



IGCSE Music

Musical Language

NAME: _____

TEACHER: _____

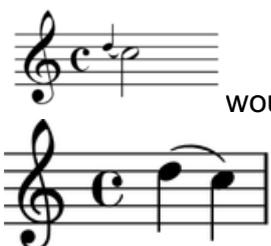
The musical vocabulary in this booklet forms the basis for the exploration of all of the Areas of Study within IGCSE Music.

This booklet is designed to be both a learning and a revision tool.

As new vocabulary is introduced in lessons, you should aim to learn it for use in class, your composition and performance commentaries and the final listening exam.

NOTATION

Staff	The five lines on which music is written.
Score	Musical name for sheet music.
Treble clef 	The clef for higher-pitched melody instruments (e.g. flute, oboe, clarinet, violin, trumpet & horn) and Soprano & Alto voices. The sign always goes in the same place on the staff with the curly part wrapped around the line for G above middle C.
Bass clef 	The clef for low-pitched instruments (e.g. tuba, trombone, bassoon, 'cello & double bass) and Bass voices. The blob always goes on the line for the F below middle C and the two little dots go other side of the F line.
Sharp 	A sharp makes a note one step/semitone higher. Sharp signs are always placed before the note. E.g. placing a # before an F would make it an F#
Flat 	A flat sign makes a note one step/semitone lower. Flat signs are always placed before the note. E.g. placing a b sign before a B would make it a B b
Natural 	A natural sign cancels a sharp or flat from earlier in the bar, or from the key signature itself. You never see natural in a key signature, only in the music as accidentals.
Phrase marks	Indicate the length of a phrase, and look like a bracket on its side over the top of the staff. They help the performer to know where to breathe.
Tie	Curved line that joins 2 notes of the same pitch, so that when they're played they sound like one note.
Trill 	Rapid alternation between the note indicated and the note directly above it: would be played as 
Turn 	Playing of the note above the one on the score, the note itself, the note below the one on the score and the note itself again: would be played as 
Mordent 	A single rapid alternation with the note above (upper mordent) or the note below (lower mordent): would be played as 
Acciaccatura 	Played a tone or semitone above or below the melody note it is decorating. Sometimes called a crushed note, because it is played very quickly before the melody note. Written  Played

Appoggiatura	<p>Comes from the Latin 'to lean upon', and is similar to an acciaccatura, but the main note is delayed by the ornament note, which takes half the length of the main note:</p>  <p>would be played as</p>
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RHYTHM

Anacrusis / Up-beat	An unstressed note or group of notes at the start of a phrase.
Syncopation	Where the accents are shifted from the main beat to a weaker beat, to avoid regular rhythm. (E.g. in 4/4, the main accent usually falls on the 1 st beat – in syncopated 4/4 time, you could move the main accent to, say, the 2 nd beat).
Metre	The regular pattern of beats indicated by a time signature.
Pulse	The 'heartbeat' of the music. Although the music may have rhythms made up of different note lengths, the pulse will be steady.
Rest	An interval of silence between one note and the next, indicated with a symbol on the staff.
Cross rhythm	When two different rhythms are played together at the same time. Usually rhythms contrast in some way for instance a rhythm with a triple metre feel against a rhythm with a duple metre feel.
Polyrhythm	When two or more rhythms are played at the same time. Parts usually contrast in metre and accent producing a rich, complex texture. Often found in African and Afro-Cuban music.
Swing rhythm	Syncopated, jazzy rhythm.
Tala (Indian)	A rhythm with a set number of beats.
Keteg (Gamelan)	One four beat bar.
Gongan (Gamelan)	An 8 bar rhythmic cycle.
Son (Salsa)	The basic rhythm which gave rise to Salsa.
Clave (Salsa)	Basic rhythm of a piece of Salsa music – either 3-2 or 2-3.
Chaal (Bhangra)	8 note, repeated rhythmic pattern, with swung quavers Dha na na na na dha dha na

