CHAPTER 5

Music

Thinking Critically

1. Examine the various forms of classical, jazz, and popular music.
2. Outline the properties of sound and rhythm.
3. Characterize the fundamentals of melody and harmony.
4. Compare and contrast the characteristics of musical texture.
5. Describe the types of opera.

We all have favorite forms of music. They might be tejano, reggae, rock, rhythm and blues, rap, gospel, or classical. Occasionally our favorite tune or musical form had a previous life: a rock tune that was once an operatic aria, or an ethnic style that combines styles from other ethnic traditions. Whatever the case, music comprises rhythms and melodies differing only in their method of composition.

Music often has been described as the purest of the art forms because of its freedom from the physical restrictions of space that apply to the other arts. However, the freedom enjoyed by the composer becomes a constraint for us listeners because music places significant responsibility on us, especially in trying to learn and apply musical terminology. We have only a fleeting moment to capture many of the characteristics of music. A painting or a sculpture stands still for us; it does not change or disappear, despite the length of time it takes us to find or apply some new characteristic.

We live in a society in which aural perceptions usually do not require any kind of active listening. For example, we hear satellite service music in many stores, restaurants, office buildings, and on telephone "hold," intended solely as a soothing background designed not to attract attention. We hear music constantly on the radio, the television, and in the movies, but nearly always in a peripheral role. Therefore, we hardly ever undertake the kind of practice we need to attend to music and to perceive it in detail. However, like any skill, the ability to hear perceptively grows through repetition and training. If we have had limited experience in responding to music, we will find challenge in the concert hall hearing what there is to hear in a piece of music that passes in just a few seconds.

WHAT IS IT?

At a formal level, our experience of a musical work begins with its type or form, a term that has many different connotations. We can identify broad "forms" of music, including classical, jazz, pop/rock, and so on. The term *classical* also refers to a specific style of music, mostly associated with the seventeenth century, within this broad "classical" form.

The basic form of a music composition shapes our initial encounter by providing us with some specific parameters for understanding. Unlike our experience with the theatre, for example, we usually find an identification of the musical composition, by type, in the concert program. Thus, if we know the definitions of the form, we can understand more fully how the piece works and what it might mean. The remainder of this section on What Is It? contains descriptions of three broad forms, classical, jazz, and pop, and some of their subforms. Because many musical forms grew out of a specific stylistic tradition, some of the descriptions include brief historical references.

Classical Forms

Art Song

An art song is a setting of a poem for solo voice and piano. Typically, it adapts the poem's mood and imagery into music. Art song grew out of the Romantic style of the nineteenth century, and thus it has an emotional tendency, and its themes often encompass lost love, nature, legend, and the far away and long ago. In this type of composition, the accompaniment plays an important role in the composer's interpretation and acts as an equal partner with the voice. In this form, important words use stressed tones or melodic climaxes.

Franz Schubert's (SHOO-bairt; 1797–1828) "The Erlking" provides an excellent example. The song consists of a musical setting of a poem by Goethe (GHUHR-tuh) about the supernatural. Schubert uses a through-composed setting—he writes new music for each stanza—in order to capture the poem's mounting excitement. The piano plays the role of an important partner in transmitting the mood of the piece, creating tension with rapid octaves and a menacing bass motif. Imaginative variety in the music allows Schubert's vocal soloist to sound like several characters in the dramatic development.

Cantata

A cantata, usually a choral work with one or more soloists and an instrumental ensemble, has several movements. Typified by the church cantata of the Lutheran church of the baroque period (1600–1750), it often includes chorales and organ accompaniment. The word *cantata* originally meant a piece that was sung—in contrast to a sonata, which was played. The Lutheran church cantata (exemplified by those of Johann Sebastian Bach) uses a religious text, either original or drawn from the Bible, or familiar hymns (chorales). In essence, it serves as a sermon in music, drawn from the lectionary (prescribed Bible readings for the day and on which the sermon is based). A typical cantata might last twenty-five minutes and include several different movements—choruses, recitatives, arias, and duets.

Mass

The Mass, a sacred choral composition, consists of five sections: Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei. These also form the parts of the Mass Ordinary (the Roman Catholic Church texts that remain the same from day to day throughout most of the year). The Kyrie text implores, "Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us." The Gloria text begins, "Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will towards men." The Credo states the creed: "We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth," and so on. Sanctus confirms, "Holy, holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord Most High." The Agnus Dei

(Lamb of God) implores, "O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace." The *Requiem Mass*, which often comprises a musical program, is a special mass for the dead.

Oratorio

An oratorio, a large-scale composition, uses a chorus, vocal soloists, and orchestra. Normally an oratorio sets a narrative text (usually biblical), but does not employ acting, scenery, or costumes. The oratorio was a major achievement of the baroque period. This type of musical composition unfolds through a series of choruses, arias, duets, recitatives, and orchestral interludes. The chorus of an oratorio, an important part, can comment on or participate in the dramatic exposition. Another feature of the oratorio, the narrator, uses recitatives (vocal lines imitating the rhythms and inflections of normal speech) to tell the story and connect the various parts. Like operas, oratorios can last more than two hours.

A familiar example is George Frederick Handel's (HAHN-duhl; 1685–1759) *Hallelujah Chorus* from the oratorio *Messiah*. The *Hallelujah Chorus* forms the climax of the second part of the work. The text proclaims a victorious Lord, whose host is an army with banners. Handel creates infinite variety by sudden changes of texture (see page 000) among monophony, polyphony, and homophony. Words and phrases repeat over and over again. In unison, the voices and instruments proclaim, "For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." Polyphony marks the repeated exclamations of "Hallelujah" and yields to homophony in the hymnlike *The kingdom of this world.*

Concerto

The *solo* concerto, an extended composition for an instrumental soloist and orchestra, reached its zenith during the classical period of the eighteenth century. It typically contains three movements, in which the first is fast, the second slow, and the third fast. Concertos join a soloist's virtuosity and interpretive skills with the wide-ranging dynamics and tonal colors of an orchestra. The concerto provides, thus, a dramatic contrast of musical ideas and sound in which the soloist is the star. Typically, concertos present great challenge to the soloist and great reward to the listener, who can delight in the soloist's meeting of the technical and interpretive challenges of the work. Nonetheless, the concerto retains a balance in which the orchestra and soloist act as partners. The interplay between orchestra and soloist provides the listener with fertile ground for involvement and discernment. Concertos can last from twenty to forty-five minutes. Typically, during the first movement, and sometimes the third, of a classical concerto, the soloist has an unaccompanied showpiece called a cadenza.

