

GCSE Revision

Key Terms

Miss Mace's Guide

Notes from revision/text books, the internet and albums.

2012

Rhythm and Metre



- **Pulse** or **metre** = the **beat** of the music.
- **Rhythm** = the pattern of beats in the music.
- **Tempo** = the **speed** of the music.
- **Time signature** = how many **beats** are in each **bar**.
- **Dotted rhythms** = made up of pairs of notes – one **long** and one **short**.
- **Triplets** = when **3** notes are played in the usual time for **2** notes.
- **Syncopation** = when weak beats are **accented** – when a rhythm feels like it is moving **off-beat**.
- **Cross rhythm** = when you have two **conflicting rhythms** being played at the same time.
- **Polyrhythm** = more than **2 conflicting rhythms** being played at the same time.
- **Rubato** = when rhythms are performed with a sense of **flexibility/** music pulled around to create **expression**.
- **Swing rhythm** = used in jazz/blues – played on the hi-hat most often.

Listening

1. For Cross rhythm / Polyrhythm examples – listen to African Drumming.
2. For Swing rhythm/ Syncopation examples – listen to Blues.

Rhythm and Metre

NOTE LENGTHS

Note	Rest	Name	Number of crotchet beats
		Semibreve	4
		Dotted minim	3
		Minim	2
		Dotted crotchet	1½
		Crotchet	1
		Quaver	½
		Semiquaver	¼

Tempo

- **Allegro** = Fast.
- **Vivace** = Lively.
- **Allegretto** = Fairly quick.
- **Moderato** = At a moderate speed.
- **Andante** = At a walking speed.
- **Adagio** = Slowly.
- **Lento** = Slow.
- **Accelerando** = Gradually getting faster.
- **Ritardando / Rallentando** = Gradually getting slower
- **Ritenuto** = Held back.
- **Rubato** = With some freedom of time – pulling the music about for expression.
- **Pause** = Marked on the music with a curved line with a dot. You would usually hold on to a pause for as long as the conductor/performer decides. Often comes at the end of a piece.

Harmony

- **Consonant** = describes notes that sound **pleasing** together.
- **Dissonant** = describes notes that **clash** when played together.
- **Diatonic** = the music uses only notes from the current key.
- **Chromatic** = the music contains notes that don't belong to the key the music is currently in.
- **Triad** = another name for a chord using 3 notes.
- **Pedal** = a long note that is **held** or **repeated**, usually in the **bass**, while the harmonies change above it. (**Drone** = same as a pedal only more than one note held in the bass, while the harmonies change above).
- **Drone** = similar to a pedal, but usually with two notes sustained (interval of a 5th). Some instruments play drones all the time – such as a bagpipe, and some Indian instruments.
- **Chord progression/sequence** = A pattern of chords used in a piece of music.

PRIMARY CHORDS

- **Tonic** = Chord I in the key the music is in.
- **Subdominant** = Chord IV in the key the music is in.
- **Dominant** = Chord V in the key the music is in. **Dominant 7th** = Chord V7.

SECONDARY CHORDS

- Chords such as chord II, iii, vi, vii.

Harmony

- **Power chords** = a way of playing chords on a guitar – usually open 5ths with no 3rd in the chord.
- CADENCES
- **Cadence** = the pattern of chords found at the end of a phrase or section of music.
- **Perfect Cadence** = Chord V-I – sounds strong and final.
- **Imperfect Cadence** = any chord to Chord V – sounds incomplete, the music wants to carry on.
- **Plagal Cadence** = Chord IV-I – sounds like Amen in Church music – sounds final.
- **Interrupted Cadence** = Chord V-VI – sounds like a surprise.

Tonality

- **Tonal** = in a **major** or **minor** key
- **Atonal** = not in any key
- **Modal** = based on a type of seven-note scale called a 'mode'.
- **Key signatures** = the **key** indicates which **scale** the music is based on, and tells us how many **sharps** or **flats** the music uses.
- **Modulation** = when the music changes **key** to a different key for a section of the music. Common modulations are to the **dominant, the relative minor from major and vice versa, the sub-dominant.**
- **Pentatonic** = music based on a 5 note scale rather than the major/minor scales.



Listening

1. Listen to Handel's Water Music – 4 – *Hornpipe I*. This music is in a **major** key – notice how happy and uplifting it sounds.
2. Now listen to Handel's Water Music – 5 – *Andante espressivo*. This is in a **minor** key. Notice how sad and haunting it sounds.

