

6. The qualities of sound

The expressive power of music






BLOCK 1 MUSICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS. LISTENING



1.1. THE QUALITIES OF SOUND




1.1.1 Intensity

1. Listen to the following exercises and complete the boxes below, indicating the type of intensity you hear and the sensation it produces. You can use the adjectives in your textbook, but you can also try to use others. Listen to all three exercises before beginning.

| Listening Exercises | Intensity used | Sensation you get |
|--|--------------------------------|--|
|  Listening 17 <i>Antarctica</i> Vangelis | <i>soft sounds</i> | <i>sensation of tranquillity, calm, serenity, peace..</i> |
|  Listening 18 <i>Gladiator</i> H. Zimmer | <i>loud sounds</i> | <i>sensation of great energy, power, excitement, grandiosity, solemnity...</i> |
|  Listening 19 <i>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</i> R. Strauss | <i>contrasting intensities</i> | <i>energy-calm/vitality-relaxation/excitement-tranquillity</i> |




1.1.2. Duration

2. After listening to the following exercises, complete the chart by indicating what types of sounds are used - long or short - and the sensation they produce.




| Listening Exercises | Intensity used | Sensation you get |
|--|---|---|
|  Listening 20 <i>Bagatelles</i> G. Ligetti | <i>short sounds (short notes or separate notes)</i> | <i>sensation of vitality, energy, excitement...</i> |
|  Listening 21 <i>Strength and Honor</i> H. Zimmer | <i>long sounds</i> | <i>sensation of stability, persistence, monotony...</i> |
|  Listening 22 <i>Siala</i> R. Barce | <i>repeated sounds with different durations</i> | <i>sensation of tension, disorder, disquiet...</i> |

1.1.3. Pitch

3. a. These exercises contain melodies with high sounds and low sounds and repetitions. Indicate what sounds are used in each - high or low - and the sensation they produce.

| Listening Exercises | Intensity used | Sensation you get |
|--|--|--|
|  Listening 23 <i>Barbarian Horde</i> H. Zimmer | <i>low sounds</i> | <i>sensation of power, calm, heaviness, serenity, anxiety...</i> |
|  Listening 24 <i>Zigeunerweisen</i> P. Sarasate | <i>high sounds</i> | <i>sensation of excitement, lightness, stimulation, aliveness...</i> |
|  Listening 25 <i>Gymel</i> W. Duckworth | <i>sounds repeated at the same pitch</i> | <i>sensation of stability, obstinacy, persistence...</i> |

- b. Complete the chart by indicating what types of melody is used and the sensation it produces.

| Listening Exercises | Intensity used | Sensation you get |
|--|----------------------------------|--|
|  Listening 26 <i>Rhythm</i> | <i>absence of melody</i> | <i>sensation of curiosity, expectation...</i> |
|  Listening 27 <i>Variation for Piano</i> A. Webern | <i>melody with big intervals</i> | <i>sensation of curiosity, expectation...</i> |
|  Listening 28 <i>Morning Mood</i> E. Grieg | <i>melody with gentle waves</i> | <i>sensation of clarity, balance, order...</i> |

1.1.4. Timbre

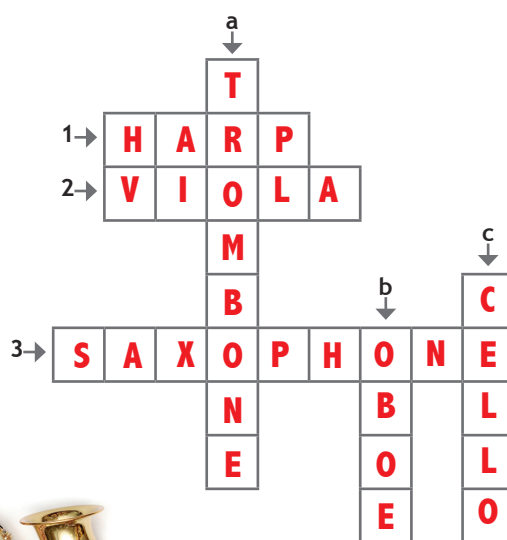
4. You have already heard that some music fragments sound different because of the instrument being used. This is because each instrument has a different sound quality, or timbre, that enables you to distinguish it by ear. Composers use these characteristics to produce certain sensations in listeners. In this exercise you have to pretend you are the composer and write in the names of the instruments you hear.

