

# Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu

## Ceòl Nàiseanta 5

# 20<sup>th</sup> Century Musical Styles and Instrumental Techniques

Name:

Class:

Section:

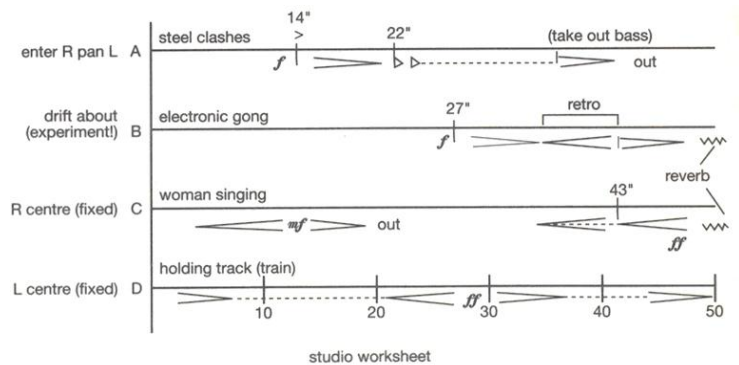
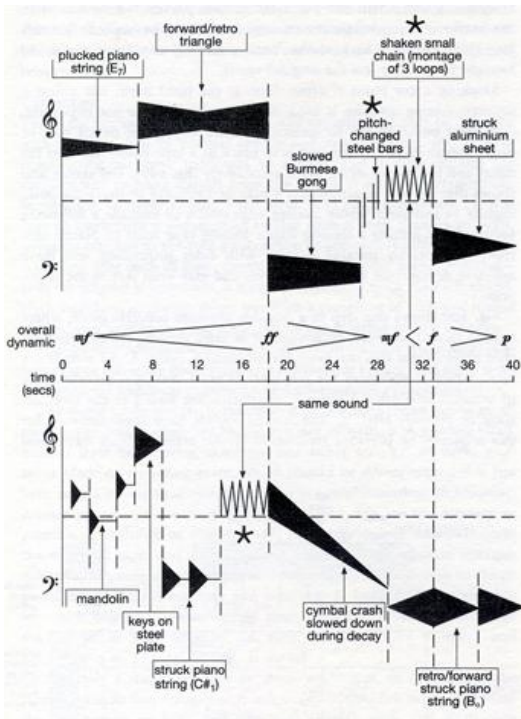
Teacher:

## Impressionist

## Aleatoric

## Atonal

## Minimalist



This unit of work involves studying the main musical features and concepts associated with **Impressionist**, **Minimalist**, **Atonal** and **Aleatoric** music, as well as a number of instrumental playing techniques.



This sign indicates a short excerpt of music to illustrate a particular musical feature or style.

# Instrumental Techniques

A number of pieces of music written in the 20<sup>th</sup> century require the performers to play their instruments in a variety of different ways.

Before going on to listen to 20<sup>th</sup> century music you are going to learn a little more about different instrumental techniques.

It should be noted, however, that some of these instrumental techniques can be found in music of other periods as well. Not just the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Muted / Con sordino

This involves the player using a device which reduces the volume or alters the sound of an instrument. Often the sound is muffled.

The following Italian terms are often used in connection with the mute:


***Con sordino*** means **with mute**.

***Senza sordino*** means **without mute**.

These terms are generally applied to Brass and String Instruments.


Brass players use a cone shaped device which is inserted into the bell of the instrument. This muffles the sound.




 Listen to an example of a muted trumpet from a piece by Prokofiev.

String players use a comb shaped device which is placed over the strings. This also muffles the sound.



 Listen to an example of a muted violin playing the melody of *Claire de Lune* by Debussy.

## Glissando

 Glissando means sliding from one note to another taking in all the notes in between where possible.

## Flutter Tonguing

**Flutter tonguing** music is a method of tonguing in which the player rolls the letter 'r'. It is used by wind players and is particularly effective for flute and brass.




 Listen to an example of **flutter tonguing** on the flute, from a piece by the composer Sallinen.

# Arco

**Arco** is an instruction given to string players to use the bow. This term might be given to players after a passage using **Pizzicato** (*plucking*).



 Listen to an excerpt of strings being played **arco**.

# Double Stopping

**Double stopping** is a technique is achieved on bowed string instruments by bowing across more than one string at the same time, thus producing more than one




 Listen to this example of **Double stopping**

# Pizzicato

**Pizzicato** (abbreviation **pizz.**) is an instruction given to string players to pluck the strings instead of using the bow.





