

Music Department

N5

Understanding Music

Listening Concepts



Name _____

Understanding Music

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This booklet covers ALL musical concepts required for NQ NATIONAL 5 LEVEL. Use it in class and at home for continued revision.

In addition, a helpful website for home revision is:-

jm-education.com

also

A-Z of Music concepts - Musipedia

This is an important element of the course and is in the form of a written listening paper (May diet of exams).

It is worth **40 marks!**



MELODY / HARMONY	RHYTHM / TEMPO	TEXTURE / STRUCTURE / FORM	TIMBRE	STYLES
Atonal / Cluster	Rutabo	Strophic	Piccolo, oboe, bassoon	Symphony
Perfect Cadence	Ritardando	Binary/AB	(French) horn, tuba	Gospel
Imperfect Cadence	Moderato	Rondo	Viola	Classical
Inverted Pedal	Cross Rhythms	Alberti Bass	Castanets, bongo drums	Pibroch
Chromatic	Compound Time	Walking Bass	hi-hat cymbals	Celtic Rock
Whole-tone scale	6/8 9/8 12/8	Ground Bass	Clarsach	Bothy Ballad
Grace note		Homophonic	Bodhran	Waulking Song
Glissando		Polyphonic	Sitar, tabla	Gaelic Psalm
Modulation		Contrapuntal	Arco	Aria
Contrary Motion		Coda	Pizzicato	Chorus
Trill			Con sordino	Minimalist
Syllabic			Flutter-tonguing	Indian
Melismatic			Rolls	
Counter melody			Reverb	
Decant			Mezzo-soprano	
Pitch Bend			Baritone	
Tone / Semitone			A cappella	

New concepts for NATIONAL 5 LEVEL

Melody & Harmony

Words in this section describe what is happening in the melody or 'tune' and the different ways that notes are formed together to make harmony.

The melody can move in a variety of ways:-

ASCENDING	Moving in an upward direction	<input type="checkbox"/>
DESCENDING	Moving in a downward direction	<input type="checkbox"/>
STEPWISE	Moving by step to the note directly above or below	<input type="checkbox"/>
LEAPING	Jumping between high notes and low notes	<input type="checkbox"/>

The melody can move in patterns:-

REPETITION	Musical idea heard more than once in exactly the same way by exactly that same Instrument / voice	<input type="checkbox"/>
SEQUENCE	A pattern of notes repeated higher or lower	<input type="checkbox"/>
QUESTION	An opening phrase in a melody	<input type="checkbox"/>
ANSWER	Reply to an opening phrase or musical answer	<input type="checkbox"/>

The melody / harmony can be measured in distance

SEMITONE	The shortest distance in music - half a tone C to C# or B to Bb, etc	
TONE	An interval of 2 semitones, eg from C to D or F to G etc	<input type="checkbox"/>

**BROKEN CHORD /
ARPEGGIO**

Notes of the chord played separately

OCTAVE

The distance of eight notes

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The melody can be decorated in order to make it more interesting:-

IMPROVISATION

Music made up on the spot

ORNAMENT

A musical decoration in the melody line

GLISSANDO

Sliding rapidly up and down the notes

GRACE-NOTE

A type of ornament played quickly before the note. Used mainly as a decoration

TRILL

A rapid repeated movement between 2 notes



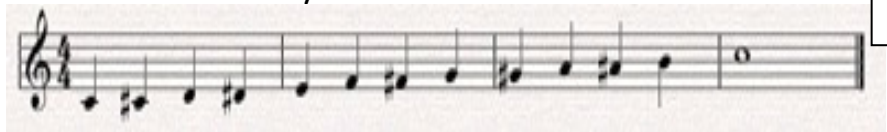
PITCH BEND

Changing the pitch of a note by pushing a string upwards on a guitar or by using a control wheel on a keyboard. Gives a "wonky" effect.

Melodies can be played using different scales:-

CHROMATIC

A scale built entirely on semitones



PENTATONIC SCALE

A scale based on 5 notes. Very popular in folk (Scottish) Music

WHOLE TONE SCALE

A scale built entirely on tones. Popular in 20th Century music and sometimes sounds strange to the ear.



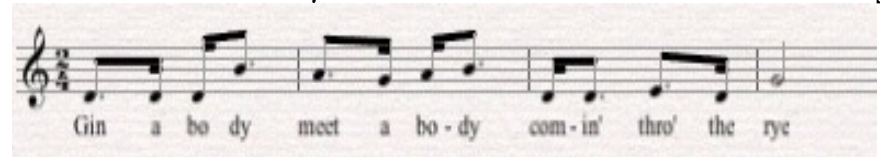
ATONAL / CLUSTER

Music based on no particular key. Sounds dissonant and is hard to listen to. Very popular in 20th Cent. when a group of notes, which clash, are played together.

