

HOW TO DESCRIBE MUSIC USING

MAD
T SHIRT



Melody – Knowledge Organiser

Pitch



How high or low a note is

Interval



The distance between any two notes.

Motif



A fragment of a melody.

Range



The difference between the lowest and highest notes

Phrase

A longer melodic idea. Musical “sentences” are constructed from phrases.



Hook/riff

A memorable repeated melodic idea designed to catch the ear of the listener.



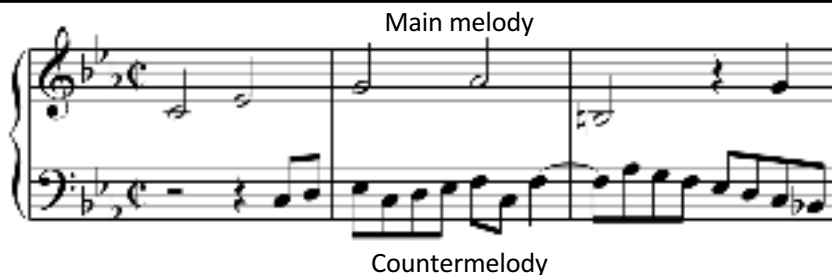
Melodic movement

- Steps** – movement between notes that are next to each other in the scale
- Skips** – movement equal to two steps. You “skip” over a note in the scale
- Leaps** – any movement that is larger than a skip
- Scalic** – when a section of a melody moves along using notes in scale order
- Chromatic** – movement using steps including notes that are not in the key
- Passing note** – notes which link chord tones

Scale/mode

A group of notes which a melody is based on
e.g. major, minor, blues, chromatic, dorian

Counter melody



Compositional devices

- Repetition** – repeat a melodic idea
- Sequence** – repeat a melodic idea but starting on a different note
- Imitation** – repeat a melodic idea in another instrument
- Variation** – change the melodic idea slightly
- Ostinato** – constant repetition of a melodic idea
- Inversion** – turn the melodic idea upside down
- Retrograde** – play the melodic idea backwards

Articulation – Knowledge Organiser

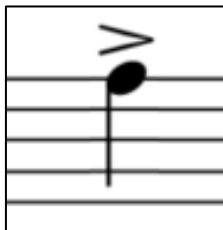
ARTICULATION means *how* you play or sing a note. It is an important part of performing music **EXPRESSIVELY**.

Staccato



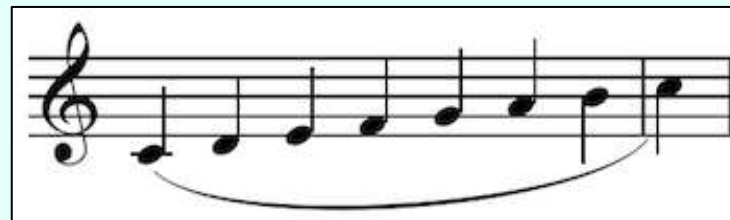
Performed short and briefly. Notes sound detached from each other.

Accent



Emphasise a note so that it sounds louder than others.

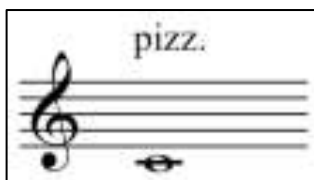
Legato



Perform the notes smoothly. Notes sound connected to each other.
A smooth articulation between two notes is called a **SLUR**.

Orchestral Strings

Pizzicato



Perform the notes by plucking them with the fingers.

Arco



Perform the notes by using the bow.

Tremolo



Continuously play the note with the bow rapidly to produce a trembling effect.

Other Articulations

Vibrato – a slight “wobbling” of the pitch of a note for expression. An important vocal technique as well as for instruments.

Tonguing – the technique used by brass and wind players. Faster rhythms often require the technique of double or triple tonguing.

Bend – guitarists can use their fingers to bend the string from one note to another. Brass and wind players can also do this with different mouth shape and air pressure.