 Listen to an excerpt of strings being played **pizzicato**.

# Col legno


**Col legno** is an instruction given to string players to turn the bow over and to bounce the wood on the strings.



 Listen to an example of **Col legno**


 Now listen to how the composer Gustav Holst uses **col legno** to quite a menacing effect at the beginning of *Mars the Bringer of War* from *The Planets*.

# Tremolando / Tremolo

 **Tremolando** is a term that describes the rapid up-and-down movement of a bow on a stringed instrument creating an agitated, restless effect.

The same term also describes rapid alternation of two different notes at least a 3<sup>rd</sup> apart played on piano, strings or wind instruments.

# Vibrato

 **Vibrato** is a very slight wavering in pitch, for expression, which brings warmth to the tone. **Vibrato** can be used by string players, wind players and also singers.

# Instrumental Techniques Revision Homework

Complete the following table by inserting in the correct concept alongside the brief description given. Choose from:

**Arco**

**Flutter tonguing**

**Con Sordino**

**Pizzicato**

**Double stopping**

**Vibrato**

**Col legno**

**Tremolando**

**Glissando**

Description	Concept
1. A term used to describe string players plucking the strings.	
2. A term used to describe string players using the wood of the bow to strike the strings.	
3. A slight wavering in pitch, for expression, which brings warmth to the tone.	
4. A special effect produced by players of woodwind or brass instruments rolling the letter "r" as they play.	
5. A technique of bowing across more than one string at a time.	
6. Sliding from one note to another taking in all the notes in between.	
7. A term used to describe string players using the bow.	
8. Using a device which reduces the volume or alters the sound of an instrument.	
9. A rapid up-and-down movement of a bow on a stringed instrument, creating a trembling or agitated effect.	

Complete the following table by inserting in the correct instrument(s) most likely to use the technique in the first column.

Technique	Instrument(s)
Double Stopping	
Con sordino	
Arco	
Glissando	
Pizzicato	
Flutter Tonguing	

# Instrumental Techniques Listening Exercise

Listen to the following ten excerpts of music. In each case tick **one box** in **column A** to identify the instrument playing and **one box** from **column B** to identify the technique being used.

## Column A

## Column B

1  Woodwind

Tremolando

Strings

Flutter tonguing

Brass

Pizzicato

2  Harp

Double stopping

Double bass

Col legno

Violin

Glissando

3  Oboe

Glissando

Flute

Pizzicato

Clarinet

Flutter tonguing

4  Harp

Arco

Piano

Glissando

Violin

Tremolando

5  'cello

Col legno

Viola

Pizzicato

Violin

Double stopping

### Column A

6  French Horn

Trumpet

Trombone

7  Viola

'cello

Double bass

8  Woodwind

Brass

Strings

9  Harp

Violin

Piano

10  Violin

Viola

'cello

### Column B

Glissando

Con sordino

Tremolando

Arco

Pizzicato

Double stopping

Tremolando

Flutter tonguing

Arco

Double stopping

Pizzicato

Col legno

Tremolando

Glissando

Con sordino

Total out of 20



## 20<sup>th</sup> Century Music (1900 onwards)

### Introduction

The 20<sup>th</sup> Century has produced a wide range of musical styles. While some composers have taken quite a traditional approach to music, others have been very experimental.

Important features include popular styles such as **Latin American, Blues, Ragtime, Swing, Samba, Salsa, Jazz, Boogie-woogie, Soul** and **Country**, as well as more experimental music such as **Impressionist, Minimalist, Aleatoric** and **Atonal**.

Some important concepts associated with 20<sup>th</sup> Century Music:

<b>Melodic</b>	Use of scales such as <b>whole tone, pentatonic, modal</b> and <b>chromatic</b> . Wide leaps. <b>Atonal</b> .
<b>Harmonic</b>	<b>Dissonance</b> and <b>Discords</b> (often 9 <sup>th</sup> or 13 <sup>th</sup> ) in parallel motion. <b>Clusters</b> .
<b>Rhythmic</b>	<b>Cross rhythms</b> (e.g. 3 against 2). Repetition. Often vague, fluid rhythms, with no clear sense of pulse.
<b>Structural</b>	Although carefully structured the effect is often of no clear-cut outlines.
<b>Timbre</b>	Colourful use of contrasted orchestral and instrumental sounds. Instruments played in unusual ways, e.g. <b>Flutter tonguing, Col legno</b> etc.
<b>Styles/Forms</b>	Often <b>programmatic</b> or descriptive. <b>Impressionist, Minimalist, Aleatoric</b> and <b>Atonal</b> .

