



KS3 Spine

Western Classical Music - Snapshot

1. Medieval music (500-1400):

The two main types of music in this period were **sacred** and **secular**.

- **Sacred** music was performed in the church as part of a religious service, usually a mass.
- **Secular** music was non-religious music. This type of music was often songs written to poems, accompanied by a **lute/lyre**.

Music that was documented was hand written. Vocal chants, or **Gregorian chants**, were common and there was limited use of **harmony** because chords as we know them today were yet to be used. There was also a limited amount of instruments because many had not been invented yet.

The major and minor scale were not established as we know them today and, instead, a lot of music was based around **modes**.

Notable composers: Hildegard von Bingen, Guillaume de Machaut,

2. Renaissance music (1400-1600):

Sacred music was still dominant and the church had a large influence over composers and music that was composed.

Composers began to write music with more complex **textures** (layers of music), and changes in texture were more frequent.

Madrigals were a common form of **secular** music. These were songs written for multiple voices and were **polyphonic** (multiple melody lines being played at the same time).

Notable composers: Dufay, Josquin des Prez, Palestrina, Monteverdi.



3. Baroque music (1600-1750):

This period saw the creation of **tonality** as we know it today, where an arrangement of pitches are all based around one central pitch, called the **tonic**. The main scales were the **major** scale and the **minor** scale.

Contrast was an important feature of the music, with **texture** and **dynamics** being used to dramatically change between quiet and loud.

Ornamentation was used frequently, in order to decorate melodies. There were different types of ornaments, such as:

- **Trill** - a constant rapid alternation between two adjacent notes.
- **Mordent** - a singular rapid alternation between a note and the note directly above or below it.
- **Turn** - a type of ornament where the melody revolves around the written note using both the note above and below the written note.

Opera became a more popular musical form, which is a form of theatre that was entirely sung.

Common instruments: harpsichord, violin, cello, recorder, organ, oboe and natural trumpet (trumpet without valves).

Composers of the time were not free to compose what they liked because they were paid by either a political or religious institution who directed the composers what they should compose.

Notable composers: J S Bach, Handel, Vivaldi, Monteverdi, Purcell, Pachelbel.

History Of Western Classical Music



4. Classical music (1750-1820):

The classical period was a return to simplifying music with a sense of balance and symmetry.

The **orchestra** was developed as more instruments were invented, such as the clarinet. A larger orchestra led to the need for a conductor to direct the ensemble.

The **symphony** is a multi-movement extended composition for orchestra and was an extremely popular musical form. It was developed from containing three different movements to having four.

The **concerto** was another popular musical form, where a solo instrument would be accompanied by an orchestra.

Composers continued to be on the payroll of the wealthy.

Notable composers: Mozart, Haydn, Hummel, (early) Beethoven.

5. Romantic music (1780-1910):

The romantic period was very expressive, with a wide range of **dynamics** being used. By this stage, the church was not as influential on composers as they once were. Music was instead influenced more by poetry, art, drama and folklore.

There was an increased use of **dissonance** (a combination of sounds that creates tension) as composers continued to explore harmony.

Musical phrases were often longer and irregular as there was a greater emphasis on **melody** writing.

New musical forms emerged such as:

- **Lied** – a song with piano accompaniment
- **Nocturne** – a piece written for solo piano

The **orchestra** continued to grow as more instruments were invented, such as the xylophone, celeste, bass clarinet, tuba and more. This gave composers a wider range of expressive sounds to draw from.

Notable composers: (late) Beethoven, Brahms, Wagner, Tchaikovsky, Mahler, Rachmaninov, Chopin, Sibelius.

Activities

Recap quiz

1. What is secular music?
2. Name three types of ornamentation.
3. In which period was the clarinet invented?

State which musical period these instruments belong to:

- Lyre
- Recorder
- Piano
- Harpsichord
- Saxophone

In which period were these musical forms popular?

- Madrigal
- Opera
- Lied
- Gregorian chant
- Symphony

Musical Instruments



1. Families of instruments:

An **instrument** is an object that is created or adapted to make musical sounds.

Instruments can be put into one of five main categories. These are:

- String
- Woodwind
- Brass
- Percussion
- Keyboard

An **orchestra** is a large instrumental ensemble that contains different families of instruments.

An **ensemble** is a group of musicians who perform together.

2. String

String instruments are musical instruments that use vibrating strings to create sound. They can be played by plucking the strings or by rubbing a bow against them.

Examples of string instruments often played in **orchestras**:

Violin – the highest pitched string instrument in the orchestra.

Viola – a slightly larger version of a violin and plays at a lower pitch.

Cello – a bass member of the string family. It is larger than the viola and needs to be played sitting down.

