

Music through the Microscope



Anton Bruckner

Locus iste

A musical analysis

Music through the Microscope Volume 6

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Tonal Scheme**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

 A section.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

 B section.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

 C section**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

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Introduction

This document is a detailed analysis of *Locus iste* by Anton Bruckner. The purpose of this analysis is to aid the study of the work by isolating aspects of structure, melody and melodic development, harmony, texture, rhythm, etc.

This study is not a critique of the composer and does not seek to explore the cultural, contextual or historical aspects of the music.

If some of the illustrations appear too small then a free copy of the illustrations can be downloaded as a PDF file from:

http://www.nickredfern.co.uk/Cloud_Factory_Publications.htm

Sources

The source of this analysis is a transcription made from various scores at [http://imslp.org/wiki/Locus_iste,_WAB_23_\(Bruckner,_Anton\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/Locus_iste,_WAB_23_(Bruckner,_Anton)). The transcription is available to download as a free PDF file form along with a piano reduction:

http://www.nickredfern.co.uk/Cloud_Factory_Publications.htm.

The text has been excluded from many illustrations for visual clarity.

Nick Redfern

Anton Bruckner

Anton Bruckner was an Austrian composer (1824 – 1896).

The motet

A motet is a short sacred work which is performed without accompaniment as part of a church service.

Locus iste & style

Composed in 1868, the work is not typical of the genre for this period, which was a time of great advances in harmonic and melodic writing. Bruckner chose a refined and restrained setting which has Classical allusions in the harmony, clear structure, setting and texture.

The employment of dynamics as a compositional device is reminiscent of the terraced dynamic of the Baroque period and the *Strum und Drang* style of the early Classical period. The use of false relations was common in Renaissance music whilst the overtly homophonic texture has a Classical flavour and allows the text to be heard in great clarity at all times.

Text

Locus iste a Deo factus est

Inaestimabile sacramentum, irreprehensibilis est

Translation

This place was made by God

Priceless mystery, it is irreproachable

Structure

A: Bar 1 to 12, beat 1

B: Bar 12, beat 2 to 20

C: Bar 21 to 29

A1: Bar 30 to 42 plus bar of silence (43)

D: Coda bar 44 to 48

Thematicism

A section

Before studying the wider aspects of the work it is important to understand the construction of the score in terms of musical motifs. The employment of motifs ensures a cogent structure and brings an inherent sense of unity in the musical language. The motifs are to be found in the Soprano in the first four bars.

Z Y X W
 Lo - cus i - ste a De-o fa-ctus est

Figure 1 Motifs Z, Y, X & W Soprano bar 1 to 4

In isolation bar 1 to 4 reveal four motifs and each motif is characterised by a wholly distinct rhythmic and melodic function. It is on these four building blocks that Bruckner constructs the whole work.

Z Y X W
 Lo - cus i - ste a De-o fa-ctus est

5 Z Y X W
 Lo - cus i - ste a De-o fa-ctus est,

9 X Y Z
 a De-o, De - o fa - ctus est,

Figure 2 Motifs Soprano Bar 1 to 12

It is interesting to note that the exposition of the motifs in the **A** section, bar 1 to 12 beat 1, that Motif Z, Motif Y and Motif W maintain their melodic characters, that is in descending conjunct motion. Motif X is far more malleable in the **A** section. In bar 7 the third note simply ascends a minor third rather than fall a perfect fourth as in bar 3; thus an *échappée* movement becomes a *cambiata*.

B section

The **B** section sees the motifs in free arrangement with W being extended by a crotchet to form Motif W1. The imitative counterpoint is evident between the Soprano and Bass; owing to the homophonic unity of the inner voices with the Soprano it is not necessary that they are represented in this illustration.

The image shows a musical score for two voices: Soprano (S.) and Bass (B.). The Soprano part is in treble clef and the Bass part is in bass clef. The score is divided into two measures. The first measure is marked with a '12' above the Soprano staff. The lyrics are: 'est, in - ae - sti -' for the Soprano and 'est, in - ae - sti - ma - bi - le' for the Bass. Motif X is indicated by a bracket above the Soprano staff in the second measure, covering the notes 'in - ae - sti -'. Motif W1 is indicated by a bracket below the Bass staff, covering the notes 'in - ae - sti - ma - bi - le'.

14

S. ma - bi - le sa - cra - men - tum

B. sa - cra - men - tum, in - ae - sti -

W1 Z

Z X

Figure 3 Motif bar 12 to 16 Soprano & Bass

However, to fully appreciate the thematic unity of the parts as well as the imitative nature of the Tenor at bar 13 and the Soprano at bar 14 a full illustration does aid the analysis.

12

S. *f* est, in - ae - sti - ma - bi - le sa - cra men - tum

A. *f* est, in - ae - sti - ma - bi - le sa - cra men - tum

T. *f* est, in - ae - sti - ma - bi - le sa - cra men - tum

B. *f* est, in - ae - sti - ma bi le sa - cra - men - tum, in - ae - sti *ff*

Figure 4 Motifs bar 12 to 16