

curriculum for excellence



Advanced Higher Music Concept Dictionary

A

A cappella (Nat 5)	Unaccompanied choral singing.
A tempo (Nat 4)	The music returns to the main tempo (speed) after there has been a change.
AB (Nat 5)	Two-part form - music in two sections: A then B. These sections may be repeated.
ABA (Nat 4)	Three-part form – music in three sections: section A, then B, then back to A.
Accelerando (Nat 4)	The tempo (speed) of the music gradually becomes faster.
Accented (Nat 3)	Accented notes are notes which sound louder than others.
Acciacatura (Nat 6)	An ornament which sounds like a crushed note, played very quickly on the beat or just before it.
Accidental (Nat 5)	A sign added to a note to change the pitch.
Accompanied (Nat 3)	Other instrument(s) or voice(s) supports the main melody.
Accordion (Nat 3)	An instrument with a keyboard played with the right hand and buttons (which play chords) pressed by the left hand.
Acoustic guitar (Nat 3)	The acoustic guitar is a stringed instrument that is played by plucking or strumming the strings with fingers, or using a plectrum.
Adagio (Nat 3)	A slow tempo (speed).
Added 6 th (Nat 6)	A type of chord that is used frequently in jazz and popular music. Root, 3rd and 5th of the chord with the 6th added (e.g. CEGA).
African music (Nat 4)	Much African music features voices and/or African drums.
Alberti bass (Nat 5)	Broken chords played by the left hand outlining harmonies whilst the right hand plays the melody.
Allegro (Nat 3)	A fast tempo (speed).
Alto (Nat 4)	The lowest female voice.

Anacrusis (Nat 4) The notes which appear before the first strong beat of a musical phrase, particularly at the start of a piece.

Andante (Nat 4) A tempo at a walking speed.

Answer (Nat 3) A short musical phrase that follows on from a 'question' phrase.

Answer (Adv. Higher)	In a fugue, after the subject is played, the same tune appears in another voice or part in the dominant (a 5th higher or a 4th lower). This is called the answer.
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Anthem (Adv. Higher)	Short sacred choral piece sung in English, sometimes sung by a choir a cappella and sometimes accompanied by organ and featuring solo parts. The anthem is the protestant equivalent of the motet.
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Antiphonal (Adv. Higher)	Dialogue between voices or instruments - one group of voices or instruments answers the other.
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Appoggiatura (Adv. Higher)	An ornament which sounds like a leaning note. It takes half the value of the main note which follows it or two-thirds if the main note is dotted.
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Arco (Nat 5) Instruction given to string players to use a bow.

Aria (Nat 5) A solo song sung in an operatic style, in an opera, oratorio or cantata, with orchestral accompaniment.

Arpeggio (Nat 4) Notes of a chord played one after the other.

Ascending (Nat 3) Ascending notes rise in pitch.

Atonal (Nat 5) Atonal music has no feeling of key, major or minor. It is very dissonant and lacks a 'nice' melody and accompaniment.

Augmentation (Nat 6) An increase in the length of notes, usually by doubling the note values. The music sometimes sounds slower.

Augmented Triad (Adv. H)	This chord is formed by a major triad in which the 5th degree is raised by a semitone.
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Ayre/Air (Adv. Higher)	English for Aria. Song or simple melody, sometimes the title of a movement of a suite. Usually for solo voice and lute.
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B

Backing vocals (Nat 4)	Singers who support the lead singer(s), usually by singing in harmony in the background.
Bagpipes (Nat 3)	A musical instrument having a flexible bag inflated either by a tube with valves or by bellows, a double-reed melody pipe, and from one to four drone pipes.
Ballett (Adv. Higher)	A type of madrigal in strophic form, which was originally danced to. It features a fa-la-la refrain at the end of each verse.
Baritone (Nat 5)	A male voice whose range lies between that of bass and tenor.
Baroque (Nat 4)	The name given to a style of music composed during the period 1600-1750 approximately.
Bass (Nat 4)	The lowest male voice.
Bass drum (Nat 4)	This instrument belongs to the percussion family.
Bass guitar (Nat 4)	The bass guitar is pitched lower than a guitar. It is an electric string instrument and has only four strings, two fewer than an electric guitar.
Basso continuo (Nat 6)	Sometimes referred to as Continuo . In the Baroque period, the continuo part consisted of a bass line (basso continuo) played by cello, bass, viola da gamba or bassoon. In addition the harpsichord, organ or lute player was expected to fill in harmonies built on that bass line. Sometimes figures were written under the bass line indicating the chords the composer would like played. This was called figured bass.
Bassoon (Nat 5)	This instrument belongs to the woodwind family.
Beat (Nat 3)	The basic pulse you hear in music.
Binary (Nat 5)	A form in which the music is made up of two different sections labelled A and B.
Blowing (Nat 3)	The sound produced by blowing into or across the mouthpiece of the instrument, eg brass, woodwind and recorders.
Blues (Nat 3)	Blues started as Black American folk music, developing from spirituals and work songs.

