

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 1:

Allegretto (♩=126)

The musical score consists of four staves of music in 3/4 time. The tempo is marked *Allegretto* with a metronome marking of 126 quarter notes per minute. The first staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second staff continues the melodic line. The third staff features a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. The fourth staff begins with a *dim.* (diminuendo) marking, followed by a *rit.* (ritardando) marking, and ends with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking.

LAYERED ANALYSIS OF MUSICAL EXAMPLE 1:

- *Meter and metric conventions*

The time signature, or meter, indicates the number of beats per measure and the type of note that gets the beat. This composition uses one of the most common time signatures: $\frac{3}{4}$ (simple triple). This category of meter always has three as the top number and 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, etc. in the bottom. Since the job of any meter is to show the beat patterns clearly, the conventions of each meter are an important part of processing the material at sight. The function of this meter is to organize the rhythmic material into three clear beats per bar, with each of the beats being represented by a quarter note. The tempo (*Allegretto*) indicates that the piece should be performed at moderately fast rate. When this meter type (simple triple) is taken at a very fast tempo, the individual beats lose their practical application and cannot be counted individually with continued ease or regularity. When this happens, the meter transforms into a single beat per bar. Though this single beat will change how quickly we see the musical material, it does not change the conventions of how the rhythm is expressed inside each measure. Another key element in evaluating the material is the metronome marking. There is very little music written today that does not indicate the metronome setting. Keep a keen eye out for details indicated in the metronome marking. For example, if this were a score that wanted the measure to be counted in a single beat, the metronome marking would indicate that the dotted half note would bear the beat standard. This single change in metric information would