In vocal music we can describe the word setting of melodies as follows:-

SYLLABIC

One note for each syllable.



MELISMATIC

Several notes sung to one syllable



SCAT SINGING

Nonsense words and sounds made up by a singer usually found in JAZZ music.

Harmony can be split into two areas of TONALITY:-

MAJOR The music sounds in a major key - bright and happy sounding

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MINOR The music sounds in a minor key - sad and dull sounding

Melody / Harmony is built in the following way:-

CHORD Two or more notes sounding together

CHORD CHANGE Moving from 1 chord to a different chord

DISCORD A chord in which certain notes clash producing an unpleasant sound. Popular in 20th Century music

VAMP A rhythmic accompaniment with a bass note played on the strong beat and a chord played off the beat.

CONTRARY MOTION Two parts moving in opposite directions Eg one ascending, one descending

COUNTERMELODY A melody played against the main melody

DESCANT Another melody above the main tune, mainly in vocal music

PEDAL A note which is held or repeated continuously in the bass part while the harmony changes over it

INVERTED PEDAL A note which is held or repeated continuously in the upper part while the harmony changes below it

Harmony changes in the following way:-

MODULATION

A change of key

CHANGE OF KEY

Moving from one key to another

Concepts affecting harmony are:-

PERFECT CADENCE

2 chords at the end of a phrase.

Chord V to chord I - the dominant to the tonic.



IMPERFECT CADENCE

2 chords at the end of a phrase.

Chord I to chord V - the tonic to the dominant.

This cadence has an unfinished feel



DRONE

One note held on or repeated in the bass.

Commonly found on a bagpipe.

Rhythm / Tempo

Words in this section describe what is happening in the rhythm and tempo

Rhythm falls into 2 areas:-

SIMPLE TIME	Music with 2, 3 or 4 beats in the bar. Each beat is usually 1 crotchet	<input type="checkbox"/>
COMPOUND TIME	Each beat is divided into groups of 3 pulses 6/8, 9/8, 12/8	<input type="checkbox"/>

Tempo can be described as:-

ADAGIO	Slow	<input type="checkbox"/>
ANDANTE	At a walking pace	<input type="checkbox"/>
MODERATO	At a moderate pace	<input type="checkbox"/>
ALLEGRO	Fast	<input type="checkbox"/>

Speed changes are described in the following way:-

ACCELERANDO	Music gets gradually faster	<input type="checkbox"/>
RALLENTANDO	Music gets gradually slower	<input type="checkbox"/>
RITARDANDO	Music starts to slow down	<input type="checkbox"/>
RUBATO	The performer plays in a very free way and is able to pull the music about to suit the situation	<input type="checkbox"/>
A TEMPO	Music returns to the original speed	<input type="checkbox"/>

Rhythm effects can be described in the following way:-

ON THE BEAT

The main accents are on the beat

OFF THE BEAT

The main accents are on the weak beat or against the beat

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SYNCOPIATION

Accented notes playing off or against the beat. Same as above

SCOTCH SNAP

A rhythmic figure with a short accented note followed by a longer note. Mostly found in a Strathspey

CROSS RHYTHMS

Effect where 2 notes are played against 3

DOTTED RHYTHMS

Long notes followed by short notes and vice versa giving a jolty effect

ANACRUSIS

Notes which appear before the first strong beat of the bar. Almost like a very short lead-in.

DRUM FILL

A rhythmic decoration played on the drumkit

BEAT/PULSE

The basic pulse you hear in music. The pulse may be in groups of 2, 3 or 4 with an accent or stress on the first beat of each bar

PAUSE

The musical flow / rhythm is held up by a long note or silence

ACCENT / ACCENTED

Notes that are slightly stressed sounding louder than others.

MARCH

Music with a strong steady pulse with two or four beats in the bar

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STRATHSPEY

A Scottish dance with four beats in the bar featuring dotted rhythms and a Scotch Snap

REEL

A fast Scottish dance in simple time with two or four beats in the bar.

WALTZ

A dance in simple time with three beats in the bar

JIG

A fast Scottish dance in compound time

Texture / Structure / Form

Words in this section describe how a piece of music is put together or constructed

All music falls into one of these categories:-

- | | | |
|---------------------|---|--------------------------|
| POLYPHONIC | Texture consisting of two or more melodic lines which weave independently of each other | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| CONTRAPUNTAL | Similar to above | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| HOMOPHONIC | Texture where all the parts move together rhythmically - e.g. a Hymn Tune | <input type="checkbox"/> |

These categories are either:-

- | | | |
|----------------------|--|--------------------------|
| ACCOMPANIED | One or more instruments / voices support the main melody | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| UNACCOMPANIED | The melody is not supported by any other instruments or voices | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Music is constructed in the following ways