Bodhran (Nat 5)	An Irish wooden drum, held in one hand and played with a wooden beater.
Bongo drums (Nat 5)	Fairly high-pitched drums, joined in pairs and usually played with fingers and palms.
Bothy ballad (Nat 5)	A folk song, usually with many verses, from north-east Scotland.
Bowing (Nat 3)	The sound produced by drawing the bow across the strings of a stringed instrument, eg violin or cello.
Brass (Nat 3)	A family of instruments made from metal with a mouthpiece, eg trumpet and euphonium.
Brass band (Nat 4)	A band of brass instruments and percussion.

Bridge (Adv. Higher)	A link between two themes.
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Broken chord (Nat 4)	In a broken chord, the notes of a chord are played separately.
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C

Cadence (Nat 5)	The end of a musical phrase.
Cadenza (Nat 4)	A passage of music which allows soloists to display their technical ability in singing or playing an instrument.
Canon (Nat 4)	Strict imitation. Once one part starts to play or sing a melody, another part enters shortly afterwards with exactly the same melody.
Castanets (Nat 5)	A percussion instrument popular in Spanish music.
Cello (Nat 4)	This instrument belongs to the string family and is slightly smaller and slightly higher in pitch than a double bass.
Celtic rock (Nat 5)	A style of music that mixes Celtic folk music and rock together.
Chamber Music (Nat 6)	Music written for a small instrumental ensemble with one player to a part, e.g. String quartet.

Change of key (Nat 4) A move from one key to another.

Choir (Nat 3) A group of singers who perform together.

Chorale (Adv. Higher) A German hymn tune. Written in four parts for soprano, contralto (alto), tenor and bass, some of these chorales were used by Bach in his oratorios and cantatas. Usually homophonic in texture.

Chord (Nat 3) Two or more notes sounding together.

Chord progressions (Nat 4) A series of related chords built on the first, fourth and fifth notes of a major or minor scale.

Chord progressions (Nat 5) Different progressions using the chords built on the 1st, 4th, 5th and 6th notes of a major or minor scale.

Chords I, IV, V, VI in Major/Minor Keys (Adv. Higher)
In a major key, it is normal for chords I, IV and V to be major chords. Chord VI is normally a minor chord.

Chord II and 1st Inversion (Adv. Higher)
In a major key, chord number two tends to be a minor chord.

Chorus (Nat 5) A group of singers, the music written for them or the refrain between verses of a song.

Chromatic (Nat 5) Notes which move by the interval of a semitone.

Clarinet (Nat 4) This instrument belongs to the woodwind family. It uses a single reed, which is attached to a plastic mouthpiece.

Clarsach (Nat 5) A small Scottish harp, used in folk music. Clarsach is Gaelic for harp.

Classical (Nat 5) A term used to describe/refer to music composed during the period 1750-1810 approximately; the era of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.

Cluster (Nat 5) A term used to describe a group of notes, which clash, played together.

Coda (Nat 5) A passage at the end of a piece of music which rounds it off effectively.

Col legno (Nat 5)	Instruction given to string players to turn the bow over and bounce the wood on the strings.
Coloratura (Nat 6)	Term for high, florid, vocal singing involving scales, runs and ornaments. Sometimes these passages were written down, but often were extemporised by the performer.
Compound time (Nat 4)	The beat is divided into groups of three.
Compound time groupings (Nat 5)	The beat is a dotted note which divides into three, eg 6/8 = two dotted crotchet beats in a bar and each beat can be divided into three quavers.
Concerto (Nat 4)	A work for solo instrument and orchestra, eg a flute concerto is written for flute and orchestra.
Concertino (Nat 6)	In a Concerto grosso this is the name given to the small/solo group of instrumentalists as opposed to the main group which is called Ripieno .
Concerto grosso (Nat 6)	A type of concerto in which a group of soloists (concertino) is combined and contrasted with a larger group (ripieno).
Con sordino - muted (Nat 5)	Using a mute changes the sound normally produced on an instrument.
Consort (Adv. Higher)	Dance-like in style; this music could be played by solo instruments such as lutes, harpsichords or virginals, by small groups of instruments of the same family or a group of varied instruments from different families.
Contemporary Jazz (Adv. Higher)	Contemporary jazz is an umbrella term for all kinds of jazz music being played now - as well as jazz music of the 80s, 90s, 00s & 10s.
Contrapuntal (Nat 5)	Texture in which each of two or more parts has independent melodic interest; similar in meaning to polyphonic.
Contrary motion (Nat 5)	Two parts which move in opposite directions, eg as one part ascends the other part descends.
Counter melody (Nat 5)	A melody played against the main melody.

