MUSIC: LET’S HEAR IT!

Bruce Rixon • Brad Merrick

Science Press
Acknowledgements

Music: Let’s Hear It! has taken several years to realise from its conception and many people have been part of the journey from start to finish. Along the journey it was then taken up in a number of schools and refined to reach this final copy.

Special thanks must go to Sydney bands Backy Skank and Van the Man for allowing us to use their songs. Thank you to the many people who have helped with the production of the book in so many ways, in particular Max Harding for the preparation of the CD recordings and Julie Simons for her preparation of the music transcripts and to Science Press for the ongoing encouragement and support. Thanks also to the various artists for giving permission for us to use their songs as part of this educational resource.

This book is dedicated to Jennie, Adam, Mitchell and Jarrod Rixon and to Caroline, Cameron and Daniel Merrick for their tireless support over the many years that this book has taken to complete. Without their encouragement and understanding, a project like this would not be finalised.
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Introduction

The purpose of this book is to introduce and develop an awareness of the concepts of music. Through a series of introductory chapters each music concept is discussed in detail and accompanied by a range of aural examples. These are then followed by a series of answer templates that allow you to explore styles of music you are interested in while developing your skills in hearing, analysing and writing. A series of music excerpts representing a range of topic areas such as Australian Music, Rock, Jazz, Film, and Music of Other Cultures are also provided. Through the combination of information, aural exercises and exam-style questions it is hoped that you will complete the book and develop a better understanding of the concepts of music combined with the ability to identify these accurately and discuss them in class.

Music concepts

Duration is the length of a note or rest value in a piece of music.

The Pitch of a sound is how high or low it is, and depends on how quickly the soundwaves are vibrating. The faster the vibration the higher the pitch. Pitch also involves Melody and Harmony.

Performing Media is the source that creates a sound. The term usually refers to the instruments and voices used to perform the music.

Tone Colour or Timbre (pronounced tam-brah) is the quality of sound produced by the performing media.

The Dynamics or Volume of a sound is its loudness or softness.

Tempo refers to the speed at which music is played.

Texture refers to the layers of sound contained in music.

Structure (also called form) refers to how the composition is constructed and how it is divided into sections.

Expressive Techniques refers to how the performer plays the instrument, e.g. slides, note bends, staccato, legato, tongued.

Suggested marking criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>I can demonstrate focused listening with well-supported observations about the concepts of music, including detailed descriptions of musical events. My response is well structured and coherent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>I can demonstrate careful listening and an awareness of the concepts of music, although my observations require more detail at times. I attempt to organise my response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>I can discuss ways in which the concepts are used in the excerpt and give appropriate examples although at times my answer is quite general.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>I can demonstrate some awareness of the music concepts, but often make basic observations with little use of supporting examples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>I can only demonstrate limited awareness of the concepts of music. I am unable to discuss observations accurately or correctly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 Duration and Tempo - Rhythm
The duration of a sound is how long it lasts. In music, **Duration** is the concept related to the flow of music over time. It includes beat accents, measures or bars, groups of notes into beats, grouping of beats into measures, and grouping of measures into phrases.

### Key words

**Duration** is how long the sound of a note lasts. Duration also refers to the beat and metre of music.

**Beat** is the regular speed or **pulse** you can hear in music; it is the heartbeat of the music. If the music is slow, then the beat is slow. If the music is fast, then the beat is fast.

**Rhythm** refers to the different lengths of sound that occur during a piece of music. Rhythm may also include the rests (period of silence) heard in the music.

**Metre** is the word used to identify the groupings of rhythms or accents in a piece of music.

**Bar.** Notes are grouped into beats, usually of the same number, and separated by a bar line.

**Anacrusis** is an up-beat or unaccented beat at the beginning of a piece of music. The bar containing the anacrusis is incomplete. Its value is completed in the final bar of the music.

**Syncopation** involves placing an accent on a weak beat of the bar. In rock music, where the snare drum often plays on beats 2 and 4, the term **back beat** refers to syncopation.

**Ostinato** is a repeated rhythmic pattern. In rock music a melodic ostinato is known as a **riff**.

**Time signature** numbers are used at the beginning of a piece of music to indicate how many beats in each bar. The more common pulse groupings are multiples of 2 (duple), 3 (triple) or 4 (quadruple).

- **4** Top number – How many beats per bar? Four beats.
- **4** Bottom number – What kind of beats in each bar? Four represents crotchet beats.

