

GCSE Music Course Handbook



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GCSE MUSIC – An Overview

Examining body: AQA

Course overview:

They will be encouraged to engage critically and creatively with a wide range of music and musical contexts, and reflect on how music is used in the expression of personal and collective identities. The Subject content is divided into the three components:

- Understanding music
- Performing music
- Composing music

The areas of study in the Understanding music unit, provide an appropriate focus for students to appraise, develop and demonstrate an in-depth knowledge and understanding of musical elements, musical context and musical language. The four areas of study can also provide a rich source of material for students to work with when developing performance and composition skills.

There are four areas of study:

1. Western classical tradition 1650–1910
2. Popular music
3. Traditional music
4. Western classical tradition since 1910

Assessment:

Unit 1: Understanding Music – examination 40% (1 hour and 30 minutes)

Unit 2: Performing Music - Solo (15%) Ensemble (15%)

Unit 3: Composition - One free composition (15%) One to a set brief (15%)

	HT 1	HT 2	HT 3	HT 4	HT 5	HT 6
Year 10 coursework	Students begin their first free composition	Free comps continuation	First solo recording completed	First composition completed Begin second composition	Free comps 2 continuation	Students working on the ensemble pieces ready to record in HT2 in year 11. Free comp 2 completion
Year 10 exam/set works/ musical elements	Set work 1 Western Classical tradition 1650 - 1910 (The Coronation Anthems and Oratorios of Handel. The Orchestra Music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. The piano music of Chopin and Schumann. The Requiem of the late Romantic period)	Set work 2 Popular Music: music of Broadway 1950s to 1990s rock music of 1960s and 1970s film and computer gaming music 1990s to present pop music 1990s to present	Set work 1. Traditional Music: Blues music from 1920–1950 Fusion music incorporating African and/or Caribbean music Contemporary Latin music Contemporary Folk music of the British Isles	Set work 2 Western Classical traditions since 1910: British music of Arnold, Britten, Maxwell-Davies and Tavener The orchestral music of Zoltán Kodály and Béla Bartók Minimalist music of John Adams, Steve Reich and Terry Riley	Set work 1. Western Classical tradition 1650 - 1910 (The Coronation Anthems and Oratorios of Handel. The Orchestra Music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. The piano music of Chopin and Schumann. The Requiem of the late Romantic period)	Set work 2. Popular Music: music of Broadway 1950s to 1990s rock music of 1960s and 1970s film and computer gaming music 1990s to present pop music 1990s to present
Keywords	Rhythm and Metre, Texture and melody, Harmony and tonality	Structure and form, Sonority and dynamics, tempo, metre and rhythm	Rhythm and Metre, Texture and melody, Harmony and tonality	Structure and form, Sonority and dynamics, tempo, metre and rhythm	Rhythm and Metre, Texture and melody, Harmony and tonality	Structure and form, Sonority and dynamics, tempo, metre and rhythm

	HT 1	HT 2	HT 3	HT 4	HT 5
Year 11 coursework	Begin Composition 2 once sent out by the exam board. Ensemble recording.	Continuation of composition 2 Solo recording 1. Composition 2 to be completed by the end of this term	Final performances re-recorded. Annotation of composition 1 and completion of composition 1 (pop song)	Final performances re-recorded. Annotation of composition 1 (pop song) and continuation of composition 2 set to a brief.	Exam focus only - Final recordings of any students who have been off.
Year 11 exam/set works/ musical elements	Set work 1. Western Classical tradition 1650 - 1910 (The Coronation Anthems and Oratorios of Handel. The Orchestra Music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. The piano music of Chopin and Schumann. The Requiem of the late Romantic period)	Set work 2. Popular Music: music of Broadway 1950s to 1990s rock music of 1960s and 1970s film and computer gaming music 1990s to present pop music 1990s to present	Set work 1 Western Classical tradition 1650 - 1910 (The Coronation Anthems and Oratorios of Handel. The Orchestra Music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. The piano music of Chopin and Schumann. The Requiem of the late Romantic period)	Set work 2. Popular Music: music of Broadway 1950s to 1990s rock music of 1960s and 1970s film and computer gaming music 1990s to present pop music 1990s to present	Set work 1. Western Classical tradition 1650 - 1910 (The Coronation Anthems and Oratorios of Handel. The Orchestra Music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. The piano music of Chopin and Schumann. The Requiem of the late Romantic period)
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Rules and Expectations in GCSE Music