Countersubject (Adv.Higher)	In a fugue, after the subject or answer is played, the continuation of that same instrument or voice is called the countersubject.
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Countertenor (Adv. Higher)	A male adult voice whose range is higher than a tenor's.
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Crescendo (Nat 3) The music gradually becomes louder.

Cross rhythm (Nat 5) Contrasting rhythms played at the same time or played with unusual emphasis on notes.

Crotchet (Nat 3) A note that lasts for 1 beat.

Cymbals (Nat 4) A percussion instrument, round in shape and made of metal.

D

Da capo Aria (Nat 6) An aria in ***Ternary*** form (A B A), found in opera and oratorio in the 17th and 18th centuries. The third section is not written out but the instruction Da capo (from the beginning) is given instead. The repeat of the A section was performed with the solo ornamented.

Descending (Nat 3) Descending notes fall in pitch.

Descant (voice) (Nat 5) A counter melody which accompanies and is sung above the main melody.

Diminished 7th (Nat 6) A chord consisting of three intervals of a minor 3rd built one on top of the other, the interval between the lower and top note being a diminished 7th. This can be a very useful chord for modulation to distant keys.

Diminuendo (Nat 3) The music gradually becomes quieter.

Diminution (Nat 6) A decrease in the length of notes. The music will sound faster when imitated or repeated

Discord (Nat 3) A chord in which certain notes clash. In the 20th century, many composers used discords in their music.

Distortion (Nat 4) An electronic effect used in rock music to colour the sound of an electric guitar. It gives a 'fuzzy' sound rather than the usual clean sound.

Dominant 7 th (Nat 6)	Chord built on the dominant (5 th) note of a key which adds the 7 th note above its root. It is sometimes written as V7 or, in the key of C major, G7(GBDF).
Dotted crotchet (Nat 5)	A note that last for 1½ beats.
Dotted minim (Nat 3)	A note that last for 3 beats.
Dotted quaver (Nat 5)	A note that last for ¾ beats.
Dotted rhythm (Nat 4)	A long note followed by a shorter one or a short note followed by a longer one, as in a Scotch snap.
Double bass (Nat 4)	The largest and lowest instrument of the string family.
Drone (Nat 4)	One note held on or repeated in the bass.
Drum fill (Nat 3)	A rhythmic decoration played on a drum kit.
Drum kit (Nat 3)	A set of drums and cymbals often used in rock music and pop music.

E

Electric guitar (Nat 3)	A guitar which requires an electric amplifier to produce sound.
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Electronic Dance Music (Adv Higher)

Electronic dance music is normally heard in clubs where the DJ combines tracks electronically into one smooth mix. It can encompass music of different genres including house music, dubstep, drum and bass.

Exposition (Nat 6)	This describes the first hearing of the 'theme' and is normally associated with compositions structured in sonata form or fugue
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F

Faster (Nat 3)	The tempo (speed) increases.
Fiddle (Nat 3)	Another name for the violin, used in Scottish folk music.

Flute (Nat 4)	This instrument belongs to the woodwind family, although it is made of metal. It differs from other woodwind instruments as it does not have a reed.
Flutter tonguing (Nat 5)	Rolling your 'r's' whilst playing a brass or woodwind instrument.
Folk groups (Nat 3)	A group of two or more musicians who perform music in a traditional style, usually accompanied by guitars.
Forte (Nat 3)	Forte means loud volume, abbreviated to ' <i>f</i> '
Fortissimo (Nat 5)	This means very loud volume, abbreviated to ' <i>ff</i> '
French horn (Nat 5)	This instrument belongs to the brass family and is basically four metres of tubing curled around, with a bell-shaped opening on one end and a mouthpiece in the other.

Fugue (Adv. Higher)	A contrapuntal piece based on a theme (subject) announced in one voice part alone, then imitated by other voices in close succession.
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G

Gaelic psalms (Nat 5) unaccompanied.	Psalms (hymns) which were sung in Gaelic,
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Galliard (Adv. Higher)	A Renaissance court dance which follows the pavan. A galliard is quick and lively with 3 beats in a bar.
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Glissando (Nat 5)	Sliding from one note to another, taking in all the notes in between where possible.
Glockenspiel (Nat 4)	This instrument belongs to the percussion family. The metal bars are laid out in a similar pattern to the piano and are played with beaters.
Gospel (Nat 5)	Music written with religious lyrics, often in praise or thanksgiving to God.
Grace note (Nat 5)	A type of ornament played as a quick, crushed note before the main note of a melody.
Ground bass (Nat 5)	A theme in the bass which is repeated many times while the upper parts are varied.

Grouped semiquavers (Nat 4) A group of semiquavers which are joined together.