Common to the late baroque period, the *concerto grosso*, a composition for several instrumental soloists and small orchestra, contrasts between loud and soft sounds and between large and small groups of performers. In a concerto grosso, a small group of soloists (two to four) contrasts a larger group called the *tutti*, which consists of eight to twenty players. Most often a concerto grosso contains three movements with contrasts in tempo and character. The first movement is fast; the second, slow; and the third, fast. The opening movement, usually bold, explores the contrasts between tutti and soloists. The slow movement is more lyrical, quiet, and intimate. The final movement is lively, lighthearted, and sometimes dancelike.

Symphony

An orchestral composition, usually in four movements, a symphony typically lasts between twenty and forty-five minutes. In this large work, the composer explores the full

PROFILE

Mozart

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791), often considered the greatest musical genius of all time, produced—especially in view of his short life—an enormous amount of music including sixteen operas, forty-one symphonies, twenty-seven piano and five violin concerti, twenty-five string quartets, nineteen masses, and other works in every form popular in his time. Perhaps his greatest single achievement was the characterization of his operatic figures.

Mozart was born on January 27, 1756, in Salzburg, Austria. His father, Leopold Mozart, held the position of composer to the archbishop and was a well-known violinist and author of a celebrated theoretical treatise. When Wolfgang was only six years old, his father took him and his older sister, Maria Anna (called Nannerl), on tours throughout Europe during which they performed as harpsichordists and pianists, both separately and together. They gave public concerts, played at the various courts, and met the leading musicians of the day. In Paris in 1764, Mozart wrote his first published works, four violin sonatas. In London, he came under the influence of Johann Christian Bach. In 1768, young Mozart became honorary concertmaster for the archbishop.

In 1772, however, a new archbishop came to power, and the cordial relationship Mozart enjoyed with the previous archbishop came to an end. By 1777, the situation became so strained that the young composer asked to be relieved of his duties, and the archbishop grudgingly agreed.

In 1777, Mozart traveled with his mother to Munich and Mannheim, Germany, and to Paris, where she died. On this trip alone, Mozart composed seven violin sonatas, seven piano sonatas, a ballet, and three symphonic works, including the *Paris Symphony*.

The final break between Mozart and the archbishop occurred in 1781, although prior to that time Mozart had unsuccessfully sought another position. Six years later, in 1787, Emperor Joseph II finally engaged him as chamber composer—at a salary considerably smaller than that of his predecessor. Mozart's financial situation worsened steadily, and he incurred significant debts that hounded him until his death.

Meanwhile, his opera *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (sih-RAHL-yo) enjoyed great success in 1782; in the same year, he married Constanze Weber (vay-bair), the daughter of friends. He composed his great *Mass in C Minor* for her, and she sang the soprano solos at its premiere.

During the last ten years of his life, Mozart produced most of his great piano concerti; four horn concerti; the *Haffner, Prague, Linz*, and *Jupiter* symphonies; the six string quartets dedicated to Haydn; five string quintets; and the major operas—*The Marriage of Figaro, Don Giovanni, Cosí Fan Tutte, La Clemenza di Tito*, and *The Magic Flute*. Mozart could not complete his final work, a requiem, because of illness. He died in Vienna on December 5, 1791, and was buried in a multiple grave. Although the exact nature of his illness is unknown, there is no evidence that Mozart's death was deliberately caused (as the popular movie *Amadeus* implies).

dynamic and tonal range of the orchestral ensemble. The symphony came from the classical period of the eighteenth century and evokes a wide range of carefully structured emotions through contrasts of tempo and mood. The sequence of movements usually begins with an active fast movement, changes to a lyrical slow movement, moves to a dancelike movement, and closes with a bold fast movement. The opening movement is almost always in sonata form. Most classical symphonies have self-contained movements, each with its own

A Question of Style

Classicism in Music

Classicism (KLAS-uh-sihz-uhm). The principles, historical traditions, aesthetic attitudes, or style of the arts of ancient Greece and Rome, including works created in those times or later inspired by those times. Or, classical scholarship. Or, adherence to or practice of the virtues thought to be characteristic of classicism or to be universally and enduringly valid—that is, formal elegance and correctness, simplicity, dignity, restraint, order, and proportion. Musical classicism (eighteenth century) pursued classical goals through careful attention to form. It exhibits five basic characteristics: (1) variety and contrast in mood, (2) flexibility of rhythm, (3) a predominantly homophonic texture, (4) memorable melody, and (5) gradual changes in dynamics.

The classical symphony takes its name from the Latin *symphonia* (based in turn on a Greek word), meaning "a sounding together." Seen as the typical classical symphony, Mozart's Symphony No. 40 in G minor has a clear order and restraint, and yet it exhibits tremendous emotional urgency. The first of its four movements is written in sonata form (see page 131) and begins *allegro molto.* The violins state the first theme above a soft chordal accompaniment, which establishes the tonic key of G minor. Three short motifs repeat throughout the piece. The liveliness of the lower strings accentuates the restlessness of the rhythm. The second theme in the woodwinds and strings provides a relaxing contrast. In a contrasting key, the relative major, B flat, flows smoothly, each phrase beginning with a gliding movement down a chromatic scale. A codetta echoes the basic motif on various instruments and finishes with a cadence in B flat major. In most performances, the entire exposition section repeats, giving the movement an AABA form.

The development section concentrates on the basic three-note motif and explores the possibilities of the opening theme. This somewhat brief section has lots of drama. The recapitulation restates the first theme in the home key, and then the second theme, also in G minor rather than in the original major. This gives the ending a more mournful character than the equivalent section in the exposition. A coda in the original key ends the movement.

set of themes. Unity in a symphony occurs partly from the use of the same key in three of the movements and also from careful emotional and musical complement among the movements. As an example, Ludwig van Beethoven's (1770–1827) Symphony No. 5 has no break between the third and fourth movements. In some of his four-movement works, he changed the traditional third movement minuet and trio to a scherzo and trio of significantly livelier character. Beethoven's symphonies draw heavily on imagery—for example, the image of heroic action in Symphony No. 3 and pastoral settings in Symphony No. 6. The famous Symphony No. 5 in C minor, for example, begins with a motif that Beethoven described as "fate knocking at the door."

