

**The Best Laid Plans...and Others:  
an 18<sup>th</sup>-Century analysis of a compositional outline**

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This file includes the abstract, extensive keyword list, and selected bibliography for the video essay “The Best Laid Plans...and Others: an 18<sup>th</sup>-Century analysis of a compositional outline,” by L. Poundie Burstein, Quynh Nguyen, and Jennifer Roderer, *SMT-V*10.1 (2024). This video-essay may be found at <https://vimeo.com/societymusictheory/smtv101burstein>.

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**Abstract for**  
**The Best Laid Plans...and Others:**  
**an 18<sup>th</sup>-Century analysis of a compositional outline**  
***SMT-V10.x* (2024)**

A standard strategy for music analysis is to reduce out the less essential elements of a composition so as to arrive at a type of musical outline of the work. Both the benefits and problems with such an approach are highlighted in one of the first analyses along these lines, an examination by Heinrich Christoph Koch (1787) of the aria “Ein Gebet” from Carl Heinrich Graun’s oratorio *Der Tod Jesu*.

**Short Keyword List**

music analysis, history of music theory, Galant music, analytic model

**Extensive Keyword List**

4-bar basic phrase, 4-bar minimum, abstract outline, ambiguities, ambiguities, *Anlage*, aria, bars, basic phrase, benefits and disadvantages, C. H. Graun, cadence-altering suffix, Carl Heinrich Graun, complete composition, *Der Tod Jesu*, eighteenth-century, “Ein Gebet,,” elaboration, ending-altering suffix, essential material, expanded phrase, extended phrase, finished composition, framework, H. C. Koch, Halloween candy, harmony, Heinrich Christoph Koch, important, may, music analysis, non-essential material, obvious, omitted, oratorio, order, order, original, passage, passage, phrase, piece, plan, plan, preexisting composition, proposed plan, realization, repetition, repetitions., reverse-engineer, reverse-engineer, *Satz*, second guesses, simplified, simplified, single, spotlight, stable, suffix, thematic, thematic plan, *Theorie der schönen Künste Allgemeine* theorist, treatise, trick-or-treating, trick-or-treating, unstable, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition*, vocal, vocalist, vocalist’s, well-wrought.

## About the Authors

**L. Poundie Burstein** teaches at Hunter College and the Graduate Center of CUNY. He has served as President of the Society for Music Theory and as Editor of *SMT-V*. His book, *Journeys Through Galant Expositions*, was published by Oxford University Press in 2020. He has also performed extensively as a free-lance pianist for comedy improvisation groups.

**Jennifer Roderer** is an active vocalist who has performed extensively in North and South America, and Asia. Among others, she has sung solos and leading roles with the Metropolitan Opera, Teatro Colón, Chautauqua Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Indianapolis Opera, Los Angeles Opera and Washington National Opera, New York City Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Tulsa Opera, Opera Roanoke, Los Angeles Philharmonic, American Symphony Orchestra, Santa Fe Opera and Syracuse Opera, Toledo Opera, Los Angeles Philharmonic, as well as with the Jacksonville Symphony, Pacific Symphony, Palm Beach Opera, Roanoke Opera, and Florida Symphony. She has won grants from the William Matheus Sullivan Musical Foundation and Opera Buffs of Southern California, as well as the Arthur E. Walters Memorial Award from Opera Index and First Place in the Opera Guild of Southern California Competition. She teaches at CUNY Hunter College where she is an Instructor of Voice, and she is a DMA candidate at the CUNY Graduate Center. See <http://www.lombardoassociates.org/jennifer-roderer> and <https://www.jenniferroderer.com/>

**Quynh Nguyen**, praised by the Boston Globe as "a musical and expressive player" who is "sensitive and poetic," Vietnamese-American pianist Quynh Nguyen was selected as one of the "19 young stars of tomorrow" by Musical America. For her Carnegie Hall performance, the New York Concert Review commends: "She is a real artist, a wonderfully communicative performer ...What a compendium of intellect, sophistication and taste!"

Recently, Quynh just finished recording a new piano concerto with the London Symphony Orchestra in January of 2022. This work was written for her by the American composer Paul Chihara. The concerto will be part of her CD for Naxos's American Classics Series and will feature all of Paul Chihara's piano works. She will perform the world premiere of this concerto with the Vietnamese National Symphony Orchestra at the Hanoi Opera House on October 7th, 2022, in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the US and Vietnam, fiscally sponsored by the New York Foundations for the Arts. Her upcoming recording of Germaine Tailleferre's piano music, sponsored by the Sorel Foundation, will be released later this year.

Quynh Nguyen has performed extensively throughout the United States, Europe, and

Vietnam including Hungary, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and France, in notable concert venues such as Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center, McEvoy Auditorium and the Freer Gallery at the Smithsonian in Washington D.C., the Kaye Playhouse in New York, the Berlin Konzerthause, and the Opera House in Hanoi, Vietnam. Her performances have been featured on radio stations throughout the United States as well as television programs such as "Grand Piano," which was shown on cable channels in several states across the country, CUNY TV channel 75 on the program "Study With the Best," Japanese television Fujisankei and Vietnamese national television. Her recordings can be found on the Arabesque Recordings label, on Itunes, and Amazon.