Güiro (Nat 4) This instrument belongs to the percussion family. It is made of wood that has been hollowed out and has ridges cut into the outer surface. A wooden stick is scraped along the ridges to produce the sound.

H

Harmonic minor (Nat 6) Scale which shares the same key signature as its **Relative major** but raises the 7th note by a semitone. C Maj Harmonic Minor is Am and the 7th degree of the scale would be G#.

Harmonics (Nat 6) The high “eerie” sounds produced on a bowed string instrument by lightly touching the string at certain points. On a guitar these will sound bell-like

Harmony (Nat 3) The sound of two or more notes made at the same time.

Harp (Nat 4) This instrument belongs to the string family. It is usually about 1.8 metres high, weighs 36kg and has 47 strings.

Harpsichord (Nat 4) A keyboard instrument which looks like a small grand piano. The keys are laid out in the same way as on a piano but are opposite in colour – the majority of the keys are black, and the raised ones are white.

Hemiola (Adv. Higher)	A rhythmic device giving the impression of a piece of music changing from duple (2) to triple (3) time, or vice versa. Sometimes placed at the end of a piece to act as a kind of Rallentando.
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Hi Hat cymbals (Nat 5) Used as part of a drum kit, they consist of two cymbals (one upside-down) that are hit with a stick or brush, and opened/closed with a foot pedal.

Homophonic (Nat 5) Texture where you hear melody with accompaniment or where all the parts play a similar rhythm at the same time.



Imitation (Nat 4)	Where the melody is immediately copied in another part.
Imperfect cadence (Nat 5)	A cadence consists of two chords at the end of a phrase. In an imperfect cadence the last chord is chord V (the dominant) creating an unfinished effect.
Impressionist (Nat 6)	A term borrowed from painting in which brief musical ideas merge and change to create a rather blurred and vague outline. Debussy was an important composer of this style. (Extended definition – Texture and timbral exploration were also important features, including use of <i>whole tone</i> and <i>pentatonic scales</i> , parallel chords and unresolved discords.)
Improvisation (Nat 3)	The performer makes up music during the actual performance, they don't have the melody written down to help, although there may be suggested chords as a guide.
Indian music (Nat 5)	Music from India which uses instruments such as the sitar and tabla.
Interrupted cadence (Nat 6)	A cadence is formed by two chords at the end of a phrase. An interrupted cadence is usually formed by the chords V–VI. (In the key of C major, chords G to A minor.) This is known also as the surprise cadence as the listener may be expecting V–I which has a more final sound.
Interval (Nat 6)	The distance in pitch between two notes.
Inversion (Adv.Higher)	When a musical shape is mirrored; an inverted chord is formed when a note other than the root is in the bass.
Inverted pedal (Nat 5)	A note which is held on or repeated continuously at a high pitch.
Irregular time signatures (Nat 6)	Often in modern or rhythmically based ethnic music, groupings of notes change, but the underlying pulse remains constant. Groupings of two and three produce irregular accents and metres. (Extended definition – Sometimes composers in the 20th century try to destroy the feeling of a regular down beat by changing the time signature frequently. Stravinsky often used this technique, particularly in “The Rite of Spring”.)

J

- Jazz** (Nat 3) At first this was music created by black Americans in the early 20th century.
- Jazz funk** (Nat 6) A combination of jazz *Improvisation* and the amplified instruments and character of *Rock*.
- Jig** (Nat 4) A fast dance in compound time. Usually 2 beats in a bar, with each beat dividing into 3 quavers.

L

- Latin American music** (Nat 3) Dance music from South America.
- Leap/leaping** (Nat 3) Jumping between notes which are not next to each other.
- Legato** (Nat 3) The notes are played or sung smoothly.

Leitmotiv (Adv. Higher)	A theme occurring throughout a work which represents a person, an event or an idea, etc.
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Lied (Nat 6) This term (the German word for song) refers specifically in the Romantic era to works for solo voice and piano. The text is in German, the structure of the verses is strophic and through composed. An important feature is that voice and piano are equally important.

Lines and spaces of the treble clef (Nat 3) The system for writing music uses five lines, each with a different letter name - find out more about the lines and spaces.

M

Madrigal (Adv. Higher)	In the Renaissance era, this was a non-religious work, polyphonic in style, using imitation. Features of a madrigal include text in English, use of word painting, through-composed music, usually a cappella.
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Major (Nat 4) The music sounds in a major key – often described as having a cheery, happy feel to it.