Fugue

The fugue (fyoog), a polyphonic (two or more melodic lines of relatively equal importance

performed at the same time) composition based on one main theme or subject, can be written for a group of instruments or voices or for a single instrument like an organ or harpsichord. Throughout the composition, different melodic lines, called "voices," imitate the subject. The top melodic line is the soprano and the bottom line, the bass. A fugue usually includes three, four, or five voices. The composer's exploration of the subject typically passes through different keys and combines with different melodic and rhythmic ideas. An extremely flexible form, the fugue has as its only constant feature the beginning in which a single unaccompanied voice states the theme or subject. The listener must, then, remember that subject and follow it through the various manipulations that follow.

Jazz Forms

Jazz probably began toward the end of the nineteenth century, but we do not know for sure because for many years it existed solely in performance rather than being written down. Almost no jazz pieces found their way to recordings before 1923, and none at all before 1917 when the Original Dixieland Jazz Band made a recording. Jazz blended elements from diverse musical cultures, including West Africa, America, and Europe. Several important characteristics developed from the West African traditions. These included emphasis on improvisation, percussion, rhythmic complexity, and a characteristic called "call and response." African drumming, like jazz, is often extremely complex, producing a dense, interlocking texture of multiple, simultaneous rhythms and notes. Call and response also lies at the core of West African tribal music and consists of a soloist who sings a phrase to which a chorus responds. Jazz uses this when a voice or instrument is answered by an instrument or group of instruments.

Blues

Developing out of a variety of venues—street, bars, brothels, and dance halls—in New Orleans and played mostly by African American musicians, jazz employs improvisation, syncopation, a steady beat, unique tone colors, and specialized performance techniques such as "blues," which became a national craze in the 1920s. Probably the most popular blues song ever written is W. C. Handy's (1873–1958) "St. Louis Blues." The melody contains the Afro-Spanish habanera rhythms that Handy heard when he toured Cuba with his minstrel show at the turn of the twentieth century. He borrowed the final strain in the song from "Jogo Blues," an instrumental piece he had written the year before, whose melody came from Handy's preacher. Another type of blues, vocal blues, is intensely personal and often has references to sexuality, the pain of desertion, and unrequited love, with a very specific metrical and poetic form consisting of two rhythmic lines and a repeat of the first line. Performers like Bessie Smith (1894–1937) gave the blues an emotional quality, which the accompanying instruments tried to imitate.

New Orleans Style

Jazz also found its materials in spirituals, work songs, and gospel hymns. Out of this deep well came jazz as we know it in its wide variety of substyles, including New Orleans style (Dixieland), swing, bebop, cool jazz, and free jazz. In the New Orleans style, the front line or melodic instruments improvise several contrasting melodic lines at once, supported by a rhythm section clearly marking the beat and providing a background of chords. New Orleans style typically has a march or church melody, ragtime piece, or popular song as its base. Swing developed in the 1920s and flourished from 1935 to 1945. This is a "big band" style, ideal for dancing,

A Question of Style

Baroque

Baroque (buh-ROHK). A diverse artistic style from the late sixteenth to early eighteenth centuries, marked typically by complexity, elaborate form, and appeal to the emotions. In literature it witnessed bizarre, calculatedly ingenious, and sometimes intentionally ambiguous imagery.

Baroque music, like its visual cousins, in many cases reflected the needs of churches, which used its emotional and theatrical qualities to make worship more attractive and appealing. The new scientific approaches of Galileo and Newton, for example, and the rationalism, sensuality, materialism, and spirituality of the times also found themselves manifested in art and music. The term *baroque* refers to music written during the period extending approximately from 1600 to 1750. The term itself originally referred to a large, irregularly shaped pearl of the kind often used in the extremely fanciful jewelry of the post-Renaissance period, and music of this style was as luscious, ornate, and emotionally appealing as its siblings of painting, sculpture, and architecture. Exemplary of the style were the works of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750). His *Brandenburg* Concerto No. 2 has three movements (fast-slow-fast), which contrast the solo and the *ripieno* (full ensemble). Bach treats the solo group in various combinations. The solo group contains recorder, oboe, horn, and violin, and Bach exhibits their timbre characteristics among solos, duets, trios, and quartets. This piece is often played with *flute* and trumpet (an early manuscript allows for horn as an alternative), but the word *flute* usually meant recorder in Bach's time. The piece has three sections, with an "episode" between the second and third. Bach uses thematic material very ingeniously, combining, recombining, and moving from instrument to instrument with deft handling of harmonies and textures.

and it worked its way into the forefront of American popular music.

Ragtime

Ragtime is a type of piano music (occasionally played on other instruments) dating to the 1890s. Mostly growing out of the saloons and dancehalls of the South and Midwest, and largely played by African American pianists like Scott Joplin (1868–1917), "ragging" involves taking a classical or popular tune and playing it with syncopation. It later developed a style and compositions of its own, such as Joplin's *Maple Leaf Rag*. Typically in duple meter, ragtime takes a steady, regular beat in the left hand and juxtaposes it against a lively, syncopated melody in the right hand.

Free Jazz

By the end of the 1950s, jazz moved away from fixed chord progressions, and by the 1960s and 1970s had produced a new style called "free jazz." Free jazz depends on two qualities: creative improvisation and original compositions. Abstract, dense, and difficult to follow, this style often does away with regular rhythmic patterns and melodic lines, and utilizes energetic drumming and melodic improvisation with extremely high notes, squawks, and squeals. Raucous and chaotic, it lacks the appeal of other forms of jazz.

Fusion

In the 1970s and 1980s, jazz combined with elements of rock music to produce an extremely popular style called fusion. The primary elements of fusion are use of electronic instruments (synthesizers, electric pianos, and electric bass guitar), large percussion sections, and simplicity of form and harmony. Often based on simple chord progressions and repetitive rhythmic patterns, it layers above these foundations a wide variety of different sounds.

Groove

Moving from the 1990s into the twenty-first century, jazz has seen another revival of popularity with the reappearance of many of the old styles: Dixieland, big band, and bebop, for example, with Wynton Marsalis among the featured names. In the twenty-first century, jazz has become its own international language with large followings in Japan, Europe, and North and South America, and it continues to evolve, blending with popular dance rhythms and emerging new styles such as "groove" music, or "funk," which suggests the blues in a highly complex, repetitive, and rhythmic approach.

Pop Music Forms

Among the many musical forms identifiable as "pop" or products of popular culture, two stand out as formative in late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century music: rock and roll and rap.

Rock and Roll

Rock and roll drew its sustenance from the dance mania of the 1950s and posed a dramatic confrontation to the smooth character of popular music dating back to the mid-nineteenth century. Rock and roll has a pounding rhythm accenting the first beat of the measure. It is loud, intense, coarse, and fast in tempo with an obvious sexuality in its sound and lyrics.

