

## MUSIC GLOSSARY

**A cappella:** Unaccompanied vocal music.

**Accompaniment:** A vocal or instrumental part that supports or is background for a principal part or parts.

**Alla breve:** A tempo marking indicating a quick duple meter with the half note rather than the quarter note getting the beat (2/2 rather than 4/4). Sometimes referred to as cut time.

**Anticipation (Guitar):** Placing an accent before beats 1 and 3, often performed as an upward strum tied to downbeats of 1 and 3.

**Arpeggio:** A term used to describe the pitches of a chord as they are played one after the other, rather than simultaneously.

**Arrange:** To create an adaptation of a composition.

**Articulation:** In performance, the characteristics of attack and decay of tones and the means by which these characteristics are produced.

**Atonal:** Music in which no single tone is the home base or key center.

**Aurally:** Pertaining to the ear or the sense of hearing.

**Basic Harmonic Accompaniment:** I-IV-V chord progression used as an accompaniment.

**Binary:** A musical form consisting of two main sections.

**Blues Progression:** I-IV-I-I; IV-IV-I-I; V-IV-I-I. Sometimes referred to as twelve-bar blues.

**Blues Scale:** A major scale in which the third and seventh are lowered a half-step.

**Body Percussion:** The use of the body to create unpitched sounds (e.g., pat, clap, snap, stomp).

**Bowing:** The technique of using the bow on a stringed instrument.

**C Position (Piano):** Notes included in the 5-finger hand position starting on C (C, D, E, F, G).

**Chord:** a combination of three or more pitches sounded simultaneously.

**Chord Melody Guitar Style:** Chord voicing with melody on top string.

**Chord Progression (Harmonic Progression):** A succession of two or more chords. A basic progression is I-IV-V in a given key.

### **Class Piano Level Terminology:**

- **Early Elementary:** Simple five-finger patterns in C position and middle C position; simple rhythms in 4/4 time signature including quarter notes, half notes, dotted half notes, and whole notes; music is suitable for a Level One student.
- **Elementary:** Simple five-finger patterns in C and G; simple rhythms in 4/4 and 3/4 time signatures including eighth notes, quarter notes, dotted quarter notes, half notes, dotted half notes and whole notes; primary chords in C and G major; music is suitable for a Level One student.
- **Late Elementary:** Five-finger patterns in C, G and D; finger patterns should expand beyond the five notes; simple rhythms in 4/4 and 3/4 time signatures including eighth notes, quarter notes, dotted quarter notes, half notes, dotted half notes and whole notes; primary chords in C, G and D major; music is suitable for an advanced Level One student or a Level Two student.
- **Early Intermediate:** Moderately difficult pieces in the keys of C, G, D, A, E and F major; moderately complex rhythms with 4/4, 3/4 or 6/8 time signatures including sixteenth notes, eighth notes, quarter notes, dotted quarter notes, half notes, dotted half notes and whole notes; primary chords in C, G, D, A, E and F major; music is suitable for a Level Two student.
- **Late Intermediate:** Difficult pieces in all major keys and the keys of c, g, d, a, e, and f minor; complex rhythms with 4/4, 3/4, 5/4, 6/8 and 3/8 time signatures including all note values; primary chords in all major keys and the keys of c, g, d, a, e, and f minor; music is suitable for an advanced Level Two student or a Level Three student.
- **Advanced:** Very difficult pieces in all major and minor keys; very complex rhythms in all time signatures including all note values; primary chords in all major and minor keys; music is suitable for an advanced Level Three student or a Level Four student.

**Classroom instruments:** Instruments typically used in the general music classroom, including, recorders, autoharps, mallet instruments, pitched and unpitched percussion instruments, fretted instruments, keyboard instruments, and electronic instruments.

**Common Practice Period:** End of Baroque period to the beginning of the Romantic period. Basically, the Classical period.

**Compose:** to create music.

**Compound meter:** A meter that includes a triple subdivision within a beat (e.g., 6/8) or that has a numerator greater than four (e.g., 5/4).

**Concert Pitch:** Actual sound produced by an instrument as distinct from a written note for transposing instruments.

**Diction:** Pronunciation and enunciation of words in singing.

**Double Stop:** Playing two strings at the same time.

**Dynamic levels, dynamics:** Degrees of loudness.

**Elements of music:** Pitch, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, timbre, texture, form, and tempo.

**Embouchure:** The proper position of lips in playing wind instruments.

**Ensemble:** A group of musicians performing together.

**Event:** The point at which a change occurs in the music (e.g., modulation, entrance of a solo, tempo change, dynamic change).

**Expression, expressive:** With appropriate dynamics, phrasing, style, and interpretation and appropriate variations in dynamics and tempo.

**Form:** The overall structural organization of a music composition (e.g., AB, ABA, call and response, rondo, theme and variations, sonata-allegro) and the interrelationships of music events within the overall structure.

