

GCSE MUSIC AREA OF STUDY 1:
New Directions in Western Classical Music 1600-1899

Keywords - You are expected to know and be able to use all of the following keywords:

A cappella	Unaccompanied singing (usually choral)
Antiphony	Music in which two or more groups of performers alternate with each other
Arpeggio	A chord played as successive rather than as alternate notes
Articulation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The point at which a note is sounded 2. The length of notes in relation to their context
Authentic performance	A performance that takes account of historical performance practice using instruments of the time or replicas based on contemporary descriptions
Bar	A metrical unit represented in print by all of the notes and rests between vertical lines called barlines.
Baroque	The period c.1600-1750 and its music.
Bass	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Low male voice 2. The lowest sounding part of a composition whether for voices or instruments.

Baritone	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A male voice with pitch range between that of bass and tenor 2. A brass instrument
Basso continuo	In baroque music, a continuous bass part, often with figures to indicate the chords that should be improvised on a harmony instrument such as a harpsichord or organ. Often played on the cello or bassoon.
Basso Ostinato	A short bass melody continuously repeated throughout an entire movement or lengthy passage of a movement. Not to be confused with basso continuo
Beam	A line joining the stems of two or more notes, such as quavers.
Beat	The underlying pulse of metrical music
Binary Form	A musical structure in two sections (A-B)
Bpm	Abbreviation of beats per minute
Cadence	A point of repose at the end of a phrase sometimes harmonised with two cadence chords.

Cadenza	An improvised or written out solo in an aria or concerto movement
Call and Response	A technique whereby a soloist sings or plays a phrase to which a larger group responds with an answering phrase
Canon	A compositional device in which a melody in one part is later repeated note for note in another part while the melody in the first part continues to unfold
Canon by inversion	A canon in which the second part to enter presents the original melody upside down.
Cantabile	In a singing style
Chaconne and Passacaglia	18 th Century variations based on an ostinato which could be a repeating bass pattern, a harmonic progression or both
Chamber Music	Music intended for domestic performance with one instrument per part.
Choir	A group of singers performing together, whether in unison or in parts
Chorale	A Protestant hymn tune with German words
Chorale prelude	An organ composition based in the melody of a chorale
Chromatic Notes	Notes outwith the key of a piece of music

Clef	A symbol defining the pitches of the notes in a stave.
Coda	The final section of a movement or piece
Concerto	A composition for one or more solo instruments accompanied by an orchestra. Usually in three movements
Consonance and Dissonance	The relative stability (consonance) or instability (dissonance) of two or more notes sounded together. Consonant intervals (i.e. major 3 rd) and chords are concords. Dissonant intervals and chords are discords.
Contrary motion	The relationship between two melodies in which an ascent in one part is mirrored by a simultaneous descent in another part, and vice versa.
Counter melody	A new melody that occurs simultaneously with a melody that has been heard before
Counterpoint	The simultaneous combination of two or more melodic lines.
Countersubject	A melody sounding against and contrasting with the subject or answer of a fugue or similar contrapuntal composition.
Cross Rhythm	A rhythm that conflicts with the regular pattern of stressed and unstressed beats of a composition, or the combination of two conflicting rhythms within a single beat (e.g. duplets against triplets)
Decoration	Printed embellishments or small departures from the written score intended to enrich a performance and provide variety in repeated passages.

Descant	A decorative line sung above the main melody of a hymn or similar vocal piece
Diatonic and Chromatic notes	Diatonic notes are those belonging to the scale of the prevailing key while chromatic notes are foreign to it. E.g. in C Major G is a diatonic note whereas G# is a chromatic note.
Divisions	A type of variation form in which the long notes of the theme are divided into shorter notes values by the addition of extra notes.
Dominant	The fifth degree of a major or minor scale. (D is the Dominant in G Major)
Dominant pedal	The fifth degree of the scale held or repeated against changing harmony
Dominant 7th chord	A chord consisting of the dominant - the fifth degree of the scale - plus diatonic notes a 3 rd , 5 th and 7 th above it. In C major the dominant 7 th chord consists of the notes G, B, D and F.
Double Stopping	The performance of a two note chord on a bowed string instrument
Doubling	The simultaneous performance of the same melody by two players or groups of players, either at the same pitch or at pitch levels separated by octaves.
Dynamics	The loudness (f) or quietness (p) of notes
Enharmonics	Two notes of the same pitch that are notated differently, e.g. C and B#
Episode	A distinct section within a movement