Early rock and roll employed a twelve-bar blues pattern (AAB) consisting of three phrases of four measures each. The lyrics repeat the first line of text (AA) and follow that with another line (B) that rhymes with the first. The chord sequence of the music is usually limited to three chords: I, IV, and V, arranged as follows: Text A—chords I-I-I-I; repeat text A—chords IV-IV-I-I; text B—chords V-IV (or V)-I-I. The limited number of chords makes rock and roll very repetitive and forces focus onto the driving rhythm.

Rap

Rap music has been traced by some sources to the West African and Caribbean traditions of rhymed, rhythmic storytelling. Modern rap, gaining popularity as street art in the 1970s, featured half-spoken, rhymed lyrics and strong, complex rhythms. Backed by percussion, bass, and synthesizer, rap songs are often created and mixed in the recording studio or by DJs or *turntablists* using two turntables to manipulate the sounds by cutting in and out of the sound made by *scratching* while the second LP is playing. Rap also can use a technique called *looping*, the frequent repeating of a short sound fragment originally produced by the recording of a brief loop of tape played on a tape machine. Since the 1970s rap has undergone several changes that have increased its loudness and complexity, its appeal to a broad spectrum of audiences, and have involved white and female rap bands as well as African American male rappers.

HOW IS IT PUT TOGETHER?

Understanding vocabulary and being able to identify its application in a musical work help us comprehend communication using the musical language, and thereby understand the creative communicative intent of

the composer and the musicians who bring the composition to life. The ways in which musical artists shape the characteristics that follow bring us experiences that can challenge our intellects and excite our emotions. As in all communication, meaning depends on each of the parties involved; communicators and respondents must assume responsibility for facility in the language utilized.

Among the basic elements by which music is put together, we will identify and discuss seven: sound, rhythm, melody, harmony, tonality, texture, and musical form.

Sound

Music designs sound and silence. In the broadest sense, sound is anything that excites the auditory nerve: sirens, speech, crying babies, jet engines, falling trees, and so on. We might even call such sources noise. Musical composition, although it can even employ "noise," usually depends on controlled and shaped sound consistent in quality. We distinguish music from other sounds by recognizing four basic properties: pitch, dynamics, tone color, and duration.

Pitch

Pitch, the relative highness or lowness we hear in sound, represents a physical phenomenon measurable in vibrations per second. So, when we describe differences in pitch, we describe recognizable and measurable differences in sound waves. A pitch has a steady, constant frequency. A faster frequency produces a higher pitch; a slower frequency, a lower pitch. If we shorten a sounding body—a vibrating string, for example—it vibrates more rapidly. Musical instruments designed to produce high pitches, such as the piccolo, therefore tend to be small. Instruments designed to produce low pitches tend to be large—for instance, bass viols and tubas. In music, we call a sound that has a definite pitch a tone.

In Chapter 2, we discussed color. Color comprises a range of light waves within a visible spectrum. Sound also comprises a spectrum, one whose audible pitches range from 16 to 38,000 vibrations per second. We can perceive 11,000 different pitches, obviously more than practical for musical composition. Therefore, *by convention,* musicians divide the sound spectrum into roughly ninety equally spaced frequencies comprising seven and a half *octaves.* The piano keyboard, consisting of eighty-eight keys (seven octaves plus two additional tones) representing the same number of equally spaced pitches, serves as an illustration (Fig. 5.1).

A scale, an arrangement of pitches or tones played in ascending or descending

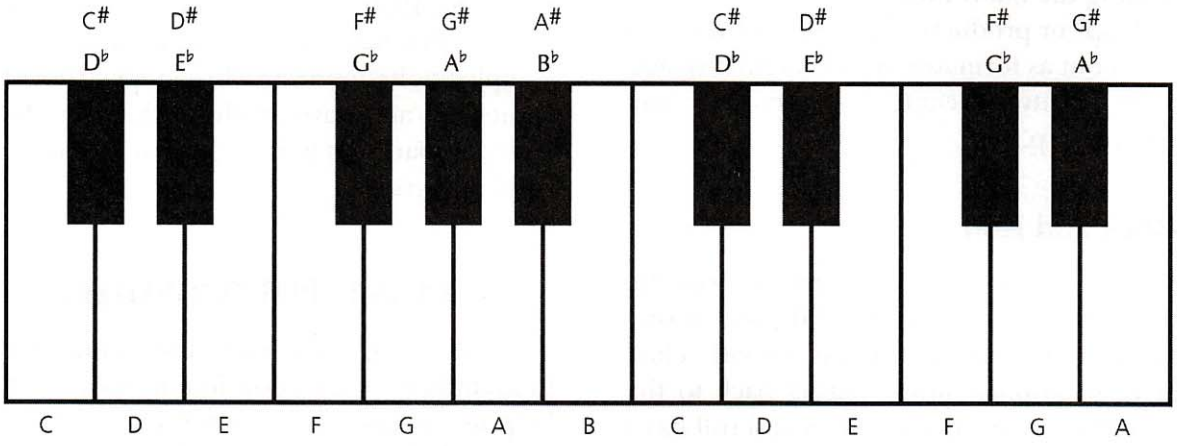

Figure 5.1 *Part of the piano keyboard and its pitches.*

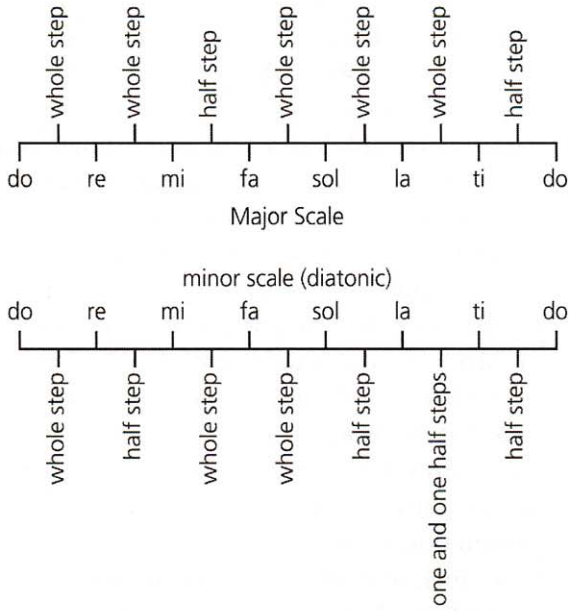

Figure 5.2 *The major and minor scales.*

order, represents a conventional organization of the frequencies of the sound spectrum (Fig. 5.2). Not all music conforms to this convention. Music of Western civilization prior to approximately C.E. 1600 does not, nor does Eastern music, which makes great use of quarter tones. In addition, some contemporary Western music departs from the conventions of tonality of the major or minor scale. Islamic calls to prayer exhibit this quality. These examples represent cultures whose music does not conform to the Western conventions of pitch and scale, or tonality. Other characteristics, however, make this music sound different from the music of Bach, for example.

