WEEK ONE

A cappella

The performance by a singer or a singing group without instrumental accompaniment. In DJing, this refers to vocal-only tracks.

Accompaniment

Pieces written with an instrumental or vocal part designed to support or complement the melody.

Anacrusis

A note or sequence of notes which precede the first strong beat of a musical phrase, particularly at the start of a piece.

Anthem

A vocal piece that has special importance for a particular group of people or a country, often performed on a special occasion (eg Coronation anthems).

Antiphony

A musical texture in which the musical ideas are passed between different groups of instruments or voices.

Arch-shape

A structure of contrasting sections in the form A-B-C-B-A.

Arco

An instruction given to string players to use the bow.

Aria

A composition for solo voice, usually contained within a larger musical work and which may be accompanied by instruments or a full orchestra (eg oratorios, operas). An aria is usually sung after a recitative.

Arpeggio

A type of broken chord in which the notes that compose a chord are played or sung in an ascending or descending order (eg an ascending arpeggio of a C major chord is C, E and G).

Articulation

The effect on how the note is played (eg phrase mark, staccato, slur, accent and legato etc).

WEEK TWO

Atonal

Music composed without a key or tonal centre.

Audio recording

Sound recording of students' final performances.

Augmentation

A compositional device where the time values of the notes of a melody can be lengthened, or the interval between two notes can be widened (eg augmented 4th).

Automated double tracking (ADT)

ADT imitates the effect of doubling voices or instruments using double tracking, without the need for a musician to overdub their part (they perform their part only once).

Balance

The relative volume levels between voices and/or instruments to achieve clarity of recording, as used in music production.

Backbeat

A strong rhythmic accent on the second and fourth beats of a bar of a piece in 4/4 time, used especially in jazz and popular music.

Baritone

A male voice with a range midway between tenor and bass.

Beat boxing

Using your voice to produce musical and rhythmic sounds (eg drum beats, hi-hat or cymbal noises, brass effects etc).

Binary

The structure of a piece of music which is divided into two different sections. It is usually written as an AABB or AB form.

Blues scale

A six-note minor pentatonic scale with the addition of a flattened fifth (eg a blues scales in C minor includes the notes C, Eb, F, Gb, G and Bb).

WEEK THREE

Blues note

A flattened note (lowered in tone by a half step), usually the third or seventh, used especially in blues music.

BPM

Stands for ‘beats per minute’ and used for measuring the tempo of a piece of music.

Break

A short instrumental solo, often improvised and used in pop and jazz.

Cadence

A pair of chords in which the harmony marks the end of a musical statement (eg perfect, plagal, interrupted and imperfect).

Cadenza

A passage usually towards end of a solo piece, where a soloist plays an elaborate flourish or showy solo passage in a skilled way.

Call and response

A feature of instrumental and vocal music where the leader plays or sings a melody and the rest of the group plays or sings in response.

Canon

A musical texture in which a melody is played and then imitated (one or more times) after a short delay in another part. It is a contrapuntal technique as the melodic lines move independently of one another (eg Pachelbel’s Canon).

Ceilidh

A social gathering with music and dancing that is associated with Celtic folk music.

Choir

A musical ensemble of people who sing together. Different types of choirs include mixed choirs, male voice choirs, female choirs and a cappella ensembles.

Chord

The simultaneous sounding of two or more notes.

WEEK FOUR

Chord symbols

Specific symbols used to represent chords on musical notation (eg C7).

Chorus

In Pop music, this is a repeated refrain in a verse-chorus structure. In Classical music, it refers to a large group of singers in a choral work or opera.

Chromatic

Chromatic notes do not belong to the key of the music (ie they are not in the key signature) and are usually evident in the melody and/or harmony parts.

Clave

A name of an instrument and the name of a rhythm (called ‘son clave’) used in Cuban popular music. The latter is a repeating two bar pattern, where the first bar has three accented beats and the second bar has two accented beats.

Compatible tracks

Tracks of music that work well together in DJing (eg harmony, key, tempo etc).

Compound time

A metre in which the main beat can be subdivided into three. The opposite is simple time.

Composing

Composing is the process of making or forming a piece of music by combining the parts, or elements of music. This could include notation, instrumentation, orchestration, musical montage and sound production.

Conjunct

A melody that moves by step.

Con sordino

Played with a mute on the instrument.

Contrapuntal

A musical style which involves intertwining two or more independent melodies, similar to polyphony.

WEEK FIVE

Consonant

Notes that sound ‘pleasing’ when played together at the same time (eg 3rds and 6ths).

Continuo

Continuo, sometimes called ‘basso continuo’, is found in baroque music and is an accompanying part that includes a bassline and harmonies. T

Conventions

Musical terms and concepts (eg melody, accompaniment, tonality).

Countermelody

A secondary melody that is sung or played in counterpoint with the original melody.

Cross rhythm

The effect produced when two or more conflicting rhythms are heard together (eg two eighth notes played against triplet eighth notes).

Cyclic

A type of structure in which a musical theme is heard, sometimes in a varied form, in more than one movement.

Delay

A time effect that postpones the sound from playing for a number of milliseconds.

Devices

A technique used for achieving a particular artistic effect. They can be wide ranging and include harmonic, rhythmic and melodic devices (eg ostinato, melisma, syncopation, pedal notes etc).

Diatonic

Refers to chords or notes which exist within a given key in Western music.

Diminution

A compositional device where the time values of the notes of a melody can be shortened, or the interval between two notes can be reduced (eg diminished 5th).

WEEK SIX

Direct Input (DI)

Sometimes called ‘direct input transformer’, this refers to recording or playing directly into a mixing desk or computer without the use of an amplifier.

Disjunct

A melody that moves in leaps using larger intervals than a 2nd.

Dissonant

Notes that sound harsh or unpleasant when played together at the same time (eg augmented 4th).

Distortion

Distortion and overdrive are sounds created to alter the sound of amplified electric musical instruments (eg electric guitars).

DJ

Using turntables to manipulate tracks and demonstrate an understanding and a range of techniques specific to DJing.

Dominant

A term used to describe the fifth note of any diatonic major or minor scale (eg G in C major) or the fifth triad, the chord built in thirds from the fifth note.

Dominant 7th

A term used to describe a chord built on the fifth note of any major or minor diatonic scale and including the root, major third, perfect fifth, and minor seventh (eg G-B-D-F in C major). In roman numerals it is written as V7.

Double tracking

The process of recording two different performances of the same material to thicken a musical line.

Double and triple stopping

Two or three notes played together at the same time on a string instrument.

Drone

A harmonic effect or accompaniment where two notes are continuously sounded throughout most or all of a piece.