KEYWORD	DEFINITION
Accelerando	Gradual increase in speed of the pulse or beat
Accent	Stress or emphasis on a note
Adagio	Slow
Allegro	Moderately Fast (skipping speed)
Andante	Walking speed
Aria / Art Song	A song for a solo voice that is often accompanied.
Arpeggio - Composition Technique	Notes of a chord played separately in ascending or descending motion
Arpeggio - Harmonic	Notes of a chord played separately in ascending or descending motion
Arpeggio - Melodic	Notes of a chord played separately in ascending or descending motion
Arrangement	A musical adaptation of an existing composition
Articulation	The manner in which a single note is played
Attacca	An instruction found in between two musical movements, to begin the next movement right away without pause
Atonal / Atonality	Music that does not utilize traditionally tonal structures (ex. Major, Minor, Modal), often with an unidentifiable tonic (home-note)
Avant-Garde / Experimental	Music favoring unusual or experimental ideas
Ballet	An artistic dance form performed to music using precise and highly formalized set steps and gestures.

Band	A large ensemble of woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments that often plays for marching or open-air performances
Bass Line	A line of music played by a low-range instrument, serving as foundation for the melody and harmony played above
Binary Form	Two-part form where the two main sections are repeated A-B
Bitonality	Music that utilizes two keys / tonalities simultaneously
Brass Instruments	An instrument of brass or other metal with a cup-shaped mouthpiece
Cadence	A short sequence of notes or chords that end a musical phrase
Cadenza - Form	An often virtuosic solo passage near an important cadence, or near the end of a piece of music
Cadenza - Melodic	An often virtuosic solo passage near an important cadence, or near the end of a piece of music
Call and Response	Music that works similarly to a conversation, with one musical phrase offered first and a second phrase answers back
Canon	A melody performed with itself in imitation
Cello Ensemble	A musical group comprised entirely or primarily by cello players
Chamber Group	A musical ensemble modest in size
Chordal Texture	Musical material primarily using chords/harmony with little melodic activity
Chordal Texture - Harmony	Musical material primarily using chords/harmony with little melodic activity
Chords	Three or more single pitches played together in blocked or broken style
Chorus	An ensemble of singers

Chromatic	Musical scale of 12 tones, each a half step or semitone above or below the adjacent pitches
Col Legno	Striking the string of a string instrument with the wood side of the bow
Compound Meter	Meter where the beat divides into three, or then further subdivides into six
Concerto	A musical composition for a solo instrument or instruments accompanied by an orchestra
Conjunct Motion - Counterpoint	Moving by steps
Conjunct Motion - Melody	Moving by steps
Contour	the sequence of motion between notes in a melody
Contrary Motion	Two voices moving in opposite direction
Contrast	When an aspect of a piece of music develops in a different way, most often heard with extremes (loud and soft, short and long, slow and fast)
Counterpoint	The art of combining different melodic lines in a musical composition
Disjunct Motion - Counterpoint	Moving by skips and leaps
Disjunct Motion - Melody	Moving by skips and leaps
Dissonance	Two or more notes that create musical tension when played together
Double Stops	The playing of two notes at once on a bowed string instrument

Duo / Duet	A piece or a section of a piece played or sung featuring two performers
Duple Meter	Pulse groupings of 2
Duplet	A borrowed division from Simple Meter where two equal notes are played in the time of three
Dynamics - Composition Technique	The spectrum of loudness and softness in a piece of music
Dynamics - Expressive Elements	The spectrum of loudness and softness in a piece of music
Etude	(The French word for "Study") Music designed to train a performer a particular skill on a solo instrument
Extended Technique - Composition Technique	Singing and/or playing techniques that are typically unconventional
Extended Technique - Expressive Elements	Singing and/or playing techniques that are typically unconventional
Fantasy	A composition free in form and inspiration, usually for an instrumental soloist. (Also called Fantasia)
Fermata	A note prolonged beyond its normal duration for expressive purposes
Form	The structure and organization of a musical composition
Free Tonality / Pantonality	Music that is not in one tonality or key, but shifts freely among many or all keys
Fugue	A compositional procedure characterized by the systematic imitation of a principal theme or subject in simultaneous melodic lines
Glissando	A continuous slide upward or downward between two notes
Guitar Ensemble	A musical group comprised entirely or primarily by guitar players