Dynamics

We call degrees of loudness or softness in music dynamics. Any tone can be loud, soft, or anywhere in between. Dynamics is the *decibel* level of tones and depends on the physical phenomenon of *amplitude* of vibration. Greater force employed in the production of a tone results in wider sound waves and causes greater stimulation of the auditory nerves. The *size* of the sound wave, not its number of vibrations per second, changes.

Composers indicate *dynamic levels* with a series of specific notations:

pp	pianissimo (pee-yah-NEES—ee-moh)	very soft
p	piano	soft
mp	mezzo (MEHT-zoh) piano	moderately soft
mf	mezzo forte	moderately loud
f	forte (FOR-tay)	loud
ff	fortissimo (for-TEE-see-moh)	very loud

The notations of dynamics that apply to an individual tone, such as ***p***, ***mp***, and ***f***, also may apply to a section of music. Changes in dynamics may be abrupt, gradual, wide, or small. A series of symbols also governs this aspect of music.

<	Crescendo (kreh-SHENN-doh)	becoming louder
>	Decrescendo	becoming softer
>/^ ***sfz***	Sforzando (sfohrt-ZAHN-doh)	"with force"; a strong accent immediately followed by *p*

As we listen to and compare musical compositions, we can consider the use and breadth of dynamics in the same sense as we

A Question to Ask

Does this music sound like music typical of my culture? What musical characteristics make this so?

consider the use and breadth of the palette in painting.

Tone Color

Tone color, or *timbre* (TAM-buhr), signifies the characteristic of tone that allows us to distinguish a pitch played on a violin, for example, from the same pitch played on a piano. In addition to identifying characteristic differences among sound-producing sources, tone color characterizes differences in quality of tones produced by the same source. Here the analogy of tone color is particularly appropriate. We call a tone produced with an excess of air—for example, by the human voice—"white." Figure 5.3 illustrates some of the various sources that produce musical tone and account for its variety of tone colors. The piano could be considered either a stringed or a percussion instrument because it produces its sound by vibrating strings *struck* by hammers. The harpsichord's strings are set in motion by plucking.

Voice		***Electronic***
Soprano, Mezzo-soprano, Contralto	Women's	Synthesizer
Tenor, Baritone, Bass	Men's	

Strings	***Woodwinds***	***Brasses***
Violin	Flute	Trumpet
Viola	Piccolo	Horn
Cello (violoncello)	Oboe	Trombone
Bass	English horn	Tuba
Harp	Clarinet	
	Bassoon	

Percussion		
Snare drum	Piano	Harpsichord
Bass drum		
Timpani		
Triangle		
Cymbal		

Electronically produced music, available since the development of the RCA synthesizer at the Columbia-Princeton Electronics Music Center, has become a standard source in assisting contemporary composers (Fig. 5.4). Originally electronic music fell into two categories: (1) the electronic altering of acoustically produced sounds, which came to be labeled as *musique concrète* (see Glossary), and (2) electronically generated sounds. However, advances in technology have blurred those differences over the years.

Synthesizing technology took an important step forward with the development of MIDI (pronounced mih-dee; for musical instrument digital interface), a standard adopted by manufacturers for interfacing synthesizer equipment. MIDI allowed the device played on to be separated from tone production—for example, keyboards that look, feel, and play like a piano and string controllers that play like a violin. In addition, control signals can be fed to and from a MIDI instrument into and out of a personal computer so users can edit and store music and convert to and from musical notation. Computers now can act as controllers to drive MIDI equipment and are used for direct digital synthesis.

Duration

Duration, another characteristic of sound, constitutes the length of time in which vibration is maintained without interruption. Duration in musical composition uses a set of conventions called musical notation (Fig. 5.5). This system consists of a series of symbols (notes) by which the composer indicates the relative duration of each tone. The system is progressive—that is, each note is either double or half the duration of an adjacent note. Musical notation also includes a series of symbols that denote the duration of *silences* in a composition. These symbols, called *rests*, have the same durational values as the symbols for duration of tone.

Rhythm

Rhythm comprises recurring pulses and accents that create identifiable patterns.

