



## MTO 17.3 Examples: Osborn, Understanding Through-Composition

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

<http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.11.17.3/mto.11.17.3.osborn.php>

### Example 1. Formal Design of The Beatles, “Happiness is a Warm Gun” (1968)

Section Group	Section	Clock Time	Description
I	A (intro)	0:01	“She’s not a girl who misses much” [Am7–6–Em]
	B	0:14	“She’s well acquainted” [Dm–Am]
II	C (transition)	0:44	Guitar foreshadows “need a fix” theme; moves to 6/8 time.
	C′	0:58	“I need a fix ‘cause I’m goin’ down” [A7–C–Am]
III	D	1:13	“Mother Superior jump the gun.” [A7–C–A7–G], alternating 9- and 10-beat groupings
	E	1:34	“Happiness is a warm gun” [C–Am–F–G]; du wop backing vocals continue until end
	E′	1:48	“When I hold you” (each previous chord reduced from 4 beats to 3)
	E′′	2:05	“Happiness” (4/4 restored, vocal improvising), ends on F minor (borrowed iv)
	E′′′	2:22–2:44	Lennon’s PAC on C5 begins chorus-dependent outro

### Example 2. Four Through-Composed Types

	One-Part Forms ( <i>O</i> )	Multi-Part Forms ( <i>G</i> )
Monothematic ( <i>M</i> )	Type I: One-Part Monothematic $\langle O, M \rangle$	Type II: Multi-Part Monothematic $\langle G, M \rangle$
Polythematic ( <i>P</i> )	Type III: One-Part Polythematic $\langle O, P \rangle$	Type IV: Multi-Part Polythematic $\langle G, P \rangle$

**Example 3.** Formal Design of Sleepy Eyes of Death, “Mean Time ‘Till Failure” (2007)

Section Group	Section	Clock Time	Description
(Ø)	A	0:01	Fuzzy guitars and drums, lead synth loop, synth pads on two-chord theme [F–Am]
	A′	0:36	Guitar lead changes direction upward over second chord
	A′′	1:07	Vocoders added to [F–Am] theme
	A′′′	2:12	Drums and fuzzy guitar exit, only lead synth and two-chord pads left
	A′′′′	2:50–4:21	Lead synth faded out gradually, only two-chord pad left with soft lead

**Example 4.** Two-chord Thematic Idea in Sleepy Eyes of Death, “Mean Time ‘Till Failure” (2007, 0:01)

Lead synth

Synth pads (reduction)

F Am/E

**Example 5.** Rhythm Section Groove in Sleepy Eyes of Death, “Mean Time ‘Till Failure” (2007, 0:01–0:36)

Electric Guitar (overdrive and thick delay)

Tremolo picking

F Am/E

Electric Bass

Drum Set (ad libitum)

E. Gtr.

F Am/E

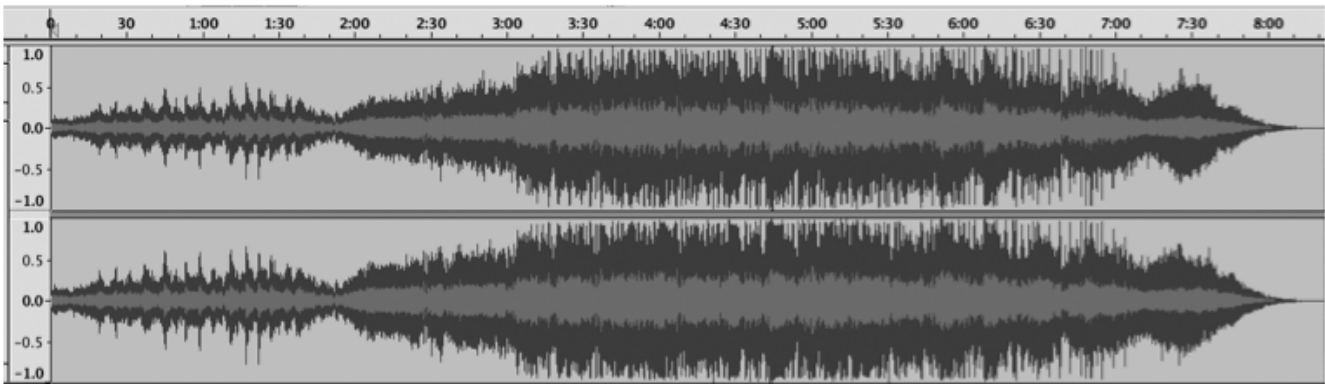
E. Bass

Dr.