1. Spend **at least** 60-90 minutes per week on Independent Learning.
2. In addition to IL tasks set, spend about 30 minutes minimum per day practising your chosen instrument.
3. Meet all IL deadlines
4. When you experience difficulty with a topic or particular skill, seek help straight away
5. See staff in advance if you are unable to attend a lesson. This includes your instrumental lessons
6. Catch up on work missed through illness using the lesson
7. Do not be afraid of making mistakes
8. Familiarise yourself with the criteria for the GCSE grades
9. If you are below target, ensure that you know exactly what to do to get back on track

Resources and Reading

Independent Learning

As in Key Stage 3, much of your Independent Learning will be set using Show my homework. Many times you will be required to complete work on your compositions. This can only be done using Logic software. You will have a dedicated evening set aside once a week for you to use the computers. You are also able to work in the music MAC room from 8am each morning.

Lesson powerpoints and worksheets

If you are absent or cannot attend a lesson for any other reason, or even if you just need to go back over the activities from a lesson, all of the presentations you will have in class can be shared with you if you email your teacher in advance. It is your responsibility to find out if IL has been set in the lesson that you have missed.

Text books

New GCSE Music AQA Complete Revision & Practice (with Audio CD) - for the Grade 9-1 Course

Theory is fun by Maureen Cox - Grades 1 - 8

This course handbook!

At the back of this course handbook, you have all of the keywords that you will need for the GCSE course.

Revision guide

During the course, you will be issued with a revision guide, which includes useful tips and strategies to help revise for exams.

Past papers - <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/music/gcse/music-8271/assessment-resources>

A wide range of past exam papers are available to download for free on the AQA website. Mark schemes are also available.

Yacapaca - <https://yacapaca.com/resources/gcse-music/0/>

This website contains a large amount of quizzes based on your set works and keywords.

GCSE Bitesize - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects/zpf3cdm>

This BBC website is particularly useful when you are revising for listening and reading assessments. All of the exercises are interactive and self-marked, giving you instant feedback.

YouTube - www.youtube.com

Search up the set works and a range of different styles of music to challenge yourself to identifying keywords.

AQA specification:

<http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/music/specifications/AQA-8271-SP-2016.PDF>

Future Pathways

What Skills will I get from Studying Music?

Studying music can give you a great mix of social, technical and business skills, which can all help in acquiring the seven skills that define employability; put together in the working towards your future joint report by the National Union of Students and the Confederation of British Industry.

Dr Robert Adlington, associate professor of music at the University of Nottingham points out that: "While some of these skills are acquired by students of all subjects, for example, teamwork, good communication and self management, music students have an edge.

"The experience of organising, hosting and performing in events that are open to the public provides them with skills beyond those on other programmes, requiring knowledge of customer awareness, or interaction with the public, for example."

In the words of Albert Einstein: "The greatest scientists are artists as well". Music is kind of like part art, part science! Which means it will help you build your problem solving, research, planning, analytical and critical thinking skills, as well as develop your creativity.

Not to mention discipline, composure under pressure, time management, communication, team and individual working ability - all gained from practice and performing. You might also learn technical skills through using computers, equipment and software to create and record music.

What Careers is Music Good for?

Music graduates have a wide range of career options available to them both inside and outside the industry, including: performer, teacher, administrator, songwriter (we think it's one of the greatest jobs out there), conductor, composer, recording engineer, manager, promoter, or music publisher. The range of roles can seem quite endless!

There are also more jobs than ever in music business related areas, such as: careers in digital marketing, social media, PR, technology, label services, ticketing and merchandising. It is also common to find music graduates in consultancy, finance, banking, music therapy and legal jobs.

Unit 1: Listening and Appraising music 40%
(96 marks)

Section A (68 marks)	Section B (28 marks)
Students will listen to eight different excerpts and use musical keywords to answer questions.	Students to answer questions based on the set works. There are two questions to answer in this section.

Students must be able to listen attentively to unfamiliar music from all four areas of study to identify and accurately describe musical elements, musical contexts and use musical language (including staff notation).

Study pieces

For **two** areas of study (**one** of which must be Area of study 1 and the other a choice of **one** from Areas of study 2–4), students must also be able to critically appraise the music from the specified **study pieces** using knowledge and understanding of:

- the effect of audience, time and place on how the study pieces were created, developed and performed
- how and why the music across the selected areas of study has changed over time
- how the composer's purpose and intention for the study pieces is reflected in their use of musical elements
- relevant musical vocabulary and terminology for the study pieces.

