

## Rhythm and Metre

- **Rhythm** is the way different lengths of sound are combined to produce patterns.
- **Metre** is a regular pattern of beats indicated by a **time signature**.
- **Pulse** is the beat of the music. It's what you tap your feet to! The rhythms can vary the pulse or beat will be steady (like your pulse – hopefully!)
- **Tempo** is the speed of the music, and in particular the speed the pulse of the music is beating.
  - **Largo** – very slow tempo
  - **Adagio** – slow tempo
  - **Andante** – at a walking pace. (Medium-slow)
  - **Moderato** – A medium tempo / moderate tempo
  - **Allegro** – Fast tempo
  - **Vivace** – Fast and lively tempo.
  - **Presto** – Very fast tempo
- **Accelerando** – to get faster.
- **Rallentando(Rall.)/Ritardando(Rit.)** – Slowing down the tempo.
- **Rubato** – flexible tempo
  
- **Simple time** each beat is divided into two equal parts.
- **Compound time** each beat is divided into 3 equal parts.
- **Triplet** is 3 notes (or rests), all the same length, squeezed into the time of two.
- **Syncopation** – when the weak (off beats) beats of the bar are accented.
- **Regular metre** – a time signature where all the beats are the same length.
- **Irregular metre** – a time signature where the beats are grouped together unevenly (5 or 7 beats per bar). Will have a lopsided feel and may not sound western.
- **Free metre** -Where the music has no definite pulse or metre.
- **Drum fill** – short drum solo in between sections of a piece.

## Tonality

- **Tonality** – the *key* of the music. The piece will be built mainly from a particular scale. The tonality can be:
- **Major** – a happy uplifting sound (play C-C to get used to the sound)
- **Minor** – a sad, more serious sound (play A-A, replacing the G with a G# to get used to the sound)
- **Tonal** – will have a sense of key/tonal centre.
- **Atonal** – music with no sense of fixed tonality/key. May sound rather ‘random’.
- **Pentatonic** – a five note scale. Often used in Chinese, African and Celtic Folk melodies
- **Modal** – came before scales. E.g. play D-D on the white notes-this is the Dorian mode. Often used in early music, folk and jazz.
- **Whole tone** – a scale made up of only whole tones. (Sounds quite mysterious – remember The Sea Music project from Year 8.) C, D, E, F#, G#, A#

## Harmony

- **Harmony** – two or more notes of different pitch create harmony.
- **Chromatic** - scale made up of **semitones** (smallest interval e.g. C-C#).
- **Diatonic** harmony uses only the notes that belong to the major or minor keys.
- **Consonance** - music/harmonies that sound nice (**consonant**).
- **Dissonance** – clashing music/harmonies (**dissonant**).
- **Discords** – harsh, **dissonant** sounding combination of notes.
- **Close harmony** – where the notes are close together within the separate parts e.g. Barber shop singing
- **Drone** – long held note, usually in the bass. Often 2 notes held together. Used a lot in Indian music.
- **Modulation** – to change key/tonality. For example if the piece is in the key of C major you could **modulate** to the key of G major or A minor... It's a good way of developing a piece of music. Stevie Wonder uses loads of modulation in his songs. Listen to ‘Golden Lady’ on you tube.
- **Tierce de Picardie** – when a piece in a minor key finishes with a major chord
- **Cadences** – a cadence is formed by the two chords that come at the end of a musical phrase:
  - **Perfect cadence** V-I. Sounds final and complete.
  - **Plagal cadence** IV-I. Also sounds complete, but not as strong. Used for the “Amen” at the end of hymns.
  - **Imperfect cadence** I -V. Unfinished feel to the music.
  - **Interrupted cadence** V-VI. Your ears expect it to go to the tonic as in a perfect cadence, but instead it goes to the VI chord – so it is the surprise cadence!

