Instrumental Music

Symphony

A symphony is a large-scale piece for orchestra, usually with 4 movements (sections), each with a different character (fast, slow, dance-like, dramatic). Listen to the opening of Beethoven's 5th symphony and answer the grid below



Rhythm and Tempo	
Tonality *(major / minor/ atonal)*	
Dynamics *(NB do they change?)*	
Texture of opening 4 bars	
Texture of bars 5 - 13	
Concept in bassoon and cello (bar 5)	
Timbre	

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Listen to the opening of Mozart's 40th symphony and answer the grid below



Rhythm and Tempo *(NB violin bar 1)*	
Tonality	
Dynamics *(NB do they change?)*	
Texture	
Texture of bars 5 - 13	
Melodic concept in violin parts	
Timbre	
Both these symphonies come from the CLASSICAL period.	
• Clear cut, balanced phrases • Simple, diatonic harmonies • Strings, Woodwind, Brass (horns / trumpets), Percussion (timpani) • Graded dynamics and generally clear, homophonic textures • Sequences, trills, scales, arpeggios, alberti bass	

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Baroque Period (1600-1750)

Main composers: **Bach** **Handel** **Vivaldi** **Telemann**

The continuo (or basso continuo) part was usually played on the **harpsichord** or **organ**. The instruments were used in the harmonies and for holding the ensemble together. The bass line was often played by the **cello** or **bassoon**.
The Baroque orchestra was relatively small (a small orchestra is known as a chamber orchestra). The orchestra was still evolving during the Baroque period. At first there were no set instruments, but as the 17th century progressed, the orchestra began to take shape.

Baroque orchestra instruments usually included:

Strings
Mainly strings - violins, violas, cellos and double basses

Woodwind
Recorders or wooden flutes, oboes and bassoon

Brass
Sometimes trumpets and/or horns (without valves)

Timpani
Percussion

Basso Continuo
Harpsichord or organ

Musical characteristics of Baroque music

The use of **harpsichord basso continuo** provides foundation, providing a strong, purposeful bass that causes the music to press forward throughout.

Modes now replaced by **major-minor keys diatonic harmonies**

long flowing melodic lines often using **ornamentation** (decorative notes such as trills and turns)

Lots of **polyphonic/ contrapuntal textures** contrasting with homophonic passages

Use of **ground bass, pedal** and sometimes **walking bass**

Terraced dynamics and contrasts between solo and ensemble, creating sudden changes in volume and an echo-like effect

Example 1 Example 2 Example 3 Example 4

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Classical Period (1750-1820)

Classical orchestras were bigger in size and as instrument building improved so did the range of dynamics in the performance. The harpsichord was replaced with the fortepiano, the precursor to today's modern piano.

Main composers: **Mozart Haydn Beethoven Clementi**

Strings

Violin, viola, cello, double bass, and sometimes harp

Woodwind

Recorder or wooden flute, oboe, bassoon and **clarinet**

Brass

Trumpet, horns (with valves by the end of the period)

Percussion

Timpani (kettledrums) and sometimes triangle, hand cymbals and bass drum

Keyboard

Fortepiano/piano

Musical characteristics of Classical

Lighter, clearer textures than Baroque – **mainly homophonic** (melody with accompaniment) but still polyphonic textures in places

Clear cut, balanced phrases with shorter, elegant melodies

Harmonies are still diatonic but with increasing colourful chromatic chords as period progresses

More variety and contrast within a piece – frequent changes of mood and timbre

Graded dynamics – use of crescendo and sforzando

Harpsichord disappears and replaced by piano (solo and chamber music as well as piano concerto)

Instrumental music becomes more dominant though still vocal music forms

Concerto grosso disappears – only **solo concerto**, often featuring a **cadenza**, where the soloist can show off their skill

Rise of the **symphony** and string quartet

Example 1 Example 2 Example 3 Example 4

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Romantic Period (1820-1900)

Main composers: **Tchaikovsky Chopin Liszt Mahler Wagner**

During the romantic period, the orchestra had become a great force due to its increasing size including the following:

Strings
Larger string section

Woodwind
Flutes and piccolo, oboes and clarinets, bassoon and double bassoons

Brass
Trumpets, trombones and French horns (tuba added later in the period)

Percussion
Full percussion section

Keyboard
Piano

Some Romantic orchestra (e.g. Wagner, Mahler) were huge with hugely dominating brass sections, benefitting from the development of the valve system

Musical characteristics of Romantic

Large orchestras – prominent brass and percussion

Use of **rubato** , triplets

Adventurous harmonies and modulations, including intense chromaticism and discords

Intense, lyrical and emotional melodies

Rich variety of styles of piece, ranging from short solo piano pieces and songs to huge symphonies

Rise of Nationalistic music

Greater technical virtuosity – especially from pianists and violinists

Example 1 Example 2 Example 3 Example 4

LIVEWORKSHEETS

20th Century Period

Musical characteristics of 20th Century music

Melodies are often **fragmented, dissonant and experimental**. Depending on the form or style used, melodies could be based on scales from non-Western countries, chromatic scales, twelve-tone rows, or microtonal scales. Wide leaps in melody, glissandi, angular melodies

Harmony is often **experimental and dissonant**. Note **clusters**. Instead of all harmony being based on the interval of a third, harmony is sometimes based on seconds, fourths and fifths (respectively). **Atonality**, meaning an absence of tonality, is present in music such as twelve-tone compositions. **Extended chords**

Use of **whole tone scale** (*Impressionist* music)

Musical forms from previous musical periods are used, often in experimental ways

Minimalism – Started in early 1970s. This music uses simple, repetitive melodies and rhythms (**ostinato**) that are gradually extended by adding more layers of music until a complex structure develops

Complex, individual rhythms are used, and new rhythms and meters are common such as **polyrhythms**. **Irregular meters and time changes**. **Syncopation, ostinato**

Performing groups during this era include chamber orchestras; instrumental ensembles; orchestras; choral groups; computer generated instruments (including synthesizers); and mixed media (taped sounds with traditional instruments).