March (Nat 3)	Music with a strong steady pulse with two or four beats in a bar.
Mass (Nat 6)	A sacred choral work traditionally using the five main sections of the Roman Catholic liturgy – Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus & Agnus Dei.
Melismatic (Nat 5)	Several notes sung to one syllable.
Melodic minor (Nat 6)	Scale which shares the same key signature as its Relative major but raises the 6th and 7th notes by a semitone ascending, and similarly lowers them descending.
Mezzo forte (Nat 4)	Mezzo forte stands for fairly loud volume.
Mezzo piano (Nat 4)	Mezzo piano stands for 'fairly quiet volume'.
Mezzo soprano (Nat 5)	A female singer whose voice range lies between that of a soprano and an alto.
Middle eight (Nat 4)	In popular music, a section which provides a contrast to the opening section. It is often eight bars long.
Minim (Nat 3)	A note that lasts for 2 beats.
Minimalist (Nat 5)	A development in the second half of the 20th century based on simple rhythmic and melodic figures which are constantly repeated with very slight changes each time.
Minor (Nat 4)	The music sounds in a minor key, often described as having a sadder feel than major.
Modal (Nat 6)	Term used to describe music based on a mode, a type of early scale used before major and minor keys were developed. Modes are used in jazz and pop music for improvising.
Mode (Nat 6)	Usually refers to any of the early scales called modes. Often used as the basis of folk song melodies and plainchant . It can also be used more generally as a reference to major mode (in a major key) or minor mode (in a minor key). See Modal .
Moderato (Nat 5)	A medium tempo (speed).
Modulation (Nat 5)	A change of key.

Modulation to relative major (Nat 6) A change from minor to major key with the same key signature found 3 semitones higher, e.g. D minor to F major.

Modulation to relative minor (Nat 6) A change from major to minor key with the same key signature found 3 semitones lower, e.g. C major to A minor. See *Modulation*.

Mordent (Nat 6) An ornament which sounds the main note, the note above and then the main note again. An inverted mordent sounds the main note, the note below and then the main note again.

Motet (Adv. Higher)	In the Renaissance era this was a sacred choral work with Latin text and polyphonic texture. It was usually sung a cappella.
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Mouth music (Nat 4) Unaccompanied songs with Gaelic or nonsense words, normally sung for ceilidh dances.

Musical (Nat 3) A musical play which has speaking, singing and dancing and is performed on a stage.

Musique concrete (Nat 6) Recorded natural sounds which are transformed using simple editing techniques such as cutting and re assembling, playing backwards, slowing down and speeding up.

Muted (Nat 4) Using a device which reduces the volume or alters the sound of an instrument.

N

Nationalist (Adv. Higher)	A term used to describe music which incorporates elements of folk music of the composer's country. It emerged about the second half of the 19th century and was a type of Romanticism. Composers include Glinka, Smetana and Grieg.
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Neo-classical (Adv. Higher)

New classicism. From about 1929 onwards this style in music came about when composers reacted against Romanticism and wanted to return to the structures and styles of earlier periods but combined with dissonant, tonal and even atonal harmonies. The composers started to write for smaller orchestras. Stravinsky and Prokofiev were two of the composers of this style.



Obbligato (Nat 6)

A prominent solo instrument part in a piece of vocal music.

Oboe (Nat 5)

This instrument belongs to the woodwind family. It uses a double reed which is placed between the lips and the air travels between the two reeds into the instrument.

Octave (Nat 3)

The distance of 8 notes eg from C up to C.

Off the beat (Nat 3)

Notes played on the weaker beats, eg beats 2 and 4 in a 4/4 bar.

On the beat (Nat 3)

Notes played on the stronger beats, eg beats 1 and 3 in a 4/4 bar.

Opera (Nat 4)

A drama set to music with soloists, chorus, acting, and orchestral accompaniment.

Oratorio (Nat 6)

Usually a story from the Bible set to music for soloists, chorus and orchestra. It may include **recitatives**, **arias**, **duets** and **chorus**. It is performed without acting or stage design.

Orchestra (Nat 3)

There are four main sections to an orchestra: strings, woodwind, brass and percussion.

Organ (Nat 3)

A keyboard instrument usually found in churches. It usually has more than one keyboard, plus pedals that are played with the feet.

Ornament (Nat 4)

An ornament decorates a melody by adding extra notes. Ornaments are often short and add melodic and rhythmic interest.

Ostinato (Nat 3)

A short musical pattern repeated many times.

P

Paired quaver (Nat 4)	Two quavers (1/2 beat notes) joined together.
Pan pipes (Nat 4)	Pipes which are graded in size and are bound together. The sound is made by blowing across the top of the pipes
Passacaglia (Nat 6)	Variations over a ground bass .
Pause (Nat 3)	A note or rest that is held longer than written. The pause sign (looks like an eye and an eyebrow) is written above the note or rest that is to be held as a pause.