# Impressionist Music (early 20<sup>th</sup> century)

The term **Impressionist** is borrowed from a style of painting in which the images were blurred and hazy.



Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century **Impressionist** composers, such as Claude Debussy, attempted to incorporate the same vague, hazy feelings into their music.

Common characteristics of **Impressionist** music include the **whole tone scale** and **discords**.

The **whole tone scale** is made up from notes that are **tone** apart:



**Discords** in parallel motion:





Listen to an excerpt from *Voiles* by Debussy played on the piano. Listen for:

**Whole tone harmonies**

**Vague rhythms**

**Rubato**

**Pedal**



Listen to an excerpt from *Prelude à L'après-midi d'un Faune* by Debussy played by an orchestra. The piece was inspired by a poem by the Frenchman, Stéphane Mallarmé.

It describes a young faun (a mythological creature of woodlands and forests – part human, but with pointed ears, and horns, tail and feet of a goat) lying under shady trees in the intense heat of a summer's afternoon. His thoughts gradually become more and more hazy as he drowns in the heat.

Listen for:

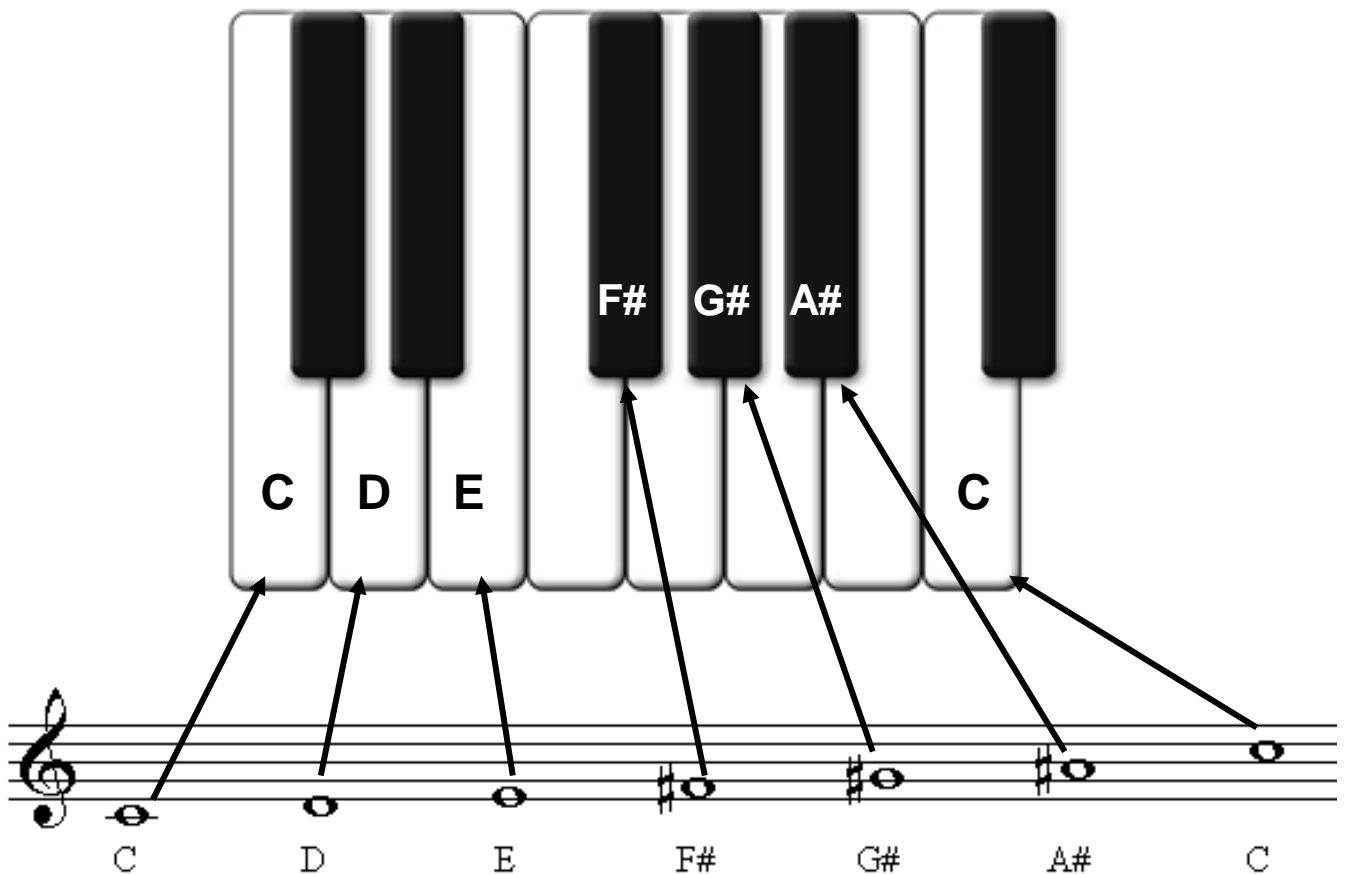
**Solo flute**

**Vague rhythms**

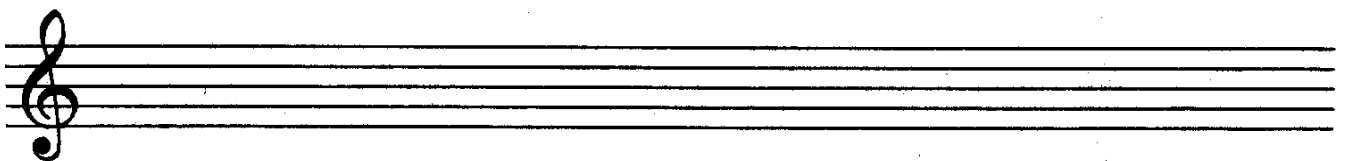
**Harp glissando**

# Impressionist Music

An important feature of **Impressionist** music is the **whole-tone scale**. Here are the notes of the **whole-tone scale**, starting on middle C:



Copy out the notes of the whole-tone scale here:



Compose a short melody, based on this **whole-tone scale**.  
Try to capture the mood of the **Impressionist** picture:



Write out the ideas for your melody here:

Four blank musical staves, each beginning with a treble clef, provided for writing a melody.

Use your manuscript book to extend your melody if you wish.

# Atonal Music (early 20<sup>th</sup> century)

**Atonal** music is music that has no sense of being in a particular key. Common characteristics of **atonal** music include **dissonance** and **discords**, large intervals, and short fragments of musical ideas.



Listen to an excerpt from the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement of *Variations for Piano* by Anton Webern. Notice the wide **leaps** and **discords**.

