

Intro To Music

ELEMENTS OF MUSIC – Combining and controlling the elements of sound.

Melody- A series of single *pitch*s of particular *duration*. A “tune”. The part of a piece of music that you might sing or hum if you took away the words. Melody is, traditionally, the most important part of any musical composition.

Harmony- 2 or more *different pitch*s sounding at the same time. The harmony serves as the foundation or accompaniment to the melody. “thickens the music”

Chord- 3 or more pitches or tones sounding together usually under the melody.

Arpeggio- a “broken chord”, tones played one at a time adding up to a chord.

Consonant Harmony- A harmony (chords) that sounds “traditional”, stable, agreeable, “good” or “nice” sounding.

Dissonant Harmony- A harmony (chords) that sounds unstable or causes tension, sounds disagreeable or “bad” to our ear. Tension which is seeking resolution or movement.

Most music with harmony uses both consonance and dissonance, with the dissonance creating unstable sounds that “resolve” to consonance. Dissonance and consonance are both established through the use of TONALITY.

Tonality- Based on a particular scale. Each scale will have a starting and ending note that has the same letter name. This note is the most important note in the scale and is called the *tonic*. The tonic serves as home base upon which the scale is built. Scales are used as the material that melodies and harmonies are made of. A piece of music that is based on a certain scale will revolve around the tonic. Many times this is referred to as the key of a piece. The tonic and the scale make the key or tonality (C Major/A minor, etc.) and establish what combination of notes will sound consonant and what will sound dissonant.

Major – up/happy or minor – depressed/sad/lowered

When a piece of music moves from one key or tonality to another is it called a *modulation*.

Modulate- Change the key or tonality within a piece of music.

Rhythm- Organization of Time

A. Beats- units of equal length that felt as a pulse. They are either strong and clear or weak and unclear.

B. Measures- groupings of beats on the staff also referred to at times as bars. The organization of beats within these measures is called meter. Meter can be felt as: duple(2), triple(3), quadruple(4) and irregular(5,7,10,11 etc.)

C. Phrases- logical segments of melody. Similar to poetry

D. Tempo- Speed of the beat or pulse.

Slow-*Largo*-very slow

Grave-slow, ponderous

Adagio Dolce- slow/sweet

Moderate- *Moderato*

Andante

Fast- *Allegro*

Allegro vivace-fast/lively

Presto- quite fast

Prestissimo - very fast

Form- Organization of musical ideas. How you progress through the various musical ideas within your piece of music.

Unity- Like or similar musical ideas

Variety- Different or new musical ideas

Most music becomes appealing by balancing familiar ideas (unity) with new ideas (variety).

Too much unity- Boredom from hearing repetition of the same musical ideas.

Too much variety- Confusion from hearing no familiar material or ideas.

Songs will often use words like *verse*, *chorus*, *refrain* to refer primarily to the words.

Most musicians refer to musical ideas as lettered sections. How these sections are organized is **Form**.

Strophic- A A A A A etc. One musical idea repeated many times.

Rondo- (alternating) A B A C A B A or A B A C A One musical idea repeated on an alternating basis with new musical ideas.

Through-composed – A B C D E F etc. A form with little or no repetition of musical ideas.

Theme and Variations – A1 A2 A3 A4 A5 etc. A form which uses one musical idea as the foundation and substantially changing it in each variation (melodic, harmonic, rhythmic variety)