Falsetto	A special vocal technique that enables a man to extend his range to higher pitches than usual
Figuration	A melodic line made up of repeated figures or continuous ornamental patterns
Figure	Another name for a motif
Figured bass	A bass part with Arabic numerals that indicate the intervals above the bass that are to be played in order to form the desired chords.
Flat	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A sign (b), which lowers the pitch of a note a semitone. One or more flat signs at the beginning of a staff make a key signature. 2. An adjective describing a note that is sung or played at a lower pitch than it should be.
Frets	Raised strips running at right angles across the fingerboard of instruments such as the guitar, lute and sitar.
Fugue	A composition based on a melody (called the subject) that is repeated in combination with a rhythmically independent countersubject.
Genre	A category or group such as the piano sonata
Glissando	A slide from one pitch to another.
Gong	A large circular metal plate suspended in a frame and beaten with a stick or a mallet.
Grace notes	Any of the many melodic ornaments printed in small type near to a principal melody note.

Ground bass	A melody in the bass part of a composition that is repeated many times and which forms the basis for a continuous set of melodic and/or harmonic variations.
Harmonic progression	A series of chords.
Harpsichord	A keyboard instrument with one, two or three manuals controlling a set of jacks. Each jack has a quill or piece of plastic that plucks a string when a key is pressed.
Heterophony	A texture made up of a simple tune and a more elaborate version of it played or sung together.
Homophony	A texture in which one (usually the uppermost) part has all of the melodic interest, while the others provide a simple accompaniment.
Imitation	A contrapuntal device in which a melodic idea stated in one part is copied in another part while the melodic line of the first part continues. Only the opening notes of the original melody need to be repeated for this effect to be heard.
Imperfect cadence	An approach chord plus chord V at the end of a phrase.
Improvisation	Performance based not on a written score but on the mood of the moment.
Interrupted cadence	Chord V followed by an unexpected chord (such as VI) at the end of a phrase.

Interval	The distance between two pitches, including both of the pitches that form the interval. So, in the scale of C major, the interval between the first and second notes is a 2nd (C-D), the interval between the first and third notes is a 3rd (C-D-E), and so on.
Inversion	1. The process of turning a melody upside down so that every interval of the original is maintained but moves in the opposite direction. 2. A chord is inverted when a note other than the root is sounded in the bass. 3. An interval is inverted when one of the two notes moves an octave so that instead of being below the second note it is above it (or vice versa).
Key	The relationship between the pitches of notes in which one particular pitch called the tonic seems more important than any other pitch. The pitch of the tonic determines the key of the music. So a composition in which C is the tonic is 'in the key of C'.
Key signature	One or more flat signs, or one or more sharp signs placed immediately after a clef at the beginning of a staff. In many cases a key signature gives some indication of the key of the music printed on the same staff.
Leap	An interval greater than a semitone or tone between consecutive notes of a melody.
Lute	A fretted plucked-string instrument popular in the renaissance and baroque periods, used for solo performance and accompaniment.
Melody and accompaniment	The melody is the line of a piece of music where choice and arrangement of pitch, duration and intervals are intended to provide primary interest. It is often played on higher instruments. The accompaniment is the part or parts of the music which supports the melody.
Metallophone	A category of musical instruments consisting of rows of tuned metal bars that are struck with mallets.
Metre	The repeating patterns produced by strong and weak pulses, usually of the same duration.