Ruhig fließend\*  $\text{♩} = c. 80$

Piano

5

10

15

20

rit. - - - - - tempo

rit. - - - - -

*p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

*sf* *p* *f* *più f* *ff* *p*

*f* *p*

\*gently flowing

# Aleatoric Music (20<sup>th</sup> century)

**Aleatoric** music is music that has random or chance elements. The word aleatory comes from the Latin “alea”, meaning “dice”. Common characteristics of **Aleatoric** music include **atonality**, **dissonance** and **discords**, and note **clusters** (a number of notes played at the same time).

The “chance” element could be in the composing process, with the composer deciding what notes to use by throwing a dice, or by some other chance operation. Or, the “chance” element could be left to the performer, allowing the performer to either make decisions about what to play, or to improvise on a given group of notes.







Listen to an excerpt from *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima* by Krystof Penderecki.

This piece was composed in memory of those killed or injured as a result of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945.



The composer asks the performers to play their instruments in a variety of different ways, in order to achieve an intense dramatic and emotional impact.

## Some of Penderecki's symbols and abbreviations

	highest possible note of the instrument (no definite pitch)
	play with the bow between the bridge and the tailpiece
	play with the bow actually on the tailpiece
	percussion effect: strike the upper sounding board of the instrument with the nut of the bow or the fingertips
ord.	<i>ordinario</i> – in the ordinary way
s.p.	<i>sul ponticello</i> – bow strings as near bridge as possible
con sord	<i>con sordino</i> – with the mute
c.l.	<i>col legno</i> – bow strings with the wood of the bow
l.batt.	<i>legno battuto</i> – beat strings with the wood of the bow