Pavan (Adv. Higher)	A Renaissance court dance linked with the galliard. The pavan is slow and stately with two beats in the bar.
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Pedal (Nat 4)	Short for pedal point. A note which is sustained, or repeated continuously, in the bass beneath changing harmonies.
Pentatonic (Nat 4)	Any five-note scale. In practice, the most common one is that on which much folk music is based, particularly Scottish and Celtic.
Percussion (Nat 3)	Instruments that are played by hitting, striking, shaking or scraping.
Perfect cadence (Nat 5)	A cadence consists of two chords at the end of a phrase. A perfect cadence is the dominant to tonic chords (V-I).
Pianissimo (Nat 5)	Pianissimo is an indication that the music should be played very softly, abbreviated to 'pp'.
Piano (dynamics) (Nat 3)	Quiet volume, abbreviated to 'p'.
Piano (instrument) (Nat 3)	A keyboard instrument which produces sounds by hammers hitting strings.

Piano Trio (Adv. Higher)	A piano trio is a chamber music ensemble comprising of three instruments; the most common form comprises of a piano, violin and cello.
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Pibroch (Nat 5)	Music for solo bagpipe, in theme and variation form, and with grace notes.
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Piccolo (Nat 5)	A half-size flute which plays an octave higher than the standard flute.
Pitch bend (Nat 5)	Changing the pitch of a note, for example by pushing a guitar string upwards.
Pizzicato (Nat 5)	Abbreviation pizz. An instruction given to string players to pluck the strings instead of using the bow.
Plagal cadence (Nat 6)	A cadence is formed by two chords at the end of a phrase. A plagal cadence is the subdominant to tonic chords (IV–I). In the key of C major, chords F to C.
Plainchant (Nat 6)	Also known as Plainsong and Gregorian chant. Unaccompanied melody set to words of the Roman Catholic liturgy, such as the Mass . Plainchants are modal and have no regular metre. They follow the rhythm of the Latin words.
Plucking (Nat 3)	Sound made when you pluck the strings of a stringed instrument with a finger or fingers.
Polyphonic (Nat 5)	Texture which consists of two or more melodic lines, possibly of equal importance, which weave independently of each other.

Polytonality/ (Adv. H) Bitonality	The use of two or more keys played or sung at the same time, eg the melody might be in the key of C major whilst the accompaniment might be in E major. This device was used by many 20th-century composers, eg Bartok, Ives, Holst and Stravinsky.
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Pop (Nat 3)	A style of popular music played by a group of musicians.
Pulse (Nat 3)	The basic beat in music. The pulse may be in groups of two, three or four with a stress on the first in each group.



Quaver (Nat 4)	A note that lasts half a beat.
Question (Nat 3)	An opening phrase which is often followed by an answer.

R

Ragtime (Nat 4)	A style of dance music which became popular at the end of the 19th century and which helped to influence jazz.
Rallentando (Nat 4)	The tempo (speed) of the music gradually slows down.
Rapping (Nat 4)	Rhyming lyrics that are spoken and performed in time to a beat. Rapping is popular in hip-hop music.
Recitative (Nat 6)	A type of vocal writing where the music follows the rhythm of speech. It is used in <i>operas</i> and <i>oratorios</i> to move the story or plot on.
Recorder (Nat 4)	There are four main types of recorder: descant, treble, tenor and bass.
Reel (Nat 3)	A Scottish dance written in simple time with two or four beats in a bar.
Reggae (Nat 4)	Reggae music was developed in the late 1960s in Jamaica. It has quite a distinctive sound and has the characteristic of strong accents on the 2nd and 4th beats of the bar.

Renaissance (Adv. Higher)	The style of music of music from the period from about 1450 to 1600, ie between Medieval and Baroque.
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Repeat sign (Nat 4)	A sign which indicates a section of music should be repeated.
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Repetition (Nat 3)	An exact repeat of a musical idea.
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Retrograde (Adv. Higher)	To go backwards; a melody or a section of music can be written or performed from the end to the beginning.
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Reverb (Nat 5)	An electronic effect which can give the impression of different hall acoustics.
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Riff (Nat 3)	A repeated phrase usually found in jazz and popular music
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Ritardando (Nat 5)	The music slows down.
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Ritornello (Nat 6)	Little return. A 17th-century term for a brief introduction or interlude in a vocal composition, or for a brief instrumental passage between scenes in a 17th-century opera. In a Concerto grosso , the ritornello is the main theme played by the Ripieno group (the orchestra) and sometimes by Concertino (the soloists). The ritornello may return frequently throughout the movement, similar to a Rondo .
Ripieno (Nat 6)	In Baroque music, especially Concerto grosso , the term means the main group of instrumentalists as opposed to the small/solo group which was known as the Concertino .
Rock (Nat 3)	A style of popular music with a heavy, driving beat. Usually features electric guitar, bass guitar and drum kit.
Rock 'n' roll (Nat 3)	1950s American music which grew from the combined styles of jazz, blues, gospel and country.
Roll (Nat 5)	A very fast repetition of a note on a percussion instrument, eg on a snare drum or timpani.
Romantic (Nat 4)	In music, the period 1810-1900 approximately, which followed the Classical era.
Rondo (Nat 5)	A form where the first section (A) keeps returning, in between different sections – B, C etc.
Round (Nat 3)	Each part sings or plays the same melody, entering one after the other. When they reach the end they start again.
Rubato (Nat 5)	Translates as 'robbed time' which means the music will speed up and slow down in order to allow for expression, therefore there will not be a strict tempo maintained.
	