## Melody (the tune)

- **Pitch** – how high or low the note is.
- **Interval** – the gap in pitch between two notes.
- **Scale** – a group of notes played in ascending or descending order.
- **Arpeggio** - playing the notes of a chord one by one
- **Conjunct** melodies move mainly by step (next door notes like C-D) and sound smooth.
- **Disjunct** melodies use a lot of leaps (bigger intervals) rather than step movement. They will sound spiky and are much harder to sing!
- **Triadic** melodies that use the notes from a **triad** (3 note chord). E.g. a melody using C's, E's and G's would be **triadic** as those are notes from the chord of C.
- **Scalic** melodies are melodies that follow the order of a particular scale. *Similar to conjunct melodies except that a scalic melody can only move up or down to the next note of the scale, whereas a conjunct melody can have a few little jumps.*
- **Pentatonic scale** - a five note scale. Often used in Chinese, African & Celtic Folk melodies.
- **Whole tone scale** – a scale made up of only whole tones. (*Sounds quite mysterious – remember The Sea Music project from Year 8.*)
- **Chromatic scale** scale made up of **semitones** (smallest interval e.g. C-C#).
- **Augmentation** – doubling the note values/lengths of the original tune
- **Diminution** – halving the note values/lengths of the original tune
- **Modes** – came before scales. E.g. play D-D on the white notes-this is the Dorian mode. Often used in early music, folk and jazz.
- **Passing notes** are the notes in between the notes of the harmony. *So if the accompanying chord was C, the notes not in the chord (D, F, A, B) would be the passing notes. You need passing notes to make a melody sound smooth otherwise it would just be a triadic melody.*
- **Blue notes** the flattened notes in a Blues Scale. Often slide up or down to these notes. They make a piece sound 'bluesy'!
- **Sequence** – when a tune is repeated a step higher (ascending sequence) or a step lower (descending sequence).
- **Glissando/Portamento** – a slide between 2 notes. (*instruments like piano or harp would play all the notes in between the 2 notes really fast by sliding the fingers over the notes really quickly.*)
- **Pitch bend** – bending the note on a guitar or any string instrument/voice or keyboard/synthesizer.
- **Ornamentation** – decorating the melody with ornaments such as **trills** (2 adjacent notes played rapidly).
- **Mordents** - (upper and lower) – 3 notes starting and ending on the same note with the middle note either a step higher or lower.
- **Ostinato / Riff** - a repeated rhythm or tune. (Both words mean the same, but **riff** tends to be used in a pop context.)
- **Phrase** – a musical sentence (where you'd naturally take a breath). Often 2, 4 or 8 bars long. Indicated by a curved line above the staff.
- **Articulation** – how to play the notes:
  - **Staccato** ( ) short, detached notes.
  - **Legato** -smooth. Indicated by a **slur** ( )
  - **Accent** ( ) notes played with more force.
- **Improvisation** – when a player makes the music up on the spot. In jazz/blues/pop players will often improvise a solo – commonly on a guitar/sax/trumpet/keyboard.

## Texture

(how the different parts of the piece are woven together)

- **Monophonic** – one single melody line. No harmonies, but it may be played/sung by more than one instrument/voice.
- **Unison** – When everyone sings/plays one part together e.g. when we all sing Happy Birthday we are singing in unison (therefore, unison is monophonic).
- **Octaves** - If the instruments/voices are an octave apart this is called being in **OCTAVES**. To be in unison the notes must be at the same pitch.
- **Homophonic (or harmonic)** – a texture where all parts (melody and accompaniment) move in the same (more or less) rhythm creating a **chordal** effect. The accompaniment is supporting a clear melody.
- **Broken Chords** – Playing the notes of the chord separately, one after the other. Broken Chords provide a more flowing accompaniment than when they are played as block chords.
- **Polyphonic / Contrapuntal** –A texture where 2 or more equally important *melodies interweave* (weave in and out of each other).
- **Imitation** – a phrase is repeated (imitated – so not necessarily exactly the same!). Could be one instrument/voice imitating itself, or 2 or more imitating each other.
- **Canon** – is a particular type of imitation. It's like a round ('London's Burning'), where the imitating part repeats the entire melody and not just a few notes of it.
- **Antiphonal** –stereo effect as a musical phrase is passed from one group of performers to another. E.g. like two choirs singing alternate phrases standing in different places in a church. A lot of early religious vocal music was antiphonal.

## **Timbre and Dynamics**

**Dynamics** (how loud or quiet the music is)

- **Fortissimo (ff)** - very loud
- **Forte (f)** - loud
- **Mezzo Forte (mf)** - quite loud
- **Mezzo piano (mp)** - quite quiet
- **Piano (p)** - quiet
- **Pianissimo (pp)** - very quiet
  
- **Crescendo (< )** - getting louder
- **Decrescendo / Diminuendo ( > )** - getting quieter
- **Sforzando (sf)** - suddenly very loud

## **Timbre** (the type of sound an instrument makes)

- **Vocals** – The use of voices.
  - **Soprano voice** – A high pitched female voice.
  - **Tenor voice** – A high male voice.
  - **Alto voice** – A low female voice.
  - **Bass voice** – A low male voice.
  - **Countertenor** - a male alto achieved using a falsetto voice
  
