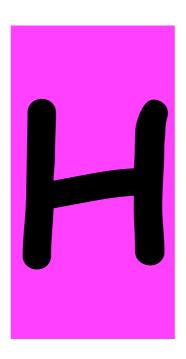
### Music Department



# Understanding Music Listening Concepts



Name\_\_\_\_



#### **Understanding Music**



Page | 2

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

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

### jm-education.com

### 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 and 35% of your total overall final grade.

MELODY/ HARMONY	RHYTHM/TEMPO	TEXTURE / STRUCTURE / FORM	TIMBRE / DYNAMICS	STYLES Page   3
Mode/modal	3 against 2	Through- Composed	Tremolando	Sonata
Relative major / minor	Time changes	Da Capo Aria	Harmonics	Oratoria
Interval	Irregular Time Sigs	Lied	Coloratura	Impressionist
Obbligato	Augmentation	Passacaglia	Ripieno	Musique concrete
Acciaccatura	Diminution	Concerto Grosso	Concertino	Plainchant
Mordent		Sonata Form	String quartet	Mass
Plagal Cadence		Exposition		String Quartets
Interrupted Cadence		Subject		Recitative
Tierce de Picardie		Basso Continuo		Chamber Music
Dominant 7th		Ritornello		Jazz Funk
Diminished 7th				Soul Music
Added 6th				
Harmonic Minor Scale				
Melodic Minor Scale				

# 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.

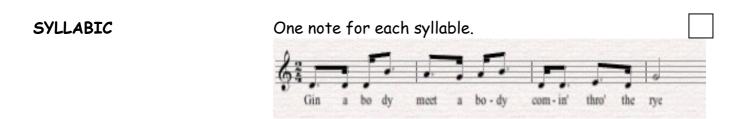
The melody can move in a variet	ry of ways:-	
ASCENDING	Moving in an upward direction	
DESCENDING	Moving in a downward direction	
STEPWISE	Moving by step to the note directly above or below	
LEAPING	Jumping between high notes and low notes	
The melody can move in pattern	ns:-	
REPETITION	Musical idea heard more than once in exactly The same way by exactly that same Instrument / voice	
SEQUENCE	A pattern of notes repeated higher or lower	
QUESTION	An opening phrase in a melody	
ANSWER	Reply to an opening phrase or musical answer The melody can be measured in distance:-	
The melody / harmony can me r	measured in distance	
INTERVAL	The distance between 2 notes	

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	Page   5
BROKEN CHORD / ARPEGGIO	Notes of the chord played separately	
OCTAVE	The distance of eight notes	
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 rapidy 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	
MORDENT	An ornament.  Played as: the main note - the note above - the main note again.  (inverted mordent - mordent)	

ACCIACCATURA	An ornament which sounds like a 'crushed note'. The note is played very quickly on or before the note.	Page   6
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 di	fferent scales:-	
MODE/MODAL	Usually refers to an early form of scale or in reference to a major mode (major key) or minor mode (minor key).	
HARMONIC MINOR	Scale sharing the same key signature as its relative major but raises the 7 <sup>th</sup> note by one semitone.	
MELODIC MINOR	Scale sharing the same key signature as its relative major but raises the 6 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> notes by one semitone ascending and similarly lowers them when descending.	
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 20 <sup>th</sup> Century music and sometimes sounds strange to the ear.	Page   7
ATONAL / CLUSTER	Music based on no particular key. Sounds dissonant and is hard to listen to. Very popular in 20 <sup>th</sup> Cent.	
RELATIVE MAJOR	A change from a minor key to the major key with the same signature. The major key is found 3 semitones higher – eg, D Minor to F Major	
RELATIVE MINOR	A change from the major key to the minor key with the same key signature. The minor key is found 3 semitones lower - eg, C Major to A Minor	