Double bass - the lowest pitched string instrument in the orchestra. It is also often used in jazz music.

Harp – an instrument that has a number of individual strings that are plucked with the performer's hands.

3. Woodwind

Woodwind instruments are musical instruments that produce sound by air vibrating without the use of strings or membranes. They can be played by blowing into or across a hole, or by blowing into a **mouthpiece**.

Examples of woodwind instruments often played in **orchestras**:

Flute – an instrument that creates sound from air being blown across a hole.

Oboe – a double reed instrument with two pieces of cane in the mouthpiece that creates a 'bright' sound.

Clarinet – a single reed instrument. A cylindrical tube with holes in it.

Recorder – an instrument that can be made from wood or, more recently, plastic. It is a tube that tapers towards the bottom and has several finger holes.

Bassoon – a lower pitched double reed instrument.

4. Brass

Brass instruments are musical instruments that produce sound by the performer's lips vibrating through a **mouthpiece** and the sound resonating through a tube.

Examples of brass instruments often played in **orchestras**:

Trumpet – the highest pitched brass instrument. They have valves that, when pressed, change the length of tubing in order to play different notes.

Cornet – very similar to the trumpet, although the tubing gets gradually wider, creating a mellower tone.

French horn – made of metal tubing wrapped into a coil. It has a more subdued tone than the trumpet.

Trombone – a lower pitched instrument than the trumpet. It has a slide that moves in and out in order to alter the length of tubing, which changes the pitch.

Tuba – the lowest pitched brass instrument in the orchestra.





Music KS3: Musical Instruments

5. Percussion

Percussion instruments are musical instruments that produce sound by being hit or rubbed by a beater or the performer's hand.

Examples of percussion instruments often played in **orchestras**:

Xylophone – a pitched instrument made with a set of wooden bars hit with a beater.

Glockenspiel – a set of metal bars hit with a beater.

Cymbal – a thin metal plate that can be hit with a beater or two cymbals could be hit together.

Snare drum – a drum with a set of stiff wires against the bottom skin.

Timpani – a large drum tuned to a note.

7. Instruments from around the world

There are a huge number of instruments that have been invented. Here are some notable instruments from around the world:

• **Steel pans** – a percussion instrument from the Caribbean made from oil drums.

• **Mandolin** – a string instrument commonly used in traditional folk music, similar to a guitar.

• **Banjo** – a string instrument commonly used in traditional folk music with a skin stretched over the body.

• **Bagpipes** – a woodwind instrument most commonly associated with Scotland that can play multiple notes at the same time.

• **Sitar** – a plucked string instrument originating from India.

• **Tabla** – a percussion instrument from India consisting of two drums.

• **Surdo** – a large bass drum used in Samba music from Brazil.

6. Keyboard

Keyboard instruments are musical instruments that are played by pressing a keyboard, which is a row of levers.

The keyboard family of instruments is unique in that they can produce sound in a number of ways:

An **organ** will flow air through pipes.

A **piano** has strings that are struck by hammers that are connected to the keyboard.

A **celeste** has a set of metal plates or bars that are struck by hammers that are connected to the keyboard.

Activities

Recap quiz

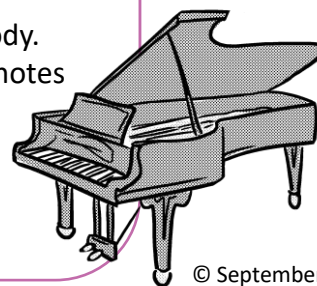
1. Name the five different families of instruments.
2. Is the clarinet a single reed or double reed instrument?
3. What material is a xylophone made from?
4. What part of the trumpet does the performer blow into?
5. How does a piano make sound?
6. Where do steel pans come from?

State which family of instruments the following belong to:

- French horn
- Flute
- Viola
- Saxophone
- Organ
- Glockenspiel
- Cornet

State from which country the following instruments are from:

- Banjo
- Sitar
- Steel pans
- Bagpipes



KS3 Spine Notation

1. The Creation of Western Music Notation

Music from the Western Classical tradition is written on a staff. Before music notation was invented, music was passed on **orally** (sung) or **aurally** (listening to sounds). Whilst an effective way of sharing music, this method had problems as pieces of music often changed over time and it was common for different versions of the same piece of music to exist.

The church had a desire to share the same music throughout its churches and began to create a system using horizontal lines as a reference point for notes to be added. This was the starting point for the staff and notation as we know it today.