**Tempo** is the term used to indicate the speed of the music.

The music element of duration can be considered under four subheadings:

- metre
- note values
- tempo
- key terms and definitions.
Metre

Metre is the word used to identify the accents of the music and therefore how many beats there are in a bar. In most music the beat is divided into regular groups called bars. The first beat of each bar is usually accented more strongly than other beats in the bar.

Features to listen for:

- **Accents** – Identify if there are 2, 3 or 4 beats to a bar.
- Identify whether there is no obvious metre, or free rhythm as in a plain chant.
- Is there an irregular metre, for example 5/4, 7/4, or 7/8?
- In syncopation, accenting what would normally be an unaccented or weak beat of the bar is used to displace the natural metre of the music. In most types of rock music the snare drum is frequently played with a strong accent on beats 2 and 4 of each bar. This type of syncopation is called a back beat.
- **Anacrusis** is an up-beat or unaccented beat at the beginning of the music or each musical phrase. The bar containing the anacrusis is incomplete. Its value is completed in the final bar of the music.
- **Triplets** are groups of three notes played in the time of two notes of the same value. Triplets are used in simple time signatures.
- **Duplets** are groups of two notes played in the time of three notes of the same value. Duplets are used in compound time signatures.
- Is the metre arranged into regular or irregular phrase lengths, e.g. 2, 3 or 4 bar phrases?
- Are there balanced or imbalanced phrases? Balanced phrases will be of the same length and often have a sense of question and answer with each rhythmic pattern of the phrase.
- **Polyrhythms** (poly means many) are two or more different rhythms or accents heard at the same time, usually with different time signatures, e.g. 2/4 against 6/8 time. Polyrhythms make the music complex and the texture more dense.
- **Cross-rhythms** are similar to polyrhythms where, two contrasting accents are played against each other making the sound complex, for example, groups of two quavers played against three quavers (triplets). America from West Side Story has many cross-rhythms.
- **Multi-rhythms** can occur when the metre is changed to displace the natural feel of the accent in the music. If time signatures are notated then this effect is known as multi-rhythms but if the time signatures are not notated then the effect is known as cross-rhythms.
- When a piece is marked **rubato** (rubato means robbed) the overall tempo of the piece remains fairly constant but in certain points of the phrase there is a ‘freeing up of the tempo’ to highlight the emotional impact of the music. This is like stretching and contracting the music. Rubato interpretation is often associated with music from the Romantic period.
Note values

Refer to the use of the following in your discussion of metre:

- Note and rest values in the piece; long, short or dotted note values.
- Repeated rhythmic patterns, or ostinato. The function of the rhythmic ostinato is to assist in unifying the piece. For example, the rhythmic motive of Mozart’s Symphony No. 40 is heard throughout the music. The rhythmic motive in the accompaniment of *Heaven On Their Minds*, from Jesus Christ Superstar, unifies the piece.
- Simple or complex rhythmic patterns.
- Syncopation.
- Rubato, the fluctuation and freedom of the metre by the performer for the purpose of interpretation.
- Layering of rhythm patterns is often linked with the voicing of a song, e.g. a layer of melody followed by a layer of harmony and then a layer of bass line or a rhythmic pattern underneath that – there might be three different rhythm layers.

Tempo

Identify and discuss the effects of the tempo and any changes of tempo heard in the music. Tempo changes are often used to heighten climax in the music.

Listen for:

- Changes to the tempo – through slowing down (rallentando); immediately slowing (ritenuto); or quickening the tempo (accelerando).
- Use of pause in the music, including at the end of the phrase.
- Use of rests.
Duration chart

METRE (Accents)

- Accents – regular 2, 3, 4
- No metre
- Irregular metre
- Changing metre (multi-rhythm)
- Regular phrases
- Balanced or imbalanced phrases
- Anacrusis
- Syncopation
- Rubato

NOTE (Rhythmic) PATTERN

- Long, short, dotted notes
- Ostinato patterns
- Syncopation
- Simple or complex rhythms
- Layering of rhythmic patterns
- Rhythmic motive development
- Polyrhythm, cross-rhythm, hemiola

DURATION (Rhythm)

TEMPO (Speed)

- All tempo
- Changing tempo
- Use of pause
- Tempo changes for musical climax
- Effect of tempo changes in the music
- Rubato

