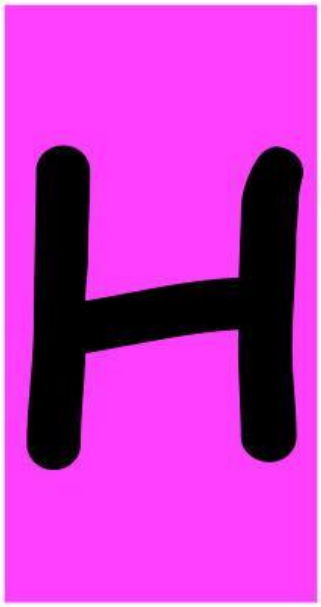
Breadalbane Academy Performing Arts

Music Department



Understanding Music

Listening Concepts

Name_____

curriculum for excellence

NQ Music : Higher Level - Updated 2017 DMG

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Understanding Music

This booklet covers ALL musical concepts required for NQ HIGHER LEVEL. Use it in class and at home for continued revision.

In addition, a helpful website for home revision is:-

jm-education.com

also

A-Z of Music concepts - Musipedia

This is an important element of the course and is in the form of a written listening paper (May diet of exams).

It is worth **40 marks** and **35% of your total overall final grade.**

LIVEWORKSHEETS

MELODY / HARMONY	RHYTHM / TEMPO	TEXTURE / STRUCTURE / FORM	TIMBRE / DYNAMICS	STYLES
Mode/modal	3 against 2	Through-Composed	Tremolando	Sonata
Relative major / minor	Time changes	Da Capo Aria	Harmonics	Oratoria
Interval	Irregular Time Sigs	Lied	Coloratura	Impressionist
Obbligato	Augmentation	Passacaglia	Ripieno	Musique concrete
Acciaccatura	Diminution	Concerto Grosso	Concertino	Plainchant
Mordent		Sonata Form	String quartet	Mass
Plagal Cadence		Exposition		String Quartets
Interrupted Cadence		Subject		Recitative
Tierce de Picardie		Basso Continuo		Chamber Music
Dominant 7th		Ritornello		Jazz Funk
Diminished 7th				Soul Music
Added 6th				
Harmonic Minor Scale				
Melodic Minor Scale				

New concepts for HIGHER LEVEL

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Melody & Harmony

Words in this section describe what is happening in the melody or 'tune' and the different ways that notes are formed together to make harmony.

The melody can move in a variety of ways:-

ASCENDING	Moving in an upward direction	☐
DESCENDING	Moving in a downward direction	☐
STEPWISE	Moving by step to the note directly above or below	☐
LEAPING	Jumping between high notes and low notes	☐

The melody can move in patterns:-

REPETITION	Musical idea heard more than once in exactly The same way by exactly that same Instrument / voice	☐
SEQUENCE	A pattern of notes repeated higher or lower	☐
QUESTION	An opening phrase in a melody	☐
ANSWER	Reply to an opening phrase or musical answer	☐

The melody can be measured in distance:-

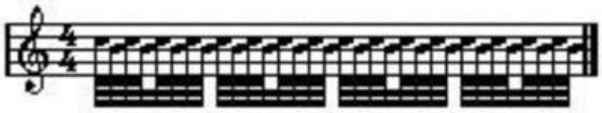
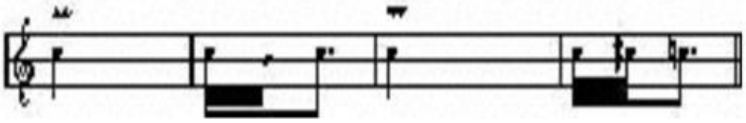
The melody / harmony can me measured in distance ☐

INTERVAL The distance between 2 notes

LIVEWORKSHEETS

SEMITONE	The shortest distance in music – half a tone C to C# or B to Bb, etc	☐
TONE	An interval of 2 semitones, eg from C to D or F to G etc	☐
BROKEN CHORD / ARPEGGIO	Notes of the chord played separately	☐
OCTAVE	The distance of eight notes	☐

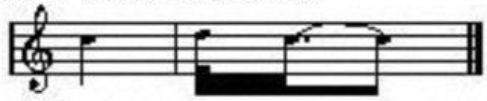
The melody can be decorated in order to make it more interesting:-

IMPROVISATION	Music made up on the spot	☐
ORNAMENT	A musical decoration in the melody line	☐
GLISSANDO	Sliding rapidy up and down the notes	☐
GRACE-NOTE	A type of ornament played quickly before the note. Used mainly as a decoration	☐
TRILL	A rapid repeated movement between 2 notes 	☐
MORDENT	An ornament. Played as : the main note – the note above – the main note again. (inverted mordent - mordent) 	☐

LIVEWORKSHEETS

ACCIACCATURA

An ornament which sounds like a 'crushed note'. The note is played very quickly on or before the note.



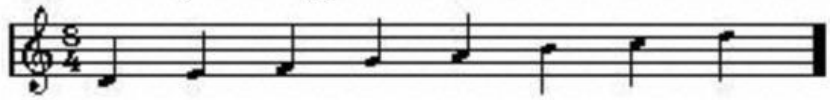
PITCH BEND

Changing the pitch of a note by pushing a string upwards on a guitar or by using a control wheel on a keyboard. Gives a "wonky" effect.