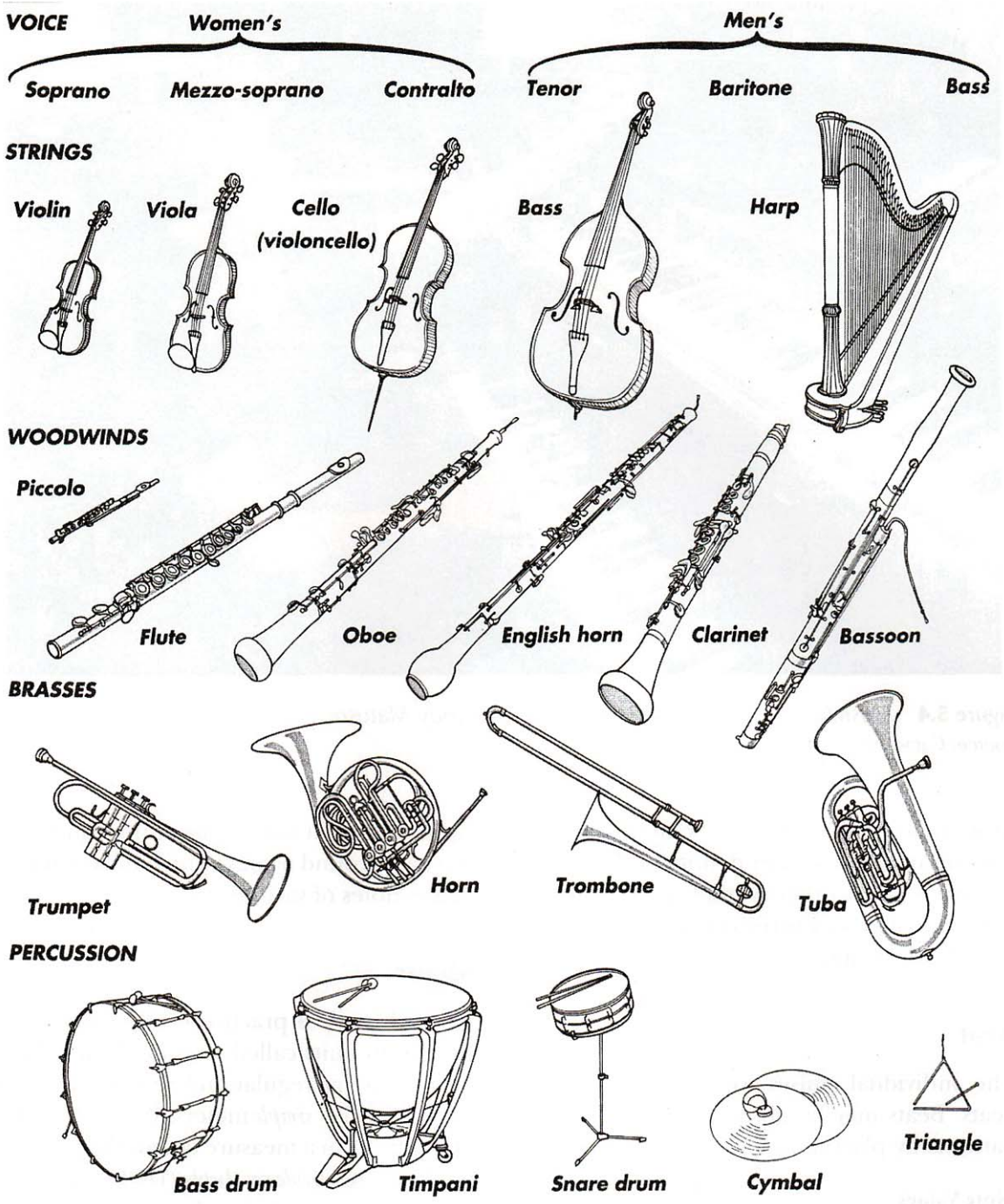

Figure 5.3 *The key sources of musical tone in an orchestra (instruments not to scale).*
Source: Laurence King Publishing Ltd., London, England.

Without rhythm we have only an aimless rising and falling of tones. Earlier we noted that each tone and silence has duration. Composing music means placing each tone into a time or rhythmical relationship with every other tone. As with the dots and dashes of the Morse code, we can "play" the rhythm of a musical composition without reference

Figure 5.4 *Musician at an electronic control panel. Randy Matusow/Monkmeyer Press.*
Source: Cameramann/The Image Works.

to its tones. Each symbol (or note) of the musical notation system denotes a duration relative to every other symbol in the system. Rhythm consists of three components: beat, meter, and tempo.

Beat

The individual pulses we hear are called beats. Beats may be grouped into rhythmic patterns by placing accents every few beats.

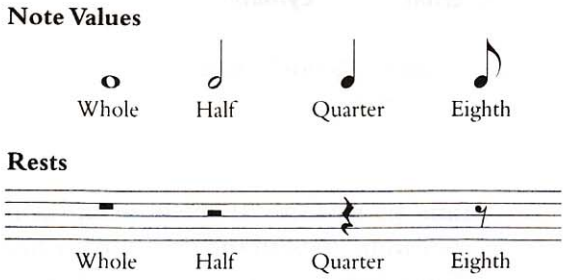

Figure 5.5 *Musical notation.*

Beats represent basic units of time and form the background against which the composer places notes of various lengths.

Meter

Normal musical practice groups clusters of beats into units called *measures*. When these groupings are regular and reasonably equal they comprise *simple* meters. When the number of beats in a measure equals three or two it constitutes *triple* or *duple* (DOO-puhl) meter. As listeners, we can distinguish between duple and triple meters because of their different *accent* patterns. In triple meter we hear an accent every third beat—ONE two three, ONE two three—and in duple meter the accent is every other beat—ONE two, ONE two. If there are four beats in a measure, the second accent is weaker than the first—ONE two THREE four, ONE two

THREE four. When accent occurs on normally unaccented beats, we have *syncopation.*

Tempo

Tempo is the rate of speed of the composition. A composer may notate tempo in two ways. The first involves a *metronome marking,* such as ♩ = 60. This means playing or singing the piece at the rate of sixty quarter notes (♩) per minute. The other method, although less precise, involves more descriptive terminology in Italian.

The tempo may be quickened or slowed, and the composer indicates this by the words *accelerando* (accelerate) and *ritardando* (retard, slow down). A performer who takes liberties with the tempo uses *rubato* (roo-BAH-toh).

Largo (broad) Grave (grahv) (grave, solemn)	Very slow
Lento (slow) Adagio (ah-DAHZH-ee-oh) (leisurely)	Slow
Andante (at a walking pace) Andantino (somewhat faster than andante) Moderato (moderate)	Moderate
Allegretto (briskly) Allegro (cheerful, faster than allegretto)	Fast
Vivace (vih-VAH-chay) (vivacious) Presto (very quick) Prestissimo (as fast as possible)	Very fast

Melody

Melody is a succession of sounds with rhythmic and tonal organization. We can visualize melody as linear and essentially horizontal. Thus, any organization of musical tones occurring *one after another* constitutes a melody.

Two other terms, *tune* and *theme,* relate to melody as parts to a whole. For example, the *tune* in Figure 5.6 is a melody—that is, a succession of tones. However, a melody is not always a tune. In general, the term *tune* implies singability, and many melodies cannot be sung. A *theme* is also a melody. However, in musical composition, it specifically means a central musical idea, which may be restated and varied throughout a piece. Thus, a melody is not necessarily a theme.

Related to theme and melody, the *motif* (moh-TEEF), or *motive,* constitutes a short melodic or rhythmic idea around which a composer may design a composition. For example, in Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 in C minor, the first movement develops around a motif of four notes.