Harmonic Motion	When a piece moves from one chord or harmony to another
Harmonic Rhythm	How frequently the music moves from one chord or harmony to another
Harmonic Progression - Composition Technique	A group of chords played one after the other, often ending with a cadence
Harmonic Progression - Harmony	A group of chords played one after the other, often ending with a cadence
Harmony	The sound of two or more notes heard simultaneously
Hemiola	Three beats of equal value played in the amount of time normally occupied by two beats
Heterophony	The simultaneous variation of a single melodic line
Homophony	When multiple lines or parts of music move with similar or identical rhythm
Imitation - Composition Technique	When a musical idea is echoed in another voice
Imitation - Counterpoint	When a musical idea is echoed in another voice
Imitation - Melody	When a melody is echoed in another voice
Interval - Harmonic	The distance between two pitches
Interval - Melodic	The distance between two pitches
Inversion - Composition Technique	When a musical passage is turned upside-down, turning its ascending intervals into descending intervals and vice versa.
Harmonic Inversion	When a note other than the root of a given harmony is in the bass

Improvisation - Expressive Elements	Created or performed spontaneously, or without preparation
Improvisation - Form	Created or performed spontaneously, or without preparation
Improvisation - Melody	Created or performed spontaneously, or without preparation
Largo	Very slow, labored
Legato	Musical notes performed smoothly and connected
Live Instruments with Electronics	When an acoustic instrument plays alongside another digital component, such as a recording or audio program
Major Tonality	Music that is centered around the tonic (home-note) of a major scale and/or harmonic progression
Melody	A succession of pitches in rhythm, often the most memorable aspect of a song
Meter	Groupings of beats in a recurring pattern
Metric Modulation	A change in meter, where beat groups in the first tempo share similarities with beat groups in the new tempo
Microtonal	Music using intervals outside of standard tuning, often with intervals smaller than a semitone.
Minor Tonality	Music that is centered around the tonic (home-note) of a minor scale and/or harmonic progression
Mixed Ensemble	A musical group comprised of non-conventional instrumentation, with any size and mix of instruments
Mixed Meter	Meter where the beat groups in a bar change freely throughout the music
Modal	Music based on one of the eight church modes, which use the major scale and start on a home tone other than Do
Moderato	Moderate tempo

Modulation - Composition Technique	The change from one key to another
Modulation - Harmony	The change from one key to another
Monophony	One note sounding at a time
Motif	A short pattern of 3-5 notes that is repeated and/or varied during a piece of music
Non-Metric	Music without a sense of underlying pulse or beat
Nonet	A piece or a section of a piece played or sung featuring nine performers
Oblique Motion	One melodic line remains on one pitch sustained or repeated while the second melodic line ascends or descends
Octet	A piece or a section of a piece played or sung featuring eight performers
Ornamentation - Composition Technique	The embellishment of a musical passage by adding notes or modifying rhythms
Ornamentation - Expressive Elements	The embellishment of a musical passage by adding notes or modifying rhythms
Melodic Ornamentation	The embellishment of a musical passage by adding notes or modifying rhythms
Ostinato - Composition Technique	A short musical pattern that is repeated usually as an accompanying part
Ostinato - Form	A short musical pattern that is repeated usually as an accompanying part
Overture	The orchestral introduction to a musical work

Parallel Motion	Two melodic lines moving in the same direction
Pentatonic Scale	A musical scale with five notes per octave
Percussion Ensemble	A musical group comprised entirely or primarily by percussionists
Percussion Instruments	Any instrument that makes a sound when it is struck, shaken or scraped
Phrase - Expressive Elements	A substantial musical thought, which ends with a musical punctuation called a cadence
Phrase - Melody	A substantial musical thought, which ends with a musical punctuation called a cadence
Pizzicato	Playing technique which involves plucking the strings of a string instrument
Polyphony	Multiple independent melodic lines performed at the same time
Prelude	A short piece of music with little or no particular form, often played before something else.
Presto	Very fast
Quadruple Meter	Pulse groupings of 4
Quartet	A piece or a section of a piece played or sung featuring four performers
Quintet	A piece or a section of a piece played or sung featuring five performers
Range - Composition Technique	1. The distance between the lowest and highest note of a piece of music or musical instrument 2. The placing of each musical element of a composition in a specific pitch class, often for clarity's sake
Range - Expressive Elements	The use of high, middle, and low range musical placement, especially in contrast, to create musical expression