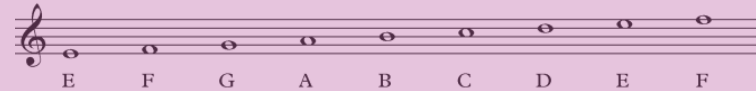


2. Pitch

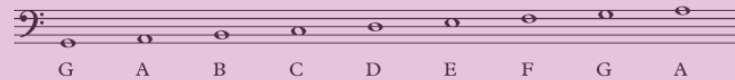
The **stave** is a set of five horizontal lines; the position of the notes on the stave determines the pitch of the notes.

There are two main **clefs** (a symbol that informs the performer the pitch of each note on the stave) that are used in notation.

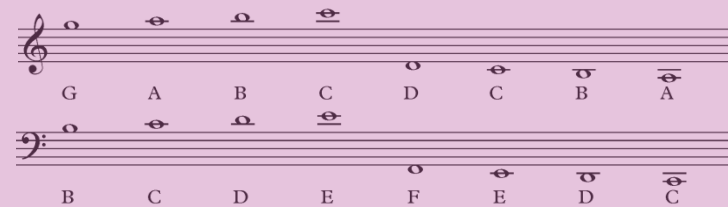
The **treble clef** has its name as it was used by boys with unchanged voices who sang at a high pitch (**treble**). It is also used by other high pitched instruments such as the flute, violin, guitar and the right hand of the piano.



The **bass clef** has its name as it was used by men who sang at a low pitch (**bass**). It is also used by instruments such as the bassoon, tuba, cello, bass guitar and the left hand of the piano.




Ledger lines are additional drawn on lines either through, under or above a note in order to extend the stave. These are used when a note goes higher than the top line of the stave, or below the bottom line.



Sharps (a symbol to raise a note by a semitone - #) and **flats** (a symbol used to lower a note by a semitone - b) are types of **accidentals** used to alter a given note.

3. Rhythm

Whilst the **stave** refers to the pitch of the note written, a range of symbols are used to tell the musician how long each note should be held.

A **semibreve** is held for four beats. 

A **minim** is held for two beats. 

A **crotchet** is held for one beat. 

A **quaver** is held for half a beat. 

A **semiquaver** is held for quarter of a beat. 

A **beat** is the basic unit of time in a bar. **Time signatures** are used to tell the musician how many beats are in each bar. The top – or first – number states how many beats are in each bar, and the bottom – or second – number states what type of beat it is (4 would be crotchet and 8 would be quaver).

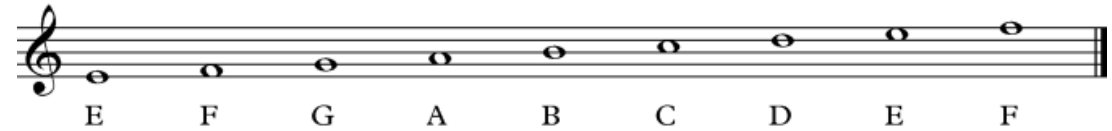
For example, a 4/4 time signature means that there are four crotchet beats in a bar, whereas a 6/8 time signature means that there are six quaver beats in a bar.

Music KS3 Notation

4. Alternative notational systems

There are a number of other notational systems that are in use, outside of the Western Classical Tradition. Many popular musicians use **tablature** (or **TAB** for short). This is written for a specific instrument and, instead of the horizontal lines representing a pitch, horizontal lines are used to represent a string on a guitar. Numbers are then added on the lines to tell the musician which fret they should press down on. This is a very friendly notation to start using, although there are some limitations. For example, it does not inform the musician how long each note should be held for, so notation may be used in tandem with guitar **TAB**.

Graphic scores are also sometimes used by more modern composers, where any range of symbols can be used (sometimes with symbols from standard notation). These symbols are not as prescriptive as standard notation so the performer has some artistic licence regarding how they interpret what is written by the composer. This means that every performance of a piece of work using this type of notation is likely to be different in some way.



Activities

Task

Write down a piece of music that you know, using standard notation. Use your instrument to help you work out what the pitch is.

Task

Create a glossary of musical keywords associated with music notation and pitch and rhythm.

Activities

Recap quiz

1. How was music passed around before the use of Western Classical notation?
2. Who began to create a starting point for notation as we know it today?
3. What do sharps and flats do?
4. Name two instruments that use a treble clef and two instruments that use a bass clef.
5. What is a ledger line?

State how long each of these note values lasts for:

- Minim
- Semiquaver
- Semibreve
- Crotchet
- Quaver

Create an acronym to remember the notes of the treble and bass clefs.

Music KS3 Musical Elements

1. The Musical Elements

Music questions will require you to identify or discuss the musical elements in some way. Make sure that you are familiar with each of the elements and the meanings of the main keywords associated with them.