In listening for how a composer develops melody, theme, and motive, we can use two terms to describe what we hear: *conjunct* and *disjunct.* Conjunct melodies comprise notes close together, stepwise, on the musical scale. For example, the interval between the opening notes of the soprano line of J. S. Bach's (1685–1750) chorale "Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring" from his Cantata 147 (Fig. 5.7) never occupy more than a whole step. Such melodic development is highly conjunct. Disjunct melodies contain intervals of a third or more. However, no formula determines disjunct or conjunct characteristics; no line exists at which a melody ceases to be disjunct and becomes conjunct. These constitute relative and comparative terms that assist us in description. For example, we would say that the opening melody of "The Star Spangled Banner" (see Fig. 5.6) is more disjunct than the opening melody of "Jesu

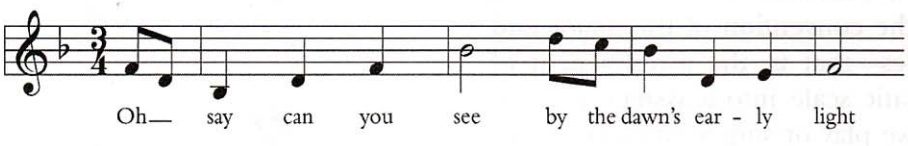

Figure 5.6 *"The Star Spangled Banner" (excerpt).*
Source: From "The Star-Spangled Banner" by Francis Scott Key

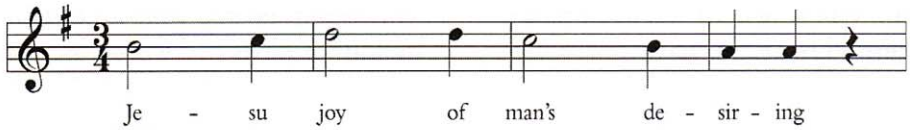

Figure 5.7 *"Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring" (excerpt).*
Source: "Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring" Johann Sebastien Bach, 1716

Joy of Man's Desiring"—or that the latter is more conjunct than the former.

Harmony

When two or more tones sound at the same time, we have harmony. Harmony is essentially a vertical arrangement, in contrast with the horizontal arrangement of melody.

However, as we shall see, harmony also has a horizontal property—movement forward in time. In listening for harmony, we are interested in how simultaneous tones *sound together.*

Two tones played simultaneously are an *interval*; three or more form a *chord.* When we hear an interval or a chord, we first respond to its *consonance* or *dissonance.* Consonant harmonies sound stable in their arrangement. Dissonant harmonies sound tense and unstable. Consonance and dissonance, however, are not absolute properties. Essentially they are conventional and, to a large extent, cultural. What sounds dissonant to our ears may not to someone else's. In musical response, we must determine *how* the composer utilizes these two properties. Most Western music is primarily consonant. Dissonance, on the other hand, can be used for contrast, to draw attention to itself, or as a normal part of *harmonic progression.*

As its name implies, harmonic progression involves the movement forward in time of harmonies. In discussing pitch, we noted the convention of the major and minor scales—that is, the arrangement of the chromatic scale into a system of *tonality.* When we play or sing a major or minor scale, we note a particular phenomenon: Our movement from *do* to *re* to *mi* to *fa* to *sol* to *la* seems smoothly natural. But when we reach the seventh tone of the scale, *ti*, something strange happens. It seems as though we must continue back to *do*, the *tonic* of the scale. Sing a major scale and stop at *ti.* You feel uncomfortable. Your mind tells you to *resolve* that discomfort by returning to *do.* That same sense of tonality—that sense of the tonic—applies to harmony. Within any scale, a series of chords may be developed on the basis of the individual tones of the scale. Each of the chords has a subtle relationship to each of the other chords and to the tonic—that is, the *do* of the scale. That relationship creates a sense of progression that leads back to the chord based on the tonic (note the basic chordal progression of rock and roll—I–IV–V–I—discussed earlier in the chapter).

We call the harmonic movement toward, and either resolving or not resolving to, the tonic, *cadence* (Fig. 5.8). Composers use cadence as one way of articulating sections of a composition or of surprising us by upsetting our expectations. A composer using a full cadence uses a harmonic progression that resolves just as our ear tells us it should. We have a sense of ending, of completeness. However, when using a half cadence or a deceptive cadence, the composer upsets the expected progression, and

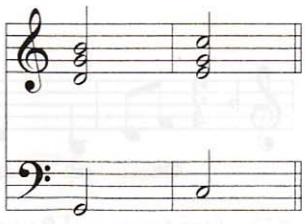

Figure 5.8 *Full cadence in the key of C.*

the musical development moves in an unexpected direction.

As we listen to music of various historical periods, we may note that in some compositions tonal centers are blurred because composers frequently *modulate*—that is, change from one key (see Glossary) to another. In the twentieth century, many composers (see Serialism, p. 130), some of them using purely mathematical formulas to utilize equally all tones of the chromatic scale, have removed tonality as an arranging factor and have developed *atonal* music, or music without tonality. A convention of harmonic progression is disturbed when tonality is removed. Nonetheless, we still have harmonic progression, and we still have harmony—dissonant or consonant.

Tonality

Utilization of tonality, or key, has taken composers in various directions over the centuries. Conventional tonality, employing the major and minor scales and keys we discussed previously relative to pitch, forms the basis for most sixteenth- to twentieth-century music, as well as traditionally oriented music of the twentieth century. In the early twentieth century, traditional tonality was abandoned by some composers, and a new *atonal* harmonic expression occurred. Atonal compositions seek the freedom to use any combination of tones without the necessity of having to resolve chordal progressions.

Texture

The term *texture* has various spatial connotations. Texture in painting and sculpture denotes surface quality: roughness or smoothness. Texture in weaving denotes the interrelationship of the warp and the woof (the horizontal and vertical threads in fabric). In music, texture has three characteristics: monophony, polyphony, and homophony.

Monophony

When we have a single musical line without accompaniment, we have a texture called monophonic. Many voices or instruments may be playing at the same time, but as long as they sing the same notes at the same time—in unison—the texture remains monophonic. G.F. Handel's (1685–1759) "Hallelujah" Chorus has instances in which men and women sing the same notes in different octaves. This still represents monophony.

Polyphony

Polyphony or counterpoint means "many-sounding," and it occurs when two or more melodic lines of relatively equal interest are performed at the same time. We can hear it in a very simple statement in Josquin Desprez's (day-PRAY; 1440–1521) "Ave Maria . . . Virgo Serena." Palestrina's "Kyrie" from the *Pope Marcellus Mass* has more complexity. When the counterpoint uses an immediate restatement of the musical idea, then the composer employs *imitation.*

Homophony

When chords accompany one main melody, we have homophonic texture. Here the composer focuses attention on the melody by supporting it with subordinate sounds.

Of course, composers may change textures within a piece, as Handel does in the "Hallelujah" Chorus. This creates an even richer fabric of sound for our response.