Vertical



- A brass instrument whose sound suggests solemnity and containing the letter O
- A woodwind instrument whose sound suggests clarity and containing the letter O.
- A bowed string instrument whose sound suggests shyness and containing the letter O.

Horizontal

- A plucked string instrument whose sound suggests transparency and containing the letter A.
- A bowed string instrument whose sound suggests clarity and containing the letter A.
- A woodwind instrument whose sound has a velvety tone and containing the letter A.



5. Listen to each of these sound fragments and complete the table with the name of the instrument family and the sensation it suggests.

| Listening Exercises | Instrument family | Sensation you get |
|---|-------------------------------|---|
|  Listening 29 <i>The X Files</i> Mark Snow | <i>electronic instruments</i> | <i>expectation, suspense, intrigue...</i> |
|  Listening 30 <i>Ouverture</i> C. Séjourné | <i>percussion family</i> | <i>sensation of energy, vigour, rhythm...</i> |

6. In this letter soup you can find a series of instruments. You should now know the sensations that the different instrument families produce in listeners and you should also remember the names of the instruments in each family. Here you have to look for the name of 4 instruments that suggest the sensations described below.

- a. Woodwind family instrument that suggests the sensation of clarity and warmth.

piccolo

- b. Percussion family instrument (indefinite pitch) that suggests the sensation of energy or vigour.

drum

- c. Brass family instrument that suggests the sensation of solemnity of majesty.

trumpet

- d. String family instrument that suggests the sensation of transparency and softness.

harp

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | T | I | C | I | O | T | O | T |
| H | D | S | B | G | M | I | T | U |
| P | R | X | I | L | E | L | P | V |
| P | U | L | U | T | R | I | U | A |
| A | M | I | S | C | C | J | X | C |
| S | V | T | F | C | S | E | T | E |
| U | Q | F | O | C | O | E | E | P |
| A | M | L | S | I | D | H | P | M |
| O | O | N | E | K | E | O | M | A |
| O | R | M | R | I | G | U | U | R |
| K | E | P | R | A | H | L | R | T |
| O | T | A | V | I | S | E | T | S |

1.2. DESCRIPTIVE OR PROGRAMME MUSIC

7. *Dakota* de Jacob de Haan

The Dutch composer Jacob de Hann has composed music telling stories. One example of this is his work for a music band called *Dakota*.

Dakota or *The Sioux* was inspired by the native Americans from South Dakota.

The work has five parts or movements, in which the culture and history of these Indians is portrayed. Throughout the movements, Jacob de Hann uses an old South Dakota melody in his composition.

Listening 31

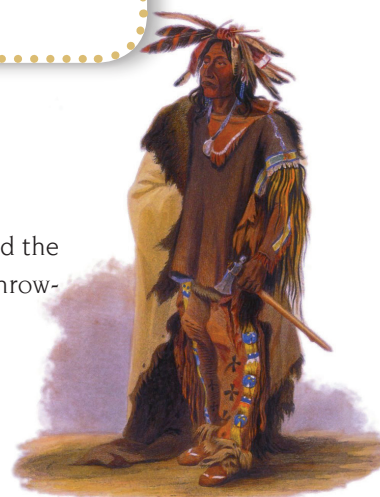
1. *The Great Spirit*

The culture of the native Americans from Dakota is related to the land and the Great Spirit culture. They believed that the Great Spirit created the Earth by throwing a black ball onto the waters, and a second ball created all the animals.

Listening 32

2. *Buffalo Hunting*

Riding after a herd of buffalo and killing one with a bow and arrow required great skill, courage and bravery. The men awaited this opportunity to demonstrate their bravery in the hunt.



Listening 33



3. *Smoking the Pipe*

Smoking the pipe was a symbol of peace and was used between men of different tribes and nations. It was an act that demonstrated good faith, and the medicine man (the holy man) also smoked the pipe to commune with the Great Spirit.

Listening 34



4. *The Ghost Dance*

This is a religious dance, a dance of lost hope, based on prayer, dancing and singing, like most music in olden times.

In 1890, American soldiers interrupted a Great Spirit ceremony and massacred the Indians at Wounded Knee.

Listening 35



5. *Pilgrims at Wounded Knee*

Wounded Knee was a tragic battle for the Indians, as both Indian men and women and children were killed. Today, many people make pilgrimages to Wounded Knee, now a sacred hill, where the wind blows over the graves of innocent victims.