  - **Falsetto** – ‘false voice’ technique where male singers can sing higher using a softer voice.
  - **Vibrato** – A slight regular wavering of a pitch used by singers and instrument players to add warmth and interest to the note.
- **Instrumental Music** – Music played by instruments only. (No singing!)
- **Instrumental family** – e.g. String family, Woodwind family, Percussion family, Brass family.
  - **Muted (Con sordino)** – To deaden/quieten the sound. Brass players put mutes in the bell of the instrument to do this.
  - **Vibrato** – See above
- **String instruments can be played:**
  - **Con arco (Arco)** – with a bow
  - **Pizzicato (pizz)**– plucked with the finger
  - **Double stopping** – when 2 strings are played at once
  - **Tremelo/tremolando** – literally means ‘trembling’. Rapid up & down movements of the bow on the strings. Good for building suspense etc.
- **Technology** – Use of technology in music
  - **Reverb** – this is when the sounds of an instrument last longer, imitating the sound of the instrument reflecting against walls, floors and ceilings.
  - **Distortion** – Usually used in rock, this is when an instrument is forced to sound ‘aggressive.’
  - **Chorus** – This is when a voice or instrument is multiplied electronically, so it sounds like many
  - **Multitracking** – A recording technique where different sounds/instruments are recorded seperatly and played back together e.g. Logic
  - **Compression** – Used mostly as a recording technique, this is where the quietest sounds are boosted and the loudest are lowered, so the recording is evened out. E.g. drums.
  - **Vocodor** – Device used to **electronically combine** a human **voice** with a **musical instrument**
  - **Sequence** - Electronic device or computer program that is used to record, edit and play back music data using MIDI
  - **Panning** - Sound is electronically moved across from one speaker to another, or is separated into different speakers

## Structure and Form

(How the music is arranged and ordered. The plan of the music.)

- **Binary -**
  - Two sections of roughly equal length
  - First section (A) is then answered by the second section (B)
  - Each section is usually repeated
- **Ternary –**
  - Built up in three sections: A, B, A
  - Section B contains a contrast in some way to Section A.
  - The repeat of Section A can be exactly the same as the first time or it may have added detail to make it more interesting
- **Call and Response -**
  - A musical phrase is sung by one person or musician and is followed by a responding phrase by one person or a group of musicians.
  - Common in traditional African Music and African-American music like Gospel
  - Think ‘Oh happy days’
- **Rondo -**
  - A main theme (A) keeps on returning between contrasting sections
  - Would have the structure A, B, A, C, A, D, A and so on
  - The contrasting sections are called episodes
  - Rondo is an example of a multi-sectional form as it has more forms than binary or ternary
  - A composer may change the repeats in some way each time and other sections may be repeated
  - Therefore this would still count as a Rondo: A, B, A, C, A, B, A as it has returned to A between each episode
- **Theme and Variations -**
  - Involves starting a piece with a main theme which is then repeated several times, but changing or ‘varying’ each time
  - May be changed in tempo, style, instruments, rhythm, anything
  - But the main theme is usually in binary or ternary form and is often very memorable
- **Arch-Shape -**
  - This form is completely symmetrical
  - The plan of the music resembles an arch; A, B, C, B, A
- **Cyclic Form -**

- Constant repetition of a fixed number of beats or melodic pattern
- During each cycle these patterns can be repeated and developed through improvisation, or changes in texture or dynamics
- Common in Africa, India, and Asia
- **Popular Song Forms-**
  - Be able to recognise verse, chorus, bridge
  - Some may also involve Intro and Outro, Fills and Middle 8s
  - **Ballad** –
    - A common form of pop music; often romantic it is a song that tells a story.
- **Ground Bass -**
  - A melody in the bass (the lowest part) that is repeated through out the music
  - Harmony and Melody may keep changing around the ground bass
  - May be known as a Riff in popular music
- **Continuo/Basso Continuo**
  - The Baroque orchestra also used a ‘continuo’ part beneath these instruments – a bass instrument (cello or bassoon usually) and harpsichord or organ - to fill out the harmonies. This would be the equivalent today of bass guitar and keyboard/guitar in the group – it provided the backdrop to the rest of the music
- **Pedal note** –
  - a sustained (held) or repeated note, usually in the bass. The harmony on top of a pedal note must change while the pedal note stays the same or it is not a pedal note. It may be a Tonic pedal or a Dominant pedal note.
- **Fugue** –
  - a polyphonic piece where each part enters with the same tune (at different pitches) and develops each one independently. It is similar to a canon but more complex with modulations, a development section and an ‘exposition’ where the opening section returns.
- **Concerto** –
  - A piece of classical music for a soloist accompanied by an orchestra. Usually has 3 movements (fast – slow – fast).
- **Concerto Grosso** –
  - In the Baroque times you could also get a Concerto Grosso which meant that in this case there were a small group of soloists rather than just one

#### **All forms used in vocal music -**

- **Strophic** –
  - When the same tune is repeated throughout for each verse. Think hymn tunes or Adele’s ‘Make you feel my love’
- **Through-Composed** –
  - Opposite of Strophic. When new music occurs for each verse, changing to reflect different moods or situations described in the lyrics
- **Aria** –

- A solo singer sings a melody with orchestral accompaniment. Found frequently through *operas*