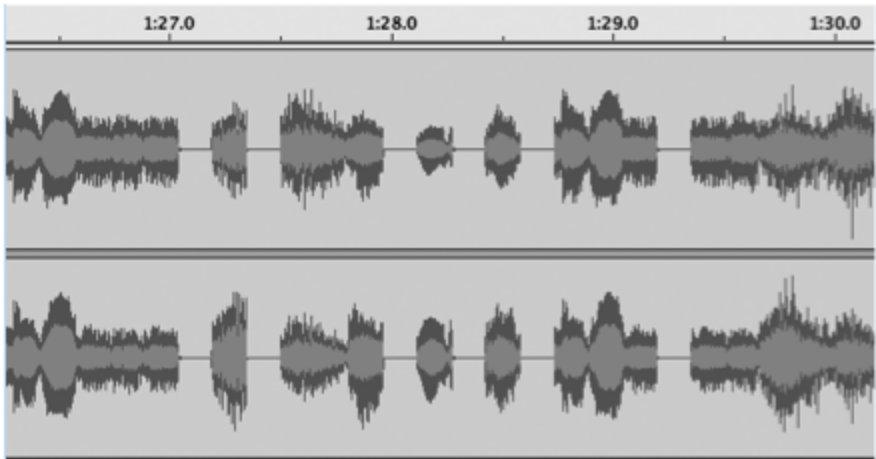
**Example 6.** Formal Design of Animal Collective, “Banshee Beat” (2005)

Section Group	Section	Clock Time	Description
(Ø)	A	0:01	Single chord [E/B]
		0:17	Voice enters
		1:51	Two-note percussion faded in
	A'	2:25	Second chord added [A/C♯–E/B]
		2:59	3+3+2 matures
		4:00	Voice two makes animal noises in background
	A''	4:27	“Howling” climax begins
		5:30	Lead vocal abandons text, joins second vocal in barking noises
	A	6:53	Reversion to single chord
		7:42-8:22	Chords and rhythm begin to fade out, leaving only “tinkering” noises

**Example 7.** Structural Crescendo in Animal Collective, “Banshee Beat” (2005)



**Example 8.** Glitching in The Books, “Tokyo” (2003, 1:26)



**Example 9.** Formal Design of Mew, “Chinaberry Tree” (2005)

Section Group	Section	Clock Time	Description
I	Intro	0:01	Bass and drums 4/4 groove established
	A	0:04	Voice enters [Em–Am–F–C–Em]
	A′	0:28	[F–C] truncated progression, repeated lyric
	Transition	0:48	Moves to 3/4
II	Intro	0:59	New 9-beat bass and drums groove
	B	1:04	Voice returns [Em–Am–F–C–Em]
	B′	1:35	Higher vocal tessitura, [F–C] progression
	B′′	1:45	More metrical dissonance, PAC at end
III	C	2:05	[C–Em–Dm–F] x2
	Outro	2:37–3:33	Sustained low C, shifting upper partials

**Example 10a.** Representative Grooves and Melodies of Groups I and II in Mew, “Chinaberry Tree” (2005)  
A Section Melody, 0:04

Score for the A Section Melody (0:04) of Mew's "Chinaberry Tree". The score is written for Voice, Bass, and Drums in 4/4 time.

**First System:**

- Voice:** In pa-ral-lel seas where would I be my first love
- Bass:** A steady eighth-note groove.
- Drums:** A steady eighth-note groove.

