

Glossary

The Interrelated Dimensions of Music:

Pulse - the regular heartbeat of the music; its steady beat.

Rhythm - long and short sounds or patterns that happen over the pulse.

Pitch - high and low sounds.

Tempo - the speed of the music; fast or slow or in-between.

Dynamics - how loud or quiet the music is.

Timbre - all instruments, including voices, have a certain sound quality e.g. the trumpet has a very different sound quality to the violin.

Texture - layers of sound. Layers of sound working together make music very interesting to listen to.

Structure - every piece of music has a structure e.g. an introduction, verse and chorus ending.

Notation - the link between sound and symbol.

Keywords A-Z

A Capella: Without accompaniment from instruments, i.e. voices only.

Appraising: Listening carefully and considering aspects of the music.

Arrangements: How voices and instruments are used in a song; where they occur within the song.

Back beat: Beats 2 and 4 in a drum-line or if we are clapping along with the music.

Backing: The accompaniment to a song.

Balance: The level of volume at which players or singers play. If the balance is good then everyone can be heard.

Ballad: A gentle love song.

Band: Playing/singing/performing together.

Bossa Nova: A Brazilian dance music that has syncopated guitar rhythms.

Blues: A style of music characterised by its harmonic structure and the notes used to create the melodies.

Bridge/middle 8: Contrasting section which leads back to main material.

Call and response: A musical structure where a solo person sings or plays a musical idea and the rest of the performers sing or play a different musical idea.

Chord: More than one note played at the same time.

Chorus: A repeated section in a song which gives the main message.

Classical music: This often means all Western art music from the Medieval era to the present. More specifically, it is music composed between c.1720 and 1840, e.g. the era of Mozart, Joseph Haydn, and the young Beethoven.

Coda: Short section which brings the song or piece to an end.

Cover: A version of a song performed by someone other than the original artist. It might sound a bit or very different from the original.

Composing: Creating and developing musical ideas and 'fixing' them.

Crossover: Can be a mixture of different styles which introduces new music to different audiences.

Decks: Equipment used by DJs, MCs, and Rappers to mix sounds from different records and to make effects e.g. scratching that was first used in the late 1970s.

Disco: (short for discotheque) is dance music from the 1970s, characterized by hypnotic rhythm, repetitive lyrics and electronically produced sounds.

Drum loops: A sequence of sounds/music that is recorded, may be sampled, and is reproduced digitally or electronically.

Dynamics: A musical dimension indicating how loudly or quietly the music is being played. Ending: Short section which brings the song or piece to an end.

Ensemble: A French word used to describe playing, singing or performing together.

Folk tunes/melodies: Music sung or played by people, usually not recorded or performed. Often the music is passed down through families and friends.

Funk: music with strong bass lines and a heavy syncopated beat.

Gospel: Music that is Christian usually sung with rich harmony and often with a call and response structure.

Groove: The rhythmic part of the music that makes you want to move and dance.

Grime: Electronic dance music that emerged in London in the early 2000s. It developed out of a British electronic music style called UK Garage, and draws influences from Jungle, Dancehall, and Hip Hop. It has been described as the "most significant musical development within the UK for decades."

Harmony: Different notes sung or played at the same time to produce chords.

Hip-Hop: Music that developed in the 1970s but remains very popular today. It includes rapping.

Hook: A term used in Pop music to describe a short catchy phrase or riff that we can't stop singing; the bit that 'hooks' us in; the main musical idea from a song that we remember.

Improvise: To make up a tune and play it on the spot. There is an assumption that it can never be recreated.

Interlude: A passage of music played between the main theme.

Introduction: Music heard at the beginning of a song or piece of music.

Keyboard: An electric instrument played like the piano. It has a range of pre-recorded sounds.

Lyrics: The words of a song.

Melody: Another name for tune.

Melodic: The music has a melody or tune.

Motown: A 1960s label created from Soul music characterised by a rhythm section playing, laying down the groove with a funky bassline and a tambourine sounding over the top. Often brass sections play punchy riff-based rhythms and sometimes violins playing long high notes.

Neo-Soul: The style emerged from Soul and contemporary RnB. The instrumentation, arrangement and studio mix are very important. Songs are mixed in the studio to sound as if they are from an older Soul era like the Motown era. The modern way in which the songs are produced, give a timeless Soul feel that has a contemporary edge.

Notation: Ways to visually represent music.

Offbeat: The beat that is not the strong beat. If a piece of music has 4 beats in a bar i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4, beats 2 and 4 would be the 'off' beats.

Organ: Organ usually refers to church organs but is also used to describe a type of electric keyboard that is large and with 2 or 3 keyboards and foot pedals.

Original: The first ever version of a song.

Ostinato: A short repeated rhythmic or melodic pattern.

Outro: Short section which brings the song or piece to an end.

Pentatonic scale: A fixed five-note pattern e.g: the five black keys on a piano.

Performing: Singing and playing instruments for others to hear.

Phrase: A musical sentence.

Pitch: A musical dimension that describes the range of high and low sounds.

Pop music: A shortened form of 'Popular music'. Pop music constantly changes as we change and the world changes.

Pre-chorus: A short section in a song, before the chorus.

Producer: A record producer or music producer oversees and manages the sound recording and production of a band or performer's music.

Pulse/beat: The heartbeat or steady beat of a song/piece of music.

Rapping: A vocal technique in which the performer speaks rhythmically against a steady beat.

Recurring theme: A tune that repeats again and again in a piece of music.

Rhythm: A musical dimension that describes the combination of long and short sounds to make patterns.

Reggae: Developed in the 1970s and originated from Jamaica, Reggae defined by Bob Marley. It has a prominent bass beat and a strong off-beat usually played on the guitar.

Riff: A short repeated phrase, often played on a lead instrument such as guitar, piano or saxophone.

Roots Reggae: Music that deals with social and racial issues and references elements of Rastafari.

Sampling: Record a sample of music, a small section, and re-use it in another piece of music or song. Used frequently in hip-hop and other Pop music.

Secular: Non-religious.

Solo: An Italian word to describe playing, singing or performing of one person or on our own.

Structure/form/shape: How the sections (verses and choruses etc.) of a song are ordered to make the whole piece.

Rock music: Came from Rock'n'roll of America in the 1950s and 1960s. It is characterised by loud guitars and drums due to the heavy amplification, strong bass line and driving rhythms. Style: The type of music e.g. Blues or Rock.

Style indicators: Identifiers that show us the genre of the music.

Swing: A type of rhythm often associated with Jazz. Notes in the rhythm pattern are made longer and shorter to create a syncopated effect.

Syncopation: Music with lots of rhythmic variety, often quite difficult. The strong beats occur in unexpected places.

Synthesizer: An electric instrument that looks like a keyboard and has pre-recorded and created sounds.

Tag: (Usually) a short ending, tagged on to the main part of the song.

Tempo: A musical dimension that describes how fast or slowly the music is played.

Texture: A musical dimension that describes the layers of sound in music.

Timbre: A musical dimension that describes the quality and character of the sound of the instruments used.

Turntables: (typically 2) are used by DJs to manipulate sounds and create new music, sound effects, mixes and other creative sounds and beats.

Unison: Everyone plays or sings the same music at the same time.

Urban contemporary: Modern music that uses elements of Soul, Hip Hop, Funk, Jazz and RnB.

Verse: A section in a song which has the same tune but different words.