Saxophone (Nat 4)	This instrument belongs to the woodwind family. It uses a single reed which is attached to a plastic mouthpiece.
Scale (Nat 4)	A sequence of notes moving by step in an ascending or descending order.

Scat singing (Nat 4)	Nonsense words, syllables and sounds are improvised (made up) by the singer. Sometimes the singer is imitating the sounds of instruments.
Scotch snap (Nat 4)	A very short accented note before a longer note.
Scots ballad (Nat 4)	A Scottish song which tells a story. Examples of Scots ballads are 'Flower of Scotland' and 'Loch Lomond'.
Scottish (Nat 3)	Music of Scotland.
Scottish dance band (Nat 3)	A band which plays Scottish music for people to dance to.
Semibreve (Nat 3)	A note that lasts for four beats.
Semiquaver (Nat 4)	A note that lasts for a quarter (1/4) of a beat.
Semitone (Nat 5)	Half a tone, eg G to A ^b on a keyboard. From one fret to another on a guitar.
Sequence (Nat 3)	A melodic phrase which is immediately repeated at a higher or lower pitch.

Serialism (Adv. Higher)	A 20th-century method of musical composition invented by Schoenberg in which the 12 notes of the Chromatic scale are organised into a series or tone row. This row can be transposed, inverted or played in retrograde, and forms the material basis for an entire work or movement.
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Sforzando (Nat 5)	A note played with a forced sudden accent.
Simple time (Nat 4)	The music has two, three or four beats in each bar, and each beat is a crotchet (1 beat note) and each beat can be divided into 2.
Sitar (Nat 5)	A plucked, stringed instrument from India. It's basically an Indian guitar – easy to remember because sitar rhymes with guitar.
Slower (Nat 3)	The tempo (speed) decreases.
Snare drum (Nat 4)	This instrument belongs to the percussion family and is played with sticks or brushes. This drum can act as two different instruments – a side drum and a snare drum.

Solo (Nat 3) One instrument or voice. A prominent instrument or voice can be solo even when part of a larger ensemble.

Sonata (Nat 6) A composition for solo piano or a composition for solo instrument accompanied by piano.

Sonata Form (Nat 6) Sometimes known as first movement form. This term is used to describe the structure of the first movement of many *sonatas*, *symphonies* and often *overtures*. It has three sections: *exposition*, *development* and *recapitulation*. The *exposition* introduces two contrasting themes in related keys. These are developed and heard again in the *recapitulation*, this time in the same key.

Song Cycle (Adv. Higher) A group of songs linked by a common theme or with a text written by the same author, usually accompanied by piano but sometimes by small ensembles or full orchestra.

Soprano (Nat 5) The highest range of female voice.

Soul (Nat 6) A style of Afro-American popular music including elements of blues and gospel and conveying strong emotions.

Sprechgesang (Adv. Higher) A technique used in vocal music where the singer is required to use the voice in an expressive manner half-way between singing and speaking.

Staccato (Nat 3) The notes are short and detached.

Steel band (Nat 3) A West Indian band whose instruments are made out of oil drums called pans. The top of each drum is hammered into panels to make different pitches.

Step/stepwise (Nat 3) Moving up or down between notes which are next to each other.

Strathspey (Nat 4) A Scottish dance with four beats in a bar and usually featuring the Scotch snap.

Stretto (Adv. Higher) Where voices or instruments enter very quickly one after the other, as in fugue.

Striking (Nat 3) The sound is produced by hitting the instrument.

String Quartet (Nat 6) A chamber music ensemble made up from two violins, one viola and one cello.

Strings (Nat 3)	The family of instruments which have strings. The sound is produced by dragging a bow across the strings or by plucking them with the fingers.
Strophic (Nat 5)	A song which has music repeated for verses/choruses, therefore the same music will be heard repeating throughout the song.
Strumming (Nat 3)	A finger, fingers or plectrum are drawn across the strings of an instrument, usually guitar.
Subject (Nat 6)	The main theme in a composition, sonata form or fugue
Suspension (Adv. Higher)	This effect occurs when a note from one chord is held over to the next chord creating a discord, and is then resolved by moving one step to make a concord.
Swing (Nat 4)	A jazz style which started in the 1930s and was performed by a big band. The numbers and types of instruments in the big bands increased during this period, through the influence of swing.
Syllabic (Nat 5)	Vocal music where each syllable is given one note only.
Symphony (Nat 5)	A large work for orchestra, usually in four movements.
Syncopation (Nat 4)	Strongly accented notes playing off or against the beat. Syncopation occurs in all kinds of music.

