

## AoS 4 – Timbre & Dynamics

**Dynamics** (how loud or quiet the music is)

**Timbre** (the type of sound an instrument makes)

**Vocals** – The use of voices:

- **Soprano** – A high pitched female voice.
- **Tenor** – A high male voice.
- **Alto** – A low female voice
- **Bass** – A low male voice.

**Acapella** – just voices, NO instruments playing in the background

**Con arco (Arco)** – to play a violin for example with a bow

**Pizzicato (pizz)**– to play a violin string for example plucked with the finger

**Reverb** – this is when the sounds of an instrument last longer, imitating the sound of the instrument reflecting against walls, floors and ceilings.

**Electronic Effects (often used in popular music):**

**Distortion** – Usually used in rock, this is when an instrument is forced to sound 'aggressive.'

**Picking** – to play a guitar by plucking the string rather than **strumming** a chord

**Forte (f)** – loud

**Piano (p)** – quiet

**Crescendo (<)** – getting louder

**Decrescendo / Diminuendo (>)** – getting quieter

**Falsetto** – 'false voice' technique where male singers can sing higher using a softer voice.

**Muted (Con sordino)** – To deaden/quieten the sound. Brass players put mutes in the bell of the instrument to do this.

**Double stopping** – when 2 strings are played at once on a violin for example

**Tremolo/tremolando** – literally means 'trembling'. Rapid up & down strokes on a violin for example

**Electronic Effects (often used in popular music):**

**Chorus** – This is when a voice or instrument is multiplied electronically, so it sounds like many

**Multi-tracking** – A recording technique where different sounds/instruments are recorded separately and played back together

**Panning** – Sound is electronically moved across from one speaker to another, or is separated into different speakers

**Fortissimo (ff)** – very loud

**Mezzo Forte (mf)** – quite loud

**Mezzo piano (mp)** – quite quiet

**Pianissimo (pp)** – very quiet

**Sforzando (sfz)** – suddenly very loud

**Countertenor** - a male alto achieved using a falsetto voice

**Vibrato** – A slight regular wavering of a pitch used by singers and instrument players to add warmth and interest to the note.

**Electronic Effects (often used in popular music):**

**Compression** – Used mostly as a recording technique, this is where the quietest sounds are boosted and the loudest are lowered, so the recording is evened out. E.g. drums.

**Vocodor** – Device used to **electronically combine** a human **voice** with a **musical instrument**

**Sequence** – Electronic device or computer program that is used to record, edit and play back music data using MIDI

### TOP TIPS

Use the work picking/strumming for guitar and pizzicato/plucking or bowed/con arco for orchestral string instruments