Texture

- **Monophonic** = a single melody line – unaccompanied music.
- **Homophonic / Chordal** = where all the parts move with the same rhythm, but they are on different notes of the chord.
- **Melody Dominated Homophony** – a texture where all the harmonies accompanying the melody moves block chords underneath a melodic line.
- **Polyphonic** = two or more melodies being played at the same time – many layers of melody. Each melodic line is of equal importance.
- **Contrapuntal/Counterpoint** = (often described as 2, 3 or 4 part counterpoint). Where there is more than one melody (like Polyphonic), but there is a little more give and take in the melodies. In other words, when one melody is busy, the other melody gives way and is less busy. In this way, the melodies feel like they are in conversation with each other.
- **Melody and Accompaniment** = a melody line with an accompaniment.
- **Imitation** = When a melody is repeated or copied by another instrument/voice.
- **Canon** = When each of the **imitated** melodies are repeated **exactly the same** as the original.
- **Layered** = several different ideas superimposed on top of each other.
- **Antiphonal** = two instrumental or vocal groups alternate with each other in a musical conversation.

Texture

- **Octaves** = when a melody line is played on a high and low pitch at the same time.
- **Unison** = everyone performs the same note or melody on the same pitch.
- **Drone** = sustained chords/note underneath the music (like a bagpipe has).
- **Alberti Bass** = An accompaniment pattern, which involves a broken chord pattern, most often played with the bottom note of the chord, followed by top, middle, top.
- **Stab chords** = Used in Jazz and various types of pop music. Often a horn section – trumpet/trombone/saxophone will play short chords, called stab chords because of the shortness and sharpness of them. You can also get them in Jazz music by the brass or piano player. They are used to inject rhythm into the music, and will make the music sound more lively. Heavily used in styles such as Disco and Funk.
- **Walking Bass** = Usually seen in Blues/Jazz, but also in some popular music styles, it is a busy, constantly moving bass line. This is as opposed to just holding the bass note of a chord. A walking bass often outlines the notes of the chord.

Melody

Listening

1. Listen to Mozart's Piano Concerto No.27 1st mov. – notice how **scalic** and **arpeggic** the melody is.
2. Also notice the ornamentation such as **trills** in the piano part.

Melodies are usually based on **scales**, a set of notes to choose from.

- **Chromatic scale** = uses all 12 chromatic pitches (black and white notes, all sharps and flats)
- **Pentatonic scale** = uses 5 pitches.
- **Whole tone scale** = a scale using 6 notes – each a tone apart.
- **Blues scale** = a major scale, with a flattened 3rd, 5th and 7th. The flattened notes are called **blue notes**.

The terms below describe how the melodies move.

- **Conjunct** = moves by **step**.
- **Disjunct** = moves by **leap**.
- **Ascending** = the melody **rises**.
- **Descending** = the melody **descends (goes downwards)**.
- **Triadic** = the melody is based on the notes of the chord – like a broken chord.
- **Scalic** = goes up and down like a scale.
- **Arpeggios** = going up and down the notes of the scale – like a broken chord.
- **Broken chord** = using the notes of the chord in a different order in a pattern.
- **Anacrusis** = A melody that begins with a pick up before the 1st beat of the bar.
- **Range** = The notes measured from the lowest to the highest in the melody (range of a 12th etc.)
- **Chromatic** = Melodies that move by semitone.
- **Counter melody** = An opposing melody, being played at the same time as another melody.
- **Answering phrase** = Such as you might find in a Call & Response.

Melody

Melodic Device

Sequence = A melody that is repeated one note higher or lower each time.

Theme = A main melody that is used and developed during the piece of music.

Thematic transformation = When a theme is developed throughout the music.

Leitmotif = A melody (used in both Western Classical Music, and Film music) that represents a character, time, place etc.

Intervals

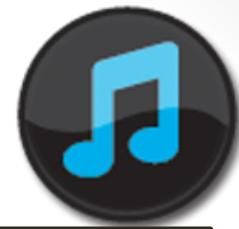
Octave / Tone, Major 2nd / Major 3rd / Perfect 4th / Perfect 5th / Major 6th / Major 7th / Semitone / Microtone

Microtone is a smaller interval than a semitone, and used in non-Western music, such as Indian music.