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



#### 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 o	areas of TONALITY:-	
MAJOR	The music sounds in a major key - bright and happy sounding	
MINOR	The music sounds in a minor key - sad and dull sounding	
Melody / Harmony is built in th	he 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 20 <sup>th</sup> 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 <u>vocal</u> music	
OBBLIGATO	A prominent solo additional instrument part in a piece of music. Almost like an instrumental descant	Page   9
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	
Chords:-		
DOMINANT 7 <sup>th</sup>	Chord built upon the dominant (5 <sup>th</sup> ) note of the key which adds the 7 <sup>th</sup> note above the root (the 7 <sup>th</sup> note of the scale).  Eg - In the scale of F Major (C-E-G-Bb)	
DIMINISHED 7 <sup>th</sup>	A chord built from three Minor $3^{rd}$ intervals one on top of the other. The interval between the lower note and the top note is a diminished $7^{th}$ .	
ADDED 6 <sup>th</sup> *	Chord made up from a Major chord with the 6 <sup>th</sup> note added to the top. Sometimes gives a 'jazzy' effect!	

Harmony changes in the following way:-

MODULATION	A change of key	Page   10
CHANGE OF KEY	Moving from one key to another	
Concepts affecting harmony ar	e:-	
PERFECT CADENCE	2 chords at the end of a phrase.  Chord V to chord I - the dominant to the tonic.	
PLAGAL CADENCE	2 chords at the end of a phrase.  Chord IV to chord I. Sounds finished and is known as the 'Amen' effect.	
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	

INTERRUPTED CADENCE	2 chords at the end of a phrase.  Chord V to chord VI (minor chord). Known as the 'surprise' cadence as it interrupts the flow of the music. (always ends in a minor chord!)	Page   11
TIERCE DE PICARDIE	The final chord in a piece of music played in the minor key is changed to major	
DRONE	One note held on or repeated in the bass. Commonly found on a bagpipe.	
RELATIVE MAJOR / MINOR	Each major key has a relative minor which shares the same key signature. If we picked a major key, such as C Major for example, to find its relative minor key we would move down three semitones, which would take us t	

o A Minor.

# 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	
COMPOUND TIME	Each beat is divided into groups of 3 pulses 6/8, 9/8, 12/8	
Tempo can be described as:-		
ADAGIO	Slow	
ANDANTE	At a walking pace	
MODERATO	At a moderate pace	
ALLEGRO	Fast	
Speed changes are described	in the following way:-	
ACCELERANDO	Music gets gradually faster	
RALLENTANDO	Music gets gradually slower	
RITARDANDO	Music starts to slow down	
RUBATO	The performer plays in a very free way and is able to pull the music about to suit the situation	
A TEMPO	Music returns to the original speed	

Rhythm effects can be described in t	he following way:-	
ON THE BEAT	The main accents are on the beat	
OFF THE BEAT	The main accents are on the weak $$\operatorname{Page} $$ beat or against the beat	13
SYNCOPATION	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	
TRIPLETS	Group of three notes played in the space of 1 beat	
ANACRUSIS	Notes which appear before the first strong beat of the bar. Almost like a very short lead-in.	
Concepts affecting the rhythm:-		
3 <b>AGAINST 2</b>	One line or part playing quavers in groups of two while another part plays triplets.	

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	Page   14
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.	
AUGMENTATION	The note values are increased affecting the length of the notes. The music sounds slower when repeated.	
DIMINUTION	The note values are decreased. The music sounds faster when repeated.	
TIME CHANGES	Changes in time signature.	
IRREGULAR TIME SIGNATURES	Regular time changes.	
MARCH	Music with a strong steady pulse with two or four beats in the bar	
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 thes	se categories:-	
POLYPHONIC	Texture consisting of two or more melodic lines which weave independently of each other	
CONTRAPUNTAL	Similar to above	
HOMOPHONIC	Texture where all the parts move together rhythmically - e.g. a Hymn Tune	
These categories are either		
ACCOMPANIED	One or more instruments / voices support the main melody	
UNACCOMPANIED	The melody is not supported by any other instruments or voices	
Music is constructed in the fo	llowing ways	
SOLO	Single line / performer	
UNISON / OCTAVE	Two or more parts performing the same named note at the same pitch or 8 notes apart	
IMITATION	Musical idea played by one instrument / voice And then repeated exactly the same way by another instrument / voice	
HARMONY	Two or more parts performing different notes at the same time	

