

Vocabulary for all Music Students


LIST B – 86 Terms

La Habra High School – HiARTS

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STUDENT NAME: _____

DYNAMICS

diminuendo – (*dim.* or ) gradually softer

forte-piano – (*fp*) loud then immediately quiet

fortissimo – (*ff*) very loud

pianissimo – (*pp*) very quiet

subito – (*sub.*) immediately, as in subito piano

FORM

cadence – a series of chords that bring a phrase to a pause or an end; also a “street beat” played by the percussion section of a marching band for the entire group to march to

first and second ending – in music with a repeated section, play the bracketed 1st ending the first time, and perform the 2nd bracketed ending (skipping the 1st) the second time

movement – a section of a multi-movement work

stanza – a verse

trio – a performance by, or composition for, three musicians; also a sub-section of a march

GENERAL TERMS

acoustics – study of the properties of sound

frequency – the number of cycles of sound waves happening every second when a sound is produced; frequency determines pitch

opus – (*lit. work*) numbers that are used to catalog a composer’s work in order

resonance – the reverberating quality of sound

HARMONY AND MELODY

dominant – the 2nd most important note or chord in any key, five scale degrees above the tonic; the triad built on the dominant; Ex. G-B-D in the key of C.

resolution – movement from dissonance to consonance

sub-dominant – the note a perfect 5th BELOW the tonic; the triad that starts on that same note; Ex. F-A-C in the key of C.

tonic – the main note (tone) or chord in any key

INSTRUMENT CHARACTERISTICS

bell – the flared end of a brass or woodwind instrument where the sound exits

embouchure – (*Fr.*) the position of the mouth when playing brass and woodwind instruments

mallet – wooden or plastic stick (with a rounded head) used to play percussion instruments

mouthpiece – the plastic, metal, or wooden piece of an instrument that an instrumentalist blows air through to create pitch

reed – a shaped piece of wood that vibrates against a mouthpiece to create pitch on a woodwind instrument

tubing – the metal tubes through which air flows to create pitch in a brass instrument

valve – a mechanism that directs air into various parts of tubing on a brass instrument to create different pitches

INTERVALS

minor 2nd – one half-step

major 2nd – one whole-step

major 3rd – 4 half-steps

perfect 4th – 5 half-steps

JAZZ AND POP TERMS

bridge – the contrasting middle section of a song, sometimes called the **middle eight**

LARGE FORMS

fugue – a polyphonic work where several melodies based on an original melody enter at different times and then continue to the end of the piece

MUSICIANS

accompanist – a musician who plays accompaniment (often piano) for a choir or soloist

arranger – a musician who takes previously existing music and creates a new version of it

ensemble – (*Fr., lit. together*) a group of performers, often referring to a small group

PERFORMANCE TERMS

dolce – sweet

espressivo – expressively


lento – slow


presto – a very fast tempo

sempre – always

simile – in the same manner or style as previously marked

slur – curved line that shows that notes are to be played or sung as a group (not to be confused with a tie)

tenuto – () held or sustained for full value

trill – () musical ornament where one rapidly alternates the note with another note next to it




PIANO & GUITAR

88 – the total number of keys on a full-sized piano keyboard

bridge – the part of a guitar that transfers string vibrations to the body of the instrument

nut – the ridge on the guitar at which the strings pass over to the fretboard and begin to vibrate

PITCH

accidentals – symbols used to raise or lower a pitch, or in the case of a natural sign, to return to the original pitch; flats () , sharps () and naturals ()


concert pitch – standard pitch is A = 440 cycles per second

flat – () a sign that lowers a note by half-step

intonation – being in tune

key – a way to describe the most important note, or tonic, of a piece of music, and the notes that are used along with it


middle C – the C that is closest to the middle of the keyboard (often near the name of the piano); sitting in the middle of the grand staff, it is an important reference note for all musicians

natural – () symbol used to cancel a sharp or a flat

overtone – a note that automatically sounds as a result of, and above, a fundamental tone's vibrations

partial – any overtone including the fundamental (original) note

range – the distance between the highest and lowest note of an instrument or passage of music

sharp – () a symbol that raises a note by half-step

skip (or leap) – a melodic jump to from one note to another

step – moving from one note to another that is right next to it

tuning – adjustment to a recognized correct pitch; the exact frequency of vibrations for a pitch

RHYTHM/METER

common time – four-four time (a very common time signature)

downbeat – the 1st beat of a measure which is stronger than the other beats

meno mosso – less motion (slower tempo)

meter – the organization of accented and unaccented notes in a measure

molto – very

pick-up – note or notes that begin before a downbeat

più mosso – more motion (faster tempo)

time signature – the numbers at the beginning of a piece or measure that define the organization of the meter; bottom number shows the unit of beat, top number shows the number of beats per bar

upbeat – the weak beat that precedes a strong downbeat

SCALES/KEYS/MODES

chromatic – notes that are not from the original given scale; “color” notes

diatonic – music that uses only notes from the given scale

ionian – 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-1; another name for MAJOR

TEMPO

a tempo – in tempo; usually follows a ritardando, rallentando, or ritenuto

accelerando – (*accel.*) gradually increase the tempo

decelerando – (*decel.*) gradually lessen the tempo

poco a poco – little by little

rallentando – (*rall.*) gradually lessen the tempo

ritardando – (*rit. or ritard.*) gradually lessen the tempo

ritenuto – (*riten.*) holding back the tempo

TEXTURE

counterpoint – art of combining melodies together, often one note at a time, “note against note”

orchestration – the art of using different instruments

VOCAL MUSIC

aria – (*lit. air*) an opera solo

diaphragm – the sheet of muscle between the lungs and the intestines that allows one to control breathing

larynx – the vocal mechanism in the neck; made of cartilage, it houses the vocal folds.

solfeccio/solfège – an Italian method of learning the notes of the scale

Ex. DO-RE-MI-FA-SOL-LA-TI-DO

vocalise – vocal exercise