Chapter 2

The Elements of Music
What is Music?

**Definition:** Music is the deliberate organization of sounds by people for other people to hear.

**Elements of Music**
- Melody (Pitch, Note Names, Intervals)
- Dynamics
- Rhythm
- Tempo
- Harmony
- Form
- Tone color (voices or instruments)
- Style
Melody

**Melody**: The “tune” in music
- Long or short
- Smooth or jagged
- Simple or complex

**Melodic motion**
- Steps (adjacent notes)
- Leaps (notes more than a step away)
- Repeated notes (same note again)
Melody

Phrase--section of a melody marked off by a pause (called a cadence)

Shape--the direction that the melody goes (e.g., downward, up and then down, down and then up)

Form--organizing structure of a composition (i.e., repetition, contrast, variation)
Pitch

**Definition:** exact highness or lowness of a musical note. Determined by how fast the musical object (voice or instrument) vibrates--called frequency.

- Faster the vibration = higher pitch.
- Slower the vibration = lower pitch.
Note Names

First Seven Letters of the Alphabet are used to name notes: A B C D E F G.

Notes with the same name are related to each other.

- C above Middle C on piano is twice as many vibrations (cycles per second) as Middle C.
- C below Middle C on piano is half as many vibrations.
Intervals

**Definition:** distance between any two pitches

- Closest possible interval is **unison**--the same pitch sounded twice (either together or in succession)
- **Half step** = distance between a white note on the piano and the black note next to it.
- **Whole step** = distance between two white notes on the piano when there is a black note between them.
Intervals in a Scale

Determine the name of the interval by counting the distance from one note to the next (including the starting note).

- 2 notes apart = second
- 3 notes apart = third
- 4 notes apart = fourth
- 5 notes apart = fifth
- 6 notes apart = sixth
- 7 notes apart = seventh
- 8 notes apart = octave
Intervals

Sharp = a note that is a half-step higher.
- F# is one-half step higher than F.
Flat = a note that is a half-step lower.
- Gb is one-half step lower than G.

Harsh sounding intervals (2nd and 7th) are called dissonances.
Pleasant sounding intervals (3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th) are called consonances.

Dissonances often resolve into consonances.
Dynamics--Loudness or Softness of Sound

- \( p \) = piano
- \( mp \) = mezzo piano
- \( pp \) = pianissimo
- \( f \) = forte
- \( mf \) = mezzo forte
- \( ff \) = fortissimo

Softness:
- \( p \) = piano
- \( mp \) = mezzo piano
- \( pp \) = pianissimo
- \( f \) = forte
- \( mf \) = mezzo forte
- \( ff \) = fortissimo

Loudness:
- Soft
- Medium soft
- Very soft
- Loud
- Medium loud
- Very loud
Dynamics—Loudness or Softness of Sound

Gradual changes in volume—terms

- **Crescendo** = gradual increase.
- **Decrescendo** or **diminuendo** = gradual decrease.
Rhythm

**Definition:** the organization of notes in time

**Beat** = regular pulse of the music.

- Examples = quarter notes (called “quarter” because 4 in a measure equals a “whole” note).

See relationships between different rhythmic values on the bottom of page 23.
Rhythm: Measures

**Measure** = grouping of beats.

**Bar lines** mark off groupings of beats. **Time signature** tells how many beats in a measure and what type of rhythmic note gets one beat.