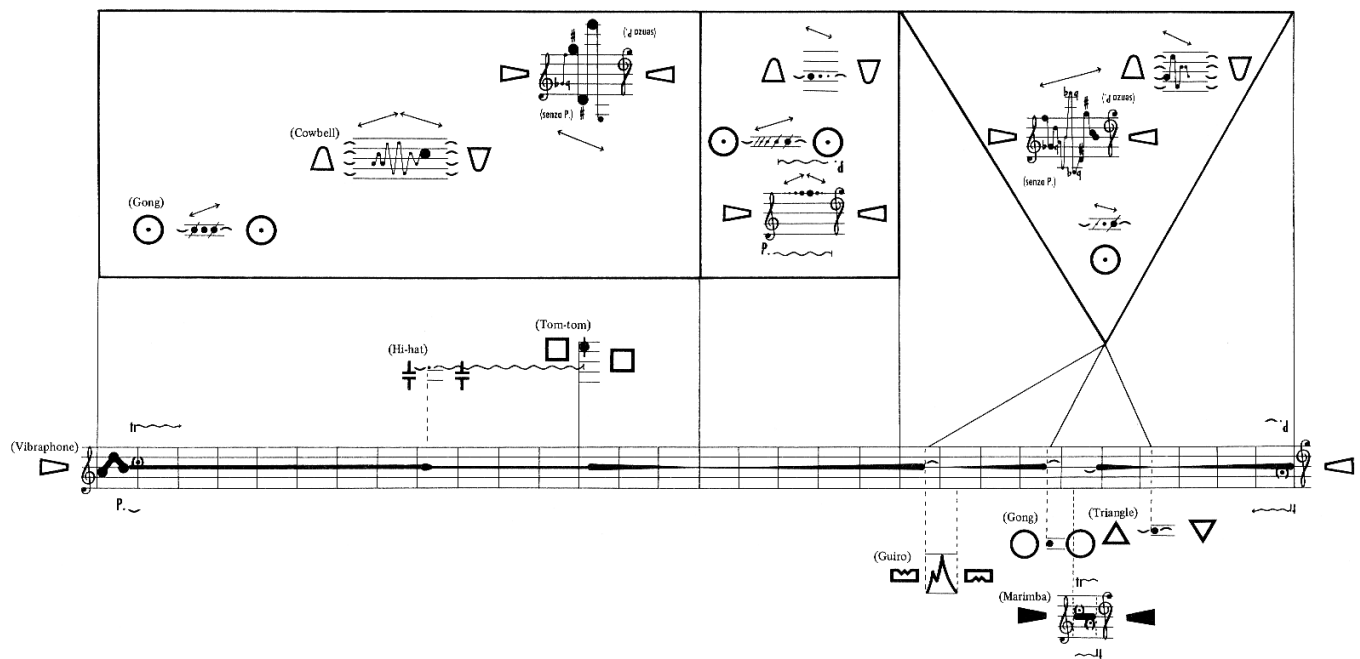


# Zyklus by Karlheinz Stockhausen

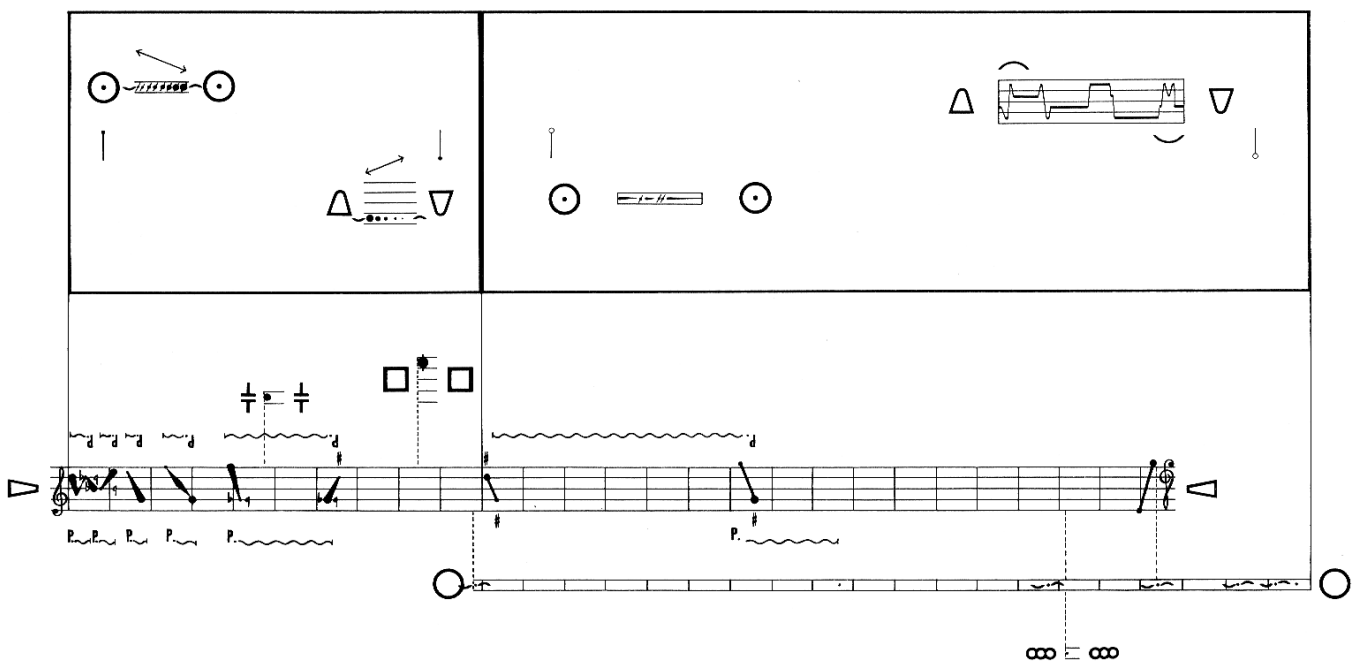
In this piece, for percussion, the percussion player can start at any point in the score but then continue through the rest of the score, returning the start, and finishing at the point they started at.

The score does not use conventional notation but contains “time fields” along with a number of symbols and visual images to guide the performer.

 Try following this “graphic score” while listening to the music:



This graphic score is divided into two main horizontal sections. The top section is a large rectangle containing several smaller boxes and musical staves. The left box shows a Gong (two circles) and a Cowbell (triangle) with rhythmic patterns. The middle box shows a staff with a wavy line and a square, labeled (Hi-hat) and (Tom-tom). The right box shows a staff with a wavy line and a square, labeled (sense P) and (2 drums). The bottom section is a long horizontal staff with a grid, labeled (Vibraphone) on the left. It features a wavy line and a square, labeled (Hi-hat) and (Tom-tom). Below the staff are various symbols: a triangle, a square, a circle, and a wavy line, labeled (Gong), (Triangle), (Guiro), and (Marimba).



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# Minimalist Music (20<sup>th</sup> Century)

**Minimalist** music is a style of music that evolved during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. **Minimalist** composers, such as Philip Glass and John Adams, deliberately attempted to make their music less complicated by basing their compositions on simple melodic and rhythmic figures that are constantly repeated with only very slight changes each time. Complete pieces are often based entirely on short repeated motifs.