MELODY/PITCH

Stepwise / Scalic	Movement of a melody upwards or downwards using the notes of the scale in order.
Leap	Movement of a melody upwards or downwards with a jump from one note to another more distant note.
Passing note	A note which links the note before and after, usually on the weak beat of the bar.
Interval	The distance between two notes.
Scale – major	A happy-sounding scale, constructed as follows: Tone, tone, semitone, tone, tone, tone, semitone.
Scale – minor	A sad-sounding scale, constructed as follows: Tone, semitone, tone, tone, semitone, tone, tone.
Scale – chromatic	A 13 note scale, where every step is a semitone. On a keyboard, you play every white and black note until you get an octave above the note you started on.
Scale – blues	A major scale with a flattened third and seventh, which replace the second and sixth notes.

Raga (Indian)	An Indian scale: Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni
Slendro (Gamelan)	The five note gamelan scale. Different gamelans are tuned to different scales.
Pelog (Gamelan)	The seven note gamelan scale. Different gamelans are tuned to different scales.
Range	The notes that an instrument can play or a voice can sing, from the highest to the lowest.
Bend / Slide / Glissando	A slide from one note to the next.

HARMONY

Diatonic	Harmony using notes from the scale (sounding 'normal' to us).
Dissonant	Harmony using notes outside the key, creating clashes. Often employed to create suspense or tension.
Atonal	Music without any sense of key.
Chromatic	Harmony using notes in addition to those from the scale (e.g. using black notes in the key of C major).
Chord – Major	A happy sounding chord, constructed from the root note of the chord using the golden ratio 4:3 (major 3 rd / minor 3 rd) e.g. root = C. Count up 4 semitones = E. Count up 3 semitones = G
Chord – Minor	A sad sounding chord, constructed from the root note of the chord using the golden ratio 3:4 (minor 3 rd / major 3 rd) e.g. root = C. Count up 3 semitones = E ^b . Count up 4 semitones = G
Chord – Seventh	A triad with an added fourth note – the seventh note above the root.
Chord – Tonic (I)	The 'home chord', built on the root note of the key in which you're in. E.g. C major – root note = C, therefore chord I = C major.
Chord – Sub-dominant (IV)	A 'primary chord', built on the fourth note of the key in which you're in. E.g C major – 4 th note = F, therefore chord IV = F major.
Chord – Dominant (V)	A 'primary chord', built on the fifth note of the key in which you're in. E.g. C major – 5 th note = G, therefore chord V = G major.
Blue note	A note that has been altered/flattened in blues music, most frequently the 3 rd , 5 th or 7 th degree of the scale.
Cadence – Perfect V-I	Dominant (V - built on the fifth note of the scale) to tonic (I - built on the first note of the scale). Like a full stop, giving the music a sense of completion.
Cadence – Imperfect I-V	Acts as a musical comma: the music must move on after it. Can be made up of any chord (typically I,II or IV) followed by chord V.
Cadence – Plagal IV-I	Subdominant (IV) to tonic (I). Another example of a full stop, but not as strong as a perfect cadence. AKA the 'Amen' cadence.
Cadence – Interrupted V-vi	'Surprise' cadence. Dominant (V) to submediant (VI). Chord VI is a chord of opposites – in a major key it is a minor chord and in a minor key is a major chord. Another example of a musical comma, requiring further music to resolve it.
Chordal (block chords)	The simplest way of playing chords - the notes of each chord are played all together and held until the next chord.
Arpeggiated (broken chords)	A more advanced way of playing chords – taking the notes of each chord and playing them separately, one after the other.
Triad	A three note chord.
Comping	Playing a chord sequence to an interesting rhythm on the piano.
Primary triad	The three most important chords in any key, chords I, IV & V. Between them, they can harmonise with any note in the scale.
Simple harmony	Harmony using only basic chords (i.e. primary triads I, IV & V)

Harmonic progression	The sequence of chords in a piece.
Harmonic rhythm	The speed of the chord changes.
Modulation	Moving from one key to another. In the exam, you need to be able to recognise modulation to the subdominant (IV), dominant (V), relative major or relative minor.
Drone	Played in the bass, like a pedal, but often has two notes played simultaneously. These two notes are usually a fifth apart (e.g. C & G). May be sustained or repeated.
12-bar Blues	A twelve bar, repeating chord sequence: (I / I / I / I / IV / IV / I / I / V / IV / I / I)