Ornamentation

- **Passing note** = a note that isn't part of the current chord
- **Appoggiatura** = a dissonant note that is usually approached by a leap, and then moves by step to resolve onto a note in the chord.
- **Acciaccatura** = a quick note that precedes the main note – a crushed note/grace note.
- **Trill** = rapidly moving from one note to the note above or below.
- **Glissando/portamento/slide** = a smooth **slide** between two notes.
- **Pitch bend** = a short **slide** up or down to a main note.

Developing Melodies



- **Ostinato** = a short melodic idea that is **repeated**.
- **Riff** = an ostinato in popular music.
- **Sequence** = when a small melodic idea is repeated, but at a higher or lower pitch – either ascending or descending.
- **Inversion** = a melodic idea that has been turned **upside-down**.

Dynamics

dynamics

Term:

Symbol:

Effect:

piano

p

soft

pianissimo

pp

very soft

mezzo piano

mp

slightly soft

forte

f

loud

fortissimo

ff

very loud

mezzo forte

mf

slightly loud

fortepiano

fp

loud then soft

sforzando

sfz

sudden accent

crescendo



gradually louder

diminuendo



gradually softer

Structure and Form



- **Binary Form** = A B (Two contrasting sections of music)
- **Ternary Form** = A B A (middle section contrasts between two sections of the same music).
- **Rondo Form** = A B A C A D A etc. (Repeating sections of music A/contrasting sections of music B, C etc. A = Ritornello, B, C, etc = Episodes.)
- **Theme and Variations** = The variations are based on the music from the theme, but they differ in texture, melody, harmony, rhythm and tempo.
- **Sonata Form** = A form of Ternary Form, with a more complex structure, related to key signatures and melodic themes known as subjects. (A) **Exposition** – 1st subject (tonic) and 2nd subject (dominant/relative minor). (B) **Development** – Develops ideas from the exposition and moves through various keys. (A) **Recapitulation** – 1st and 2nd subjects return (tonic).
- **Minuet and Trio** = performed *Minuet, Trio, Minuet*. These are dance movements put together in a Ternary Form. The Minuet is a 3/4 time signature at a medium tempo. The trio usually contrasts with the minuet.
- **Scherzo and Trio** = As the minuet and Trio. Scherzo means a 'joke', which is a lively dance in 3/4 with a fast tempo.
- **Ground Bass** = A baroque piece with a **repeating bass line and chords**, with varying melodies over the top.

Listening

Structure and Form

- **Strophic** = The same music is used for each **verse**.
- **Through-composed** = the music keeps changing without repetition throughout.
- **Da capo aria** = A Ternary Form song.
- **Call and Response** = When one part plays/sings a melody and another answers.
- **32-bar song form** = **A A B A** – 8 bars for each section = 32 bars.
- **Middle 8** = The middle 8 bars (section B) in 32-bar song form, which usually contrasts with the repeating A sections - **AAB**A. Some pop songs will also have a middle 8, and 8 bar contrasting section, used to break up the verses/choruses.
- **Verse/Chorus** = as in most songs, music for the verses same, but different lyrics, chorus uses same lyrics and music.
- **Bridge** = A section of music that acts as a link between the Verse and the Chorus.
- **12 Bar Blues** = 12 bars, using the following chord sequence, used for each verse of the song – I, I, I, I7, IV, IV, I, I, V7, IV7, I, I.
- **Ostinato** = A repeating melody or rhythm. This can be used to give structure to a piece of music.
- **Riff** = Like an ostinato, but usually a shorter melody or rhythm. Used more in popular music.
- **Instrumental Break** = A section when an instrument takes a solo during a song.
- **Introduction** = A section used to start a piece of music/song.
- **Outro** = A section used to end a song – term used in popular music.
- **Coda** = A section used to end a piece of music – term used in Western Classical Music.

Structure and Form

- **Fill** – A small melody or rhythm used to fill calm moments in a bar. Often you might have a drum fill, leading to a chorus for example. Or a guitar might fill by playing a riff towards the end of a bar, to keep the music interesting.
- **Loop** = Basically an ostinato, but the term refers to music being created electronically where a short recording/musical idea is looped to repeat.
- **Improvisation** = A section where an instrument makes up it's own melodic/rhythmic ideas on the spot.
- **Phrasing** = the sentences in music. The natural feel of where the melody starts and ends, where you might breathe etc. Phrasing in a song will often coincide with each sentence in the lyrics.
- **Periodic phrasing** = where the phrasing (during the classical period) is of equal length. For example a 2 bar melody, would be answered by another 2 bar melody.

