

Vocal Music

The main **voices** you will find in any vocal music are :

SOPRANO

a high female voice

MEZZO SOPRANO

a female voice whose range lies between that of Soprano and Alto

ALTO

a low female voice

TENOR

a high male voice

BARITONE

a male voice whose range lies between that of Bass and Tenor – closer to bass

BASS

a low male voice

- [Recognising voices quiz](#)

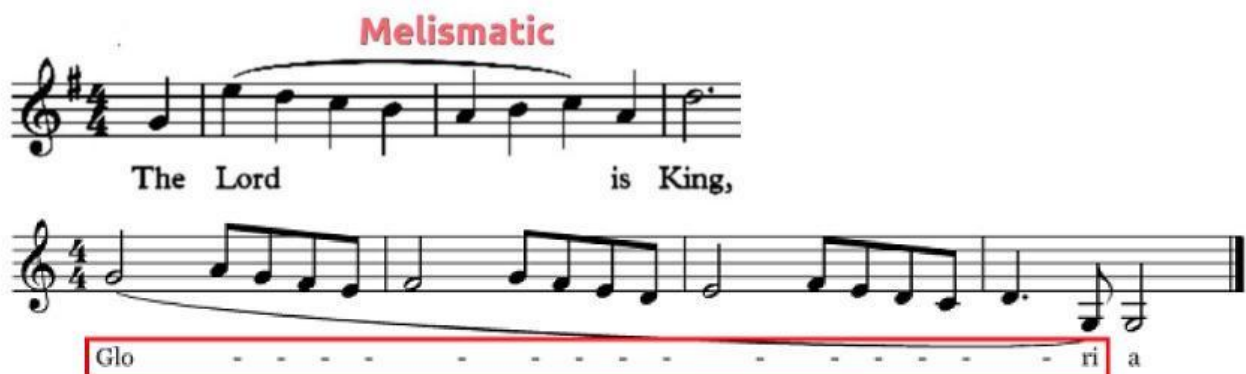
Word setting

When listening to voices, you will often be asked about the word setting.

SYLLABIC – one note per syllable



MELISMATIC (Melisma) – lots of notes to one syllable



- [Melismatic or syllabic quiz](#)

• CHORUS

The term CHORUS can be used to describe a group of singers (e.g. choir) or the music performed by a group of singers.

SATB is used to describe a chorus of mixed voices – Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass

- e.g. *Anvil Chorus*

• OPERA

A drama set to music with soloists, chorus, acting, and orchestral accompaniment. It is normally performed in a theatre. It features CHORUSES, ARIAS, DUETS, QUARTETS etc and is accompanied by an ORCHESTRA

- e.g. *Queen of the Night* – Magic Flute
- e.g. *Va Pensiero* - Nabucco

• MUSICAL

A musical play which has speaking, singing and dancing. In a musical there is much more dialogue than in an opera. It features CHORUSES, ARIAS, DUETS, QUARTETS etc and is accompanied by an ORCHESTRA/COMBO BAND

- e.g. *A Whole New World* - Aladdin

• ARIA

In operas or musicals ARIAS are solo songs which allows the soloist to show off his/her singing skill. An ARIA frequently uses MELISMAS, REPETITION, SEQUENCES and any other musical devices appropriate to the text setting. Accompanied by an orchestra.

e.g. *La dona e mobile* - (*Rigoletto* – Verdi)

Voice heard? _____

Beats in the bar? _____

e.g. *The Bird Catcher Song* - (*Magic Flute* - Mozart)

Voice heard? _____

Rhythmic concept? _____

e.g.. Mozart – *Parto ma tu ben mio* – Opera *La Clemenza di Tito*

Voice heard? _____

Solo instrument? _____

Listen to the **chorus** "The Triumphal Scene" from Verdi's Opera "Aida" and fill in the required information in the musical map below. A voice will help guide you through the music.

Chorus of

☐ SATB

☐ Male voices

☐ Female voices

(tick one box)

Sing in

☐ Unison

☐ Harmony

(tick one box)

1

Change of tonality to

2

Chorus of

☐ SATB

☐ Male voices

☐ Female voices

(tick one box)

the texture is

3

Chorus of

☐ SATB

☐ Male voices

☐ Female voices

(tick one box)

The cymbal plays

☐ On the beat

☐ Off the beat

(tick one box)

4

Melody played by

There are

beats in the bar

5

Other concepts relating to vocal music

DESCANT

A vocal melody sung ABOVE the main vocal tune. We often sing descants at Christmas in the final version of a carol – e.g. Once in Royal, Hark the Herald etc.

- *e.g. Silent Night*
- *E.g. Sing choirs of angels (Hark the Herald)*

COUNTER-MELODY

This can appear in both vocal and instrumental music. It is a melody played or sung against the main melody.

- e.g. Scarborough Fair
- e.g. Quintet (West Side Story)

A CAPPELLA

Voices singing without any instrumental accompaniment

- e.g. Hide and Seek
- e.g. Bridge over troubled water

SCAT SINGING

Nonsense words and sounds are made up by the singer. Used mainly in jazz.

STROPHIC

Each verse of a vocal piece has the same music.

e.g.

IMITATION

Imitation is when a phrase or melody is copied in another part. In popular music a popular form of imitation consists of **BACKING VOCALS** repeating usually the last notes of the lead singer last line

- e.g. O Happy Day
- e.g. Minnie the Moocher



ROUND/CANON

A very strict form of **IMITATION** is found in a **ROUND / CANON** e.g. *Frere Jacques*, *London's Burning*) After one part starts to play or sing a melody, another part enters shortly afterwards with exactly the same melody.



Listen to *Frere Jacques* as you hear it used in the 3rd movt of Mahler's 1st Symphony. You will hear the music **TWICE**.

- Describe the tonality
- Name the instrument playing the solo
- Name the instrument that enters in canon.

Vocal quizzes

Quiz 1

Quiz 2

Quiz 3

Quiz 4

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

Allegro con brio



2 Flutes

2 Oboes

2 Clarinets in B $\flat$

2 Bassoons

2 Horns in E $\flat$

2 Trumpets in C

Timpani in C/G

Violins 1

Violins 2

Violas

Cellos

Basses

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

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

Allegro Molto First Movement Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

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	

Instrumental Music

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 feature you notice 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	

- Concerto / cadenza quiz
- Symphony / concerto quiz

Cadenza

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

e.g. cadenza in Beethoven piano concerto no 3

Minimalist

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

e.g. Steve Reich's "Electric Counterpoint

Philip Glass – Metamorphosis 1

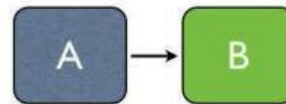
Musical Forms

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:



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