

Vocabulary for all Music Students

LIST D – 96 Terms

La Habra High School – HiARTS

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STUDENT NAME: _____

DYNAMICS

rinforzando – suddenly increasing in power

FORM

cadenza – unaccompanied section of virtuosic display played by a soloist

contour – the shape of a melody

countermelody – a second melody performed against the main melody

d. s. al coda – return to the sign (§) then continue on until you see a coda marking (⦿) and then jump to the coda

finale – a closing piece of a larger work; a big finish

overture – the introductory song of a stage show

segue – move without interruption to the next song (also **attacca**)

sequence – a melodic or harmonic repetition at successively higher or lower pitch levels

GENERAL TERMS

encore – (*Fr.*) again, yet, besides; a “bonus” piece after a concert is over

equal temperament – a system of tuning whereby each half-step of the chromatic scale is tuned in equal distances from each other, despite the actual overtone tunings

just intonation – a system of tuning whereby one tunes to the actual vibrational ratios of the overtone series

sonority – a chord, particularly when speaking of non-traditional harmonies

HARMONY AND MELODY

appoggiatura – a melodic embellishment; in counterpoint, the line jumps into a dissonance on a strong beat and then moves in the opposite direction by step

augmented triad – a triad that is two major thirds stacked upon each other; Ex. 1-3-#5

embellishment – melodic decoration (also **ornamentation**)

figured bass – a system of musical shorthand where Arabic numerals and symbols below a bass line indicate chords

harmonic rhythm – the speed at which the chords or harmonies change

minor triad – minor third plus a major third; Ex. 1-b3-5 or C-Eb-G

non-chord tone (NCT) – also called a **non-harmonic tone (NHM)**, it is a note that does not belong to the defined harmony of the moment

ornamentation – melodic decoration (also **embellishment**); the art of embellishing

pedal point – a long sustained note around which changing harmonies or chords occur

tonicization – a temporary “hinting” at another key or tonic

INSTRUMENT CHARACTERISTICS

mute – a device that changes and quiets the natural sound of an instrument

INTERVALS

compound interval – an interval that is greater than an octave (8)

JAZZ AND POP TERMS

fake book – a large book with many songs in lead sheet form

lead sheet – a score that shows melody and chords only

middle eight – another name for the **bridge** of a song, so named because it is often 8 bars long

vamp – simple musical idea designed to be repeated as over and over as necessary

walking bass – mostly one note per beat in a smooth on-beat line against which syncopations in other parts can happen

LARGE FORMS

concerto – large work for soloist(s) and orchestra

symphony – multi-movement work for orchestra

MUSICIANS

cantor – a singer who leads the singing in a religious ritual

engraver – a musician who prepares written scores for publication or performance

luthier – one who makes their own guitars and guitar-like instruments

PERFORMANCE TERMS

arco – play with the bow

morendo – dying away

pesante – heavily

pizzicato – (*pizz.*) plucking instead of bowing

tacet – silent

tremolo – the rapid repetition of one pitch; the rapid repetition of two pitches in succession

vibrato – wavering of a tone with an actual pitch fluctuation above and below the note


PIANO & GUITAR

capo – a device used on a guitar to shorten the strings, thereby raising the pitch (used for transposing)

harmonics – a technique that dampens off the fundamental tone of the guitar string and allows the higher overtones to ring

piano-forte – the soft-loud; the original name for the grand piano since it could play soft and loud (developed in the late 1700's)

PITCH

alto clef – () also known as C-clef, it shows the middle line of a staff to be middle C

enharmonic equivalents – two notes that are spelled differently, but refer to the same general pitch; Ex. F# and Gb

fundamental – the lowest note of an overtone series. (It generates all of the overtones.)


tessitura – the average range of an instrument or passage of music

RHYTHM/METER

agogic accent – the accenting of a note by lengthening, i.e. if all notes in a passage are quarter notes, then a single half note would sound accented

anacrusis – upbeat or pick-up

crusis – downbeat

double dot – () adds more value to a note; equals half of the dot that it is next to

SCALES/KEYS/MODES

atonal – music characterized by the lack of a tonic or home tone

diminished (octotonic) scale – 8-note scale made up of alternating whole and half steps (major and minor 2nds); can begin with a whole OR a half step; Ex. C-D-Eb-F-F#-G#-A-B-C

dorian – 1-2-b3-4-5-6-b7-1; like NATURAL MINOR with a raised 6

locrian – 1-b2-b3-4-b5-b6-b7-1; a 20th century mode, like PHRYGIAN with a flat 5

lydian – 1-2-3-#4-5-6-7-1; like MAJOR with a #4

mixolydian – 1-2-3-4-5-6-b7-1; like MAJOR with a flat 7

modulate – to change key

phrygian – 1-b2-b3-4-5-b6-b7-1; like MINOR with a flat 2

tetrachord – four notes that are a building block of a scale; 2 tetrachords make up a 7-note scale

tonal – music characterized by a single most important note called the tonic

whole tone scale – 6-note scale made up only of whole steps; Ex. C-D-E-F#-Ab-Bb-C

TEMPO

ad libitum – (*ad lib.*) at will; freely
allegro con brio – fast and lively with brilliance
allegro con spirito – fast and lively, with spirit
alla marcia – like a march
con fuoco – with fire
grave – gravely slow
grazioso – with grace
langsam – (*Gr.*) a slow tempo
maestoso – majestically
risoluto – with resolve
scherzando – in a playful or joking manner
schnell – (*Gr.*) quickly
sostenuto – slow and sustained
stringendo – gradually increasing the tempo; stringing the notes together
vivo – with life

TEXTURE

homophony – homophonic music is characterized by a single melody with other parts providing an accompaniment with the same rhythm, such as in a hymn or a barbershop song
polyphony – polyphonic music is characterized by two or more melodies with different rhythms happening simultaneously, as in a round, canon or fugue

VOCAL MUSIC

Bel Canto – (*lit. beautiful singing*) 18th and 19th century Italian style of singing that emphasizes beautiful vocal color and technique
hyphen – in vocal music, as in a dictionary, it shows syllabification of text
lied – German song
libretto – the book or story that is used for the text of an opera
madrigal – a vocal work based on a secular poem, sung a cappella, and popular in the Renaissance
musical – a dramatic stage production, usually in a more “pop”/less “classical” style, and usually with spoken dialogue between the songs
neume – in chant, a symbol that showed pitch; eventually became our modern notes
opera – a dramatic stage production set to music, usually with no spoken dialogue but only sung
phonation – the setting in motion of the vocal cords (with air) to create sound
recitative – in vocal music, especially opera, a lightly accompanied recited singing style
requiem – (*lit. rest*) a choral mass for the dead
sargam – an Indian method of learning the notes of a scale. SA-RE-GA-MA-PA-DHA-NI-SA
syllabic – vocal lines characterized by one note per syllable of text
vocal slur – in vocal music, it shows which notes belong to which syllable of text
word extension – in vocal music, an “underscore” that follows a word or final syllable to the last note of a melisma