Pitch and Melody

Most African melodies are based on a "limited number of pitches" - four, five, six or seven note **SCALES** and are normally short and simple, often expanded by **REPETITION** and **IMPROVISATION**. The pitch in African drumming is largely determined by the tuning of the drums.

Tempo

Since much African music was designed for dancing and social gatherings, the tempo is normally fast or set appropriately to "match the dance steps". Changes of tempo in African drumming are given by the **MASTER DRUMMER** who can speed up, slow down or set a new tempo with the drum ensemble through the use of musical cues.



Structure and Phrasing

The structure of a piece of African drumming depends on the **MASTER DRUMMER** and has no fixed or determined length, entirely dependent on the rhythms used.

Harmony and Tonality

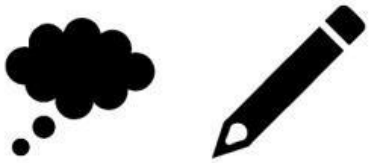
African singers often create harmony by singing in thirds, fourths or fifths. **UNISON** and **PARALLEL OCTAVE** harmony is also common.

Ornamentation

The **MASTER DRUMMER** can elaborate and decorate his solo drum part with accents and playing in a technically demanding style to "show off" to the drum ensemble and audience.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

PIT STOP



How is the **TEMPO** of African Drumming controlled within an ensemble?

How would a **MASTER DRUMMER** use **ORNAMENTATION** in African Drumming?

How is **FORM AND STRUCTURE** used within African Drumming?

LIVEWORKSHEETS