Phillip Glass is well known for writing a great deal of music for films, as well as several operas.



Listen to an excerpt from *Dance II* by Philip Glass played by **strings**. Listen for:

**Repetition**

**Simple harmonies**

**Cross rhythms**



Listen to an excerpt from *Giorni Dispari* by the Italian composer Ludovico Einaudi, played by the **piano** and **strings**. Listen for:

**Repetition**

**Simple harmonies**

**Arco strings**

**Piano**

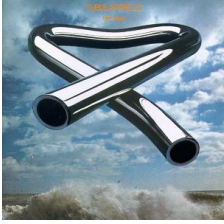
128

133

139



Listen to an excerpt from *Tubular Bells* by Mike Oldfield.



Notice the several changes in time signature.


Notice the **repetition**, with subtle changes to the rhythmic pattern.

This is a common feature of **Minimalist** music.

Allegro ♩ = 160  
*legato*  
*p*


# Minimalist Music

Here are excerpts from the piano piece *Mad Rush* by Philip Glass, illustrating some typical **Minimalist** techniques.

 The piece starts with simple harmonies, **repetition** and **three against two**:




The first two excerpts of the musical score for 'Mad Rush' by Philip Glass. The first excerpt (measures 5-6) shows a piano piece in 6/8 time. The right hand plays a melody of eighth notes with a triplet of three eighth notes over each pair of eighth notes. The left hand plays a simple harmonic accompaniment of quarter notes. The second excerpt (measures 7-8) continues this pattern, with the right hand's triplet pattern moving up the scale.