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| SOLO | Single line / performer | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| UNISON / OCTAVE | Two or more parts performing the same named note at the same pitch or 8 notes apart | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| IMITATION | Musical idea played by one instrument / voice
And then repeated exactly the same way by another instrument / voice | <input type="checkbox"/> |

HARMONY Two or more parts performing different notes at the same time

CHORD Two or more notes sounding together

Music is also constructed using different sections

REPETITION A section repeated in exactly the same way by exactly the same instrument

OSTINATO / RIFF A short musical pattern repeated many times

BINARY / AB A form where the music is made up from 2 sections - **A & B**

TERNARY / ABA A form where the music is made up from 3 sections - **A B A**

RONDO A form in music where the first section comes back after each contrasting section
A B A C A D A E A etc

THEME AND VARIATIONS A form in music where each section changes the main theme through speed, tonality, time signature or rhythm

ROUND Each part sings or plays the melody entering one after the other

CANON Strict imitation where one part sings or plays the melody with another part entering shortly afterwards with exactly the same melody

VERSE AND CHORUS Popular form in many songs - the music of the verse is repeated (with different words) with a chorus, featuring different music, in between.

MIDDLE 8

Modulating 8 bars connecting 2 related sections

STROPHIC

Music / song with a recurring verse and Chorus

CODA

The concluding section at the end of a movement or section to give a final effect.

CADENZA

A show-off passage in a Concerto where the soloist performs a solo passage showing how well they play the instrument.

Bass lines can be constructed in different ways

WALKING BASS

A moving bass line with notes of the same value. They usually move in step

GROUND BASS

A theme repeated in the bass many times while the upper parts are varied

ALBERTI BASS

Broken chords played in the left hand while the right hand plays the melody.
Usually found only on piano



Timbre

Words in this section describe instruments, ensembles and how they are used

Voices are as follows:-

SOPRANO	The highest range of female voice	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEZZO-SOPRANO	Female voice range lying between a soprano and alto	<input type="checkbox"/>
ALTO	The lowest female voice	<input type="checkbox"/>
TENOR	A high adult male voice	<input type="checkbox"/>
BARITONE	Male voice range lying between a tenor and a bass	<input type="checkbox"/>
BASS	The lowest male voice	<input type="checkbox"/>
CHOIR	A group of singers who perform together	<input type="checkbox"/>

Concepts describing vocals are:-

A CAPPELLA	Unaccompanied singing	<input type="checkbox"/>
BACKING VOCALS	Singers who support the main singer usually by singing in harmony in the background	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sections of the Orchestra:-

STRINGS	Consisting : Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass and Harp	<input type="checkbox"/>
WOODWIND	Consisting: Piccolo, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Saxophone and Bassoon	<input type="checkbox"/>
BRASS	Consisting: Trumpet, Trombone, Horn and Tuba	<input type="checkbox"/>
PERCUSSION	Consisting: Tuned - Glockenspiel, Xylophone, Marimba, Metalophone etc	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Consisting : Untuned - Drumkit, Timpani, Triangle, Cymbals, Tambourine etc	<input type="checkbox"/>

Each section has concepts associated with them:-

STRINGS:-

BOWING	When strings are played with a bow	<input type="checkbox"/>
ARCO	Another word for Bowing	<input type="checkbox"/>
PLUCKING	Using fingers to pick the strings	<input type="checkbox"/>
PIZZICATO	Sound made by plucking the strings with fingers	<input type="checkbox"/>
STRUMMING	Sound produced by drawing fingers or a plectrum across the strings	<input type="checkbox"/>

WOODWIND:-

BLOWING	Sound produced by blowing into or across the mouth piece	<input type="checkbox"/>
FLUTTER TONGUING	A method of tonguing in which the player rolls the letter 'r'. It is particularly effective on flute but also used on brass	<input type="checkbox"/>

BRASS:-

BLOWING

Sound produced by blowing into or across the mouth piece

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MUTED

Using a device which reduces the volume or alters the sound of an instrument

CON SORDINO

Musical term for muted

PERCUSSION:-

STRIKING

Sound is produced by hitting an instrument

Scottish Instruments:-

ACCORDION

Instrument with a keyboard in which the sounds are produced by squeezing bellows with the arms

FIDDLE

Another name for the violin

Instrumental effects:-

ROLLS

A very fast repetition of a note on a percussion instrument like snare drum or timpani.