TEMPO

Largo	Very slow.
Andante	Walking pace.
Moderato	Moderately fast.
Allegro	Fast.
Vivace	Lively.
Presto	Very fast.
Accelerando	Getting faster.
Rallentando	Getting slower.
Allargando	Getting slower and playing more broadly.
Rubato	'Robbed time' - Speeding up or slowing down in response to the feel of the music, either stipulated by the composer (<i>Tempo rubato</i>) or as a result of the performer's interpretation.
Pause	A temporary stop on a particular note, indicated by a sign on the score.

DYNAMICS

Pianissimo (pp)	Very quiet.
Piano (p)	Quiet.
Mezzo piano (mp)	Quite quiet.
Mezzo forte (mf)	Quite loud.
Forte (f)	Loud.
Fortissimo (ff)	Very loud.
Crescendo	Gradually getting louder. (Hairpin on score = <)
Diminuendo	Gradually getting quieter. (Hairpin on score = >)

ARTICULATION

Staccato	Separating the notes of the melody, creating a detached sound.
Tongued	The way in which wind instrumentalists sound a note, more specifically the beginning and ending of a note.
Legato / Slurred	Joining the notes of the melody, creating a smooth sound.
Pizzicato	Plucking the strings to create short, detached notes.
Arco	Playing string instruments with a bow, creating a smooth sound.
Tremolo	Playing string instruments with a rapid up and down motion of the bow on the string.
Accent	Placing emphasis on a particular note, or sequence of notes.
Sforzando (sfz)	Suddenly getting loud.

INSTRUMENTS / ENSEMBLES / TIMBRES

Woodwind	Family of instruments including oboe, clarinet, saxophone, bassoon (where sound is produced using a reed) and flute (where sound is produced using a different style mouthpiece).
Brass	Family of instruments including trumpet, cornet, horn, trombone, tuba.
Strings	Family of instruments including violin, viola, cello and double bass.
Percussion	Family of instruments with 2 sub-groups, pitched and unpitched.

	Pitched: xylophone, glockenspiel, timpani etc. Unpitched: bass drum, snare drum, cymbals etc.
Piano	A keyboard instrument where the sound is created by the striking of a hammer on strings.
Continuo - Harpsichord - Organ	Instruments which provide a rhythmic and harmonic backing for a solo instrument, either on its own, or in a chamber orchestra. Continuo players normally play an accompaniment using the chord sequence and as such, don't have a melodic function.
Orchestra	A large group of instruments, featuring all four families of instruments.
Brass Band	A British brass band consists of c. 30 players, with soprano cornet, cornets in B ^b , flugelhorn, horns in E ^b , baritone horns, tenor trombones, bass trombone, euphonium, tubas and percussion.
Wind Band	Also known as a 'Concert Band' featuring members of the brass, woodwind and percussion families.
Wind Quintet	Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Horn & Bassoon.
String Orchestra	12-21 instrumentalists playing violin, viola, 'cello, double bass, harp, piano and sometimes percussion.
String Quartet	Violin I, Violin II, Viola, 'Cello.
Duet	A piece composed for 2 instrumentalists.
Trio	A piece composed for 3 instrumentalists.
Jazz band	Frontline: saxes, trumpets, trombones. Rhythm section: piano, guitar, drums, double bass.
Instruments relating to...	
Jazz	Saxes, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, piano, guitar, drums, double bass.
Indian Classical Music	-Sitar (large, 7 stringed, long necked instrument) -Tambura (smaller, 4 stringed instrument, used more for backing) -Tabla (pair of drums – one higher pitched, one lower pitched) -Sarod (small fretless instrument, like the sitar) -Sarangi (small bowed string instrument with no frets) -Bansuri (bamboo flute) -Shehnai (double reeded instrument, like an oboe) -Harmonium (keyboard instrument powered by air pumped by hand bellows)
Gamelan	-Saron (metallophone which plays the main tune) -Gender (narrow keys made of bronze, with bamboo pipes below which resonate the sound) -Bonang (two rows of small gongs resting on cords along a wooden frame) -Gambang (xylophone with wooden bars) -Gongs (kempul = medium hanging gongs, gong ageng = big gong, kenong & ketuk = gongs which rest horizontally on cords stretched along a wooden box) -Drums
Salsa	Big Band instruments: Frontline – trombones, trumpets, saxes Vocals – soneros (lead singers) and choro (chorus) Bass guitar, tres or Spanish Guitar and Piano Rhythm section – bongos, congas, guiro, maracas
Tango	Flute, violin, guitar, piano, double bass, percussion, bandoneon. Classic sextet = 2 bandoneons (accordion), 2 violins, piano, double bass.
Bhangra	Dhol (double headed, barrel shaped drum).
American Folk	Violin, banjo, mandolin, accordion, harmonica, double bass, guitar.
Irish Folk	Violin, wooden flute, tin whistle, accordion, guitar, pipes, percussion (bodhran – wooden framed drum)