Although you have listened to this composition and the sensations it suggests in each movement, now you have to do an exercise in imagination. Based on the text for each movement, try to expand the story by inventing your own characters, creating an ambiance, describing the place where the action took place and completing a full picture of what happened in your imagination.

1. *The Great Spirit*

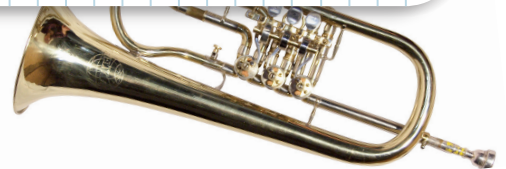
Free answer.

2. *Buffalo Hunting*

Free answer.

3. *Smoking the Pipe*

Free answer.

4. *The Ghost Dance**Free answer.*5. *Pilgrims at Wounded Knee**Free answer.*CHECK YOUR
LEARNING

8. Just like the intensity of a sound creates an effect in the listener, the duration of sounds also contributes to creating certain sensations. Relate the following terms with the sensations given below.

long sounds
broken sounds

repeated sounds of irregular duration
short sounds

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| a) sensation of disorder | <u>repeated sounds of irregular duration</u> |
| b) sensation of stability, monotony | <u>long sounds</u> |
| c) sensation of tension, disquiet | <u>repeated sounds of irregular duration</u> |
| d) sensation of instability | <u>broken sounds</u> |
| e) sensation of vitality, energy | <u>short sounds</u> |

9. You already know that a certain **intensity** of sound produces an effect in the listener. Relate the different sound intensities in the box with the sensation that you think is appropriate in the blanks below.

soft sounds crescendo sounds loud sounds
contrasting intensities diminuendo sounds

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| ✓ <u>contrasting intensities</u> | sensation of vitality or relaxation |
| ✓ <u>loud sounds</u> | sensation of grandiosity or spectacularity |
| ✓ <u>diminuendo sounds</u> | sensation of weakness and distance |
| ✓ <u>soft sounds</u> | sensation of tranquillity and serenity |
| ✓ <u>crescendo sounds</u> | sensation of tension, force or nearness |

10. In the following listening exercises you have to classify the sounds produced by certain instruments in relation to the four qualities of sound you already know.

| |  Listening 36 |  Listening 37 |
|--|--|--|
| TIMBRE (name of instrument) | <i>flute</i> | <i>clarinet</i> |
| PITCH (high-medium-low) | <i>high</i> | <i>low</i> |
| DURATION (short-long) | <i>short sounds</i> | <i>long</i> |
| INTENSITY (<i>f</i> - <i>mf</i> - <i>p</i>) | <i>mf (mezzoforte)</i> | <i>f (forte)</i> |

11. If you look carefully, you will see that there are different sound qualities in these music scores as well.

- a. Explain the difference you can see in these two lines in respect of the pitch of sounds.

Line 1



Line 2



Staff 1 has high pitched sounds, whereas Staff 2 is an octave lower, with sounds at a lower pitch

- b. Now explain the difference in respect of the *duration* of sounds.

Line 1



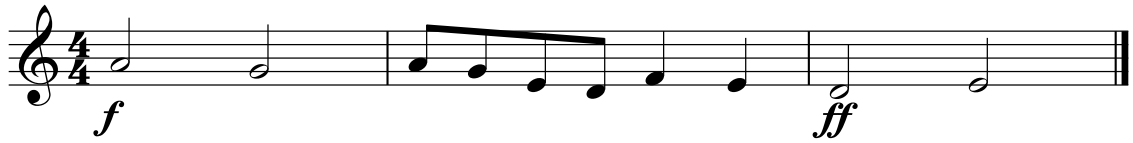
Line 2



Staff 1 has long notes (1, 2, 3 and 4 beats), whereas Staff 2 has much shorter notes (0.5 and 0.25 beats).