Area of study 1: Western classical tradition 1650–1910 (compulsory)

For the purposes of the exam, the western classical tradition is defined as art music of (or growing out of) the European tradition, normally notated, and normally intended for public performance.

Listening – unfamiliar music

Students must be able to listen attentively to unfamiliar music from the following styles/genres to identify and accurately describe musical elements, musical contexts and musical language:

- The Coronation Anthems and Oratorios of Handel.
- The Orchestra Music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.
- The piano music of Chopin and Schumann.
- The Requiem of the late Romantic period.

Area of study 2: Popular music

For the purpose of this specification, popular music is defined as mainstream music including a number of musical styles and genres including rock, pop, musical theatre, film and computer gaming music from 1950 to the present.

Listening – unfamiliar music

Students must be able to listen attentively to unfamiliar music from the following styles/genres to identify and accurately describe musical elements, musical contexts and musical language:

- music of Broadway 1950s to 1990s
- rock music of 1960s and 1970s
- film and computer gaming music 1990s to present
- pop music 1990s to present.

Area of study 3: Traditional music

For the purpose of this specification, traditional music is defined as music that takes influences from traditional sources including folk music and reinterprets them in a contemporary style, and traditional music from traditional sources and cultures that is performed as intended by the composer.

Listening – unfamiliar music

Students must be able to listen attentively to unfamiliar music from the following styles/genres to identify and accurately describe musical elements, musical contexts and musical language:

- Blues music from 1920–1950
- Fusion music incorporating African and/or Caribbean music
- Contemporary Latin music
- Contemporary Folk music of the British Isles.

Area of study 4: Western classical tradition since 1910

For the purpose of this specification, western classical tradition since 1910 is defined as music that comprises modern, contemporary classical music, experimental and minimalist music as well as other forms.

Listening – unfamiliar music

Students must be able to listen attentively to unfamiliar music from the following styles/genres to identify and accurately describe musical elements, musical contexts and musical language:

- The orchestral music of Copland
- British music of Arnold, Britten, Maxwell-Davies and Tavener
- The orchestral music of Zoltán Kodály and Béla Bartók
- Minimalist music of John Adams, Steve Reich and Terry Riley.

Unit 2: Performing (30%)

72 marks

Solo (15%)	Ensemble (15%)
Students will learn a piece of music on their chosen instrument and record this in lesson time.	Students are given a piece of music to learn to play with other students in the class. They will perform and record this in lesson time. The chosen piece of music will be based on students' current practical level.

One performance must be as a soloist and one piece must be as part of an ensemble lasting a combined minimum of four minutes. The performance as part of an ensemble must last for a minimum of one minute.

Repertoire will be determined by the student and teacher. It need not reference an area of study and can be in any chosen style or genre. Students must be able to interpret relevant musical elements as appropriate using resources (eg microphones) and techniques (eg *pizzicato*) as appropriate to communicate musical ideas with accuracy and expression and interpretation, including phrasing and dynamics appropriate to the style and mood of the music.

In all cases, the recording of the performances must be accompanied by one or more of the following documents, as appropriate to the type of performance:

- notated score
- lead sheet
- guide recording
- annotation

Unit 3: Composing (30%)

72 marks

Composition 1 (36 marks)	Composition 2 (36 marks)
This composition is a free style composition. Students will be guided to write a composition based on their favourite style of music.	This composition will be set at the start of year 11 by the exam board. Students can be given a picture, a poem and even a scenario and will be asked to create a composition based around this.

Students **must** learn how to develop musical ideas, including extending and manipulating musical ideas, and compose music that is musically convincing through **two** compositions. One must be in response to an externally set brief (Composition 1) and the other a free composition (Composition 2). The combined duration of the compositions **must** be a minimum of **three** minutes. Compositions can be composed in any style or genre to best reflect the skills, strengths and interests of the individual students.

Both compositions **must** be assessed on the student's ability to demonstrate:

- Creative and effective selection and use of musical elements
- Appropriate selection and use of musical elements (to the compositional intention)
- Technical and expressive control in the use of musical elements.