Melodies can be played using different scales:-

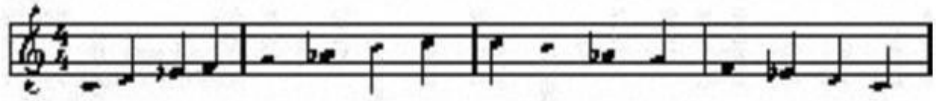
MODE/MODAL

Usually refers to an early form of scale or in reference to a major mode (major key) or minor mode (minor key).



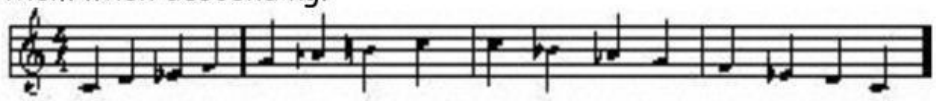
HARMONIC MINOR

Scale sharing the same key signature as its relative major but raises the 7th note by one semitone.



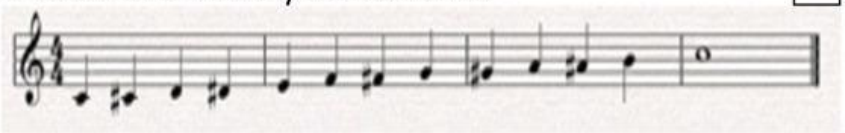
MELODIC MINOR

Scale sharing the same key signature as its relative major but raises the 6th and 7th notes by one semitone ascending and similarly lowers them when descending.



CHROMATIC

A scale built entirely on semitones



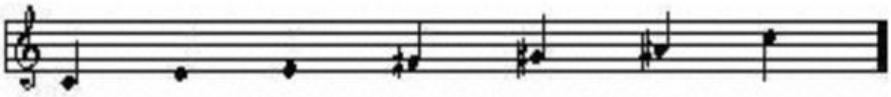
LIVEWORKSHEETS

PENTATONIC SCALE

A scale based on 5 notes. Very popular in folk (Scottish) Music

WHOLE TONE SCALE

A scale built entirely on tones. Popular in 20th Century music and sometimes sounds strange to the ear.



ATONAL / CLUSTER

Music based on no particular key. Sounds dissonant and is hard to listen to.
Very popular in 20th Cent.

RELATIVE MAJOR

A change from a minor key to the major key with the same signature. The major key is found 3 semitones higher –
eg, D Minor to F Major

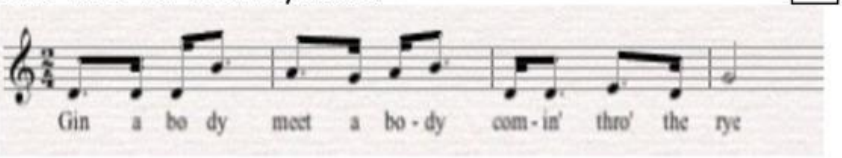
RELATIVE MINOR

A change from the major key to the minor key with the same key signature. The minor key is found 3 semitones lower –
eg, C Major to A Minor

In vocal music we can describe the word setting of melodies as follows:-

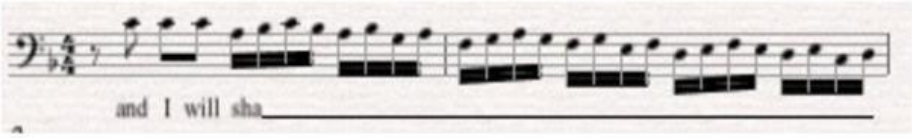
SYLLABIC

One note for each syllable.



LIVEWORKSHEETS

MELISMATIC Several notes sung to one syllable



SCAT SINGING Nonsense words and sounds made up by a singer usually found in JAZZ music. ☐

Harmony can be split into two areas of TONALITY:-

MAJOR The music sounds in a major key – bright and happy sounding ☐

MINOR The music sounds in a minor key – sad and dull sounding ☐

Melody / Harmony is built in the following way:-

CHORD Two or more notes sounding together ☐

CHORD CHANGE Moving from 1 chord to a different chord ☐

DISCORD A chord in which certain notes clash producing an unpleasant sound. Popular in 20th Century music ☐

VAMP A rhythmic accompaniment with a bass note played on the strong beat and a chord played off the beat. ☐

CONTRARY MOTION Two parts moving in opposite directions Eg one ascending, one descending ☐

COUNTERMELODY A melody played against the main melody ☐

LIVEWORKSHEETS

DESCANT — Another melody above the main tune, mainly in vocal music

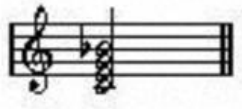
OBBLIGATO — A prominent solo additional instrument part in a piece of music. Almost like an instrumental descant

PEDAL — A note which is held or repeated continuously in the bass part while the harmony changes over it

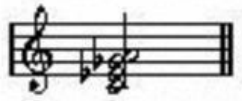
INVERTED PEDAL — A note which is held or repeated continuously in the upper part while the harmony changes below it

Chords :-

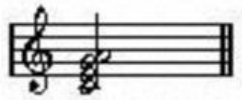
DOMINANT 7th — Chord built upon the dominant (5th) note of the key which adds the 7th note above the root (the 7th note of the scale).
Eg – In the scale of F Major (C-E-G-Bb)



DIMINISHED 7th — A chord built from three Minor 3rd intervals one on top of the other. The interval between the lower note and the top note is a diminished 7th.



ADDED 6th * — Chord made up from a Major chord with the 6th note added to the top.
Sometimes gives a 'jazzy' effect!



LIVEWORKSHEETS