MELODY

Melody
A succession of single tones or pitches perceived as a unity.

Pitch
The highness or lowness of a tone, depending on the frequency (rate of vibration). Also, a musical sound.

Interval
The distance and relationship between two pitches.

Range
The distance between the lowest and highest tones of a melody, an instrument, or a voice. This span can be generally described as narrow, medium, or wide in range.

Shape
The shape of a melody is determined by the direction a melody takes as it turns upward or downward or remains static. On a line graph, a melody might be charted as an ascending line, a wave, or a static line.

Conjunct
Describes a melody that moves in small intervals.

Disjunct
Describes a melody that moves in disjointed or disconnected intervals.

Phrase
As in language, a unit of meaning within a larger structure; thus, a melody may be divided into component phrases.

Cadence
A resting place in a musical phrase - musical punctuation.

Countermelody
An accompanying melody sounded against the principal melody.

RHYTHM

Rhythm
The element of time in music. (Since music is an art that exists solely in time, rhythm controls ultimately all the relationships within a musical work.)

Beat
Regular pulsation; a basic unit of length in musical time.

Accent
Emphasis on a note, so that it is louder or longer than another.

Meter
The grouping of beats into larger, regular patterns, notated as measures. The two basic meters are duple (two beats) and triple (three beats); quadruple (four beats) is the most common. In simple meters, such as duple, triple, and quadruple, each beat subdivides into two; in compound meters, such as sextuple, each beat divides into three.

Measure
A rhythmic group or metrical unit that contains a fixed number of beats, divided on the musical staff by bar lines. Also known as Bar.

Upbeat
The last beat of a measure, a weak beat, which anticipates the downbeat, the first beat of the next measure.

Downbeat
The first beat of a measure, the strongest in any meter.

Syncopation
Deliberate upsetting of the meter or pulse through a temporary shifting of the accent to a weak beat, or an offbeat.

FORM

Form
The structure or shape of a musical work, based on repetition, contrast, and variation; the organizing principle of music. Binary and ternary are basic forms, while more sophisticated forms include rondo, sonata-allegro, minuet and trio, theme and variations, ritornello, and fugue.

Repetition
Within a form, repetition fixes the material in our mind and satisfies our need for the familiar; it provides unity to a form.

Contrast
Within a form, contrast sustains our interest and feeds our love of change.

Variation
A formal principle in which some aspects of the music are altered but still recognizable.

Theme
A melodic idea used as a basic building block in the construction of a composition. (The main theme of a fugue is called a "subject.")

Thematic development
The process of revealing a theme’s capacities and bringing them to fulfillment. The principle of elaborating or varying a musical idea is pervasive in Western music, and it is also found in melody-oriented styles of many Far Eastern and Middle Eastern musics.

Sequence
A restatement of an idea at a higher or lower pitch level.

Motive
A small, thematic fragment that constitutes a melodic-rhythmic unit.
Ostinato
A short musical pattern - melodic, rhythmic, or harmonic - that is repeated persistently throughout a work or major section of a composition.

Binary Form
Two-part form based on statement and departure with an A-B structure.

Ternary Form
Three-part form which extends the idea of statement and departure by bringing back the first section. A-B-A structure.

TEMPO
Tempo
The rate of speed or pace of the musical pulse. Tempo markings are traditionally given in Italian.

DYNAMICS
Dynamics
Designations for the relative loudness or quietness of music. The main dynamic terms are based on the Italian words for loud ("forte") and quiet ("piano"). These words can be modified by the prefix "mezzo" (medium) or the suffix "issimo" (more).

PITCH NOTATION
Pitch
The highness or lowness of a tone, depending on the frequency (rate of vibration). Also, a musical sound.

Note
The written symbol for a musical sound indicating its pitch and duration.

Staff
Five parallel lines separated by four spaces. One of the basic symbols of music notation.

Clef
A symbol placed at the left end of a staff to determine the relative pitch names and range of the notes on that staff. The Treble clef is used for pitches within the range of the female singing voices and the Bass clef for a lower group of pitches, within the range of the male singing voice.

Grand Staff
A combination of a treble staff and a bass staff.