Dr. Nguyen is a graduate of The Juilliard School and Mannes College of Music, where she studied with Bella Davidovich and Jerome Rose respectively. She received her Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the Graduate Center of City University of New York. Her dissertation titled *An Analysis of Olivier Messiaen's Last Piano Solo Work: Les Petites Esquisses d'oiseaux* received the Barry Brook Dissertation award from the Graduate Center. Additionally, she is the recipient of several highly prestigious scholarships and awards, including the United States Presidential Academic Excellence Award, the American Prize, and the Fulbright Fellowship to study music with the late Yvonne Loriod Messiaen in Paris, France in 2004-2005.

Dr. Nguyen currently serves on the music faculty of the Music Department at Hunter College, City University of New York, and the International Keyboard Institute and Festival. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quynh\\_Nguyen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quynh_Nguyen) and <https://www.quynhpiano.com/>

## Supplementary Materials

Score for Carl Heinrich Graun, "Ein Gebet" from *Der Tod Jesu* (1755), in arrangement by J. C. F. Rellstab (1790), mm. 1–70.

For complete score, see:

[https://imslp.org/wiki/Der\\_Tod\\_Jesu%2C\\_GraunWV\\_B:VII:2\\_\(Graun%2C\\_Karl\\_Heinrich\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Der_Tod_Jesu%2C_GraunWV_B:VII:2_(Graun%2C_Karl_Heinrich)).

### "Ein Gebet," from C. H. Graun, *Der Tod Jesu*

(arr. J. C. F. Rellstab)

**Allegretto**

The musical score is written for piano and consists of four systems of music. The first system begins with the tempo marking "Allegretto" and a dynamic marking "p". The second system features a dynamic marking "f". The third system also features a dynamic marking "f". The fourth system features a dynamic marking "p" and a dynamic marking "f". The score is in 3/4 time and the key signature has two sharps (D major). The first system includes a measure with a "5" above it, indicating a fifth finger. The second system includes a measure with a "10" above it, indicating a tenth measure. The third system includes a measure with a "15" above it, indicating a fifteenth measure. The fourth system includes a measure with a "20" above it, indicating a twentieth measure. The score is arranged by J. C. F. Rellstab.

25 Ein Ge - bet um neu - e Stär - ke zur Vol - len dung -

*p* *p*

ed - ler Wer - ke theilt die Wol - ken theilt die

*f* *p* *f* *p*

Wol - ken, dringt zum Herrn - dringt zum Herrn - und der Herr er -

*f*

hört - es gern, er - hört es gern,

*f*

der Herr er - hört

*p*

50

es gern der Her es hört es gern der Herr er - hört es gern.

*tr*

*poc. f*

*f*

60

65

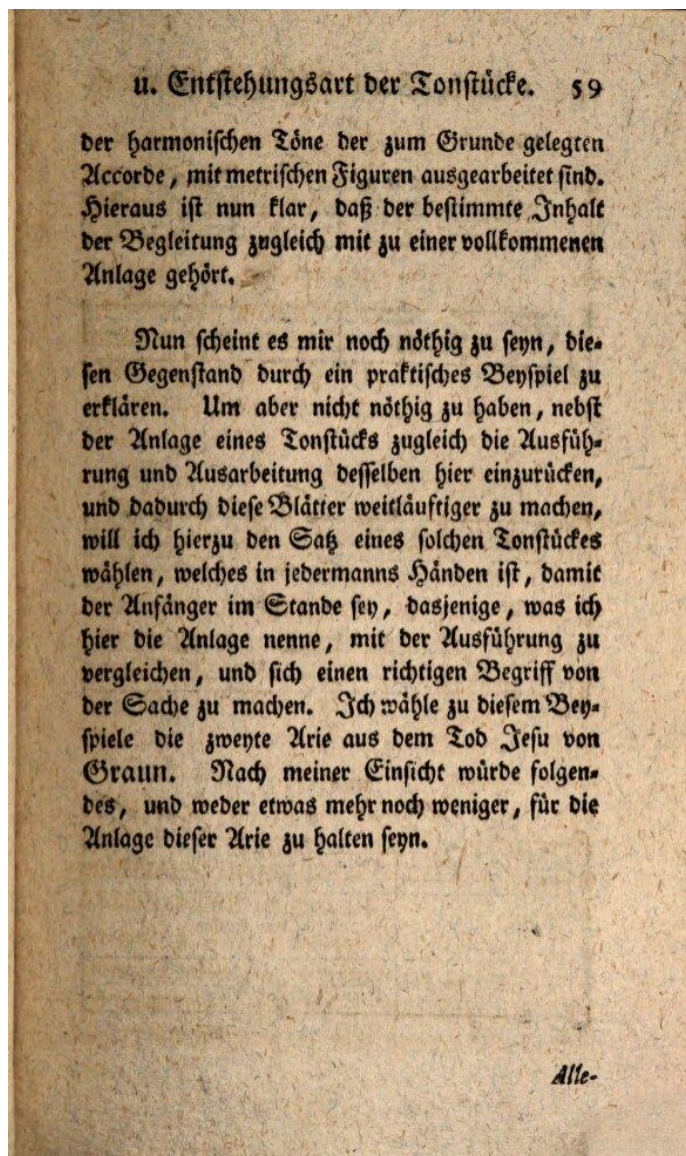
*tr*

70

Koch's plan for Graun's aria, from Koch (1787, pp. 60–62)