12. Now explain the difference as regards the *intensity* of sound for each of these lines.

Line 1



Line 2



- ✓ *The first fragment starts with a loud (f) sound and then a louder (ff) sound, whereas the second fragment is much less intense.*
- The last bar of the first fragment is played very loudly, and the last bar of the second fragment is played very softly.*

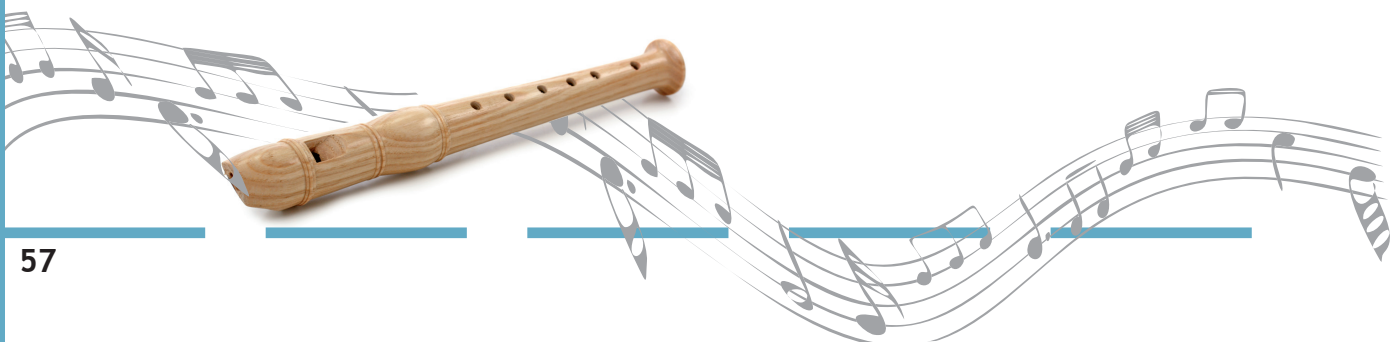
13. Now explain the difference in *timbre* between these three lines.

Recorder

Clarinet


Bassoon

- ✓ *The timbre of flute is high, the clarinet is medium and the bassoon is low.*



14. Look at the beginning of *Clair de lune* by Claude Debussy and analyse the score by looking at the quality of sound.

Andante



Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Cello

Timbre

- a. Write the name of the family of instruments used for this music.
Bowed string family
- b. Explain the sensation that is normally created in listeners using these instruments.
They transmit a sensation of transparency and softness.

Pitch

- a. The size of the instrument affects the pitch of the sounds. Order them from lowest to highest in pitch.
Cello, viola, violins.

Duration

- a. Look at type of notes used for each instrument and indicate which use long sounds and which use shorter sounds
- Long sounds: *The viola and the cello.*
- Short sounds: *The violins.*
- b. Note that there is also a tempo marking (speed). Write it out and define it.
Andante: moderately slow

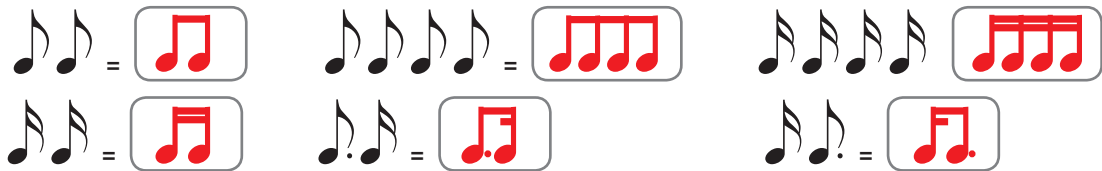
Intensity

- a. The composer has also given some indications as to the intensity at which this piece is to be played. Write out the intensity marking given and give its meaning.
pp = pianissimo (very soft)

BLOCK 2 MUSICAL CREATION AND PRACTISE

2.1. RHYTHM CREATION

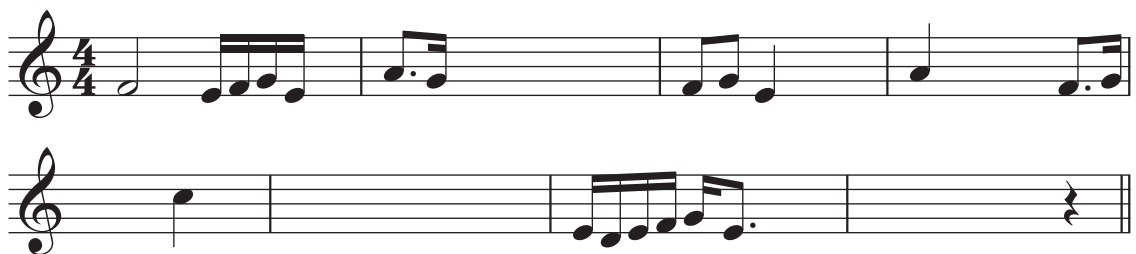
1. Remember that notes can be written separately or together, using beams. Put these notes together using beams and draw them in the box.