Timbre / Sonority

- **Strings** = Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass, Harp, Guitar
- **Woodwind** = Flute, Clarinet, Oboe, Bassoon, Saxophone, Piccolo, Recorder,
- **Brass** = Trumpet, Trombone, Horn, Tuba.
- **Percussion** = Timpani, Snare Drum, Cymbal, Bass Drum, Xylophone, Glockenspiel, Hand held percussion (such as a tambourine) etc.
- **Keyboard Instruments** = Piano, Organ, Harpsichord.
- **Voice** = Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, Treble (boy), Mezzo Soprano (between Alto and Soprano), Countertenor (male alto), Baritone (between Tenor and Bass).
- **Indian Instruments** = Dhol, Tabla, Sitar, Sarangi, Tumbi.
- **Types of groups** = Solo, Duet, Backing Vocals, A cappella, Chorus, Orchestra, String quartet, Basso continuo, Pop/rock group, Rhythm section, Acoustic.
- **Technology** = Synthesised/Electronic, Panning, Phasing, Sample, Reverb, Echo, Amplified.

INSTRUMENTAL TECHNIQUES APPLIED TO MOST INSTRUMENTS

- **Staccato** = To play notes short.
- **Legato** = To play notes smoothly.
- **Sustained** = To hold notes on for full lengths, creating a non-stop sound.
- **Accent** = To emphasise a note.
- **Muted** = Different instruments can play with a muted sound (altered, often quieter or softer) by using a mute or muting strings with the hand.

Timbre / Sonority

Instrumental Techniques

STRINGS

- **Arco** = **bow** the strings
- **Pizzicato** = **pluck** the strings
- **Con sordino** = **muted**
- **Tremolo** = rapid and continuously repeat a note
- **Double stopping** = play two or more notes at once (by bowing more than one string).
- **Harmonics** = A way of producing a higher pitch of a note by gently touching the string. Sounds muted, and higher in pitch.

WIND AND BRASS

- **Slurred** = play the notes **smoothly**
- **Tongued** = notes are played **seperately**

DRUMS

- **Fills** = a short pattern to fill a gap between phrases of melody.

VOICE

- **Falsetto** = male voice sung in a very high range – out of normal range.
- **Vibrato** = a technique to warm up the sound by **wavering** on the note.
- **Humming** = Singing with a closed mouth.
- **Syllabic** = One syllable per musical note.
- **Melismatic** = When you sing one syllable over multiple notes.
- **Scat** = A type of improvising that involves singing nonsense words.
- **Belt** = When pop/musical theatre singers sing powerfully in their natural voice range – not using their head voice/falsetto.
- **Rap** = Speaking in rhythm with the music.

Timbre / Sonority

Technology and Timbre

Popular music uses **electronic** timbres/instrument sounds.

- **Drum machine** = **replicates** the sounds of different percussion sounds by playing samples and loops of drum beats.
- **Mixing Desk** = **combines/mixes different audio signals**, which then can be **manipulated**
- **Sampler** = A **sample** is a short portion taken from an existing recording. A **sampler** allows you to **alter and manipulate samples**.
- **Synthesiser** = controlled through a keyboard, allows you to manipulate the sounds produced and add digital effects.

Effects and Digital techniques

- **Reverb** = makes the music sound as if it was recorded in a resonant space.
- **Delay** = creates the effect of **echo**.
- **Distortion** = alters the sound – **rougher and harsher**.
- **Chorus** = **thickens** the sound, making it sound as if several instruments/voices are playing.
- **Panning** = alters the **placement of the sound** from left to right speaker.
- **Quantising** = a process that fixes notes to snap in time with the beat on a computer.

Styles of music

- **Western Classical Tradition** = music from Europe, covering music from the Baroque era onwards.
- **Baroque** = Music composed between 1600-1750.
- **Classical** = Music composed between 1750-1810.
- **Romantic** = Music composed between 1810-1910.
- **Chamber Music** = Music to be played in a room, by small ensembles, such as trio/quartet etc.
- **Jazz**
- **Blues**
- **Musical Theatre**
- **Film Music**
- **Rock**
- **Soul**
- **Hip-Hop**
- **Reggae**
- **Ballad**
- **Pop**
- **Bhangra**
- **Fusion** = Music that combines the musical features of two different countries/styles.
- **Minimalism** = A type of 20th century music based on the layering of different loops, and transforming/developing them.