Each composition **must** demonstrate selection and use of **at least four** types of musical element as follows:

- at least **two** of rhythm, metre, texture, melody, structure, form
- at least **two** of harmony, tonality, timbre, dynamics, phrasing, articulation

Glossary - Key Vocabulary

Term	Definition
12 bar Blues	Style of blues with a 12-bar repeating chord pattern (I-I-I-IV-IV-I-I-V-IV-I-I)
12-tone system	Schoenberg's composition system, which involves rearranging the 12 chromatic notes of an octave into a set order – also known as serialism
A capella	Singing without instrumental backing
Acciaccatura	An ornament that's played as quickly as possible before the written note  sometimes called a 'crushed' note
Action song	A song in a musical that tells you what is going on – a bit like a recitative
Alap	The first phrase of a raga performance
Alto	Low female or high male voice. Signs roughly from the F below middle C to the F at the top of the treble clef staff
Ambient	Slow, chilled club dance music
Anacrusis	An upbeat
Antiphonal	A texture performed by two semi-independent groups in interaction, often singing alternate musical phrases. Like a Call and Response.
Appoggiatura	An ornament that clashes with the accompanying chord then resolves. This ornament takes half the duration of the note it is attached to. E.g in the above example both the D and the C are crochets/1 beat notes. 
Arch-Shape form	A musical structure: A symmetrical structure based on a repeating A section. The most popular Arch-Shape is ABCBA
Arpeggio	See broken chord
Articulation	The way notes/phrases are played:  From left to right: Staccato,

	<p>Staccatissimo, Martellato (forceful, hammered), Marcato, Tenuto</p>  <p>Tenuto Hold the note in question at its full length (or longer, with slight rubato), or play the note slightly louder.</p> <p>Marcato Indicates a note, chord, or passage to be played louder or more forcefully than surrounding music.</p> <p>Staccato Signifies a note of shortened duration: a detached note (Staccatissimo very detached note)</p> <p>Legato Indicates musical notes are to be played or sung smoothly and connected.</p>
Augmentation	Making a note longer in duration
Aria	Solo vocal piece in an opera, oratorio or a cantata. Shows the characters emotions – also known as an air
Art music	Music that's written down (unlike folk music)
Atonal	Music that's not written in any key
Balafon	West African xylophone
Ballad	A song that tells a story
Bandish	A song that forms the final phrase of a raga performance. Known as gat if it's played only on instruments
Bansuri	A bamboo flute used in Indian Classical Music
Barbershop Quartet	A group of singers who sing in close harmony, often popular songs
Baroque	Musical style of the 17 th and early 18 th centuries. It has lots of contrasts in dynamics and ornamentation
Bass	Low male voice that can sing from about the F below the bass clef to the E

	above middle C
Basso continuo	A continuous bass part in Baroque music, often played on the harpsichord with cello
Bebop	A type of jazz characterised by complex harmonies and fast, syncopated rhythms
Bi-rhythm	Two different rhythmic cycles played at the same time
Big band	A band that plays jazz and swing music
Binary form	A musical structure: music in two distinct sections (A B)
Block chord	Chord played by sounding all the notes at once
Blue notes	Flattened 3 rd , 7 ^{ths} and sometimes 5 ^{ths} of the major scale
Blues	Style of the 20 th century music from America with a distinctive scale and swung rhythms
Blues scale	A major scale with flattened 3 rd and 7 th
Bodhran	An Irish framed drum used in Celtic folk music
Brass Band	An ensemble of brass instruments
Breakbeats	Electronic music that has syncopation or polyrhythms
Bridge section	A bit of music that bridges a gap between sections
Brass	The family of the Orchestra including Brass instruments: Trumpet, Cornet, French Horn, Trombone, Tuba
Broken chord	Chord that is played as a series of notes (also known as arpeggio)
Cadence	Pair of chords used to finish off a phrase (Perfect, Plagal, Interrupted and Imperfect)
Cadenza	Section of a piece where a soloist can really show off
Call and Response	A short melody (the call) followed by an answering phrase (the response)
Canon/Canonic	Where the same tune is played by two or more parts, each starting before the previous part has finished. Also called a round.
Cantata	Vocal piece made up of 2 or 3 arias, separated by recitatives

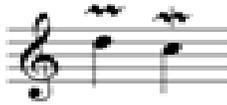
Celtic folk music	Western European folk music particularly popular in Scotland and Ireland
Choir	A group of singers. Made up of Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass in various combinations.
Choral music	Music written for choirs
Chorale	A hymn
Chorus	Piece in an opera, oratorio or cantata sung by the chorus
Chorus effect / Chorusing (electronic technique)	The layering of the same musical part over the top so that one voice/instrument sounds richer
Chorus number	A piece in a musical sung by the whole cast. Similar to a chorus in opera
Chromatic	Notes that don't belong to the main scale of a melody
Classical	The period of western classical music from about 1750-1820
Close Harmony	Chords where the notes are often close together (e.g using many suspensions) creating dissonances and resolutions. African songs and Barbershop Quartet music often uses this harmony.
Cluster chords	Chords made up of notes that are really close together
Coda	A bit at the end of a piece that's different to the rest of it and finishes it off nicely
Codetta	A mini coda used to finish off a section of a piece
Comping	Chords played on the guitar or piano underneath and improvised solo
Compound time	A time signature or metre with a triple pulse within each beat E.g 
Con Arco	With the bow (stringed instrument technique)
Con Sordino	With the mute (stringed and brass instrumental technique)
Concept album	An album where all the tracks are linked by a theme
Concerto	A piece for soloist and orchestra, usually in 3 movements