VOICES / ENSEMBLES / TIMBRE

Soprano	High female voice. Sings roughly from middle C to the C 2 octaves above.
Treble	A boy soprano, singing within the same range.
Mezzo-Soprano	A female voice lower than a soprano, but higher than an alto.
Alto	Low female voice. Sings roughly from the F below middle C to the F at the top of the treble clef stave.
Counter-tenor	A male alto, singing within roughly the same range.
Tenor	High male voice. Sings roughly from C below middle C to the G above.
Baritone	A male voice lower than a tenor, but higher than an alto.
Bass	Low male voice. Sings roughly from F below the bass clef to the E above middle C.
A cappella	Singing with no instrumental backing. The term comes from the Italian for 'in the chapel'
Syllabic	Every syllable of the text is sung to a single note.
Melismatic	The opposite of syllabic – a single syllable is sung over a succession of notes.
Lead Singer	The main vocalist who sings the melody.
Backing Vocals	Additional singers who support the lead vocalist by singing harmonies.
Choir	A group of singers. Normally, mixed voice choirs are made up of 4 voice parts – SATB (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass).
Scat	A jazz style of singing that doesn't use complete words, but 'nonsense' syllables to give the voice more of an instrumental quality.
Word painting	Where the music matches the words being sung. E.g. the word 'crying' could be sung to a descending pattern of notes.
Sonero (Salsa)	The lead singer in Salsa music.
Choro (Salsa)	The chorus or choir in Salsa music.

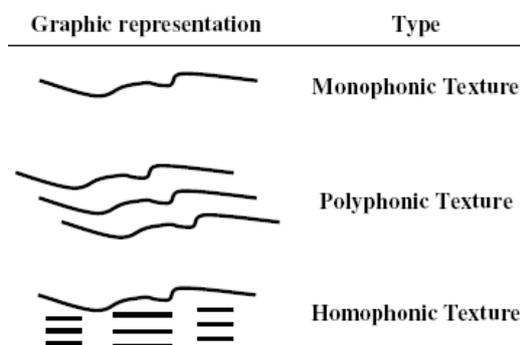
MELODIC & COMPOSITIONAL DEVICES

Repetition	Re-using musical material heard previously.
Sequence	Where a melodic phrase is immediately repeated at a different pitch, often by step.
Imitation	The repetition of a melody in a different voice. The repeated version can be varied by playing it a different pitch or making some changes to it, but the character of the original melody remains.
Ostinato	A musical phrase that constantly repeats, usually at the same pitch. Listen to Ravel's 'Bolero'.
Inversion	Where a melodic phrase is turned upside down, so that the intervals between the notes which rise in the original version now fall and vice versa.
Retrograde	Where a musical phrase is played backwards as a means of varying the original phrase and creating contrast.
Riff	Another word for ostinato, but used in the context of popular music.
Improvisation	The invention of new musical ideas on the spot during a performance. Normally associated with modern music, jazz and Indian classical music. Often built upon features of the music such as chord patterns, rhythms and melodic phrases.
Dialogue / Question & Answer	A musical conversation similar to call & response with one part singing or playing the question, with the other part responding with the answer.
Call & Response	A short melody (call), followed by an answering phrase

	(response).
Prego & Choro (Salsa)	Type of call & response used in Salsa music.
Walking Bass	A bassline consisting of small steps or intervals up and down the scale.
Fills	Short section of music between phrases.
Stabs	Short, accented notes, usually on an off-beat.
Hook	Short, memorable bit of tune.