 As the piece develops the left hand pattern remains very simple while the right hand rhythm becomes more rapid:




The third excerpt of the musical score (measures 9-12) shows the right hand's rhythm becoming more rapid. The right hand now plays sixteenth notes with a triplet of sixteenth notes over every two sixteenth notes. The left hand continues with its simple quarter-note accompaniment.

 Then the left hand starts to match the right hand rhythm but in **contrary motion**:



The fourth excerpt of the musical score (measures 13-16) shows the left hand matching the right hand's rapid sixteenth-note rhythm but in contrary motion. The right hand continues with its sixteenth-note triplet pattern, while the left hand plays a descending sixteenth-note triplet pattern.

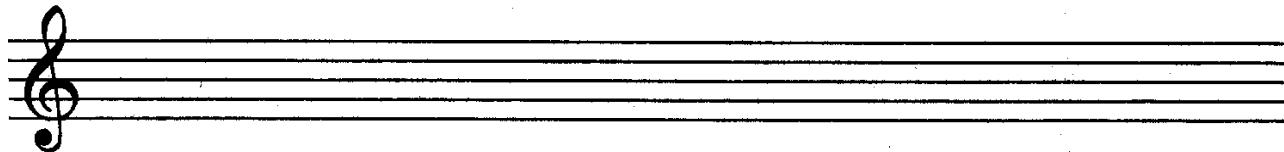
 The pattern then changes slightly as the piece progresses:



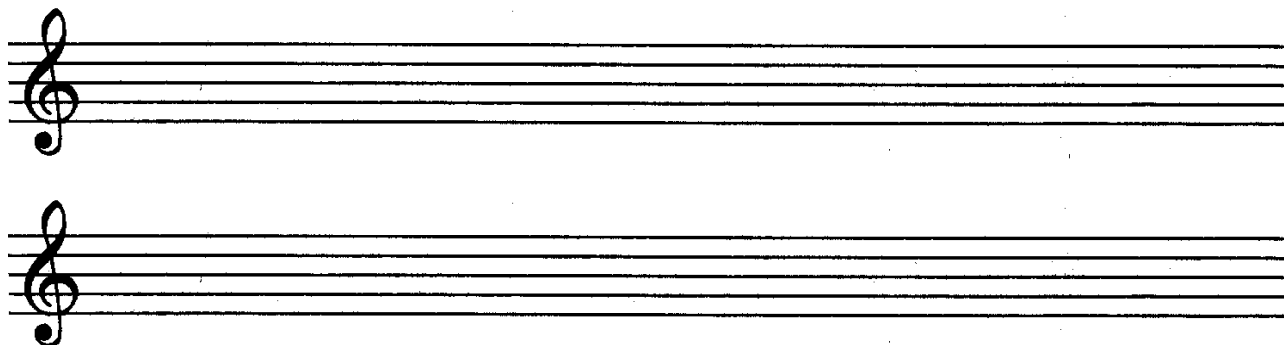
The fifth excerpt of the musical score (measures 17-20) shows a change in the pattern. The right hand continues with its sixteenth-note triplet pattern, but the left hand now plays a more complex sixteenth-note pattern, also in contrary motion. The time signature changes to 14/16.

# Composing a Minimalist piece

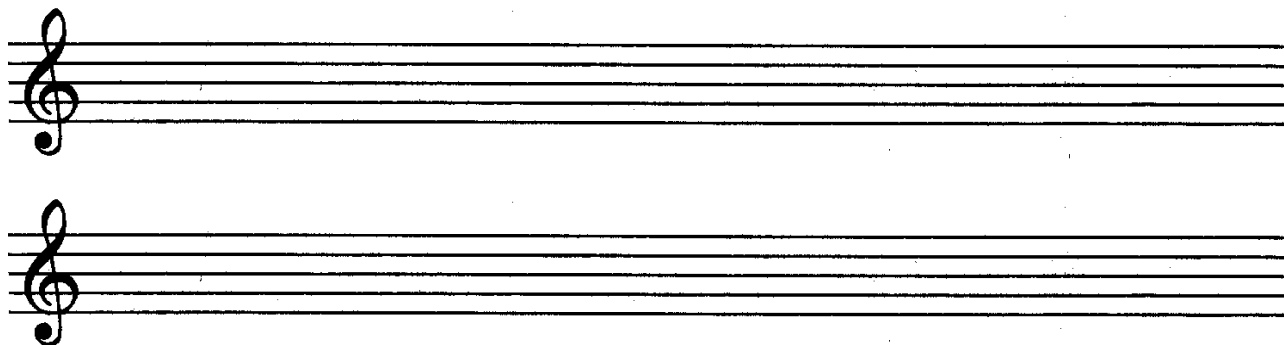
1. Compose a short musical motif. Keep it simple, possibly only using four or five notes:



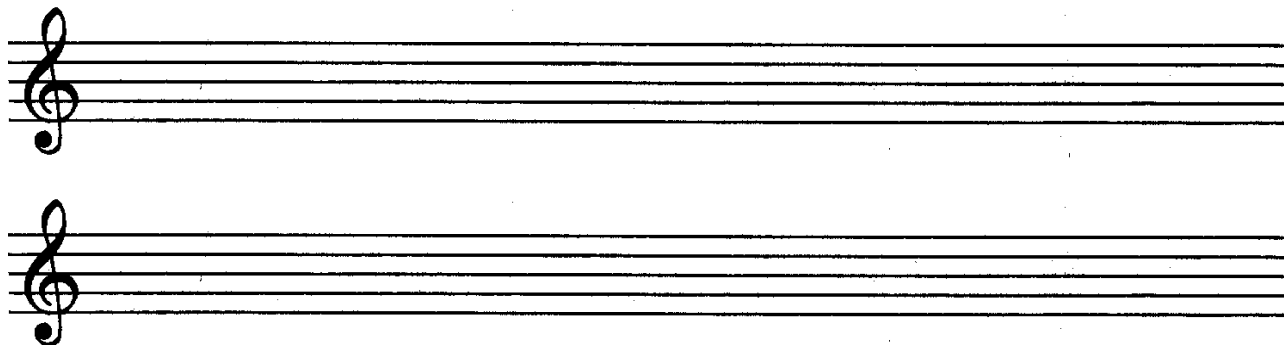
2. Now repeat the motif several times, keeping the rhythm simple:



3. Repeat the motif further, but with slight changes to the rhythmic pattern:



4. Now add a second part, using **contrary motion**:



Try to compose a short **Minimalist** piece based on the above ideas. Use your manuscript book to extend your melody.

# Revision Homework

Complete the following statements by writing appropriate musical features or concepts in the spaces provided.

1. The *Prelude à L'après-midi d'un Faune* by Debussy is an example of \_\_\_\_\_ music. The piece opens with a solo \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Music that has no sense of being in a particular key is said to be \_\_\_\_\_. The harmony in this music will often be \_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ music is music that has random or chance elements.
4. Impressionist music often makes use of the \_\_\_\_\_ scale.
5. *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima* by Penderecki makes use of some unusual playing techniques for stringed instruments, such as \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Repetition of simple musical ideas is a feature of \_\_\_\_\_ music.
7. A large number of notes played at the same time is known as a \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Complete the following table, by writing in some important composers and musical features and concepts for each style:

Style	Some important composers	Musical features and concepts
Impressionist		
Aleatoric		
Minimalist		
Atonal		

# Listening Exercise

Listen to the following ten excerpts of music. In each case tick **one box** in **column A** to describe the style of the music and **one box** from **column B** to indicate another feature of the music.

## Column A

## Column B

1  Impressionist

Col legno

Aleatoric

Harp glissando

Minimalist

Muted trumpet

2  Impressionist

Repetition

Aleatoric

Pizzicato strings

Minimalist

Whole tone scale

3  Impressionist

Major key

Aleatoric

Whole tone scale

Minimalist

Discords

4  Impressionist

Arco

Aleatoric

Ground bass

Minimalist

Whole tone

5  Impressionist

Whole tone

Aleatoric

Pedal

Minimalist

Atonal

**Column A**

**Column B**

**6**  Impressionist

Clusters

Aleatoric

Repetition

Minimalist

Atonal

**7**  Impressionist

Fanfare

Aleatoric

Pizzicato strings

Minimalist

Clusters

**8**  Impressionist

Imitation

Aleatoric

Ostinato

Minimalist

Rubato

**9**  Impressionist

Modulation

Aleatoric

Whole tone

Minimalist

Clusters

**10**  Impressionist

Xylophone

Aleatoric

Tambourine

Minimalist

Snare drum

Total out of 20