The musical score is written for piano accompaniment in 3/4 time, key of D major (one sharp). It consists of three systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. The first system (measures 1-8) features a melody in the treble staff with eighth and sixteenth notes, and a bass line with whole and half notes. The second system (measures 9-14) begins with a measure rest in the treble staff, followed by a melodic line starting in measure 10. The third system (measures 15-22) starts with a measure rest in the treble staff, followed by a continuous melodic line in the treble staff and a supporting bass line. The score concludes with a final measure rest in the treble staff.

Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition II* (Leipzig: Böhme, 1787), 59–64  
 (where he discusses the Graun aria); for full volume, see <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb10598811?page=1>



60 1. Abth. Von d. Absicht, Beschaffenh.

*Allegretto.*

Ein Ge = beth um — neue

Stärke, zur Wollen = dung — ed = ler

Werke, theilt die Wolken

u. Entstehungsart der Tonstücke. 61



62 1. Abth. Von d. Absicht, Beschaffenh.



Erste Anmerkung.

Betrachtet man nun diese Anlage, und hält sie gegen die Arie wie sie Graun ausgeführt hat, so wird man finden, daß sie alle wesentlichen Theile der ganzen Arie (bis zum zweyten Theile derselben, von dem ich hernach ein Wort reden will) enthalte. Kein neuer Gedanke, der nicht schon in der Anlage enthalten ist, kommt in der Folge des Satzes vor, alles ist entweder Wiederholung, Erklärung, oder Fortsetzung der in der Anlage enthaltenen Hauptgedanken.

Die im achten Tacte (von dem Anfange der Singstimme an gerechnet) eintretende Figur der Violinen, rechne ich hier in diesem Falle deswegen mit zur Anlage, weil dadurch der Autor zwey Haupttheile des Ganzen mit einander verbunden hat. Auch ist die Bewegung der Violinen, die in dem sieben-

siebenzehnten Tacte anhebt, und in den folgenden Tacten fort dauert, deswegen ein wesentliches Stück der Anlage, weil sie mit zum ganzen melodischen Bilde des Satzes gehört.

Sowohl die Wiederholung der zweiten Hälfte eines Hauptgedankens, die in der Arie den funfzehnten und sechzehnten Tact ausmacht, \*) als auch die Folge des Satzes von dem drey und zwanzigsten Tacte an bis zum Schlusse des ersten Solo der Singstimme, so wie überhaupt die Ritornells und das ganze zweyte Solo, bis zum Hauptschlusse, gehört zu der Ausführung.

Ich rechne zu den harmonischen Hauptzügen dieser Anlage hier in diesem Falle nur die Grundstimme in Verbindung mit der Singstimme, weil ich dabey voraussetze, daß der Autor sogleich bey der Erfindung seiner Anlage bestimmt hatte, daß die begleiten-

\*) Diese beyden Tacte, in welchen Braun die Worte: dringt zum Herrn, mit verstärktem Nachdrucke wiederholt hat, können in diesem Falle auch mit zur Anlage gerechnet werden, weil diese nachdrückliche Wiederholung sogleich bey diesem zum ersten male zum Gehör kommenden Hauptgedanken angebracht ist.

gleitenden Stimmen keine besondern metrischen Figuren enthalten sollten, sondern daß die erste Violine die Singstimme im Einklange unterstützen, und die zweyte Violine, da, wo es die Figuren der Hauptstimme erlaubten, in Terzen oder Sexten begleiten, übrigens aber bloße harmonische Noten der zum Grunde gelegten Accorde anschlagen sollte; daher rechne ich den Inhalt der zweyten Violine, so wie die Begleitung der Fagotts und die Tonfolge der Violen, wo sie nicht mit dem Bass in der Octave fortgehet, in diesem Falle zu der Ausarbeitung des Satzes.

Ich habe übrigens hier mit Vorsatz ein Beyspiel zu einer Anlage gewählt, welches sowohl in Rücksicht seiner harmonischen Hauptzüge, als auch in Ansehung der ganzen Ausführung und Ausarbeitung sehr einfach und für den Anfänger leicht zu übersehen ist.

### Zweyte Anmerkung.

Weil einmal die Rede von der Arie ist, so steht hier ein Wort von dem zweyten Theile derselben nicht ganz am unrechten Orte. Der zweyte Theil einer Arie kann auf verschiedene Art bearbeitet werden. Der Ton-

seßer

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