CHORD	Two or more notes sounding together		
	Two or more notes sounding rogernal	Page   16	
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 ABACADAEA 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 shor afterwards with exactly the same melody	tly	
VERSE AND CHORUS	Popular form in many songs - the music of the ver	'se	

featuring different music, in between.

is repeated (with different words) with a chorus,

MIDDLE 8	Modulating 8 bars connecting 2 related sections	Page   17
STROPHIC	Music / song with a recurring verse and Chorus	
THROUGH - COMPOSED	Music / song that does not have a chorus or repeat	
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.	
RITORNELLO	Returning passage. In a Concerto Grosso it is the main theme played by the orchestra.	
SONATA FORM	Often describes the form of the first movements of sonatas, symphonies and overtures. Falls into 3 sections:  Exposition - Development - Recapitulation.	
EXPOSITION	The first section of a movement in Sonata Form or the first section of a Fugue.	
Bass lines can be constructed in	n 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	

ALBERII BASS	while the right hand plays the melody. Usually found only on piano	
BASSO CONTINUO	Found in Baroque Music. Consists of a Bass Line usually played by cello, bass, viola or bassoon in addition to a keyboard part - harpsichord or organ. The players would fill in missing harmonies.	
General forms:-		
CONCERTO GROSSO	From the Baroque period, a concerto in which a group of soloists (concertino) is combined and contrasted with a larger group (ripieno).	
DA CAPO ARIA	An aria in ternary form. The 3 <sup>rd</sup> section is not written out but the instruction Da Capo (from the beginning) is given instead. The first section is repeated in a highly ornamented fashion.	
LIED	From the Romantic period, music for solo voice and piano sung in German.	
PASSACAGLIA	Originally a slow stately dance of the 17th century, this term now applies to a piece with a theme which is continually repeated.	

### TIMBRE

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

Voices are as follows:-		
SOPRANO	The highest range of female voice	
MEZZO-SOPRANO	Female voice range lying between a soprano and alto	
ALTO	The lowest female voice	
TENOR	A high adult male voice	
BARITONE	Male voice range lying between a tenor and a bass	
BASS	The lowest male voice	
CHOIR	A group of singers who perform together	
Concepts describing vocals	are:-	
A CAPPELLA	Unaccompanied singing	
BACKING VOCALS	Singers who support the main singer usually by singing in harmony in the background	
COLORATURA	Term used to describe highly decorative, florid, vocal singing involving scales and ornaments. The singer would sometimes exceed their vocal range	

Sections of the Orchestra:-		
STRINGS	Consisting : Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass and Harp	P   20
WOODWIND	Consisting: Piccolo, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Saxophone and Bassoon	Page   20
BRASS	Consisting: Trumpet, Trombone, Horn and Tuba	
PERCUSSION	Consisting: Tuned - Glockenspiel, Xylophone, Marimba, Metalophone etc	
	Consisting: Untuned - Drumkit, Timpani, Triangle, Cymbals, Tambourine etc	
Each section has concepts asso	ciated with them:-	
STRINGS:-		
BOWING	When strings are played with a bow	
ARCO	Another word for Bowing	
PLUCKING	Using fingers to pick the strings	
PIZZICATO	Sound made by plucking the strings with fingers	
STRUMMING	Sound produced by drawing fingers or a plectrum across the strings	

Trembling, quivering effect

will sound "bell like".