Accidentals
Signs used to alter the pitch of a written note. A sharp before the note indicates the pitch a half step above; a flat indicates a half step below. A natural sign cancels a sharp or flat.

RHYTHM NOTATION
Rhythm
The element of time in music (Since music is an art that exists solely in time, rhythm controls ultimately all the relationships within a musical work.)

Beat
Regular pulsation; a basic unit of length in musical time.

Measure
A rhythmic group or metrical unit that contains a fixed number of beats, divided on the musical staff by bar lines. Also known as Bar.

Bar Lines
Vertical lines that separate measures.

Meter
The grouping of beats into larger, regular patterns, notated as measures. The two basic meters are duple (two beats) and triple (three beats); quadruple (four beats) is the most common. In simple meters, such as duple, triple, and quadruple, each beat subdivides into two; in compound meters, such as sextuple, each beat divides into three.

Metric Rhythm
Rhythm that has a strong sense of meter or beat.

Dot
A symbol that, when placed after a note, increases the note value by half.

Tie
A curved line used to connect successive notes of the same pitch together. When notes are tied, only one note is played with a length equal to the combined lengths of all the tied notes.

Rest
A symbol that indicate silence for a specified time in musical beats.

Time Signature
The symbol that indicates the metrical organization of a piece of music. It appears as two numbers written as in a fraction. The upper number indicates the number of beats in a measure; the lower shows which note value equals one beat.

DYNAMICS NOTATION
Crescendo
The dynamic effect of gradually growing louder.

Decrescendo
The dynamic effect of gradually growing softer.

Forte
The Italian term for "loud" (literally "strong"). This is indicated in a musical score by the marking "f".

Fortissimo
The Italian term for "very loud" (literally "more strong"). This is indicated in a musical score by the marking "ff".

Mezzo-forte
The Italian term for "moderately loud." This is indicated in a musical score by the marking "mf".

Mezzo-piano
The Italian term for "moderately quiet." This is indicated in a musical score by the marking "mp".
**Pianissimo**
The Italian term for "very quiet" (literally "more piano"). This is indicated in a musical score by the marking "pp".

**Piano**
The Italian term for "quiet" (literally "small"). This is indicated in a musical score by the marking "p".

**Sforzando**
A sudden stress or accent on a single note or chord. This is indicated in a musical score by the marking "sf".

**TEMPO NOTATION**

- **Grave**
  Tempo marking meaning solemn (very, very slow).

- **Largo**
  Tempo marking meaning broad (very slow).

- **Adagio**
  Tempo marking meaning quite slow.

- **Andante**
  Tempo marking meaning a walking pace.

- **Moderato**
  Tempo marking meaning moderate.

- **Allegro**
  Tempo marking meaning fast (cheerful).

- **Vivace**
  Tempo marking meaning lively.

- **Presto**
  Tempo marking meaning very fast.

- **Ritardando**
  Tempo marking meaning getting slower.

- **Accelerando**
  Tempo marking meaning getting faster.

- **A tempo**
  Tempo marking meaning in time or returning to the original pace.

**ARTICULATION NOTATION**

- **Staccato**
  An articulation mark which indicates that notes should be played short and detached. Marked as a dot above or below the note heads.

- **Legato**
  An articulation mark which indicates that notes should be played smooth and connected. Marked as a curved line above or below the notes that should be connected.

**MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE MUSIC**

- **Gregorian Chant**
  The single-line (monophonic) melodies of the music of the early Christian Church. Also known as plainchant or plainsong.

- **Modes**
  The scale patterns used during the Medieval and Renaissance eras.

- **Mass**
  The most solemn ritual of the Catholic Church. The portion of the Mass that remains the same in every celebration of the service is called the Ordinary; the portion that changes from day to day, dependent upon the feast celebrated, is called the Proper.

- **Organum**
  The earliest type of polyphony.

- **Motet**
  The most important form of early polyphonic form, it resulted from the addition of texts to all voices. Often different texts were sung at the same time.

- **Machaut**
  See book. The outstanding composer-poet of the French Ars Nova. Influential in the development of the motet.

- **Ars Nova (Style)**
  Fourteenth-century French polyphonic musical style whose themes moved increasingly from religious to secular.

- **A Cappella**
  Choral music performed without musical accompaniment.