Conjunct	A melody with notes moving mainly by step
Consonant harmony	Chords/harmony that sounds nice (the opposite is dissonant harmony)
Crescendo/Cresc.	Get louder
Cross-rhythms	Two or more rhythms that don't fit together are played at the same time
Cyclic	A musical structure: Cyclic form is when a theme, melody, or thematic material occurs in more than one movement as a unifying device.
Cyclic rhythm	Rhythms which repeat continuously (used in African and Indian music)
Da Capo Aria	A da capo aria is in ternary form, meaning it is in three sections. The da capo aria is a musical form, which was prevalent in the Baroque era. It is sung by a soloist with the accompaniment of instruments, often a small orchestra. The da capo aria is very common in the musical genres of opera and oratorio.
Delay	Adds echoes to music
Development	The middle section in sonata form where ideas are developed
Diatonic	Notes that belong to the main key of the piece
Diminuendo/Dim.	Get quieter
Diminution	Making a note shorter in duration
Disjunct	A melody moving with lots of leaps
Dissonance/Dissonant harmony	Chords with clashing notes (opposite of consonant harmony)
Distortion	An effect used on an electric guitar to distort notes
Dixieland Jazz	Music that was a mix of brass band marches, ragtime and blues that came from New Orleans at the start of the 20 th Century
Djembe	A single-headed African drum played with the hands
Donno	African drum, also known as a talking drum
Dotted note	A duration where the dot adds on half of the original duration. E.g A dotted Crochet lasts 1 ½ beats and a dotted Minim lasts 3 beats.
Double-Stopping	A stringed instrumental technique where more than one note is played at the same time (a chord).

Drone	Notes that are repeated under the main melody. Often used in Indian Classical Music
Drum machine	An electronic instrument used instead of live drums
Duet	A piece for two instruments or voices
Dundun	Double-headed African drum played with sticks. The three types are doudoune, kenkeni and sangban
Ektal	A 12-beat tala
Electronic music	Any music that uses electronic devices or instruments to produce and alter sounds
Electronica	Music that obviously used electronic instruments
Enharmonic equivalent	Notes which sound the same but are written differently e.g. C# and D flat
EQ	Short for equalization. It amplifies or removes specific frequencies
Exposition	The first section in sonata form where ideas are heard first
Expressionism	A style of music and art from the early 20 th Century
Falsetto	When a male singer sings notes higher than his normal range
Feedback	The noise you get when you stand too close to a speaker with a guitar or microphone. Sometimes used deliberately in rock music.
Fills	An improvised rhythm or tune played between phrases. E.g by a drum kit at the end of each rhythmic cycle.
Flanger	A studio effect added to a guitar to create a swirly sound
Forte (f)	Loud
Fortissimo (ff)	Very loud
Folk music	Music played by ordinary people. It wasn't usually written down – it was passed on orally
Free jazz	A type of jazz from the 1950s and 1960s with lots of improvisation. It didn't stick to set tempos or rhythms
Free rondo	A piece of music whose structure is loosely based on rondo form
Gat	The final phrase or a typical raga performance, played on instruments rather

	than sung. Known as a bandish if it's sung
Ground bass	A musical structure: A strong repeating bass part as the main theme and different variations layered over the top.
Harmonic rhythm	Rate at which the chords change
Harmonium	A keyboard instrument powered with air pumped by hand bellows used in Indian Classical Music
Harmony	Two parts of music harmonise when they go together nicely
Harpsichord	A keyboard instrument shaped like a small grand piano. It was popular in the Baroque period. 'Twangy' sound.
Head	The main theme of a jazz piece
Hemiola	When the music feels like it's in 2/4 when it's actually written in 3/4
High-pass filter	'cleans' a sample by getting rid of low-pitched background rumblings
Hip-hop	Music from the hip-hop culture, with Jamaican and African-American influences and lots of rapping
Homophony/Homophonic	A type of musical texture where all the different parts move at the same time (in chords)
Hook	A short, memorable bit of tune
Imitation/Imitative	A texture where there is repetition of a phrase by one instrument or voice, or two or more, imitating each other
Improvisation	Music that's made up on the spot by a performer, often based on a given chord progression or set of notes
Incidental music	Music to accompany the action on stage or in an opera or musical
Inserts	A line of vocals sung in between the lines of a verse
Interrupted cadence	Chords V and VI played at the end of a phrase. Makes it sound like the ending has been interrupted.
Interval	The distance between two notes
Inversion	When the intervals between notes are turned upside down. Good melodic development tool.
Inverted pedal point	A pedal point in the top part