The high eerie like sounds produced on a

bowed string instrument by lightly touching the string at certain points. On a guitar this

**TREMOLANDO** 

**HARMONICS** 

BLOWING	Sound produced by blowing into or across the mouth piece	Page   21
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	rage   21
BRASS:-		
BLOWING	Sound produced by blowing into or across the mouth piece	
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	
Groupings of Instruments:-		
RIPIENO	The main, larger group of instruments in a Concerto Grosso. (Baroque Period)	
CONCERTINO	The smaller, solo, group of players in a Concerto Grosso. (Baroque Period)	
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	

WOODWIND:-

Instrumental effects:-		
		Page   22
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	
HARMONICS	Harmonics can be produced by a number of instruments. By lightly touching the string of a bowed stringed instrument at certain points for example, a high eerie sound is produced. On a guitar or harp these have a bell-like quality.	
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	Page   23
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	
HARPSICHORD	Early keyboard instrument where strings were plucked. Popular in the Baroque era.	
PIANO	Keyboard instrument where the sound is produced by hammers hitting sticks	
ORGAN	A keyboard instrument usually found in churches – often more than 1 keyboard	
RECORDER	Early woodwind instrument sound produced by blowing – four types, descant, treble, tenor and bass	
PAN PIPES	Pipes which are graded in size and bound together with the sound produced by blowing across the top of the pipes	
SITAR	A string instrument from India. In addition to melody strings it has a drone and strings which vibrate with each other	
	NQ Music : Higher Level - Updated 2017 DMG	

	sitar	
CLARSACH	Small Scottish Harp	Page   24
BODHRAN	An Irish wooden drum used in folk music.	
Bands and ensembles:-		
BRASS BAND	A band containing brass instruments and percussion	
STEEL BAND	A West Indian band containing instruments made out of oil drums. Each drum is hammered into panels to make different pitches	
SCOTTISH DANCE BAND	A band containing fiddle, accordion, piano and drums	
WIND BAND	A band containing woodwind, brass and percussion instruments. Usually intended for performance in a Concert Hall	n
FOLK GROUP	A group of instrumentalists and singers performing songs from a particular country	
STRING QUARTET	A chamber music ensemble made up of 2 Violins, 1 Viola and 1 Cello	

Two Indian drums tuned to different

pitches and often used to accompany a

TABLA

## 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	
ORATORIO	A musical setting of a biblical story featuring vocals and orchestra. No acting or staging	
RECITATIVE	Vocal writing found in Opera, Oratorio and Cantata following the rhythm or speech. It is often half sung / half spoken in order to move on the story or plot	
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, Oratorio and Cantata	
PLAINCHANT	Also known as Plainsong. Unaccompanied melody set to words of the Roman Catholic liturgy such as the Mass. Plainchants are Modal and have no regular metre. Sung in Latin.	Page   26
MASS	From Renaissance period, a large scale sacred choral work featuring a Latin text and polyphonic texture. Usually performed a cappella. Listen for eg, Kyrie, Benedictus, Gloria, etc.	
MUSICAL	Popular musical play featuring vocals and orchestra	
Instrumental styles:-		
SONATA	A work for solo piano or solo instrument and piano.	
CONCERTO	A work for solo instrument and orchestra	
SYMPHONY	A large work for orchestra in four movements	
CHAMBER MUSIC	Music written for a small instrumental ensemble with one player to a part .	

Scottish styles:-	tish styles	sty	sh	11	co	S
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BOTHY BALLAD	Folk song with many verses telling a story of rural or farming / working life	Page   27
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 music for the solo bagpipe usually in variation form	
20 <sup>th</sup> 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 19 <sup>th</sup> 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.	
JAZZ FUNK	A combination of Jazz improvisation and the amplified instruments and character of rock.	Page   28
IMPRESSIONIST	A term borrowed from painting in which musical ideas merge to create a rather blurred and vague outline. Debussy was an important composer of this style	
MINIMALIST	A 20 <sup>th</sup> Century development where simple rhythmic and melodic figures are repeated with very slight changes each time	
MUSIQUE CONCRETE	Recorded natural sounds which are transformed using simple editing techniques such as playing backwards, slowing or speeding.	
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	
SOUL MUSIC	Afro-American popular music including elements of blues, gospel and conveying strong emotions.	

LATIN AMERICAN	Dance music from South America featuring percussion instruments and lively off-beat dance	
	rhythms.	Page   29
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.	