung
- Both voices have a large range of just under 2 octaves
- Mostly syllabic in a speech-like manner
- Mostly conjunct
- Leaps are often a 5th (but some larger leaps)
- Verses and chorus conjunct and wide leaps

Structure

- Verse-Chorus form
- Intro
- Interlude
- Verse 1
- Chorus 1
- Verse 2
- Chorus 2
- Interlude 2
- Chorus 3
- Repeat of intro
- Verse 3
- Chorus 4
- Coda

Context

- Musicals combine songs, spoken dialogue, dancing & acting
- Based on the novel 'The life & times of the wicked witch of the west'
- Tells the story from the witches view point (Glinda & Elphaba) who despite their differences become freinds.
- Premiered in 2003
- Final song of first act (Duet)

Tempo, Metre & Rhythm

- Changes from 3/2 to 2/2 in opening
- Changes to 4/4 later
- returns back to 2/2
- Starts with a free tempo
- Andante- steady tempo
- Allegro- Fast tempo
- Moderato- medium tempo
- Maestoso- stately/majestic
- Rallentandos-slowing down

Harmony & Tonality

- Tonality is ambiguous at the start with chromatic movement
- Chord progressions often unrelated to the key
- Some dissonance
- Chords are in root position
- Main key is D Major
- Modulates to B Major, F Major & B minor
- Full Tutti section at end in B minor
- Finishes on a D major chord

Sonority/Articulation

- Electric guitars use overdrive
- Brass plays in a fanfare-like manner
- Strings use tremolo
- Cymbal roll
- Tubular bells create a delicate/graceful sonority

Rhythm

- Mainly crotchets & quavers
- Some longer notes at the end of phrases
- Syncopation is frequent
- Dotted rhythms eg 'Gra-vi-ty'
- Triplet rhythhms
- Each phrase starts with an off-beat after a rest
- Pause marks (fermatas) are used to lengthen rhythms.
- Hi-hat on drum kit plays constant crotchets