2. Replace stems and flags with beams.



3. Complete the bars with the notes you think are appropriate.



4. Draw in bar-lines. Now write in the rhythmic syllables for each note.



5. Interpret the rhythms (you can use rhythmic syllables to help). Now listen to them and put them in the right order. Remember that some of these rhythms are in the song *Tinri-Ritin*, and it will help you to prepare this exercise.

Listening 38

Listening 39

Listening 40

Listening 41



Four musical staves are shown, each with a 4/4 time signature. The staves are numbered 1, 3, 2, and 4 from top to bottom. Each staff contains a sequence of notes and rests, representing different rhythms. The notes are mostly quarter and eighth notes, with some rests. The staves are arranged in a 2x2 grid, with the first staff on the top left, the second on the top right, the third on the bottom left, and the fourth on the bottom right.

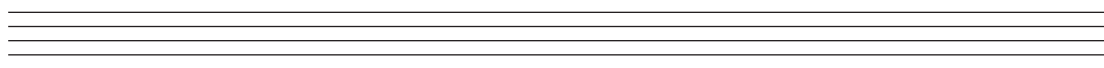
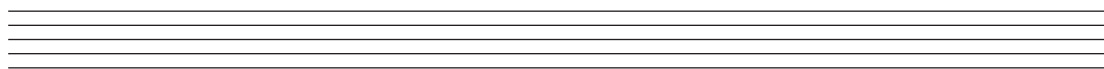
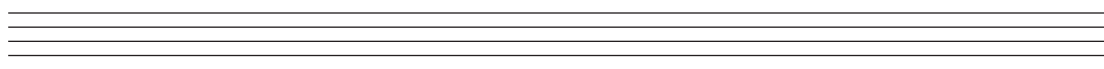
2.4. MELODY CREATION

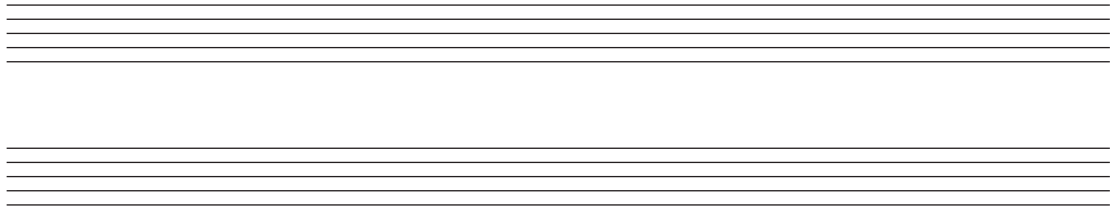
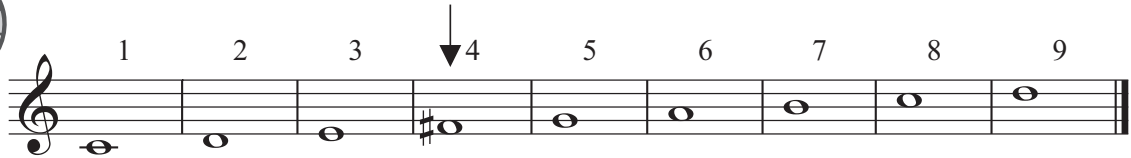


6. **COMPOSITION.** Let's review the notes F # (F sharp) and E' (high E) that you studied in preceding units. You can therefore strengthen your command of these notes. Use the notes in the following scale and then play over the musical accompaniment. Try to use the notes you have already learned. For your creation, choose one of the two scales given below.



A musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The staff contains eight notes, numbered 1 through 8. The notes are: 1 (F#), 2 (G), 3 (A), 4 (B), 5 (C), 6 (D), 7 (E), and 8 (F#). An arrow points down to the 8th note (F#).





7. **IMPROVISATION.** Try to improvise a melody with the sounds you have learned in this unit. The sounds are presented in an orderly manner, but you can interpret them in any order you want. As for notes, although semibreves are used in the scale given here, you can use notes of different duration in your interpretation, as this will make it more varied.



MUSIC AND TECHNOLOGIES

The CD ROM provides a series of activities in which you can practise what you've learned in this Unit.