DISTORTION

An electronic effect used in rock music to colour the sound of the electric guitar

REVERB

An electronic effect which can give the impression of different hall acoustics

General instrumental concepts:-

STACCATO Short, crisp, detached notes

LEGATO Notes played smoothly

Dynamics:-

PIANISSIMO Very quiet / soft

PIANO Quiet / soft

MEZZO-PIANO Half quiet

MEZZO-FORTE Half loud

FORTE Loud

FORTISSIMO Very loud

SFORZANDO Suddenly loud

CRESCENDO Getting louder

DIMINUENDO Getting quieter

Individual instruments:-

ELECTRIC GUITAR Guitar which requires an amplifier to produce sound

ACOUSTIC GUITAR A guitar which does not require an amplifier to produce the sound

BASS GUITAR Four stringed guitar.

DRUMKIT	Percussion instrument were tuned skins are hit with sticks	<input type="checkbox"/>
HARPSICHORD	Early keyboard instrument where strings were plucked. Popular in the Baroque era.	<input type="checkbox"/>
PIANO	Keyboard instrument where the sound is produced by hammers hitting sticks	<input type="checkbox"/>
ORGAN	A keyboard instrument usually found in churches - often more than 1 keyboard	<input type="checkbox"/>
RECORDER	Early woodwind instrument sound produced by blowing - four types, descant, treble, tenor and bass	<input type="checkbox"/>
PAN PIPES	Pipes which are graded in size and bound together with the sound produced by blowing across the top of the pipes	<input type="checkbox"/>
SITAR	A string instrument from India. In addition to melody strings it has a drone and strings which vibrate with each other	<input type="checkbox"/>
TABLA	Two Indian drums tuned to different pitches and often used to accompany a sitar	<input type="checkbox"/>
CLARSACH	Small Scottish Harp	<input type="checkbox"/>
BODHRAN	An Irish wooden drum used in folk music.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bands and ensembles:-		
BRASS BAND	A band containing brass instruments and percussion	<input type="checkbox"/>
STEEL BAND	A West Indian band containing instruments made out of oil drums. Each drum is hammered into panels to make different pitches	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCOTTISH DANCE BAND	A band containing fiddle, accordion, piano and drums	<input type="checkbox"/>

WIND BAND

A band containing woodwind, brass and percussion instruments. Usually intended for performance in a Concert Hall

FOLK GROUP

A group of instrumentalists and singers performing songs from a particular country

Styles

Words in this section describe the original style of the music.

Musical periods:-

BAROQUE

Music written between 1600-1750. Popular composers were Bach and Handel

CLASSICAL

Music written between 1750-1810. Popular composers were Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven

ROMANTIC

Music written between 1810-1900. Popular composers were Chopin, Schubert and Tchaikovsky

Vocal styles:-

OPERA

A secular drama set to music featuring vocals with orchestral accompaniment

ARIA

A song found in an Opera, Oratorio and Cantata usually with orchestral accompaniment

CHORUS

A group of singers with several voices to each part.
Used in Opera.

MUSICAL

Popular musical play featuring vocals and orchestra

Instrumental styles:-

CONCERTO A work for solo instrument and orchestra

SYMPHONY A large work for orchestra in four movements

Scottish styles:-

BOTHY BALLAD Folk song with many verses telling a story of rural or farming / working life

GAELIC PSALMS Unaccompanied songs sung in gaelic. One member of the congregation starts and the rest follow

MOUTH MUSIC Gaelic nonsense words sung in imitation of the sound of bagpipes as an accompaniment to dancing

SCOTS BALLAD A slow Scottish song telling a story

WAULKING SONG Gaelic work song sung by women. One woman leads and the others follow. The sound of the tweed being 'waulked' or hit against the work surface is heard in the background

PIBROCH Classical (type) music for the solo bagpipe usually in variation form

20th Century styles:-

BLUES

Music written in 4/4 time and mostly patterned in a 12-bar structure and on a scale where some notes are flattened - the blues scale

RAGTIME

A style of dance music popular at the end of the 19th Century. Often played on the piano and featuring a strongly syncopated melody in the right hand against a steady vamp in the left hand

SWING

A jazz style started in the 1930's usually performed by Big Bands

JAZZ

Music from the early 20th C featuring syncopation and improvisation.

MINIMALIST

A 20th Century development where simple rhythmic and melodic figures are repeated with very slight changes each time

INDIAN

Music from India using instruments such as the sitar and tabla

POP

Popular music performed by a group of musicians. Usually music that has been in the charts

ROCK

Popular music with a steady driving beat

ROCK 'N' ROLL

1950's popular American music

LATIN AMERICAN

Dance music from South America featuring percussion instruments and lively off-beat dance rhythms.

REGGAE

Originates from Jamaica with strong off-beat rhythms and a dominant strong bass line. Can feature singers

AFRICAN MUSIC

Music from Africa featuring voices and/or African Drums.

RAPPING

Rhyming lyrics that are spoken and performed in time to a beat

CELTIC ROCK

A style of music that mixes Celtic folk music and rock together.

GOSPEL

Music written with religious lyrics, often in praise or thanksgiving to God usually performed by choirs or congregations.