T

Tabla (Nat 5)	Indian drums often used to accompany the sitar.
Tambourine (Nat 4)	This instrument belongs to the percussion family. A wooden or plastic frame has pairs of metal jingles attached and is mostly played by the hand striking or shaking the instrument.
Tenor (Nat 4)	A high-pitched, adult male voice.
Ternary (Nat 4)	A B A – 3 part form: Section A, followed by a B section which is a different melody, than a return to the A section.
Theme & variation (Nat 4)	The structure of a piece where the melody is heard (the theme), then returns several times with variations.

Three against two (Nat 6)	One line of music may be playing quavers in groups of two whilst at the same time another line of music will be playing triplets. Other note values can be similarly used. (<i>Cross rhythms</i>)
Through-composed ((Nat 6)	A vocal/choral composition in which there is little or no repetition of the music.
Tierce de Picardie (Nat 6)	The final chord of a piece of music in the minor key is changed to major.
Time changes (Nat6)	Where the music changes time signature. E.g. 3/4 to 4/4
Timpani (Nat 4)	A drum with skin stretched across a large bowl. It was traditionally made of copper, but is more commonly now made of fibreglass.
Tone (Nat 5)	The distance between two notes, equivalent to two semitones (for example, two frets on a guitar).

Tone Row/Note Row (Adv H)	An arrangement of the 12 notes of the octave which forms the basis of a composition. Each note is as important as another; there are no important notes such as the tonic and dominant. The row can also be used in inversion or retrograde. See Serialism.
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Tremolando/Tremolo (Nat 6)	Trembling, quivering. Term for the rapid up and down movement of a bow on a stringed instrument creating an agitated, restless effect. The term also describes rapid alternation of two different notes at least a 3rd apart played on piano, strings or wind instruments.
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Triangle (Nat 4)	This is a piece of metal in the shape of a triangle, open at one corner, and struck with a metal beater. It is an un-tuned percussion instrument, as it cannot play a range of notes.
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Trill (Nat 5)	Moving quickly and repeatedly between two notes which are a step apart.
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Triplets (Nat 6)	Squeezing three notes into the space where there are normally two.
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Tritone (Adv. Higher)	Interval of an augmented 4th, eg C–F sharp or F–B. It is made up of three whole tones.
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Trombone (Nat 4)

This is the only brass instrument that has a slide instead of valves. Air vibrates through a player's lips, into a mouthpiece which is connected to the instrument.

Trumpet (Nat 4)

The trumpet is the smallest and highest brass instrument in the brass family. Air vibrates through a player's lips, into a mouthpiece which is connected to the instrument.

Tuba (Nat 5)

The tuba is the largest and lowest brass instrument in the brass family. Air vibrates through a player's lips, into a mouthpiece which is connected to the instrument.

Turn (Adv. Higher)

A type of ornament. Four notes which turn round the main note with the note above, the main note, the note below, and the main note again. An inverted turn starts with the note below reversing the process.

U

Unaccompanied (Nat 3)

There are no instruments playing in the background.

Unison (Nat 3)

Singing or playing the same notes at the same time.

V

Vamp (Nat 4)

A rhythmic accompaniment with a bass note played on the beat and a chord off the beat. Usually played on piano or guitar.

Verse and chorus (Nat 4)

A structure/ form popular in many songs. The music of the verse will repeat, often with different words, and between verses the chorus will normally repeat and features different music to the verse.

Viola (Nat 5)

This instrument belongs to the string family. It is slightly bigger and lower in pitch than the violin, but looks similar. It can be played with a bow.

Violin (Nat 4)

This instrument belongs to the string family. It is the smallest and highest pitched instrument in the string family. It can be played with a bow.

Voice (Nat 3)

The human instrument used to speak or sing.

W

Walking bass (Nat 5)	A bass line (low notes) often featured in a variety of jazz styles. It goes for a walk, up and down a pattern of notes, and is often played on a double bass.
Waltz (Nat 3)	A dance with three beats in a bar in simple time.
Waulking song (Nat 5)	A rhythmic song sung in Gaelic by the women in the Western Isles of Scotland while they waulked woollen cloth to soften and shrink it.
Whole-tone scale (Nat 5)	A scale containing no semitones but built entirely on whole tones.
Wind band (Nat 4) instruments.	A band with woodwind, brass and percussion
Woodwind (Nat 3)	Instruments which produce sounds by blowing across a hole, against an edge or through a single or double reed, eg flute, clarinet, saxophone, oboe and bassoon. They need not be made of wood.

X

Xylophone (Nat 4)	This instrument belongs to the percussion family. The wooden bars are laid out in a similar pattern to the piano and are played with beaters.
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