Irregular time	Music with an irregular time signature (not duple or triple) e.g 5/4 or 7/8
Jazz	Music with lots of syncopation, improvisation and quirky harmonisation
Jhala	The third phrase of a typical raga performance. Faster than the alap and the jhor
Jhaptal	A 10 beat tala
Jhor	The second phase of a typical raga performance. Faster and more rhythmic than the alap
Kagan	A small, barrel-shaped African drum
Kidi	A medium barrel-shaped African drum
Kora	West African harp-like instrument
Layered	When the texture has more than one layer
Libretto	The words of an opera or oratorio
Loops	Repeated sections of music
Low-pass filter	Gets rid of background noise
Major	A key that sounds happy and bright. Uses notes from the major scale
Mass	Piece of music sung as part of the Christian church service
Master drummer	Leads an African ensemble
Mbira	African thumb piano
Melismatic	A single syllable of text is sung over a succession of notes. The opposite is syllabic.
Melody with Accompaniment	A texture where the melody instrument is accompanied either by a single instrument or an ensemble.
Metre	The organisation of music into bars with Time Signatures
Mezzo-Forte (mf)	Moderately loud
Mezzo-Piano (mp)	Moderately quiet
Middle eight	Eight bars in the middle of a song with different chords or a different tune to keep it interesting

MIDI	Stands for Musical Instrument Digital Interface – every note, instrument sound, key, tempo and any other musical direction is given a computer code
Minor	A key that sounds sad. Uses notes from the minor scale
Minuet and trio	A ternary form, often used in the third movement of a symphony or sonata
Modal	Music using an old type of scale called a Mode (Medieval and Folk music) Neither Major or Minor.
Modulation	When music changes key
Mordent	A mordent is formed by playing the note, the note above and then back to the first note  A musical staff with a treble clef. The first note is a quarter note on the second line (D4). Above it is a mordent symbol (two short horizontal lines). The second note is a quarter note on the third line (E4), also with a mordent symbol above it. The third note is a quarter note on the second line (D4), also with a mordent symbol above it.
Motif	A little bit of music that's often repeated
Multi-track recording	When tracks are recorded over the top of each other
Musical	Short for musical theatre. A lighter, 20 th century version of opera with more talking and dancing
Octave	Eight notes apart on the scale. You play the same note but higher or lower. E.g C (through DEFGAB) up to C
Octaves	A texture where different parts play music 1 or more octaves apart
Opera	A story set to music. Operas are secular
Opera buffa	A type of opera with light, everyday themes
Opera comique	Form of opera with some spoken recitatives
Opera seria	A type of opera with serious, often mythological themes
Operetta	A small opera
Oral tradition	Music that's passed on orally and not written down
Oratorio	Bible stories set to music. Oratorios are sacred. A bit like opera, but not acted out and with a religious theme
Ornament	Extra notes added to decorate a tune e.g. appoggiatura, acciaccatura, trill, mordent, turn

Orchestra	A large ensemble of instruments including Strings, Brass, Woodwind and Percussion instruments.
Ostinato	A repeated musical pattern
Overdub	Parts are recorded on top of each other
Overture	A one-movement piece for an orchestra, often an introduction to a larger work, like an opera
Panning	Changes which speaker the music comes out of (Left/Right)
Passing note	A linking note (usually between two chord notes) in a melody
Pedal point	A held-on note, often in the bass part. A Tonic pedal is a pedal on the Tonic note (1 st note of the scale)
Pentatonic scale	A five-note scale. A pentatonic melody is a melody that uses the notes of this scale.
Percussion	The family of the Orchestra including instruments which are struck, shaken or scraped E.g Timpani, Cymbals, Xylophone
Perfect cadence	Chords V and I played at the end of a phrase. Makes it sound finished
Phaser	Makes a 'whooshing' sound using a sample
Phrasing/Phrases	<p>A musical sentence. Often 4 bar phrases in Classical music and Popular song. Here are two 4 bar phrases (like a question and answer). The arch-shape line shows the length of the phrase. These are called Phrase marks.</p> 
Piano	Keyboard instrument invented in about 1700. Developments in the 19 th Century made it very popular with Romantic composers
Pianissimo (pp)	Very quiet
Piano (dynamic) (p)	Quiet
Pitch bend	An instrumental technique: A slide between pitches. Often used on stringed instruments. Guitars in popular genres (Rock) and Sitar in Indian music.
Pitch shifter	Plays a sample at different pitches

