Musical and Narrative Elements
Checklist

USE OF MUSICAL ELEMENTS	
GENRE AND FORM	
The genre and form are either a) easily recognizable and well-integrated if pre-existing, or b) thoughtfully revealed if original.	
METER AND RHYTHMS	
If an historical genre/form is used, the meter/rhythms are either in keeping with it (characteristic, if that is desired), or if not, there is a rationale for the change and it works. If the genre/form is original, then the meter/rhythms are coherent with it.	
The meter and rhythms work well together and with any lyrics.	
Articulations and phrasing form a meaningful interplay with the meter and rhythm.	
Any use of polyrhythms is thoughtful and appropriate.	
MELODY	
If the piece is intended to have a solo line as opposed to an overall musical texture, this line is expressive and leads the listener through the piece.	
If an historical genre/form is used, the melody is either in keeping with it (characteristic, if that is desired), or if not, there is a rationale for the change. If the genre/form is original, then the melody is coherent with it.	
The melody is coherent with the meter and rhythms.	
HARMONY	
If an historical genre/form is used, the harmony is either in keeping with it (characteristic, if that is desired), or if not, there is a rationale for the change and it works. If the genre/form is original, then the harmony is coherent with it.	
The harmony works with the melody.	
The harmonic rhythm works with the shape of the piece.	
TIMBRE/TONE COLOR	
If an historical genre/form is used, the timbre is either in keeping with it (characteristic, if that is desired), or if not, there is a rationale for the change and it works. If the genre/form is original, then the timbre is coherent with it.	
The choices of instruments/vocalists work with the melodic and harmonic lines and the rhythms used.	
WHEN THE MUSIC DOES NOT STAND ALONE	
The music and other element (eg. film) are unified in a viable, though not necessarily traditional way. For example, it can: accompany, provide ironic counterpoint to, illustrate, support, be supported by, develop, enrich, contextualize, etc. If a separation is perceived, there is good reason for it; if one art form dominates the other(s), it is intentional and interpretable.	

USE OF NARRATIVE ELEMENTS – TECHNIQUES THAT MOVE AN AUDIENCE THROUGH TIME	
BEGINNING – CREATING INTEREST	
The audience's attention is captured and the world of the piece is unfolded. The through line of the piece is introduced. All this is in keeping with the artistic intent of the piece.	
DEVELOPMENT – PATTERNING	
By the use of formal structure, and within that structure—for example by imitation, motifs, themes, repetition, progression, variation, parody, echoing, quoting, collection, reorganization, translation/ recontextualization, reversion, adaptation, elaboration, expansion, etc.—the audience's experience is structured, interest is shaped and renewed throughout the piece, and artistic intent and coherence are achieved.	
Points of reference—formal or otherwise—are provided as landmarks for the experience in order to achieve the artistic intent.	
DEVELOPMENT – EXPECTATION	
Creating, denying, fulfilling, subverting, and redirecting expectation by manipulation of patterns results in continuity, stability, instability, suspense, tension, and release, as desired, all tending towards maintaining the audience's involvement and interest. As a result, coherence is created and the artistic intent is achieved.	
FORMAL BALANCE	
Pacing, transitions and separations, similarity, contrast, introduction, exposition, development, climax, and denouement, and choices about length are used to create formal balance (or inbalance, at moments when such serves) and further the artistic intent.	
FOCUS	
By the use of foregrounding and backgrounding techniques, the focus of the audience is directed and their involvement is facilitated during their experience so that coherence is perceived and the artistic intent is achieved.	
ENDING	
The ending refers to or relates to what has gone before in such a way as to create a sense of closure so that the listener has no doubt that the conclusion is reached, artistic intent fulfilled. This does not preclude an end that is unresolved in some way.	

This consideration of composition draws on insights from Alan Belkin's *A Practical Guide to Music Composition*