

Vocabulary for all Music Students

LIST A – 96 Terms


La Habra High School – HiARTS

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STUDENT NAME: _____

DYNAMICS

crescendo – (*cresc. or* ) gradually louder

decrescendo – (*decresc. or* ) gradually softer


dynamics – louds and softs in music

forte – (*f*) loud

mezzo – (*m*) medium

piano – (*p*) quiet

FORM

coda – () a “tag” added to the ending of a composition

double bar line – two vertical lines at the end of a measure or bar showing “the end”

duet – a performance by, or composition for, two musicians

introduction – a preparatory section of a song or composition

phrase – a natural division of a melodic line (like a clause in speech)

quartet – a performance by, or composition for, four musicians

repeat sign – two dots next to a double bar line that indicate a repeated section

GENERAL TERMS

baton – tool a conductor uses to lead an ensemble

manuscript paper – paper with staff lines printed on it

register – the range of one section of an instrument’s notes

score – written music

timbre – (*Fr.*) unique quality of a sound determined by prominence of certain overtones

HARMONY AND MELODY

fifth – the fifth note above the tonic, it is usually a perfect 5th; the 3rd note of a triad

leading tone – the seventh note of a scale when it is a half-step below the tonic

root – the name of a chord, and the bass note when the chord is in root position

seventh – the seventh note above the tonic; the fourth note of a seventh chord

third – the third note above the tonic; the second note of a triad

triad – a three note chord structure built by stacking two thirds above a root, Ex. 1-3-5 or C-E-G

INSTRUMENT CHARACTERISTICS

brass – metal instruments that use the player lips, along with valves, to create pitch

keyboard – an instrument that uses keys to trigger hammers that strike strings and create pitch

percussion – an instrument that needs to be struck or shaken to create sound; some have definite pitch (Ex. xylophone) and some have indefinite pitch (Ex. snare drum)

strings – instruments that have strings that need to be bowed, plucked or strummed to create pitch

woodwind – a (usually) wooden instrument that has a column of air that is lengthened or shortened by a series of holes and pads to create different pitches

INTERVALS

interval – the distance between two notes, including both notes;

Ex. second C-D, third C-E, fourth C-F, fifth C-G, sixth C-A, seventh C-B, octave C-next C

half-step – from one note to the very next note in the chromatic scale

octave – distance of 12 half-steps; eight notes from one letter to the next same letter;

Ex. C up to the next C

perfect 5th – distance of 7 half-steps; Ex. C-G or B to F#

whole-step – the distance of two half-steps

unison (prime) – (*lit. one sound*) two or more performers on the same note or line

JAZZ AND POP TERMS

chorus – also called a **refrain**, it is the repeated section of a song that usually follows each verse; (also another name for a choir)

rhythm section – piano, bass, and drums in a combo; may also include guitar or vibes

verse – a stanza which has new lyrics each time it is presented in a song

LARGE FORMS

canon – when two or more instruments present an imitated melody in overlapping succession at various “intervals of imitation” (in follow-the-leader fashion)

round – a vocal canon at the unison or octave; Ex. “Row, row, row your boat...”

MUSICIANS


composer – a musician who writes the music

conductor – a musician who leads other musicians in performance


instrumentalist – a musician who plays an instrument

vocalist – a musician who sings

PERFORMANCE TERMS

accent – () strong emphasis on a note


articulation – particular ways to perform notes, such as staccato or accented

fermata – () hold

improvisation – performing music on the spot without written notes

legato – smooth and connected

poco – a little

staccato – () short and detached

PIANO & GUITAR

2s and 3s – the pattern of black keys on a piano keyboard; the white note just to the left of the two black keys is the note C

fret – metal divisions of a guitar's fingerboard

fretboard – where a guitar player frets or stops the strings to create different pitches

hammer – a felt covered wooded device that strikes the strings inside a piano

PITCH

bass clef – () also known as F-clef, it shows the 4th line from the bottom of a staff to be F

clef – symbols that indicate the letters names of the staff lines and spaces

grand staff – the treble and bass clef staves combined, centered on middle C

harmony – any combination of two or more notes sounding together

ledger line – short line that allows us to extend a staff upwards or downwards in pitch


melody – the tune of the music

note – symbol used to represent the pitch and rhythm of a sound

pitch – vibrational frequency of a sound; one of the two elements of music (the other is *rhythm*)

scale – a series of notes used to create a composition


staff – the lines and spaces that we write notes upon

treble clef – () also known as G-clef, it shows the 2nd line from the bottom of a staff to be G

RHYTHM/METER

bar – the space between two bar lines; another name for **measure**

bar line – vertical line that divides measures of music

beam – (Ex. ) horizontal lines that connect notes smaller than a quarter note

beat – the underlying pulse of the music

flag – flag-like symbol attached to the stem of note to shorten its duration

measure – the space between two bar lines; another name for **bar**

rest – a symbols that represent a period of silence in music

rhythm – durational organization of music; one of the two elements of music (the other is *pitch*)

stem – a vertical line attached to a note head

tie – a curved line that adds the value of notes together (not to be confused with a slur)

SCALES/KEYS/MODES

key signature – arrangement of accidentals at the beginning of a line of music indicating the key

major scale – 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-1; w w $\frac{1}{2}$ w w w $\frac{1}{2}$

minor (natural) – scale that is a flat 3, flat 6, and flat 7 from MAJOR; also called **aeolian**

TEMPO

adagio – slowly

allegro – fast and lively

andante – at a walking pace

largo – a very slow tempo

moderato – a moderate tempo

tempo – the speed of the music

TEXTURE

divisi – a line of music that was in unison now divides

solo – a single performing voice or instrument

tutti – all parts or voices now perform (often seen after the marking **solo**)

unison (prime) – (*lit. one sound*) two or more performers on the same note or line

VOCAL MUSIC

a cappella – (*lit. for the chapel*) vocal music sung without accompaniment; also *acapella*

alto – lower treble voice (lower than soprano)

bass – lowest (usually male) voice part

SATB – music written in 4-part harmony: soprano, alto, tenor, bass

soprano – the highest treble voice

tenor – the highest (usually) male voice

text – the words or lyrics of a piece of music