- **Continuous Imitation**
  Renaissance polyphonic style in which the motives move from line to line within the texture, often overlapping one another.

- **Word Painting**
  Musical pictorialization of words from the text as an expressive device; a prominent device of the Renaissance madrigal.

- **Cantus Firmus**
  "Fixed melody," usually of very long notes, often based on fragments of Gregorian chant that served as the structural basis for a polyphonic composition, particularly in the Renaissance.

- **Palestrina**

- **Council of Trent**
  A council of the Roman Catholic Church that convened in Trent, Italy, from 1543 to 1565 and dealt with Counter-Reformation issues, including the reform of liturgical music.

**MORE MATERIALS OF MUSIC**

- **Octave**
  Interval between two tones seven diatonic pitches apart; the lower notes vibrates half as fast as the upper and sounds an octave lower. The octave can be divided into twelve half-steps.

- **Key**
  Defines the relationship of tones with a common center or tonic. Also a lever on a keyboard or woodwind instrument.
Mode
Scale or sequence of notes used as the basis for a composition; major and minor are modes.

Major Scale
Scale consisting of seven different tones that comprise a specific pattern of whole and half steps. It differs from a minor scale primarily in that its third degree is raised half a step.

Minor Scale
Scale consisting of seven different tones that comprise a specific pattern of whole and half steps. It differs from a minor scale primarily in that its third degree is lowered half a step.

Chromatic Scale
Scale consisting of all twelve semitones of the octave.

Diatonic
Melody or harmony built from the seven tones of a major or minor scale.

THE BAROQUE ERA

Monody
Vocal style established in the Baroque, with a solo singer and instrumental accompaniment

Camerata
A group of writers, artists and musicians in Florence, Italy, whose ideas and innovations led to the development of monody and opera.

Stile Rappresentativo
A dramatic recitative style of the Baroque period in which melodies moved freely over a foundation of simple chords.

Basso Continuo
Italian for "continuous bass." See figured bass. Also refers to performance group with a bass, chordal instrument (harpsichord, organ), and one bass melody instrument (cello, bassoon).

Figured Bass
Baroque practice consisting of an independent bass line that often includes numerals indicating the harmony to be supplied by the performer. Also thorough-bass.

Equal Temperament
Tuning system based on the division of the octave into twelve equal half steps; the normal system used today.

Terraced Dynamics
Expressive style typical of Baroque music in which volume levels shift based on the playing forces used.

Monteverdi
See book. Best viewed as the first master of opera.

Ground Bass
A repeating melody, usually in the bass, throughout a vocal or instrumental composition.

Handel
See book. (Born in Germany, studied in Italy, but spent much of his creative life in England. Master of late Baroque opera and oratorio. The Messiah is his most famous oratorio.)

J.S. Bach
See book. Famous in his day as a performer on the organ; in keyboard music, his most important collection was The Well-Tempered Clavier, a set of forty-eight preludes and fugues; composed the Brandenburg Concertos

Cantata
Vocal genre for solo singers, chorus, and instrumentalists based on a lyric or dramatic poetic narrative. It generally consists of several movements including recitatives, arias, and ensemble numbers.

Oratorio
Large-scale dramatic genre originating in the Baroque, based on a text of religious or serious character, performed by solo voices, chorus, and orchestra; similar to opera but without scenery, costumes, or action.

Vivaldi
See book. Lived and worked in Venice, Italy; known as the "red priest" for the color of his hair; greatest and most prolific Italian composer of concertos; wrote the well-known set of concertos called The Four Seasons.

Concerto Grosso
Baroque concerto type based on the opposition between a small group of solo instruments (the concertino) and orchestra (the ripieno).

Concertino
Solo group of instruments in the Baroque concerto grosso.

Ripieno
The larger of the two ensembles in the Baroque concerto grosso.

Ritornello
Short, recurring instrumental passage found both in the aria and the Baroque concerto.

Suite
Multimovement work made up of a series of contrasting dance movements, generally all in the same key.

Trio Sonata
Baroque chamber sonata type written in three parts: two melodic lines and the basso continuo; requires a total of four players to perform.

Fugue
Polyphonic form popular in the Baroque era in which one or more themes are developed by imitative counterpoint.