Pizzicato	Plucked (stringed instrumental technique)
Plagal cadence	Chords IV and I played at the end of a phrase. Often used to finish sacred music
Polyphony/Polyp honic/Contrapunt al	A musical texture where two or more different tunes weave in and out of each other, moving at different times.
Polyrhythms	Two different rhythmic cycles with accents in different places are played at the same time
Popular song form	A musical structure: a combination of Intro-Verse-Chorus-Verse-Chorus-Bridge/Middle 8/Instrumental-Chorus-Outro
Power chords	Chords made up of the tonic and the fifth (without the 3 rd)
Prelude	A piano piece, originally the bit that came before the main piece. Romantic composers wrote some preludes as stand-alone pieces
Prime order	Basic order of notes for a piece composed using the 12-tone system
Pulse	The beat
Question and answer	A bit like call and response – one part sings or plays a phrase and another part responds
Rag desh	A raga used in the rainy season
Raga	A set of notes used in Indian Classical Music
Ragtime	A type of music popular in early 20 th Century America with syncopated rhythms. Jazz music came from ragtime
Recapitulation	The third and final section in sonata form where the ideas are repeated
Recitative	A song performed in operas, oratorios and cantatas. It tells the story and moves it along
Regular time	Music with duple or triple time signatures e.g 4/4 or ¾ or 2/4
Requiem	A mass for the dead
Retrograde	Version of a tune where the notes are played in reverse order
Retrograde inversion	Version of a tune where the notes are played in reverse order with the intervals between them upside down

Reverberation/Reverb	Echo effect on guitars
Riff	Short repeated phrase. The modern name for an ostinato.
Romantic	The period of Western Classical music from about 1820-1900
Rock Band	An ensemble of instruments usually including an electric lead guitar, electric rhythm guitar, bass guitar and drum kit (often has many other combinations)
Rondo form	A musical structure: start with one tune, go to a new one, go back to the first one, onto another new one, back to the first one...as many times as you like: ABACADAEA...
Rubato (Free time)	Where the music does not fit into the Time Signature or given tempo but is played freely by the performer at any tempo they like
Rupak	A 7 beat tala
Sacred music	Church music or religious music
Sam	The first beat of a tala
Sampler	A piece of electronic equipment that loops and plays samples
Samples	Short bits of recorded sounds
Sarangi	A small, bowed string instrument with no frets used in Indian Classical Music
Sarod	An instrument like a small sitar with a fretless fingerboard used in Indian Classical Music
Scalic	A melody which moves using the notes of a scale (by step)
Scat	A type of improvised singing with nonsense words and syllables, used in jazz. Scat is an example of vocables.
Scherzo & Trio	The scherzo (meaning Joke and often played fast) is a binary form, but, like the minuet, is usually played with the accompanying Trio followed by a repeat of the Scherzo, creating the ABA or ternary form.
Secular music	Non-church music
Sequence	Repetition of a phrase at different pitches (melodic device)
Sequencer	A piece of computer software that tells you make loops of music
Serialism	Another name for the 12-tone system, invented by Schoenberg

S/Subito	Suddenly
Sfz/Sforzando	A sudden forceful, accent (loud)
Sf	Suddenly Loud
Sp	Suddenly Quiet
Shehnai	An instrument with a double reed like an oboe used in Indian Classical Music
(texture)/Monophonic	A texture with one single melodic line. E.g a Solo Folk voice or violin.
Slide (Portamento/Glissando)	When a singer starts on a different note to the one written and slides to the correct note. Also called a portamento
Simple time	Simple metre or simple time is a metre in which each beat of the measure divides naturally into two equal parts, rather than three which gives a compound metre.
Sitar	A large, long-necked string instrument used in Indian Classical Music with between 4 and 7 strings. Up to 5 strings are plucked for the melody and the other 2 create drone notes
Solo character song	A song in a musical sung by one character. A bit like an aria in an opera
Sonata	A piece for soloist (or 2 players) in three or four movements
Sonata form	A musical structure made up of exposition, development and recapitulation
Soprano	High female voice. Sings roughly from middle C to the C two octaves above that
Static harmony	Slow harmonic rhythm – the chords don't change much
Steel Band	A group of Steel pans used in Caribbean music. Originated from Trinidad and Tobago.
Strings	The family of the Orchestra with stringed instruments: Violins, Violas, Cellos, Double Basses
String Orchestra	An ensemble of stringed instruments (Violins, Violas, Cellos and Double Basses)
String Quartet	A group of 4 stringed instruments: Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola and Cello