Sforzando



A sforzando is a type of accent. The note should be played with a sudden, strong emphasis.

Slides

Glissando – a dramatic slide between a wide range of notes. For example, running the fingers along the strings of a harp.

Portamento – a smooth slide between two notes. Used frequently by singers.

Dynamics – Knowledge Organiser

DYNAMICS refer to how loud or soft music is played. It is an important part of performing music **EXPRESSIVELY**.

Fortissimo

ff

VERY LOUD

Forte

f

LOUD

Mezzo-forte

mf

Fairly Loud

Mezzo-piano

mp

Fairly Soft

Piano

p

Soft

Pianissimo

pp

Very Soft



On a musical score the dynamic markings are always placed **UNDERNEATH** the stave.

Sometimes composers place extreme dynamic markings on a score to express that they want the music to be played as loud or as soft as is humanly possible!

ffff
pppp

Crescendo



Gradually getting louder

Diminuendo



Gradually getting softer

Texture – Knowledge Organiser

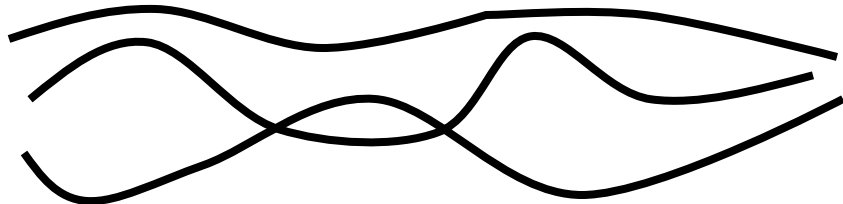
TEXTURE is what we call the different layers and parts of a musical piece and how they fit together.

Monophonic



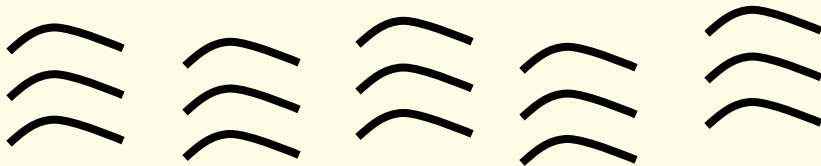
A single melodic voice or instrument

Polyphonic



Different musical lines that interweave with each other

Homophonic



A texture based on chords

Examples of THIN texture

Solo instrument
Acoustic guitar and vocal
Piano and cello

Examples of THICK texture

An orchestra
A rock band
A samba ensemble

Counterpoint

Two or more different melodies playing together.



Unison

When two or more voices or instruments sing/play exactly the same thing at the same time

Melody and accompaniment



Parallel Motion

Notes moving in the same direction keeping the same interval.



Contrary motion

Notes moving in opposite directions; one up, the other down.



Structure and Form – Knowledge Organiser

STRUCTURE - the different sections of a piece or music and how they are ordered.

Typical Pop Song Structure

Intro – Verse 1 – Verse 2 – Chorus – Verse 3 – Middle 8/Bridge – Verse 4 – Chorus – Outro

Intro

The introduction sets the mood of a song. It is often instrumental but can occasionally start with lyrics.

Binary Form

Music that has two sections. These are labelled A and B.

A B

Ternary Form

Music that has three sections. The A section is heard again after B.

A B A

Rondo Form

A recurring theme (A) contrasted by different sections.

A B A C A D A E

Verses

Verses introduce the song theme. There are usually new lyrics for each verse which helps to develop the song's narrative

Choruses

All the choruses usually have the same lyrics. This section relays the main message of the song.

Theme & Variation

A composition can be developed using the **VARIATION** technique. A main theme is composed then the following sections vary this theme in some way, by altering for example:

MELODY – RHYTHMS – CHORDS – TEMPO – INSTRUMENTATION – KEY

Middle 8/Bridge

This section adds some contrast to the verses and choruses by using a different melody and chord progression.