**Found Sounds:** Music produced by nontraditional instruments.

**Genre:** A type or category of music (e.g., sonata, opera, symphony, jazz, march, lullaby).

**Grades of difficulty:** For purposes of these curriculum standards, music is classified into six levels of difficulty:

- **Grade 1:** Very easy; easy keys, meters, and rhythms; limited ranges.
- **Grade 2:** Easy; may include changes of tempo, key, and meter; modest ranges.
- **Grade 3:** Moderately easy; contains moderate technical demands, expanded ranges, and varied interpretive requirements.
- **Grade 4:** Moderately difficult; requires well-developed technical skills, attention to phrasing and interpretation, and ability to perform various meters and rhythms in a variety of keys.
- **Grade 5:** Difficult; requires advanced technical and interpretive skills; contains key signatures with numerous sharps or flats, unusual meters, complex rhythms, and subtle dynamic requirements.
- **Grade 6:** Very difficult; suitable for musically mature students of exceptional competence.

**Iconic Notation:** Way of writing music (e.g., pitch, rhythm, dynamics) using nontraditional symbols or characters.

**Improvise:** To create music spontaneously.

**Interval:** The relationship between two pitches (e.g., major third; minor third).

**Key Signature:** The sharps or flats, or absence of either, at the beginning of a piece of music, indicating the sharps, flats and naturals belonging to the key of the music.

**Meter:** The grouping in which a succession of rhythmic pulses or beats is organized; indicated by a time signature at the beginning of a work.

**MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface):** Standard specifications that enable electronic instruments such as the synthesizer, sampler, sequencer, and drum machine from any manufacturer to communicate with one another and with computers.

**Modal Tonalities:** Music based on scales other than major, minor, or pentatonic (e.g., Mixolydian).

**Modulation:** The process of changing from one key to another.

**Musical Periods:** Renaissance (1450-1600), Baroque (1600-1750), Classical (1750-1820), Romantic (1820-1900), Contemporary (1900-the present).

**Nonstandard Notation:** Symbols to indicate sounds not typically used in standard notation (e.g., flutter tonguing, clapping, tapping on the instrument or music stand, key or valve clicks).

**Obligato:** An elaborate melodic part accompanying a solo or principal melody.

**Orally:** Pertaining to speech.

**Orchestration:** Specifying the use of particular instruments in a composition.

**Ostinato:** A short musical pattern that is repeated persistently.

**Pentatonic Scale:** Music based on a five-tone scale; most often referred to the scale using tones, Do, Re, Mi, Sol, and La.

**Performance Medium:** Type of ensemble or soloist performing (e.g., band, orchestra, chorus, jazz ensemble, vocalist).

**Primary Chords:** Chords built on the tonic (1), subdominant (4), and dominant (5) notes of a scale.

**Retardation (Guitar):** Placing accent after beats 1 and 3, often performed as an upward strum tied to downbeats of 2 and 4.

**Rondo:** A musical form in which the A section alternates with contrasting sections (ABACA).

**Rudiments:** Various rhythms with prescribed sticking combinations used by percussionists.

**Scale:** a succession of tones.

- **Major:** succession of tones in the following pattern of half steps and whole steps:  
WWHWWWH.

- **Minor:** succession of tones in three different patterns:
  - Natural:** a minor scale that shares the same key signature as the relative major and is in the following pattern of half steps and whole steps: WHWWHWW.
  - Harmonic:** Natural minor scale with a raised 7<sup>th</sup> step.
  - Melodic:** Natural minor scale with a raised 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> ascending, and natural minor scale descending.

**Simple Meter:** Any meter in which the number of beats is a multiple of two.

**Singer's Formant:** A high spectrum peak occurring around 3000Hz in vocal sounds; Also associated with "vocal ring" and with the vocal ability to project over background noise (e.g., choir, orchestra); The position of the mouth of the singer so that the sound produced leads to strong overtones.

**Staff:** The five lines and four spaces on which music is notated

**Standard Notation:** Music written on one or more staves, using traditional note symbols and clefs to indicate pitch locations and durations.

**Style:** The distinctive or characteristic manner in which the elements of music are treated (e.g., the style of Copland, Baroque style, French style, fugal style).

**Style Periods:** Historical Periods.

**Symbols of Musical Expression:** Commonly accepted written symbols for expressive elements such as dynamics, tempo, articulation, phrasing, and style.

**Syncopation:** An arrangement of rhythm that places emphasis on weak beats or weak parts of beats.

**Technical Accuracy; Technical Skills:** The ability to perform with appropriate tone, intonation, diction, attacks, and cutoffs and to play or sing the correct pitches and rhythms.

**Technique:** the mechanical skill required to play an instrument or sing.

**Tempo:** The speed of the music.

**Ternary:** A musical form consisting of three main sections.

**Texture:** The general pattern of sound created by the elements of a work or passage.

**Timbre:** Characteristic tone color which distinguishes one instrument or voice from another.

**Time Signature:** The numbers placed at the beginning of a composition to indicate the meter of the music. The upper number indicates the number of beats in a measure; the lower number indicates the kind of note that receives one beat.

**Tone:** A musical sound that has the properties of pitch, duration, volume, and timbre.

**Transpose:** To adapt a composition for a medium other than its original one (e.g., vocal music transcribed for instruments or a piano work transcribed for orchestra).

**Unison:** Singing or playing the same notes by all singers or players, either at exactly the same pitch or in a different octave

**Variation:** The manipulation of a theme by the use of melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic changes

**Vocal Production (Vocal Technique):** A singer's vocal tone as determined by the combination of correct posture, effective breathing, raised soft palate, tonal placement, and diction.