

Music 111 – Music Appreciation

Elements of Music

“Music is...an art based on the organization of sounds in time.” Roger Kamien

I. Four main properties of musical sound:

PITCH is the relative highness or lowness that we hear in a sound

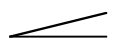
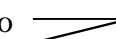
Tone is a sound that has a definite pitch.

Interval is the “distance” in pitch between two tones.

Octave is a specific interval: the distance between the first and last (8th) note of a major scale. (**do**, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti, **do**)

Pitch Range of an instrument is the distance between the highest and lowest notes that it can produce.

DYNAMICS is the term used for degrees of loudness or softness in music.

Italian terms are used:	pianissimo	pp	very soft
	piano	p	soft
	mezzo piano	mp	moderately soft
	mezzo forte	mf	moderately loud
	forte	f	loud
	fortissimo	ff	very loud
	crescendo		gradually louder
	decrescendo		gradually softer

Accent is when one note of a melody is emphasized by being played louder than the other notes around it.

TONE COLOR (TIMBRE) is the quality of sound which allows us to distinguish one instrument sound from another. (*Bright, dark, brilliant, mellow, rich,* etc. are descriptive words which might be used in discussing the overall tone color of a piece of music.)

DURATION refers to the length (in time) of musical notes relative to one another.

The duration of individual notes contributes to RHYTHM in music.

II. Performing Media: Voices and Instruments

VOICES: Female - Soprano (high), Mezzo Soprano (middle), Alto (low)
Male - Tenor (high), Baritone (medium), Bass (low)

INSTRUMENTS OF THE ORCHESTRA: in “families”

Strings: violin, viola, cello, bass, harp,

Woodwinds: piccolo, flute, clarinet, bass clarinet, oboe, English horn, bassoon, contra bassoon.

Brass: trumpet, trombone, French horn, tuba

Percussion: Definite pitch – timpani, glockenspiel, xylophone, chimes
Indefinite pitch – snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, gong

Keyboard Instruments: piano, harpsichord, organ

III. Rhythm “...is the flow of music through time.” (Kamien)

BEAT is a predictable, recurring pulse in music. Some beats are accented.

METER is the organization of beats into regular groups.

Measure – Music is divided into groups of beats called measures.

Duple meter – is music which is composed with 2 beats per measure

Triple meter - is music which is composed with 3 beats per measure

Quadruple meter - is music which is composed with 4 beats per measure

ACCENT refers to a note which is emphasized by being played louder than the notes around it, or held longer, or notes that are higher in pitch.

SYNCOPE is a term used to describe music which features accented notes where you would not normally expect them. (“Off the beat”)

TEMPO refers to the speed of the beat. Italian terms are used (See page 34)

IV. Melody “...is a series of single notes which add up to a recognizable whole.”

Melodies can have wide or narrow pitch ranges, they can move mainly by **steps** (small intervals-adjacent tones) or by **leaps** (larger intervals.) They can be played **legato** (one note smoothly connected to the next) or **staccato** (each note short, and detached or disconnected from the next note.)

Phrases are shorter parts of a complete melody, often arranged in pairs (question & answer.)

V. Harmony refers to how chords are constructed and how they follow one another.

Chord is 3 or more notes sounded at the same time

Chord progression is a series of chords played one after another.

Consonance refers to a chord which sounds stable and restful

Dissonance refers to chords which sound tense and unstable. They need to be resolved – forcing the music to move to a consonant chord.

Triad is a 3 note chord.

Arpeggios are when the notes of a chord are broken apart and played one after another instead of all at the same time.

VI Key refers to the central tone, scale, and chord around which a piece is composed.

The first seven letters of the alphabet are used to name musical notes: A,B,C,D,E,F,G.

After the note G, the pattern repeats: A,B,C,D,E,F,G,A,B,C,D,E,F,G,A,B,C,D, etc.

Different keys contain different notes in their scales and chords. EX: the key of C Major has a scale which goes from C to C. (CDEFGABC)

Scale is a specific pattern of notes ascending from one tone to that repeated note one octave higher. *do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti, do* Scales are used as the raw materials from which melodies and chords are built.

Major Scale is a very specific arrangement of notes that creates the familiar *do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti, do* pattern. Often described as sounding “bright” or “happy.”

Minor Scale is another arrangement of notes that creates a pattern often described as sounding “dark” or “sad” or “serious.”

Key Signatures are symbols written at the beginning of each line of music to tell the performer what key the music is written in.

Modulation is when a piece of music is written so that it changes from one key to another. This technique creates excitement in music.

VII. Texture refers to how many layers of sound (melody & harmony) are heard at once.

Monophonic texture features a single unaccompanied melody line.

Homophonic texture features one main melody with chordal accompaniment.

Polyphonic texture features two or more melodies of equal importance which are played at the same time.

VIII. “Form in music is the organization of musical elements in time.” (Kamien)

Techniques that create musical form: Repetition, Contrast, Variation.

Binary Form = 2 part form A B or AA BB

Ternary Form = 3 part form A B A