Huge variety of timbres/ tone colours – expansion of percussion section, instruments played at extremes of register, muted brass effects, new effects from strings (e.g., *tapping on body of instrument with heel of bow, col legno etc*)

Example 1 Example 2 Example 3 Example 4

LIVEWORKSHEETS

What Musical Period?

Choose from: **Baroque Classical Romantic 20th Century**

1

Question 1

Musical Period: _____
Reason 1: _____
Reason 2: _____

2

Question 2

Musical Period: _____
Reason 1: _____
Reason 2: _____

3

Question 3

Musical Period: _____
Reason 1: _____
Reason 2: _____

4

Question 4

Musical Period: _____
Reason 1: _____
Reason 2: _____

...

5

Question 5

Musical Period: _____
Reason 1: _____
Reason 2: _____

6

Question 6

Musical Period: _____
Reason 1: _____
Reason 2: _____

7

Question 7

Musical Period: _____
Reason 1: _____
Reason 2: _____

8

Question 8

Musical Period: _____
Reason 1: _____
Reason 2: _____

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Concerto

A concerto is a large piece of music for a solo instrument (like violin, piano, or trumpet) with orchestra. It usually has three movements: fast – slow – fast. Listen to each of the following concertos from different musical periods and comment on any features that are **specific to these musical periods.**

Concerto	Period	Musical features
Albinoni Oboe concerto in D minor	**BAROQUE**	
Mozart's Clarinet Concerto	**CLASSICAL**	
Grieg Piano Concerto	**ROMANTIC**	
Bartok Piano Concerto no 1	**TWENTIETH CENTURY**	

Cadenza:

A cadenza is a show-off solo passage in a concerto, often unaccompanied, where the soloist improvises or plays virtuosic music.

cadenza in Beethoven piano concerto no 3

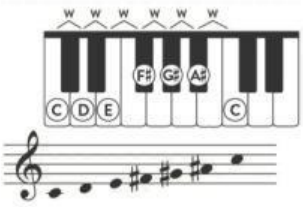
- Concerto / cadenza quiz
- Symphony / concerto quiz

Minimalism:

Minimalist music uses repetition of short ostinato patterns, repeating arpeggios, gradual changes, and layering to create a hypnotic effect. Originated in the 20th century.

Extract 1 Extract 2

Whole tone scale:



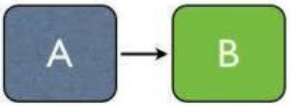
Key Features:

- **No home note:** It sounds blurry, drifting, and unresolved.
- **Mood:** It creates a dreamy, floating, or mysterious atmosphere
- **Impressionism:** Composers like Debussy used it to picture mist, water, or dreams. Extract 1 Extract 2
- **World Music:** It appears in Indonesian Gamelan and traditional Chinese music.
- Whole tone scale often sounds like a **movie dream sequence.**

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Musical Forms

🟩 Binary Form (AB)



🧩 **Two parts**
➡️ Section A – Main idea
➡️ Section B – New, contrasting idea

🟧 Ternary Form (ABA)

🔁 **Three parts** – music returns to the opening
➡️ A – Start
➡️ B – Contrast
➡️ A – Return of opening music
📌 *TIP:* Like a musical sandwich 🥪



🟦 Rondo Form (ABACA...)

🎯 **Main theme (A) keeps coming back**
➡️ **A – Main**
➡️ **B – New section**
➡️ **A – Main again**
➡️ **C – Another contrasting section**
➡️ **A – Back again**



🟥 Theme & Variations

🎨 **Theme changes** each time it returns
➡️ A – A1 – A2 – A3...

- Theme and Variation form varies the melody.
- Melody is usually a simple, memorable tune.
- There can be **any number** of variations.
- Each variation should be a recognisable version of the main theme, although it will be distinctly different:



LIVEWORKSHEETS

🟪 Strophic Form

🎵 Same tune, different words. Verse repeating

➡️ A – A – A – A...

🎤 *Used in:* Hymns, folk songs

🟫 Verse & Chorus

📖 Verse = tells the story

🎶 Chorus = the catchy repeated bit

🪕 *Used in:* Pop, rock, folk

➡️ V – C – V – C – (Middle Eight) – C

🟧 Middle Eight

🎤 A short, 8-bar **contrasting** section

💥 Breaks up verse/chorus repetition

🎶 *Also known as:* The bridge

🎸 *Used in:* Pop & rock songs

Musical forms summary

Structure	Pattern	Description	Example
Binary	A – B	Two contrasting sections	Baroque dance forms
Ternary	A – B – A	Return to the first section after a contrast	Classical piano music
Rondo	A – B – A – C – A	Main theme keeps returning	Beethoven's Rondo pieces
Middle Eight	(8 bars)	A short contrasting section in pop	Bridges in pop songs
Strophic	A – A – A...	Same music repeated with different lyrics	Hymns and folk songs
Theme & Variations	A – A1 – A2...	Same melody changed each time	Mozart's "Twinkle" Variations
Verse & Chorus	V – C – V – C	Verses tell story, chorus is repeated	Most pop songs



Structure and form quiz 1

Structure and form quiz 2

LIVEWORKSHEETS