- Example: 2/4 time = 2 beats with the quarter note getting one beat.
- Example: 3/8 time = 3 beats with the eighth note getting one beat.
Rhythm: Meter

**Definition:** patterns of strong and weak beats in a measure

- **Duple meter** = number of beats in a measure is divisible by 2.
- **Triple meter** = number of beats in a measure is divisible by 3.
- **Compound meter** = groupings of notes get the beat. (ex. 6/8 = 2 groups of 3 notes)
Rhythm: Syncopation

Definitions:
- When notes seem to come ahead of the beat
- When the stress or **accent** on a note is placed in an unusual spot in the measure (i.e., off the beat)
Tempo: The Speed of the Music

- Largo
- Adagio
- Andante
- Moderato
- Allegro
- Vivace
- Presto

Broad
Easy
At a walking pace
Moderate
Fast
Lively
Very fast
Harmony: Melody Plus Its Accompaniment

**Keynote:** melody is dominated by one particular note. For example, if keynote is C:

- Melody usually ends on this note.
- Gives a sense the melody is completed.
- Keynote is also called the **tonic**. In the key of C the tonic is C.
Harmony: Key and Scales

Called by the main note of the **Tonic**. If tonic is C, then the piece is “in the key of C.”

Based on the scale that starts on the tonic.

**Scale** = group of notes arranged in ascending or descending order.

Two main types of scales = **major** and **minor**.
Harmony: Major and Minor Scales

Name of scale is determined by the first note in the sequence. Type of scale is determined by the sequence of half and whole steps in the scale.

- **Major scale** = whole, whole, half, whole, whole, whole, half.
- **Minor scale** = whole, half, whole, whole, half, whole, whole.
Scales--Other Types

Chromatic scale = series of half steps from tonic to octave higher or lower.

Pentatonic scale = a scale with only five notes. Often used in Asian music.
Harmony: Related Keys

Keys with the same number of sharps and flats (the **key signature**) are called “related.”

Each major scale has a relative minor.
Each minor scale has a relative major.
These scales share the same key signature.
When a piece is in a certain key, the notes in that piece are taken from the scale of that key.
Harmony: Chords

**Chord** = three or more notes played together.

**Triad** = most common type of chord. Consists of one primary note (the “root”) and a third and fifth above it.
- Can be major or minor.

If notes in a chord are sounded one after the other instead of together, it’s called an **arpeggio**.

Chord built on tonic (tonic chord) establishes the key.
Harmony: Chords

Dominant chord = a triad built on the fifth note (degree) of the scale.
  ◆ Second most important chord in a key

Subdominant chord = a triad built on the fourth note (degree) of the scale.
  ◆ Third most important chord in a key
Harmony: Chords

Tonic, Dominant, and Subdominant = **Primary Chords** in a key.

**Chord progression** = movement of harmony from one chord to the next.
Harmony: Cadences

**Definition:** stopping points in the music

Three main types:

- **Authentic** = V - I. (also called “full”)
- **Plagal** = IV - I
- **Half** = I - V or IV - V
**Texture**

**Definition:** the way in which musical sounds are combined

**Types**
- **Monophony** = melody with no accompaniment.
- **Homophony** = melody with accompaniment; melody predominates. Also called *song texture*.
- **Polyphony** = two or more distinct musical lines played at once.
Texture

Counterpoint: Musical lines are particularly clear and stay independent more or less throughout the piece or section of the piece.

Round = a special kind of counterpoint in which one line of music is sung at staggered intervals to produce interweaving lines (e.g., Row, Row, Row Your Boat).
Musical Form

**Definition:** the structural organization of a piece of music
Involves repetition, variation, and contrast.
Musical Form: Types

Ternary form: A B A
Binary form: A B or AABB
Sonata form: A B (in new key) (both repeated) Development A B (both in original key)

Theme and Variations form: Theme is presented and played again with some sort of variation in key, melody, rhythm, dynamics, tempo, or harmony.
Musical Form: Jazz and Rock Forms

12 Bar Blues
- 3 lines of verse
- First line is repeated.
- Third line is different.
- Creates AAB pattern.

32 Bar AABA form
- 4 lines of verse
- First line is repeated.
- Third line is different.
- Last line repeats the first.
Form: 12 Bar Blues
Harmonic Progression

Line One: I I I I I
Line Two: IV IV I I
Line Three: V IV I I
Form: 32-Bar Song Form

First line = 8 measures.
Second line = 8 measures; repeats the same music but with different words.
Third line = 8 measures; music here is different to provide contrast.
Fourth line = 8 measures; music is same (or similar) to first line.
Sound = Tone Color

Voices

**High**
- Soprano (women)

**Medium**
- Tenor (men)
- Mezzo-soprano (women)

**Low**
- Baritone (men)
- Alto (women)
- Bass (men)
Voices: Jazz Singers

Use “slides” with “blue” or “bent” notes.