TEXTURE

Solo	A piece for one main instrument.
Monophonic	Single melody line, without harmonies, although it may be played by more than one instrument or voice.
Homophonic / Chordal	A texture that is essentially chordal, where all of the parts generally move together, but there is one line that's most important. (i.e. hymn tune).
Polyphonic / Contrapuntal	The weaving together of two or more equally important melodic lines, which all fit together harmonically. This texture sounds 'busy'.
Unison	All instruments or voices playing or singing notes at the same pitch.
Parallel motion	Where parts move in the same direction as one another.
Contrary motion	Where parts move in the opposite direction to one another.
Counter-melody	A second melody line played at the same time as the main tune.
Descant	A harmonising tune sung at the same time as the melody, but at a higher pitch.
Melody & accompaniment	Where a main tune is supported by an accompaniment, with the main tune being the focus.
Heterophony (Gamelan)	Music made up of lots of different versions of the main tune.



STRUCTURE

Binary	AB - two sections of roughly equal length. Section A is usually answered by section B, with each section usually being repeated. Major key = modulation to V during section A. Minor key = modulation to relative major. Section B begins in new key and modulates back to the tonic key.
Ternary	ABA – section B contrasts with section A, but the repeat of section A can be exactly the same as the original, or have some changed details to make it more interesting than a straight repeat.
Rondo	Literally 'to return'. Main theme (A) keeps returning with contrasting sections of music (episodes) in between (e.g. ABACA...).
Variation	A recognisable version of the main theme of the piece, but also a self-contained piece of music in its own right.
Strophic	Same music used for different verses in a song (i.e. hymns)
Through-composed	New music for each verse in a song. Music develops continuously, changing to reflect different moods or situations in the text.
Ground Bass	Melody in the bass repeated throughout the music, with the melody and harmony changing over the top.
Round	Where the same tune is played by 2 or more parts, each starting before

	the previous part has finished. (AKA – canon).
Canon	Where the same tune is played by 2 or more parts, each starting before the previous part has finished. (AKA – round). Listen to Pachelbel's 'Canon'.
Fugue	A piece of music where 2 or more parts develop the same main theme. Sounds very busy.
Cadenza	A section of a concerto where the soloist can really show off. It's often improvised, but some composers write them out.
Introduction	The opening section of a song. Usually instrumental and introduces the chord sequence.
Verse	The section of a song that tells the story. The same music returns for each verse, but the words change each time.
Chorus	The section of a song that returns in its same form each time, both in terms of lyrics and melody. The chorus has a different tune to the verse and is usually quite catchy.
Bridge	A section, usually in the middle of a song, exploring a new chord sequence and lyrics to give the song a new feel. Sometimes known as the 'Middle 8'.
Instrumental	The section of a song where the voice drops out and is replaced by an instrument solo. This is sometimes a copy of the vocal line, or an improvisation around it.
Middle 8	8 bars in the middle of a song with different chords or a different tune to keep it interesting.
Coda / Outro	The ending of a song or instrumental piece that's different to the rest and finishes it off. Literally means 'tail'.