Instrumental Solo

Solos are designed to show off an instrumentalists skills. Rock, jazz and blues often feature solos on instruments such as piano, sax, guitar and drums

Strophic Form

When all of the verses are sung to the same music.

Through Composed

When each section has different music. No section is repeated.

Harmony – Knowledge Organiser

HARMONY – how chords are used in a piece of music.

Triad



A basic type of chord made up of three notes

Inversion



Rearranging the order of the individual notes of a chord

Power Chord



A chord using only the 1st and 5th scale degrees; no 3rd

Arpeggio – playing the individual notes of a chord one after another

Cadence – a movement between two chords at the end of a phrase

Chromatic – music that uses chords that are not naturally found in the key

Diatonic – music that use only chords that belong to the key

Dominant – the fifth chord (V) of a key

Harmonic rhythm – the rate at which the chords change in a piece

Modulation – when the harmony shifts to a new key

Primary triads – chords I IV and V in a key

Progression – a sequence of chords put together

Seventh – adding the 7th degree of the scale to a triad

Tonic – the first chord (I) in a key

Chord Functions in a Key – Roman Numeral System

C	Dm	Em	F	G	Am	Bdim
I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII

Building Chords Using Scale Degrees

C	D	E	F	G	A	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Example: Minor triads are built using the 1 b3 and 5 degrees of a scale so a C minor triad contains the notes C Eb G

Major Triad
1 3 5

Minor Triad
1 b3 5

Major 7th chord
1 3 5 7

Minor 7th chord
1 b3 5 b7

Dominant 7th chord
1 3 5 b7

Perfect Cadence
“The strongest one”



Plagal Cadence
“The Amen one”



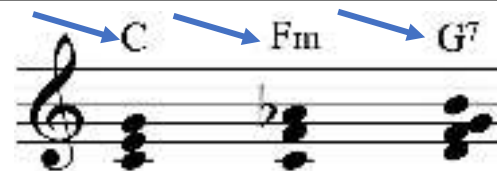
Imperfect Cadence
“The cliffhanger one”



Interrupted Cadence
“The hidden twist one”



Chord Symbol



Instrumentation (Orchestral) – Knowledge Organiser

Strings



Violin



Viola



Cello



Bass



Harp

Brass



Trumpet



French horn



Trombone



Tuba

Woodwind



Flute



Clarinet



Saxophone



Oboe



Bassoon

Percussion



Timpani



Snare Drum



Cymbals



Tambourine



Chimes



Xylophone



Bass Drum



Glockenspiel

Keyboard Instruments



Harpichord



Piano



Organ

Instrumentation (Rock and Pop) – Knowledge Organiser



Electric Guitar



Acoustic Guitar



Bass Guitar



Drum Kit



Lead Vocals



Backing Vocals



Brass Section



String Section



Piano



Electric Piano



Organ

Technology



Synthesizer



Guitar Effects



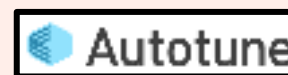
Sampling/
Looping



MIDI Sequencing/Recording
Software



Effects Processors









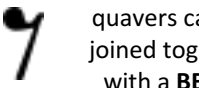
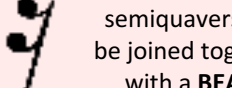


Amplifier

Rhythm – Knowledge Organiser





When you combine any two or more notes or rests you create a **RHYTHM**.

Basic Note and Rest Lengths

	Semibreve	Minim	Crotchet	Quaver	Semiquaver
	4 Beats	2 Beats	1 Beat	½ Beat	¼ Beat
Note					
Rest				 Adjacent quavers can be joined together with a BEAM	 Adjacent semiquavers can be joined together with a BEAM

Dotted Notes and Rests

A dot placed after a note or rest tells you to increase the note or rest by **HALF ITS ORIGINAL VALUE**