You can remember the elements using the **Dr T Smith** acronym:

- D = Dynamics**
- R = Rhythm**
- T = Texture**
- S = Structure**
- M = Melody**
- I = Instrumentation**
- T = Tonality**
- H = Harmony**

2. Dynamics

The term **dynamics** refers to the volume of a piece of music. Dynamics are used to create interest and expression. Italian terms are used in order to state how loud or quiet it is:

- Fortissimo (ff)** - very loud
- Forte (f)** – loud
- Mezzo forte (mf)** – moderately loud
- Mezzo piano (mp)** – moderately soft
- Piano (p)** – soft
- Pianissimo (pp)** – very softly
- Crescendo** – gradual increase in volume
- Diminuendo** – gradual decrease in volume

3. Rhythm

Rhythm refers to the combination of note lengths. It is linked to **tempo**, which refers to the speed of a piece of music. There are a number of terms that can be used to describe rhythm, such as the following:

- Onbeat** – a rhythm that is played on the strong beats of a bar.
- Offbeat** – a rhythm that is played on the weak beats of a bar, or off of the beat.
- Ostinato** – a musical motif or phrase that is repeated frequently.

There are certain genres of music that contain specific rhythmic features.

Music from the **Caribbean**, such as **Calypso** music, makes use of **syncopation** (a type of musical rhythm where the emphasis is not on the beat).

Jazz and **blues** music often make use of **swung quavers** (when pairs of quavers are played with the first quaver slightly longer than the second).



4. Texture

Texture refers to how many layers of music there is in a piece. A range of different terms are used depending on what each part is doing.

Gregorian chants were common in the Medieval period and were **monophonic** (music where there is a single unaccompanied melody line).

Composers later began to compose with multiple parts and so created **polyphonic** music (music that contains multiple independent melody lines).

The most common texture heard today in the vast majority of popular songs is a **melody and accompaniment** texture.

5. Structure

The **structure** of a piece of music refers to the order of different sections within it. Letters are used in most structures to represent each section.

Effective music often strikes a balance between repetition and contrast where the audience needs to recognise something about the piece, without repeating it too much so that it becomes tedious.

Binary form was a popular structure in the **Baroque** period and was a musical structure where there are two sections creating an AB structure. If the A section returned again afterwards, this instead created a **ternary form** piece (ABA).

Songs usually follow a predictable structure containing more than one **verse** and **chorus**.



6. Melody

Melody refers to the arrangement of single notes in order to create a pleasing sound. A more common term for **melody** is **tune**.

The majority of melodies are **conjunct** (melodic movement that moves in steps). This makes the melodies easier to sing, perform and remember. Sometimes, a melody may make use of **disjunct** movement (melodic movement that leaps) in order to highlight a particularly expressive moment.

There are some melodic devices that have been used for centuries, such as a **sequence**. This is where a musical idea is played and then repeated, starting on a different pitch.

There are a number of other melodic devices that have been used in a range of genres. **Serialism** is a genre that applies devices such as **inversion** (playing the melody upside down) and **retrograde** (playing the melody backwards).

7. Instrumentation

Instrumentation refers to the instruments or voices that are heard in a piece of music.

Instruments can be classified into one of five orchestral families, depending on how they produce their sound.

Music technology is becoming increasingly popular in music made today and makes use of a lot of electric sounds such as **synthesizers**. Digital **effects** can also be used to change an audio signal in order to modify a sound.

8. Tonality

Tonality as we know it today was not established until the **Baroque** period. When identifying the tonality of a piece of music, it usually falls into one of two categories: **major** or **minor**.

The **major** scale is often used by composers to create a pleasant and happy feel to the music. The **minor** scale is often used by composers to give the music an angry or sad feel.

Associating major and minor with these emotions is a good place to start, although some minor music can sound jovial and some major music can sound sad!

It is important to know the difference between the two scales. If you flatten the 3rd and 6th degrees of a major scale, you create a harmonic minor scale.

9. Harmony

Harmony relates to the combination of two or more pitches at the same time, creating a **chord**. There are lots of different types of chords: chords that contain three notes are known as **triads**, made up of a note and another two (a 3rd and a 5th) above it.

These chords can be extended. **7th chords** are common in jazz and blues and contain a fourth note that is an interval of a 7th above the bottom note of the chord.



10. Activities

Recap quiz

1. What does the term 'crescendo' mean?
2. Name a place where syncopated rhythms are often heard.
3. Which two sections are mainly used in a song structure?
4. What kind of melodic movement is most commonly used?
5. Which two notes are different in a minor scale from a major scale?
6. Using the C major scale as a basis: C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C. Create a C minor scale.
7. What is an ostinato?
8. Name all of the elements in the acronym Dr T Smith.
9. What is the purpose of digital effects?
10. Write down a definition for a chord.