**Second System:**

- Voice:** said to me.\_\_\_\_ Tears out for the world to see...
- Bass:** A steady eighth-note groove.
- Dr.** A steady eighth-note groove.

**Example 10b.** Representative Grooves and Melodies of Groups I and II in Mew, “Chinaberry Tree” (2005)  
B Section Melody, 1:04

The musical score is written for four parts: Voice, Piano, Electric Bass, and Drum Set. The time signature is 3/4. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains the first four measures of the melody, and the second system contains the next four measures. The lyrics are: "Don't in-ter-fere part of her back was fro - zen for the re - main - der of the war." The piano part provides harmonic support with chords and a melodic line. The electric bass part provides a steady groove with eighth notes. The drum set part provides a steady groove with eighth notes.

**System 1:**

- Voice:** Don't in-ter-fere part of her back was
- Piano:** Em Am
- Electric Bass:** Em Am
- Drum Set:** Steady eighth-note groove.

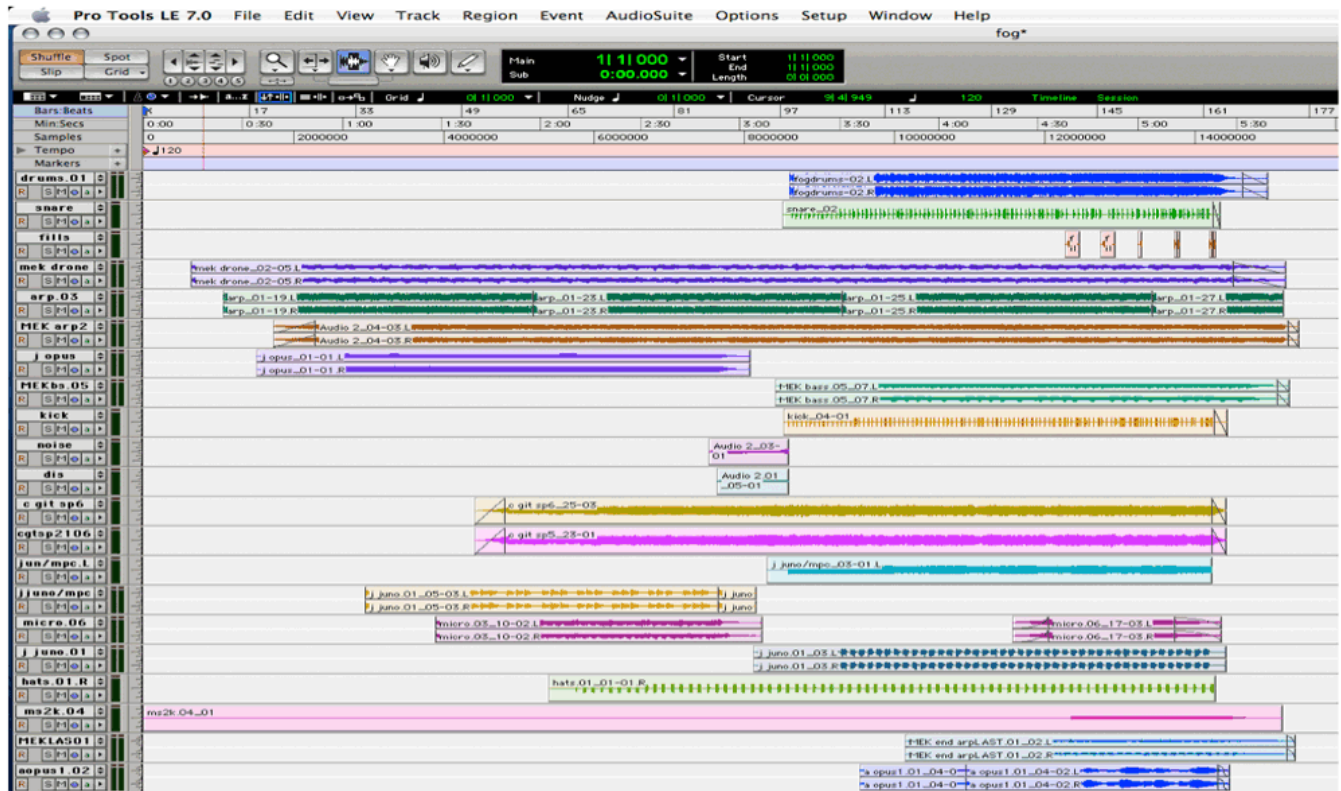
**System 2:**

- Voice:** fro - zen for the re - main - der of the war.
- Pno.:** F C Em
- E. Bass:** F C Em
- Dr.:** Steady eighth-note groove.

**Example 11.** Formal Design of Sleepy Eyes of Death, “Pierce the Air” (2009)

Section Group	Section	Clock Time	Description
I	intro	0:01	“THX” intro
	A	0:09	Introduces “paradiddle” synth
		0:27	Noise synths creep in, pitchbending at 0:42
	A’	0:52	“Whole-note” synth pads enters
	A”	1:14	“Minor 6 <sup>th</sup> ” synth in R channel
		1:46	“Minor 6 <sup>th</sup> ” harmonized, guitar enters slowly
		1:58	[4e+a1] digital hi-hat foreshadows drum arrival, guitar feedback getting louder
		2:40	“Whole note” leaves, noise in L channel and guitar getting louder
II		3:00	Live drums, digital hi-hat remains in L channel
	B	3:22	Modified “whole note” synth begins repeated chord progression
	B’	3:43	“Octave arp” synth, progression continues
	B” (climax)	4:26	3 against 4 synth, rapid drum fills, washing on crash cymbals
		4:55	Vocoders audible as pads