Sing nonverbal (or nonsense) syllables.

◆ Called “scat singing.”
Sound = Tone Color

Instruments

- Also called *timbre*
- Flute playing the same pitch sounds different from a trumpet playing the same pitch. This is the difference in tone color or timbre.
- Instruments can play alone (solo) or in small (rock band, jazz combo, chamber ensemble, string quartet) or large (orchestra, marching band) groups.
The Orchestra

**Definition:** any large group of instruments playing together

- Classical orchestra
- Jazz orchestra
Orchestra

Classical orchestra has four “sections.”

- **Strings** (violin, viola, cello, bass)
- **Woodwinds** (flute, clarinet, oboe, bassoon, piccolo, contrabassoon, English horn)
- **Brasses** (trumpet, trombone, French horn, tuba)
- **Percussion** (drums and other instruments that are hit or shaken)
String Instruments--Largest Section of the Orchestra

Violin, viola, cello, bass = main instruments of the string section. Played primarily by drawing a bow across the strings (bow made of horsehair). Can be plucked (called “pizzicato”).

Other instruments played by plucking strings = harp and guitar (not usually found in classical orchestra).

Electric guitar used in jazz and popular music. Steel strings are amplified electronically.
Woodwind Instruments

**Flute**—originally made of wood but now made of silver, platinum, or gold.

- Held sideways and played by blowing across a hole in the mouthpiece.
- Produces different pitches by opening and closing holes with keys.
Woodwind Instruments

**Piccolo**--small version of the flute
- Sounds an octave higher.
- Has a brilliant, shrill tone.

**Oboe and bassoon**--played by blowing air through double reeds made of cane.
- Oboe = smaller
- Bassoon = very long wooden tube
Woodwind Instruments

**English horn** = a lower pitched oboe (not English or a horn!)

**Contrabassoon**—sounds an octave lower than regular bassoon; the lowest instrument in the section.
Woodwind Instruments

Clarinet--played by blowing air through a single reed made of cane.

- Has 3 distinct registers (areas of sound)
  - Low = rich and melancholy.
  - Middle = singing and warm.
  - High = piercing and shrill.
Brass Instruments

Tones are created by vibrating the lips in a mouthpiece and by changing the length of the tube that has air going through it. Trumpets, French horns, and Tubas use valves. Trombone uses a slide.
Brass Instruments

**French horn**—also called just “horn.”
- Has warm, rich quality.
- Associated with hunting calls.

**Trumpet**—highest pitched brass instrument; plays fanfares well.
Brass Instruments

**Trombone**—has very grand, powerful sound in the lower range; can produce a smooth, mellow sound.

**Tuba**—the lowest of the brass instruments with a deep, round sound
Percussion Instruments

Pitched

- **Timpani**—four large drums arranged in a semi-circle around the player; can be tuned.
- Instruments with bars or tubes that are struck with mallets (xylophone, vibraphone, glockenspiel)
Percussion Instruments

Unpitched

- **Snare drum**—has strings that sizzle or rattle when drum is struck.
- **Triangle**—made of metal and struck with a metal stick.
- **Cymbals**—in an orchestra, 2 round metal plates that are struck together, making a crashing sound.
- **Bass drum**—a large drum struck with a mallet; suspended on its side.
Keyboard Instruments

**Piano**—best known as a solo instrument, but sometimes included in the orchestra.

- In a piano concerto—pianist is a soloist who plays with orchestra; pianist is in front of the orchestra.
- As part of the orchestra itself—pianist sits inside the orchestra, usually near the percussion section.

