

Vocabulary for all Music Students

LIST C – 94 Terms

La Habra High School – HiARTS

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STUDENT NAME: _____

DYNAMICS

fortississimo – (*fff*) very, very loud

pianississimo – (*ppp*) very, very quiet

sforzando – (*sfz*) sudden accent

FORM

antecedent – the opening phrase of a melody, it ends with a need to continue on (like a question in speech) and is followed by a *consequent* phrase

consequent – the closing phrase of a melody, it follows an *antecedent* phrase (like an answer)

d. s. al fine – return to the sign (§) then play until you reach the *fine*

da capo (D. C.) – (*lit. to the head*) return to the beginning of a piece

dal segno (D. S.) – (*lit. to the sign*) return to the sign and continue playing from there

fine – the finish

motive – the smallest melodic idea

theme – a self-contained musical idea

GENERAL TERMS

chamber music – music created for and performed by smaller groups of performers

reduction – when an orchestral or vocal score is reduced to a piano score

HARMONY AND MELODY

arpeggio – a “broken chord” where each note is played successively instead of simultaneously

consonance – pleasing or relaxed combinations of notes; relatively simple vibrational ratios between notes

diminished triad – a triad that is two minor thirds stacked upon each other; Ex. 1-b3-b5

dissonance – clash or harsh combinations of notes; complex vibrational ratios between notes

dominant seventh chord – the main 4-note structure of a key, starting on the 5th or dominant note, and containing stacked thirds: major 3rd, minor 3rd, minor 3rd

Ex. In the key of C the dominant 7th chord is G-B-D-F.

harmonic progression – a series of chords in a song

major triad – major third plus a minor third as in 1-3-5

picardy third – when a piece in the minor mode ends on a major tonic triad

seventh chord – a four note structure built by stacking three thirds above the root; Ex. 1-3-5-b7
or C-E-G-Bb

INSTRUMENT CHARACTERISTICS

double reed – two pieces of bound wood that create pitch on some woodwind instruments

ligature – the mechanism that holds or binds a reed to a mouthpiece

INTERVALS

minor 3rd – an interval containing 3 half-steps

diminished 4th/augmented 5th – also called **tritone**, an interval of 3 whole steps (6 half steps)

JAZZ AND POP TERMS

twelve-bar blues – a basic form for a blues song

Ex. (*chords in 4/4 time*) C – C – C – C – F – F – C – C – G7 – F – C – G7 and back to the top

turnaround – a chord or chords that lead from the end of a piece back to the beginning, as in the 12-bar blues (G7 in the above example would be the turnaround)

LARGE FORMS

sonata – multi-movement work for a solo instrument with piano accompaniment (or just piano)

string quartet – multi-movement work for 2 violins, 1 viola, and cello

MUSICIANS

concert master – lead musician of an orchestra, usually the 1st violinist

maestro – a very distinguished musician, especially an orchestra conductor

orchestrator – a musician who writes out music for orchestral instruments

virtuoso – a musician of exceptional ability

PERFORMANCE TERMS

glissando – (*gliss.*) gliding from one note to the next, playing every note in between

leggerio – lightly

marcato – marked or accented

(a) niente – (to) nothing

portamento – (*port.*) a vocal glissando

semplice – simply

senza – without

vivace – a vivacious tempo

PIANO & GUITAR

damper pedal – the farthest right piano pedal, also called **sustain pedal**. It keeps all struck notes sounding until you release it.


hammer-on – guitar technique where you first strike the string, and then hammer down a finger to create a new pitch


pull-off – guitar technique where you hold your finger down, strike the string, and then pull your finger off to play a new pitch

sustain pedal – see **damper pedal**


PITCH

circle of fifths – musician's tool, arranged like a clock beginning with C at 12:00 and moving in perfect 5ths clockwise until C is reached again (Opposite direction is the **circle of 4ths**!)


double-flat – () lowers a note by a whole-step

double sharp – () raises a note by a whole-step

RHYTHM/METER

caesura – () a grand pause

cut time – two-two time; time signature twice as fast as four-four (common in Jazz)

dot – () adds half of what it is next to (note, rest, or other dot) to the original note's value

hemiola – 2 against 3

metronome – a device that keeps a steady beat, expressed in beats-per-minute; sometimes marked as M.M. (Maelzel's Metronome) for the man its invention is attributed to

non troppo – not too much

swing rhythm (swing eighths) – in Jazz, two eighth notes in one beat are performed as a long-short rhythm even though they look even on the page

syncopation – emphasis on the “up” part of beats rather than the “down”

triplet – three notes in the space of what is normally two

SCALES/KEYS/MODES

aeolian – 1-2-b3-4-5-b6-b7-1 from MAJOR; another term for **natural minor scale**

chromatic scale – a 12-note scale that uses all half-steps from one note to the next same letter note
Ex. C-C#-D-D#-E-F-F#-G-G#-A-A#-B-C

mode – series of notes used in a composition; another name for *scale*

natural minor – 1-2-b3-4-5-b6-b7-1 (from MAJOR); also called **aeolian**

pentatonic – a five-note scale; Ex. C-D-E-G-A-C

harmonic minor – 1-2-b3-4-5-b6-7-1 (from MAJOR)

melodic minor – 1-2-b3-4-5-6-7-1 ascending, then 1-b7-b6-5-4-b3-2-1 descending (from MAJOR)

transpose – to change music to another key

TEMPO

- a piacere** – (*lit. at pleasure*) the performer may choose and alter the tempo at will
agitato – agitated or restless
allegretto – fast but not as fast as *allegro*
allegro assai – very fast and lively
andantino – less than *andante* (faster or slower?)
animato – animated and lively
attacca – move immediately to the next section
cantabile – in a singing style
misterioso – mysteriously
rubato – (*lit. robbed time*) a tempo characterized by slowing and speeding up the tempo, borrowing time from one beat to another
tranquillo – tranquilly
prestissimo – as fast as possible
tempo primo – (back to) the first tempo

TEXTURE

- ostinato** – a repeated line or idea, often in the bass, that stays the same and repeats over and over while the music around it changes
texture – the way melodic, rhythmic and harmonic materials are combined in a piece of music in regards to density and range

VOCAL MUSIC

- baritone** – voice part between tenor and bass
bocca chiusa – (*lit. mouth closed*) used for choir hums
chant – as in Gregorian chant, music with no time signature that follows the rhythm of the text, often written in original square notation
chorale – a four-part harmonization of a melody; another name for a choir
contralto – lowest treble voice part, lower than alto
counter tenor – a male voice trained to sing in the range of an alto or soprano
falsetto – highest part of a male voice range that does not use the entire length of the vocal folds; sometimes likened to Mickey Mouse, it is also called “false voice”
mass – a vocal music work based on five texts of the Catholic Mass: Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus/Benedictus, and Agnus Dei
melisma – melismatic vocal lines are characterized by two or more notes to one syllable of text
messa di voce – vocal exercise where one holds a single note and crescendos half-way and decrescendos the other half
mezzo-soprano – in opera, the voice part between soprano and contralto
motet – a short piece of sacred choral music, sung a capella, that was popular in the Renaissance
sotto voce – half-voice; sing in a whispered style