	outro	5:08–5:37	Drums drop out, only synths remain

## Example 12. Pro Tools Screenshot of “Pierce the Air”



Group I-----Group II-----

## Example 13. Formal Design of Drowningman, “Black Tie Knife Fight” (2000)

Section Group	Section	Clock Time	Description
(Ø)	A	0:01	Structured as one compound unit, played twice back to back
	Transition	0:35	Stop-time
	B	0:44	4/4, 4/4, 2/4 repeated ostinato
	C	0:53	Syncopated 4/4 groove
	D	1:04	Double-time “way up high, looking down”
	D’	1:24	Half-time, “say goodbye”
	Transition	1:44	Stop-time gestures
	E	1:56	Double-kick drum flourishes
	Transition	2:25	7/8 groove with tempo change
	F	2:35	Different double-kick syncopated flourish
	G	2:46	Vocals enter at 2:56, 4/4 quieter, only slightly dirty guitars
	H	3:27	Instrumental 4/4, ascending guitar lead
	Outro	3:48–4:10	Solo bass guitar under held chord

**Example 14.** A Section of Drowningman, “Black Tie Knife Fight” (2000, 0:01)

The musical score for "Black Tie Knife Fight" by Drowningman is presented in four systems. Each system includes staves for Voice (screamed), Electric Guitar (Tuned up a 1/2 step in Drop D#), and Drum Kit. The score features complex time signature changes and key signature changes.

**System 1:** The first system is in 6/8 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are "Try and stab me mo - ther fuck - er you". The time signature changes to 7/8 in the second measure.

**System 2:** The second system is in 6/8 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are "can't hit what you can't see all these lights are blin - ding Let's (voice 2)". The time signature changes to 7/8 in the second measure and 4/4 in the third measure.

**System 3:** The third system is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are "go! let's do it! let's go! you sack of shit let's". The time signature changes to 4/4 in the first measure.

**System 4:** The fourth system is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are "go! let's do it! let's go! you sack of — shit.". The time signature changes to 4/4 in the first measure.