Is **both** a string and a percussion instrument because strings are struck by hammers, activated by the piano’s keys.
Keyboard Instruments

**Harpsichord**—fundamental instrument of the 17th and 18th centuries (before the piano was invented and became popular)

- Pressing the key causes the string to be plucked rather than struck with a hammer (like the piano).
Keyboard Instruments

**Organ**—the “king of instruments”
Can have hundreds of pipes and several keyboards (called **manuals**). Sound is created by pressing keys which push air through specific pipes that are opened by “stops” on the organ console (where the player sits). Can have as many as 4 manuals as well as the pedals played by the feet. Sets of pipes create different sound qualities.
Keyboard Instruments

**Synthesizer**—a keyboard instrument that imitates the sounds of other instruments by electronically duplicating their wave forms (sound waves) to create similar timbres.

- Widely used in popular music.
- Can also create completely new sounds.
- Can be made to sound like a full orchestra or a single instrument.
Musical Performance

Rehearsal = practice times in which all the details of the music are worked out. Led by a conductor.

The Conductor

- Interprets the music.
- Leads the orchestra in rehearsal and performance.
- Decides the musical details of the performance.
Musical Performance

Improvisation = making the music up as the musician goes along.

- Used a lot in jazz music.
- Not used in formal orchestral music.
Attending an Orchestral Concert

Classical concerts have unspoken “rules” the audience follows.

- Enter the hall only before the music starts or during a break between movements.
- Clap only after the entire piece is completed. Do not clap after movements of a multi-movement piece.
- Turn off cell phones and pagers.
Attending an Orchestral Concert

Classical concerts usually have 3 works on the program:
- A short, lighter piece
- Possibly a concerto featuring a virtuoso performer
- Intermission (usually about 15 minutes)
- One longer, more serious piece
Attending an Orchestral Concert: Things to Do

Look at the program before the concert begins or even before coming to the hall (if it is published). Become familiar with the type of music being performed and listen to it ahead of time, if possible.

Listen to the orchestra “tune up.”

- The oboe plays the pitch; the other wind instruments tune to that pitch.
Attending an Orchestral Concert: Things to See

The first violinist (called the **concertmaster**) sounds the pitch to tune the strings.

- The audience applauds when the concertmaster enters.

The conductor enters the stage.

- The audience applauds when the conductor enters.

If there is a soloist (for a concerto), s/he enters after the conductor.

- The audience applauds when the soloist enters.
Orchestra Concerts

Often the audience appears in formal dress.

Audience is expected to be quiet during performance.

Polite applause indicates appreciation for the music.
Opera Performances

Audience members often come dressed in formal attire—long gowns and black-tie. Singers (especially female stars) are often showered with roses and other flowers at the end of the concert.
Rock Concerts

As much stage shows as musical performances

- Makeup, clothes, dancing, and elaborate stage machinery are common elements.
- Audience often participates in some way.
Jazz Concerts

Often held in a club where people eat and drink while they listen to the music.

Audience wears casual attire.

Music is part of the experience, rather than the focus of the experience.

Some jazz performances take place in concert halls. The audience is more restrained in this setting, like for an orchestra concert.
Voice Recitals

Feature a soloist (or several) usually accompanied by piano, although other instruments may also be involved.

Audience is well dressed and quiet during performance.

Applause is controlled.
Musical Style

Term used to describe the way in which the elements of music are used to create music

- Describes characteristics that set apart the music of one historical period from another.
- Describes the individual characteristics of the music written by a single composer.
Style Periods in the History of Western Music

- Middle Ages: 400 - 1400 A.D.
- Renaissance: 1400 - 1600 A.D.
- Baroque: 1600 - 1750 A.D.
- Classic: 1750 - 1800 A.D.
- Romantic: 1800 - 1900 A.D.
- Twentieth Century: 1900 - 2000 A.D.