LARGE STRUCTURES

Concerto	A piece for soloist and orchestra, usually in three movements (Fast / Slow / Fast).
Symphony	A large-scale work for orchestra, usually in four movements. Symphonies sometimes feature a choir in certain movements.
Sonata	A piece with 3 or 4 movements, written for one or two instruments. Each movement has a specific structure: -Exposition: 2 contrasting themes introduced -Development: New harmonies or rhythms may be developed, with sequences, imitation, inversion or pedal notes being introduced -Recapitulation: 2 themes from the Exposition are repeated with slight changes -Coda: concluding section
Oratorio	Bible stories or extracts set to music. Like opera, but not acted out on stage and with a religious theme.
String Quartet (Chamber Music)	A four movement work composed for Violin I, Violin II, Viola & 'Cello: -1st movement: Sonata form, Allegro, in the tonic key -2nd movement: Slow, in the subdominant key -3rd movement: Minuet and Trio, in the tonic key -4th movement: Sonata-Rondo form, in the tonic key
Wind Quintet (Chamber Music)	Music composed for a small group of wind instruments (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Horn & Bassoon), usually in a similar four movement format to a string quartet.
Concerto Grosso (Chamber Music)	A Baroque concerto for a small group of soloists and orchestra. There are usually three movements; the first is fast, the second is slow, and the last is fast. The first movement contrasts the full orchestra and the soloists, the

	second movement is quiet, while the last movement is lively.
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MUSICAL PERIODS

Baroque	c.1600 – 1750 Features lots of imitation, ornaments and dynamic contrast. Composers include: Monteverdi, J.S. Bach, Vivaldi.
Classical	c. 1750 – 1820 Features less ornaments and explores more regular, balanced phrases and harmony surrounding I & V. Dynamic contrast was more subtle, using crescendos and diminuendos rather than sudden changes. Composers include: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven.
Romantic	c. 1820 – 1900 Features a wider range of instruments and an expansion in the size of the orchestra. Music was used to tell stories or create emotions and a wider range of harmony was used, including discords. Composers include: Berlioz, Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky, Mahler.
Modern	c. 1900 – present Much freer approach to harmony (and structure), with new combinations of instruments being explored. Composers became aware of their nationality and developed national styles. Composers include: Elgar, Stravinsky, Shostakovich, Bernstein.

MUSIC TECHNOLOGY

Synthesiser	An electronic keyboard-like device, which can generate and modify sounds.
Drum machine	An electronic instrument, often used in Disco instead of live drums.
Mixing Desk	A device which allows for multiple audio signals to be routed and adjusted, allowing them, for example, to be heard through one set of speakers simultaneously.
Sequencer	Computerised equipment for recording snippets of music, played in loops as a backing track. Often used in club dance.
Multitracking	A method of sound recording allowing for the separate recording of multiple sound sources to create a single track.
Overdubbing	Adding extra layers of recorded sound to an existing track.
Amplification	The process of making music louder. Some instruments, such as electric and bass guitars, require an amplifier to be heard due to the way in which they produce sound.
Sampler	An electronic musical instrument that can record and store audio signal samples, generally recordings of existing sounds, and play them back at a range of pitches.
Sampling	The act of taking a short musical snippet and reusing it as an instrument or sound recording in a different song or piece.
Scratching	When DJs create a scratchy sound by turning records backwards and forwards by hand on the turntable.
DJ	Disc Jockey.
Decks	Equipment used by DJs for the manipulation, mixing and playback of music.
Looping	A section of music repeated again and again.
Groove	The small indentations etched into a vinyl record that contain audio source information for playback.
Panning	The spread of a sound signal into a stereo sound field.
MIDI	Musical Instrument Digital Interface – technical standard port which allows electronic musical instruments and computers to communicate with one another.
Digital Effects (FX)	

Reverb	When a sound is reflected between walls, ceiling and floor, lasting longer.
Echo	A reflection of sound arriving at the listener after the direct sound.
Distortion	Often used in rock music to create a more aggressive sound.
Attack	The extent to which a note is hit.
Delay	Where a musical idea is recorded into an audio storage medium and then played back after a period of time. The delayed signal can be played back multiple times, or played into the recording again, creating the effect of a repeating, decaying echo.
Vocoder	Device for synthesizing speech by electronically combining the characteristics of a human voice with a musical instrument.
Quantising	The process of transforming performed musical notes, which may not be totally rhythmically accurate to the exact beat or fraction of the beat.
Remix	A song that's been edited to make it sound different to the original, either for artistic purposes (i.e. club revivals of old songs) or to enhance the quality of it.

SOME OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