Minuet	An elegant dance in 3/4, it was the only dance of the baroque suite to be retained in classical instrumental music where it formed a ternary movement with a trio.
Modal music	Music based on one of the scales of seven pitch classes commonly found in western music, but excluding the major and minor scales.
Modulation	The harmonic or melodic process by which music moves from one key to another
Monophony	A single unaccompanied melody which may be performed by a soloist or by many people playing or singing the melody in unison or in octaves.
Motif	A short melodic or rhythmic idea that is sufficiently distinctive to allow it to be modified, manipulated and possibly combined with other motifs while retaining its own identity.
Octave	The interval between the first and last degrees of an eight-note major or minor scale. The two notes forming this interval are 12 semitones apart and have the same letter name.
Ode	In baroque music, a setting of a lyric poem addressed to St Cecilia or to some important person such as the reigning monarch. Like the cantata it contains several vocal movements.
Octave displacement	The practice of moving notes of an original melody one or more octaves from their original pitches, thus producing angular melodic lines sometimes found in theme and variations.
On-beat and off-beat notes	Notes articulated on strong and weak beats of the bar respectively
Opera	A dramatic fusion of words, music, spectacle and sometimes dancing.
Oratorio	A vocal setting of a sacred text falling into many movements and intended for concert rather than dramatic performance.

Ostinato	A rhythmic, melodic or harmonic pattern repeated many times in succession. Often called a riff in pop music.
Overdotting	In baroque music, the performance practice of adding a second dot to a dotted note value and, consequently, shortening the value of the note that follows it.
Passing note	A decorative melody note filling the gap between two harmony notes.
Pedal	A sustained or repeated note sounded against changing harmony.
Pentatonic music	Music based on a scale of five notes
Perfect cadence	Chords V and I at the end of a phrase
Phrase	Part of a melody which requires the addition of another phrase or phrases to make complete musical sense.
Piano	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A keyboard instrument in which strings are sounded by felt-covered hammers. 2. A dynamic instruction to play softly.
Pitch	The height or depth of a note. This can be relative and expressed as an interval (such as a tone or semitone) between two notes, or it can be an absolute quality determined by the number of vibrations per second of a string, a column of air or a membrane.

Pitch class	A set of pitches all having the same letter name. So middle C belongs to the same pitch class as the C an octave below and the C an octave above it.
Pitch names	The letters from A to G which are used to identify the pitches of notes on a stave
Plagal cadence	Chords IV and I at the end of a phrase
Polyphony	As used most frequently today polyphony means the same as counterpoint - a texture made up of two or more melodies sounding together.
Polyrhythm	The simultaneous combination of two or more distinctly different and often conflicting types of rhythm
Primary triads	Chords I, IV and V
Programme music	Music that is meant to suggest visual images or a story
Pulse	Beat
Quintuplet	A group of five equal notes played in the time usually taken by four notes of the same time values
Range	The distance between the lowest and highest notes of a melody or composition, or the distance between the highest and lowest notes that can be played on an instrument or vocalist.

Recapitulation	The repetition of music heard earlier in the piece
Refrain	A repeated passage of music
Register	A part of the range of a voice or instrument. The lowest pitches of a clarinet are in the chalumeau register. The highest pitches of a baroque trumpet are in the clarino register.
Repetition	In music, the re-statement of a passage that has already been performed.
Rhythmic counterpoint	Two or more clearly-defined and independent rhythms played together.
Ritornello	An instrumental section in a baroque aria, or a section for a large string-ensemble in a baroque concerto. In some arias and concerto movements the same or similar musical materials are used in every appearance of the ritornello (like the refrain of a rondo).
Rondo	A composition in which a passage of music heard at the start is repeated several times, the repeats being separated from each other by contrasting passages of music
Root	In tonal music, the fundamental pitch of any chord built from thirds. The fundamental pitch of a dominant triad (chord V) is the fifth degree of the scale of the key. If the key is C major the root of chord V is G, no matter which of the three pitches of chord V is the bass note.
Scalic	An adjective referring to a melodic contour in which adjacent notes move by step in a similar manner for notes in a scale
Score	A written document representing how a piece of music should be played or how it was played.
Scotch snap	A two-note rhythm consisting of a short on-beat note followed by a long off-beat note (e.g. an on-beat semiquaver followed by an off-beat dotted quaver).