**Example 15.** Formal Design of Dillinger Escape Plan, “Sugar Coated Sour” (1999)

Section Group	Section	Clock Time	Description
(Ø)	Intro	0:01	Virtuosic guitar and drums
	A	0:03	Fragmented 16 <sup>th</sup> -note patterns
	B	0:28	Ascending scale patterns
	C	0:40	Quiet guitar solos leading to grand pause with ride cymbal
	D	0:53	7/4 repeated ostinato
	D'	1:17	7/4 continues with rolling bass drum and solo guitar feature
	Transition	1:28	Stop time gesture introduced
	E	1:39	Stop time gestures build 5/4 groove
	F	1:51	Vocals enter over new groove
	Outro	2:15–2:24	Disintegration of groove into pulsed snare rolls

**Example 16.** D Section of Dillinger Escape Plan, “Sugar Coated Sour” (1999, 0:53)

The musical score for the D Section of "Sugar Coated Sour" is written in 7/4 time. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system includes Voice (screamed), Electric Guitar (distorted), and Drum Set. The second system includes Voice, E. Gtr., and Dr. The lyrics are: "Take a bow, you de-serve it. Eat shit, you earned it. Life would be so much bet-ter if you did not ex-ist." The score features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes, and a variety of dynamic markings.

**Example 17.** Formal Design of The Chariot, “Back to Back” (2007)

Section Group	Section	Clock Time	Description
(Ø)	Intro	0:01	Noise, then staccato 5/16 in unison
	A	0:20	17/16 groove with vocals
	Transition	0:54	Metrical flux, staccato groove liquidated
	B	0:58	9/16, 11/16 groove; vocals tacet
	C	1:10	4/4 “oh my god” repeated lyric
	Outro	1:26–1:33	Only drums and vocals

**Example 18.** Intro and A Section of The Chariot, “Back to Back” (2007, 0:01)

**Intro**

Lead Vocal (screamed)

Electric Guitar (drop A tuning)

Drum Set

**A Section**

Voice

*free time: "this is the last chance you get!"*

we both know we're both gon - na die there's a

E. Gtr.

Dr.

differe nce with you and I you want peace but re fuse the fight, so shake hands

with change to - night. Bathe...

The musical score is written for three parts: Lead Vocal (screamed), Electric Guitar (drop A tuning), and Drum Set. The Intro consists of a 2/8 measure followed by a 5/32 measure. The A Section begins with a 17/16 measure, followed by a 3/5 measure, and then a 13/16 measure. The lyrics are: "free time: 'this is the last chance you get!'" (screamed), "we both know we're both gon - na die there's a", "differe nce with you and I you want peace but re fuse the fight, so shake hands", "with change to - night. Bathe...". The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, 3:5 ratios, and time signatures.

**Example 19.** Formal Design of Emery, “In a Lose, Lose Situation” (2005)

Section Group	Section	Clock Time	Description
I	A (intro)	0:01	“Don’t be late,” arp guitar pedal
	B (verse)	0:24	“If I could tell the truth or lie,” two-chord progression, full band enters
	C (transition)	0:52	Quietly, “it’s just a game we play”
	D (verse)	1:04	“If you regulate” polyphonic vocals with palm-muted guitar riff
	E	1:33	New guitar riff, “this is still my life”
II	F (intro)	1:50	Solo guitar riff
	G (chorus)	2:02	“Anyone in their right mind,” full band at 2:14, polyphonic chorus
	H (verse, with end-refrain)	2:38	“Careful not to breathe in” refrain happens twice at end of lines
	J (build)	3:06	“To breathe in the air, that so proudly put to death...”
	K (climax)	3:18–3:57	“My own father’s name!”