Duration and Tempo – Rhythm
### Duration key terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A tempo</td>
<td>Return to former speed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accelerando</td>
<td>Gradually becoming faster.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accent</td>
<td>Stress placed on a beat, usually the first in the bar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adagio</td>
<td>Slowly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allegro</td>
<td>Lively and fast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anacrusis</td>
<td>Up-beat or unaccented beat at the beginning of the music or each phrase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andante</td>
<td>At an easy walking pace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar</td>
<td>Division of notes grouped into beats, usually the same number, separated by a bar line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beat</td>
<td>Regular pulse of the music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common time</td>
<td>Four beats in the bar 4/4 time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compound metre</td>
<td>Combining of two note values to make a time signature, e.g. 6/8, two dotted crotchet beats per bar, known as compound duple, combines crotchet and quaver value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-rhythm</td>
<td>The use of a different rhythmic pattern heard against the regular rhythmic pattern of the time signature, e.g. the use of triples in an even beat time signature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut common time</td>
<td>Two beats in the bar = 2 time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duple metre</td>
<td>Two beats per bar. It may be 2, 2, 2 4 2 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grave</td>
<td>Very slow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hemiola</td>
<td>A rhythmic device in which the metre seems to shift temporarily from duple to triple or vice versa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular metre</td>
<td>Where the accent in music falls on a different beat of the bar, e.g. 5, 7. It gives a sense of disjointedness to the music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L’istesso tempo</td>
<td>At the same speed. In l’istesso tempo, the duration of the beat remains the same despite the changing time signature of metre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larghetto</td>
<td>Rather broadly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largo</td>
<td>Broadly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lento</td>
<td>Slowly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meno mosso</td>
<td>Less speed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metre</td>
<td>Organisation of beats into regular groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metronome</td>
<td>An apparatus that fixes time to a number of beats per minute. Invented by Loulie in 1696 it was Maelzel (1772-1832, friend of Beethoven) that provided us with the metronome we use today. M.M. (Maelzel Metronome) = 100 means 100 crotchet beats per minute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderato</td>
<td>At a moderate speed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-metre</td>
<td>The changing of the metre or time signature every few bars (multi-rhythm).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-rhythm</td>
<td>The changing of the metre or time signature every few bars (multi-metre).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-metrical</td>
<td>Where the time signature is not evident in the music. There is not a set regular pulse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ostinato</td>
<td>A repeated rhythmic or melodic pattern. In rock music it is known as a riff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piu mosso</td>
<td>More speed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polymetre</td>
<td>Two or more rhythms, or time signatures, employed concurrently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polyrhythm</td>
<td>Two or more rhythms, or time signatures, employed concurrently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestissimo</td>
<td>Very fast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presto</td>
<td>Very fast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quadruple metre</td>
<td>Four beats to the bar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quintuplet</td>
<td>Five note values to fit the time of one note value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rallantando (rall)</td>
<td>Gradually becoming slower.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythm</td>
<td>Different note and rest values in music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riff</td>
<td>A repeated melodic or rhythmic pattern. Also known as an ostinato.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritardando (Ritard)</td>
<td>Gradually becoming slower.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritenuto (rit)</td>
<td>Immediately slower.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubato</td>
<td>Freedom of tempo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Septuplet</td>
<td>Six note values to fit the time of one note value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stringendo</td>
<td>Pressing on faster, and often louder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syncopation</td>
<td>Placing an accent on a weak beat of the bar. In rock music the term back beat refers to syncopation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempo</td>
<td>Speed of the music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempo primo</td>
<td>Return to the first tempo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time signature</td>
<td>Numbers at the beginning of the music. It indicates the number of beats and the type of note value that receives one beat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triple metre</td>
<td>Three beats in the bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up-beat</td>
<td>Anacrusis. The unaccented note, and incomplete bar at the beginning of the music. The incomplete bar is ‘made up’ at the end of the music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivace</td>
<td>Lively, spirited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivo</td>
<td>Lively, vivacious.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comment on the **tempo** and **mood** changes in this excerpt.

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**Observations**

There is a regular changing from an up-beat mood to a reflective style along with changes in performing media and tonal qualities of each instrument.

1. (000-012) The first section opens with a slow fanfare provided by strings then trombones and trumpets. (012-034) The piece quickly moves into a fast tempo in a bright, buoyant jazz cabaret style. The melody is shared between trumpets then strings and saxophones, all underpinned by a fast repeated beat on the drum kit. Interest is maintained as the melody is shared by a variety of instruments and tone colours. A rallentando of tempo allows for a smooth transition into the mood change of the following section.

2. (035-134) This section is slower with more of an orchestral feel. The melody is shared with trumpets and violins. The melody is played legato, the note values are longer and the phrases are evenly balanced.

3. (134-212) Hear the mood of the excerpt as it lifts to a climax through a rise in pitch, dynamics and punctuated rhythms. A variety of instruments are employed to introduce new pitch material as the mood and tempo moves to a carnival atmosphere.