

16th - 18th Century dance

One of the main functions of music has always been to accompany dancing. In the Renaissance and Baroque periods well-to-do people were expected to be able to perform the dance-steps at social occasions, and each type of dance gave rise to its own compositional form. Dance music during this period was performed in royal courts for entertainment. A small orchestra of mostly string instruments with limited woodwind and brass played the music. The orchestral dance suite used the dances of the time arranged for orchestra to play.

Sarabande

The *Sarabande* was a popular dance of the Baroque period. They were played on strings and harpsichord, with occasionally oboes and flutes. Solo Sarabandes were sometimes played on the harpsichord. Sarabandes were in binary form. They were slow, with 3 beats in the bar and usually a slight accent on the 2nd beat.

The *Gavotte* was a stately dance of the Baroque period, with 4 beats in the bar played at a moderate tempo, each phrase begins halfway through a bar. *Gavottes*, like many other dances, were in binary form. They were often played by strings (violins, violas, cellos and double basses) and sometimes also oboes, flutes and bassoons. *Gavottes* for solo instruments were usually for the harpsichord.

The Minuet

The *Minuet* was a popular dance of the Classical period. It had 3 beats in the bar and was played at a moderate speed. The style was so well-loved that composers like Mozart put minuets into orchestral symphonies, even though these were not for dancing to. Minuets are sometimes linked in twos, so there would be a Minuet 1 and Minuet 2. They would both be played, then Minuet 1 would be heard again. In later minuets, of **Mozart** and **Haydn** for example, the Minuet 2 was called a *Trio*.

Minuets were played by the orchestral instruments of the time: violins, violas, cellos and double basses would be used and sometimes oboes, flutes, bassoons, french horns and timpani. They would also be played by solo instruments, especially the harpsichord and piano.

The Gigue

A lively dance using skipping rhythms used as the final movement of the Baroque suite, usually in compound duple 6/8 or compound quadruple 12/8 originating from the English 16th jig.

18th - 19th Century dance

During the 18th and 19th centuries the most popular dances were the *Waltz* and the *Polka*. In this period, dances were often written not for the dance floor, but for the concert hall. For example, symphonies often had a waltz movement, and piano pieces were sometimes in waltz or polka time. Ballroom dances were popular in Vienna. During the Romantic period the move towards Nationalism resulted in composers being influenced by dances from their own countries and writing large scale works using these dances eg Dvorak Slavonic Dances, Liszt Hungarian Dances.

The Waltz

Originating in Vienna, during the 19th Century the waltz became popular all over Europe. Two brothers, both called **Johann Strauss**, composed a huge number of waltzes. **Johann Strauss** the younger was called *The Waltz King*. The Waltz always has three beats in the bar and has a bass note on the first beat. Waltzes can be identified by the 'um cha cha um cha cha' that forms the backbone of the music. The speed of the waltz is usually fairly quick and lively. Waltzes usually contain a string of seven or eight different melodies with an introduction and a coda (ending passage). Waltzes were written for string orchestras, full orchestras including woodwind and brass, and for solo instruments such as the piano or guitar.

The Polka

The Polka originally came from the area around Czechoslovakia and was a craze in the 1840s. Everyone was dancing the Polka and so it spread around Europe like an epidemic. The Polka is a very quick dance with 2 beats in the bar. Like the waltz, polkas were written for any combination of instruments.

20TH and 21ST century dances of the Americas

Salsa

Salsa is a style of dance music developed in Cuba. Today, you can hear salsa being played on dancefloors throughout the world.

Bands such as **Gloria Estefan** and the **Buena Vista Social Club** toured widely across the world, making salsa popular throughout the world.

Salsa music usually contains many drums and other percussion instruments. The percussion all play different rhythms so that the overall percussion part sounds very complex. Unlike disco music, salsa preferred the ordinary (acoustic) piano rather than the electric piano. Also included in Salsa music was a horn section, consisting of trombones, trumpets and saxophones.

Call and response is very common in salsa music - where a soloist sings something that is immediately answered by a chorus or a section of musicians

Club dance music

Club dance music of the late 20th and 21st centuries has many different forms, including *drum and bass*, *hip-hop*, *garage*, *R and B*, *trip-hop*, *house*, *rave*, *techno*, *ambient* and *europop*. You won't have to know all the differences between these styles, but you will need to be able to pick out the main musical elements and comment on the use of technology in GCSE questions.

Club dance music ALWAYS makes use of technology. In particular :

Looping, where a pattern, usually in the bass or drum part, is repeated constantly

Sampling, where a voice or a sound clip has been processed by a computer to distort it:

Quantising

This is a process on the computer where fast notes are automatically put into time by shifting the note to the nearest (usually) semiquaver. The effect of this is that the music is always completely in time with the beat.

Multi track recording

Where each part of the music (bass, drums, main vocal etc.) is recorded on its own track. It means, for example, that a singer can perform the main vocal and later perform the backing vocal as well (overdubbing).