Range - Melody	The distance between the lowest and highest note of a melody
Range - Texture	The low, middle, and/or high ranges of a piece of music or musical instrument
Refrain	A line or lines of sung music that are repeated in a song, often called "the chorus"
Rhythmic Duration	How long a note is sustained
Rhythmic Pattern - Composition Technique	A succession of rhythms performed in repetition, often used to establish beat
Rhythmic Pattern	A succession of rhythms performed in repetition, often used to establish beat
Ricochet	When the bow is thrown onto the string and naturally rebounds to play extra notes
Ritardando - Expressive Elements	Gradual slowing in tempo
Ritardando - Tempo	Gradual slowing in tempo
Rondo Form	An instrumental form characterized by the initial statement and subsequent restatement of a particular melody or section, with each statement separated by contrasting material (ABACA)
Round - Form	A melody performed with itself in imitation
Round - Texture	A melody performed with itself in imitation
Rubato - Expressive Elements	The freedom or flexibility to choose your own tempo for a section or a phrase of music
Rubato - Tempo	The freedom or flexibility to choose your own tempo for a section or a phrase of music

Scherzo	A light or playful composition
Simple Meter	Meter where the beat divides into two, or then further subdivides into four
Septet	A piece or a section of a piece played or sung featuring seven performers
Sequence - Composition Technique	A specific pattern of notes that is repeated at a higher or lower level of pitch
Melodic Sequence	A specific pattern of notes that is repeated at a higher or lower level of pitch
Sextet	A piece or a section of a piece played or sung featuring six performers
Solfege	A music education method often used to teach aural skills, pitch and sight-reading
Solo	A piece or a section of a piece played or sung featuring a single performer
Solo - Piano	A piece played by a solo pianist
Solo and Ensemble	A musical group that plays with a featured soloist
Sonata	Small scale works that typically have a soloist, and sometimes a piano accompaniment
Sonata Form	A musical form that consists of three main sections: the exposition, the development and the recapitulation
Spiccato	A bowing technique where the bow appears to bounce lightly on the string

Staccato	Musical notes performed short and separated
String Instruments	Musical instruments that produce sound from vibrating strings
String Orchestra	A musical group comprised entirely or primarily by string players
Suite	A set of connecting pieces of music that are typically dances, occasionally preceded by a prelude
Symphony	Large scale classical works featuring a full symphony orchestra. They typically have four movements, one of which is in sonata form
Symphony Orchestra	A large ensemble composed of wind, string, brass and percussion instruments, organized to perform classical music
Syncopation	A temporary displacement of the regular metrical accent in music caused typically by stressing the weak beat
Tempo	The speed of a piece of music
Tenuto	Musical notes that are emphasized and/or sustained for their full length
Ternary Form	A three-part form where the initial music returns after a contrasting section A-B-A
Terraced Dynamics - Composition Technique	A sudden change from one dynamic to another making abrupt shifts from loud to soft or soft to loud
Terraced Dynamics - Expressive Elements	A sudden change from one dynamic to another making abrupt shifts from loud to soft or soft to loud
Text Painting - Expressive Elements	When music reflects the meaning of words or lyrics
Text Painting - Melody	When music reflects the meaning of words or lyrics
Texture	How different layers of a piece of music are combined

Theme and Variation - Composition Technique	A melody is stated and then developed in different ways several times to create more interest and variety
Theme and Variation - Form	A melody is stated and then developed in different ways several times to create more interest and variety
Through-Composed	Music written without repetition or return to previous musical material
Timbre - Composition Technique	The quality given to a note when played on a particular musical instrument
Timbre - Instruments	The quality given to a note when played on a particular musical instrument
Tremolo - Articulation	A performance technique in which a performer plays an individual note or two alternating notes as fast as possible.
Tremolo - Expressive Elements	A performance technique in which a performer plays an individual note or two alternating notes as fast as possible.
Trill - Articulation	A musical ornament where two notes, often a step apart from each other, rapidly alternate
Trill - Melody	A musical ornament where two notes, often a step apart from each other, rapidly alternate
Trio	A piece or a section of a piece played or sung featuring three performers
Triple Meter	Pulse groupings in 3
Triplet	A borrowed division from Compound Meter where three equal notes are played in the time of two
Twelve Tone Serialism	All 12 notes of the chromatic scale are given equal importance, often by using 12-tone rows that are played in order, reversed, and upside down

Unison	All musical parts performing the same pitches at the same time
Vivace	Fast / Lively
Voice and Piano	Music for solo voice(s) that is accompanied.
Waltz	Music in triple meter that is often tied to dance
Whole Tone Scale	A scale consisting entirely of whole steps, no half steps