	1 Beat		2 Beats
	1 and a half beats		3 Beats

Types of Rhythms

This bass line would be described as having a **CROTCHET** rhythm



DOTTED MINIM and **SEMIQUAVER** rhythm

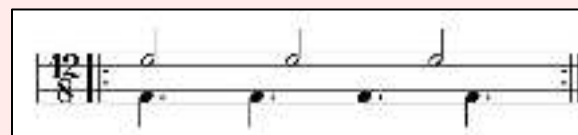


POLYRHYTHM

Two or more different rhythms with the same **METRE** played at the same time

CROSS RHYTHM

Two or more rhythms played at the same time but with conflicting **ACCENTS** often in different **METRES**



Ties

A **TIE** joins two notes of different values



Here you would play the first note and hold it for 3 beats (2+1)

Triplets

A **TRIPLET** is 3 notes played where there is usually only space for 2



Tempo – Knowledge Organiser

TEMPO means how fast or slow a piece of music is – it is the speed of music

The **TEMPO** of a piece of music is most commonly indicated in two ways – an Italian word and beats per minute (**B.P.M.**)

Italian term	English meaning	B.P.M.
Largo	Slowly and broadly	40 - 60
Adagio	Slowly (but not as slow as largo)	60 - 75
Andante	At a walking pace	75 - 105
Moderato	At a moderate pace	105 - 120
Allegro	Quite fast	120 - 155
Vivace	Quick and lively	155 - 175
Presto	Very fast	175 - 200

Tempo markings are placed at the start of the score above the staff



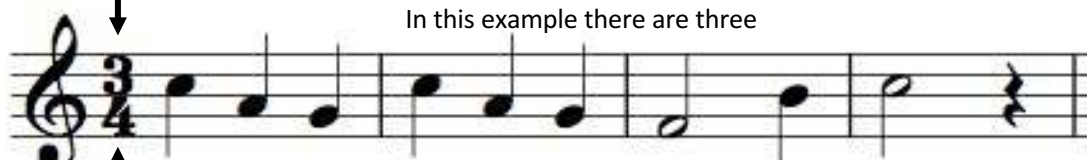
There are also some terms which indicate a change in tempo during a piece

Italian term	English meaning
Accelerando	Gradually speeding up
Ritardando/Rallentando	Gradually slowing down
Ritenuto	A sudden slowing down
Rubato	A highly expressive technique where a performer plays with flexible tempo

Time Signature – Knowledge Organiser

A **TIME SIGNATURE** gives you information on how the beats are arranged in a piece of music. It is also known as **METRE**

The top number tells you how many beats are in each bar.
In this example there are three


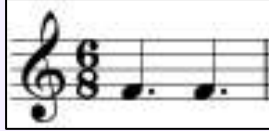
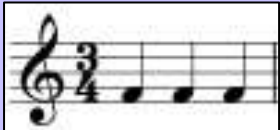

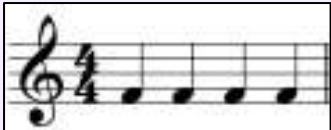
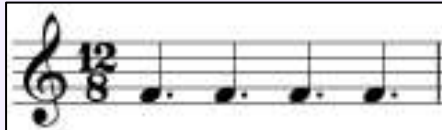


The bottom number tells you that each beat is worth a crotchet (a crotchet is also known as a quarter note hence the number 4 used to denote it)

Number **2** on the bottom = **MINIMS**

Number **4** on the bottom = **CROTCHETS**

Number **8** on the bottom = **QUAVERS**

Simple Metre	Compound Metre
	
	
	

There are two main types of metre: **SIMPLE** and **COMPOUND**

Simple time signatures have beats that can be broken down into two notes

Compound time signatures have beats that can be broken down into three notes.

In compound time signatures each beat is represented by a dotted crotchet which can be broken down into three quavers



The vast majority of music is written with a 4/4 time signature.

This is so common it is known as **COMMON TIME** and can be denoted using a letter C instead of using numbers



IRREGULAR METRE

Sometimes music is written in a metre containing odd numbers of beats in each bar