Strophic structure	Common structure of songs where the melody in each verse is the same
Sub bass	A very low bass line that makes the speakers shake
Swing music	A type of jazz from the 1930s and 1940s that could be danced to
Syllabic	Every syllable of text is sung to a single note. The opposite of melismatic
Symphony	A piece for an orchestra, often in four movements
Syncopation	Rhythm where the accents are shifted from the main beat to a weaker beat (off beat rhythm)
Synthesizer	Electronic device for creating new sounds
Tabla	Drums used in Indian Classical Music
Tala	Rhythm in Indian Classical Music with a set number of beats, played on the table
Talking drum	African drum used to send messages
Tambura	Similar in shape to the sitar, but with only four metal strings. Used as a backing instrument in Indian Classical Music
Techno	Club dance music with a very fast beat (120-150 BPM)
Tempo Tempo (continued)	Speed/Pace of the beat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Lento</i> — slowly (40–60 bpm) ● <i>Largo</i> — broadly (40–60 bpm) ● <i>Adagio</i> — slow and stately (literally, "at ease") (66–76 bpm) ● <i>Andante</i> — at a walking pace (76–108 bpm) ● <i>Moderato</i> — moderately (108–120 bpm) ● <i>Allegretto</i> — moderately fast (but less so than allegro) ● <i>Allegro</i> — fast, quickly and bright (120–168 bpm) ● <i>Vivace</i> — lively and fast (140 bpm) (quicker than allegro) ● <i>Presto</i> — very fast (168–200 bpm) ● <i>Prestissimo</i> — extremely fast (more than 200 bpm)
Tenor	High male voice. Sings roughly from the C below middle C to the G above
Ternary form	A musical structure: Piece in three sections. The first and last are very similar. The middle one's a bit different and in a different key (A B A)
Texture	The way chords and melody are woven together
Theme	Musical idea

Theme and variation form	A musical structure: A theme is played followed by a variation on it, followed by another etc.
Through-composed	A musical structure where the music does not have sections but can change all the way through. The music is means that the music is relatively continuous, non-sectional and/or non-repetitive
Tierce de Picardie	A cadence of a minor phrase where you expect the last chord to be minor but the 3 rd of the final chord is raised so that it becomes a major chord (a surprising effect!) E.g 
Timbre	The tone colour of an instrument or a piece of music
Tintal	A 16 beat tala
Tonal	Music that's written in a specific key
Treble	A boy soprano
Tremolando/Tremolo	A rapid repetition of a single note (Instrumental technique: usually on a bowed stringed instrument)
Triadic/Triad	A triad is a three-note chord which can be stacked in thirds. A triadic melody is a tune which uses the notes of a triad/chord.
Trill	A trill is formed by quickly playing the note and the note above it alternately. 
Triplet	Where 3 notes fit into the time of 2 notes. E.g Here, 3 Crochets fit into the space of 2 crochets (2 beats). 
Tritone	An interval or two notes that are three whole tones apart. Sounds a bit weird also called an augmented fourth

Turn	Another ornament. Notated like this:  sounds like this: 
Unison	A Texture: Singing or playing the same notes at the same time
Variation	Either a recognisable version of the main theme of a piece, or a self-contained piece of music in its own right based on a single theme
Verticalisation	When notes that appear horizontally in rows (in the 12 tone system) are written out vertically in the score
Vibhag	Group of beats within a tala. A bit like a bar of Western music but with different numbers of beats in each vibhag
Vibrato	When a note oscillates or wobbles to give a richer sound
Whole-Tone scale	A scale where the notes are a whole tone apart. Creates a dreamy effect.
West End	Theatre district in London
Wind Band	An ensemble of woodwind instruments
Woodwind	The family of the Orchestra including Woodwind instruments: Piccolo, Flute, Clarinet, Bassoon