

# Music Department



## Understanding Music Listening Concepts



Name \_\_\_\_\_

curriculum for excellence



NQ Music : Higher Level - Updated 2017 DMG

# Understanding Music

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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\*\*](http://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.**

MELODY / HARMONY	RHYTHM / TEMPO	TEXTURE / STRUCTURE / FORM	TIMBRE / DYNAMICS	STYLES
				Page   3
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

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# 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:-

<b>ASCENDING</b>	Moving in an upward direction	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>DESCENDING</b>	Moving in a downward direction	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>STEPWISE</b>	Moving by step to the note directly above or below	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>LEAPING</b>	Jumping between high notes and low notes	<input type="checkbox"/>

The melody can move in patterns:-

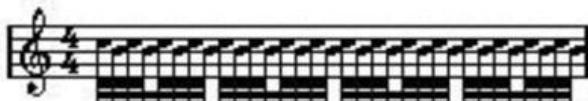
<b>REPETITION</b>	Musical idea heard more than once in exactly The same way by exactly that same Instrument / voice	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>SEQUENCE</b>	A pattern of notes repeated higher or lower	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>QUESTION</b>	An opening phrase in a melody	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>ANSWER</b>	Reply to an opening phrase or musical answer The melody can be measured in distance:-	<input type="checkbox"/>

The melody / harmony can be measured in distance

<b>INTERVAL</b>	The distance between 2 notes	<input type="checkbox"/>

SEMITONE	The shortest distance in music - half a tone C to C# or B to Bb, etc	<input type="checkbox"/>
TONE	An interval of 2 semitones, eg from C to D or F to G etc	<input type="checkbox"/> Page   5
BROKEN CHORD / ARPEGGIO	Notes of the chord played separately	<input type="checkbox"/>
OCTAVE	The distance of eight notes	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

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

**ACCIACCATURA**

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



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**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.

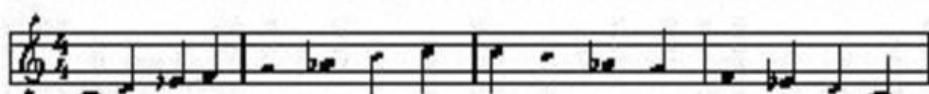
Melodies can be played using different scales:-

**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**

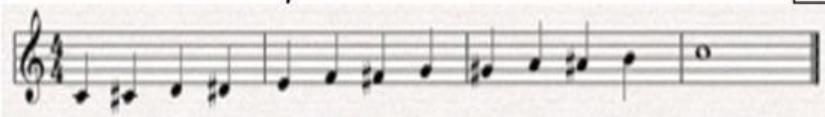
Scale sharing the same key signature as its relative major but raises the 7<sup>th</sup> note by one semitone.

**MELODIC MINOR**

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

**CHROMATIC**

A scale built entirely on semitones



**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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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

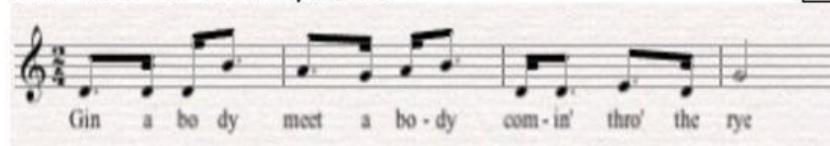
**RELATIVE MINOR**

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.



**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 20<sup>th</sup> 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

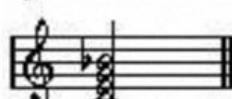
**COUNTERMELODY**

A melody played against the main melody

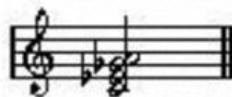
DESCANT	Another melody above the main tune, mainly in <u>vocal</u> music	<input type="checkbox"/>
OBBLIGATO	A prominent solo additional instrument part in a piece of music. Almost like an instrumental descant	Page   9 <input type="checkbox"/>
PEDAL	A note which is held or repeated continuously in the bass part while the harmony changes over it	<input type="checkbox"/>
INVERTED PEDAL	A note which is held or repeated continuously in the upper part while the harmony changes below it	<input type="checkbox"/>

Chords :-

DOMINANT 7 <sup>th</sup>	Chord built upon the dominant (5 <sup>th</sup> ) note of the key which adds the 7 <sup>th</sup> note above the root (the 7 <sup>th</sup> note of the scale). Eg - In the scale of F Major (C-E-G-Bb)	<input type="checkbox"/>
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DIMINISHED 7 <sup>th</sup>	A chord built from three Minor 3 <sup>rd</sup> intervals one on top of the other. The interval between the lower note and the top note is a diminished 7 <sup>th</sup> .	<input type="checkbox"/>
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ADDED 6 <sup>th</sup> *	Chord made up from a Major chord with the 6 <sup>th</sup> note added to the top. Sometimes gives a 'jazzy' effect!	<input type="checkbox"/>
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