Semitone	The interval between two adjacent pitches on a keyboard instrument (including black notes). The semitone is the smallest interval in common use in western music.
Sequence	The immediate repetition of a motif or phrase of a melody in the same part but at a different pitch. A harmonic progression can be treated in the same way.
Setting	Music added to a text so that the words are sung instead of spoken.
Seventh Chord	A triad plus a note a 7th above the root. The dominant 7th consists of a major triad on the fifth degree of the scale (e.g. G-B-D in C major) plus a minor 7th above the root (F).
Sextet	A composition for six instrumentalists or singers (or a mixture of both).
Sharp	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A sign (#) that raises the pitch of a note a semitone. One or more sharp signs at the beginning of a staff make a key signature. 2. An adjective describing a note that is sung or played at a higher pitch than it should be.
Solo	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A performance by a single musician. 2. A piece of music or a passage of music written for a single musician.
Sonata	An instrumental composition, usually in several movements or sections, written for a single instrument or a small ensemble.
Sonata form	A 3-part musical structure consisting of an exposition, development and recapitulation.
Soprano	A high female or unbroken boy's voice.
Stave	Parallel lines on which pitches are notated.

Stem	The vertical line attached to the note-heads of time values shorter than a semibreve.
Step	As used in Great Britain, a semitone or tone. In America it means a tone (a semitone being a half step).
Strophic song	A song in which the same music is used for every verse.
Subdominant	The fourth degree of a major or minor scale (for example C in the key of G major).
Suite	A collection of pieces intended to be performed together. In the baroque suite a number of dances in binary form and all in the same key were grouped together to form the dance suite.
Symphony	As most often used today, an orchestral composition, often in four movements
Syncopation	Accentuation of notes sounded off the beat or on a weak beat, often with rests on some of the strong beats.
System	Two or more staves joined by a bracket at the left.
Tenor	A male voice higher than a bass, but lower than an alto.
Ternary form	A three-part structure (ABA) in which the first and last sections are identical or very similar. These enclose a contrasting central section.

Texture	The number and timbres of parts in a composition and the way they relate to each other.
Theorbo	A lute with very long unstopped strings allowing an extended bass range which makes it an ideal continuo instrument
Through composed	A song in which new music is composed for each verse.
Timbre	The tone colour of an instrument or voice.
Time signature	Two numbers, one on top of the other, on a staff. The upper number usually indicates the number of beats per bar and the lower number indicates the time value of the beat.
Tirade	A very fast scalar flourish in baroque music.
Tonal music	Music based in a clearly defined key. A key is established by the relationships between the pitches of major and minor scales. The most important relationship is that between the tonic (the first degree of a scale) and all other pitches.
Tone	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An interval of two semitones, e.g. C-D. 2. A sound of definite pitch. 3. The timbre of a particular instrument or voice.
Tonic	The first degree of a major or minor scale. Tonic pedal. The first degree of a scale held or repeated against changing harmony.
Transposition	The performance or notation of a passage of music or of a whole piece at a pitch level lower or higher than the original.
Treble	An unbroken boy's voice.

Triad	A chord of three pitches consisting of a bass note and notes a 3rd and a 5th above it.
Trio	1. Music for three solo performers. 2. Music for a single performer written throughout in three contrapuntal parts. 3. The middle section of the minuet-trio-minuet group that forms the third movement of many classical symphonies and string quartets.
Trio sonata	A baroque composition in several sections or movements. It is usually printed on three staves and performed by two treble melody instruments, a bass melody instrument and one or <i>more</i> harmony instruments.
Tritone	An interval of three tones, e.g. F-B.
Tutti	A passage in which all or <i>most</i> of the members of an ensemble are playing.
Unison	The combined sound of two or <i>more</i> notes of the same pitch.
Variations	A musical structure in which a theme is repeated, each time with alterations <i>to one or more</i> of its original elements.
Viol, viola da gamba (Italian)	Any of a family of bowed and fretted string instruments tuned like lutes and popular both as solo and accompaniment instruments throughout the 16 th to early 18th centuries. The term <i>viola da gamba</i> (or just 'gamba') is often used nowadays <i>to</i> mean the bass viol.
Virtuoso	A performer of outstanding technical brilliance.