**Example 20.** Formal Design of Hopesfall, “Dead in Magazines” (2002)

Section Group	Section	Clock Time	Description
I	intro	0:01	5/4 Riff
	A	0:09	Dual vocals enter over riff, ends on PAC
	A’ (verse)	0:32	Tempo change, 4/4 groove
	B (dark chorus)	0:54	Dark singing, stop time
II	C	1:16	[ $\hat{3}$ – $\hat{5}$ – $\hat{4}$ – $\hat{5}$ – $\hat{1}$ ] stop time riff, call-and-response with screaming
	C’ (bright chorus)	1:29	Bright singing over riff
	D	1:51	Transition, 3 vs. 4 prolonged
	E (verse)	2:09	4/4 groove
III (more monthematic than polythematic)	F	2:27	Quiet, eighth-note claps
	F’	2:40	Beat, guitar chords
	F’’	2:54–3:32	Quasi improv drums, new guitar

**Example 21.** Two Independent Choruses in Hopesfall, “Dead in Magazines” (2002; 0:54, 1:29)

a. Dark Chorus at 0:54

musical score for the Dark Chorus at 0:54. It features Voice 1 (sung) and Electric Guitar. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "mo-dem- day\_ Eve\_ locked arm in arm with Cos - mo queen". The guitar part includes chords: C#m, /G#, E, C#m, /G#, and A. There is a second voice part labeled "(voice 2: screamed)" with notes marked with 'x'.

b. Bright Chorus at 1:29

musical score for the Bright Chorus at 1:29. It features Voice 1 (sung) and Guitar. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "try - ing to find\_ the po - la-rized ver - sion...". The guitar part is marked "D pedal". There is a second voice part labeled "(screamed): \"...of their obsession\"".

**Example 22.** Formal Design of Radiohead, “2+2=5” (2003)

Section Group	Section	Clock Time	Description
I	Intro	0:01	Low D with channel switching, spoken: “That’s a nice way to start, Johnny”
	A	0:14	Guitar riff [Fm–Csus4/E] establishes F minor key and 7-beat groove
	A′	0:25	Vocals enter: “Are you such a dreamer” [Fm–Csus4/E, F7/Eb–D7–Gm–Fadd6–C/E]
	A′′	0:53	“I lay down the tracks,” Section A’s two-part motivic structure now apparent
	B	1:22	“It’s the Devil’s way now,” voice/hi-hat and guitar polyrhythm
II	C	1:54	Abrupt change to rock-steady 4/4, full band, overdriven guitars, etc. [Fm–Fm/E–Db–C, Eb–Db–C] “You have not been paying attention”
	D	2:26	Instrumental interlude (Ab/F and Bb/G dyads) establishes D groove
	D′	2:39	Voice enters over D groove, parallel 6th dyads now Db/Bb and Ab/F, each phrase ends on G7 further establishing F minor tonality (V/V).

**Example 23.** Intro and A section of Radiohead, “2+2=5” (2003, 0:01)

The musical score is written for Voice, Electric Guitar (drop D tuning), and E. Gtr. in 7/4 time. The key signature has four flats (B-flat major/C minor).

**Introduction:**

- Voice:** (Empty staff)
- Electric Guitar (drop D tuning):**
  - Chord diagram:  $\begin{array}{|c|} \hline \text{---} \\ \hline \end{array}$  (w/channel switching)
  - Chord names: Fm, Csus<sup>4</sup>/E
  - Ends with a double bar line and a '2' indicating a second ending.

**Section A:**

- Voice:**
  - Melody: (C, Db, B-natural = motive x)
  - Lyrics: "Are you such a dream - er to put the world to rights?"
- E. Gtr.:**
  - Chord names: Fm, Csus<sup>4</sup>/E, Fm, Csus<sup>4</sup>/E

**Section B:**

- Voice:**
  - Melody: (C-F-C-G-F-E = motive y)
  - Lyrics: "I'll stay home for - ev - er where two and two"
- E. Gtr.:**
  - Chord names: Fm, Csus<sup>4</sup>/E, F<sup>7</sup>/E<sup>b</sup>

**Section C:**

- Voice:**
  - Lyrics: "al - ways makes (a) fi - ve."
- E. Gtr.:**
  - Chord names: D<sup>7</sup>(V/ii), Gm<sup>6</sup>(ii), Fadd<sup>6</sup>(cadential), C(V#)

**Example 24.** Waveform Analysis of Radiohead, “2+2=5” (2003)