Musical Form

Tones and rhythms that proceed without purpose or stop arbitrarily make little sense to the listener. Therefore, just as the painter, sculptor, or any other artist must try to develop design that has focus and meaning, the musician must attempt to create a coherent

A Question of Style

Serialism

Serialism (SIHR-ee-uh-lihz-uhm). In music, a mid-twentieth-century type of composition based on the twelve-tone system. In serialism, the techniques of the twelve-tone system are used to organize musical dimensions other than pitch, for example, rhythm, dynamics, and tone color. At the root of the movement was Arnold Schoenberg (SHURN-bairk; 1874–1951). Between 1905 and 1912, Schoenberg moved away from the gigantic post-Romantic works he had been composing and began to adopt a more contained style, writing works for smaller ensembles, and treating instruments in a more individual manner. Although the word *atonality*, meaning without tonality, describes Schoenberg's works, he preferred the term *pantonality*—inclusive of all tonalities. In his compositions, Schoenberg used any combination of tones without having to resolve chord progressions, a concept he called "the emancipation of dissonance." He broke down the musical texture, alternating timbres swiftly and fragmenting rhythm and melody. In 1911, Schoenberg wrote *Six Little Piano Pieces, op. 19.* In these, he made some advances in his new style and eliminated some of the traditional procedures, for example, repetition or recall of earlier musical statements. These short pieces contain only nine to eighteen measures. Nonetheless, each, like "Etwas rasch" (rather quick), constitutes a tiny but freestanding presentation of expression.

composition of sounds and silences. The principal means by which artists create coherence is repetition. As we noted in Chapter 1, the Volkswagen (Fig. 1.2) achieved unity through strong geometric repetition that varied only in size. Music achieves coherence, or unity, through repetition in a similar fashion. However, because music deals with time as opposed to space, repetition in music usually involves recognizable themes.

Thus, we can define form as organization through repetition to create unity.

Binary form, as the name implies, consists of two parts: the opening section of the composition and a second part that often acts as an answer to the first: AB. Each section is then repeated.

Ternary form is a three-part development in which the opening section repeats after the development of a different second section: ABA.

Ritornello (rih-tor-NEHL-loh), which developed in the baroque period, and *rondo*, which developed in the classical period, employ a continuous development that returns to modified versions of the opening theme after separate treatments of additional themes. Ritornello alternates orchestral or *ripieno* passages with solo passages. Rondo

A Question to Ask

What kind or kinds of texture appear in this composition?

alternates a main theme in the tonic key with subordinate themes in contrasting keys.

Sonata form, or *sonata–allegro form*, takes its name from the conventional treatment of the first movement of the sonata. It also serves as the form of development of the first movement of many symphonies: ABA or AABA. The first A section, known as the *exposition*, states two or three main and subordinate themes. To cement the perception of section A, the composer may repeat it: AA. The B section, the *development*, takes the original themes and develops them with several fragmentations and modulations. The movement then returns to the A section: This final section, called the *recapitulation*, usually does not exactly repeat the opening section; in fact, it may be difficult to recognize in some pieces. In Mozart's Symphony No. 40, the opening movement (allegro) employs sonata–allegro form. However, we recognize the recapitulation section only by a very brief restatement of the first theme, as heard in the exposition, and not as a repetition of the opening section. Then, after a lengthy *bridge*, the second theme from the exposition appears. Mozart closes the movement with a brief *coda*, or closing section, in the original key, based on the first phrase of the first theme.

The *fugue*, which we introduced earlier, is a polyphonic development of one, two, or sometimes three short themes. Fugal form, which takes its name from the Latin *fuga* ("flight"), has a traditional, although not a necessary, scheme of development with two common characteristics: (1) counterpoint and (2) a clear dominant-tonic relationship—that is, imitation of the theme at the fifth above or below the tonic. Each voice in a fugue (as many as five or more) develops the basic subject independent from the other voices, and passes through as many of the basic elements as the composer deems necessary. Unification results not by a return to an opening section, as in closed form, but by the varying recurrences of the subject throughout.

The *canon*, a contrapuntal form based on note-for-note imitation of one voice by another, separates the voices by a brief time interval—for example (the use of letters here does not indicate sectional development):

Voice 1: a b c d e f g
Voice 2: a b c d e f g
Voice 3: a b c d e f g

The interval of separation can vary among the voices. The canon differs from the *round*, for example "Row, row, row your boat." A round is also an exact melodic repeat. The canon develops new material indefinitely: The round repeats the same phrases over and over. The interval of separation in the round stays constant—a phrase apart.

Variation form modifies an initial theme through melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic treatments, each more elaborate than the last. Each section usually ends with a strong cadence, and the piece ends, literally, when the composer decides he or she has done enough.

HOW DOES IT STIMULATE THE SENSES?

Our Primal Responses

We can find no better means of illustrating the sensual effect of music than to contrast two totally different musical pieces. Debussy's *Claire de Lune* (see "A Question of Style"—Impressionism) provides us with an example of how musical elements can combine to give us a relaxing and soothing experience. Here, the tone color of the piano added to the elements of a constant beat in triple meter, consonant harmonies, subtle dynamic contrasts, and extended duration of the tones combine in a richly subdued experience that engages us but lulls us at the same time. In contrast, listen to Stravinsky's "Auguries of Spring: Dances of the Youths

and Maidens" from *The Rite of Spring*. Here the driving rhythms, strong syncopation, dissonant harmonies, wildly contrasting dynamics, and the broad tonal palette of the orchestra rivet us and ratchet up our excitement level. It is virtually impossible to listen to this piece without experiencing a rise in pulse rate. In both cases, our senses have responded at an extremely basic rate over which we have, it would seem, little control.

Music contains a sensual attraction difficult to deny. At every turn music causes us to tap our toes, drum our fingers, or bounce in our seats in a purely physical response. This involuntary motor response creates perhaps the most primitive of our sensual involvement—as primitive as the images in Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. If the rhythm is irregular and the beat divided or syncopated, as in *Rite of Spring*, we may find one part of our body doing one thing and another part doing something else. Having compared the Debussy and Stravinsky pieces, do we have any doubt that a composer's choices have the power to manipulate us sensually?

From time to time throughout this chapter, we have referred to certain historical conventions that permeate the world of music. Some of these have a potential effect on our sense response. Some notational patterns represent a kind of musical shorthand, or perhaps mime, that conveys certain kinds of emotion to the listener. Of course, they have little meaning for us unless we take the time and effort to study music history. Some of Mozart's string quartets indulge in exactly this kind of communication: yet another illustration of how expanded knowledge can increase the depth and value of the aesthetic experience.

The Musical Performance

A certain part of our sense response to music occurs as a result of the nature of the performance itself. As we suggested earlier in the chapter, the scale of a symphony orchestra gives the composer a tremendously variable canvas on which to paint. Let's pause, momentarily, to familiarize ourselves with this fundamental aspect of the musical equation. As we face the stage in an orchestral concert, we note perhaps as many as one hundred instrumentalists facing back at us. Their arrangement from one concert to another remains fairly standard, as illustrated in Figure 5.9.

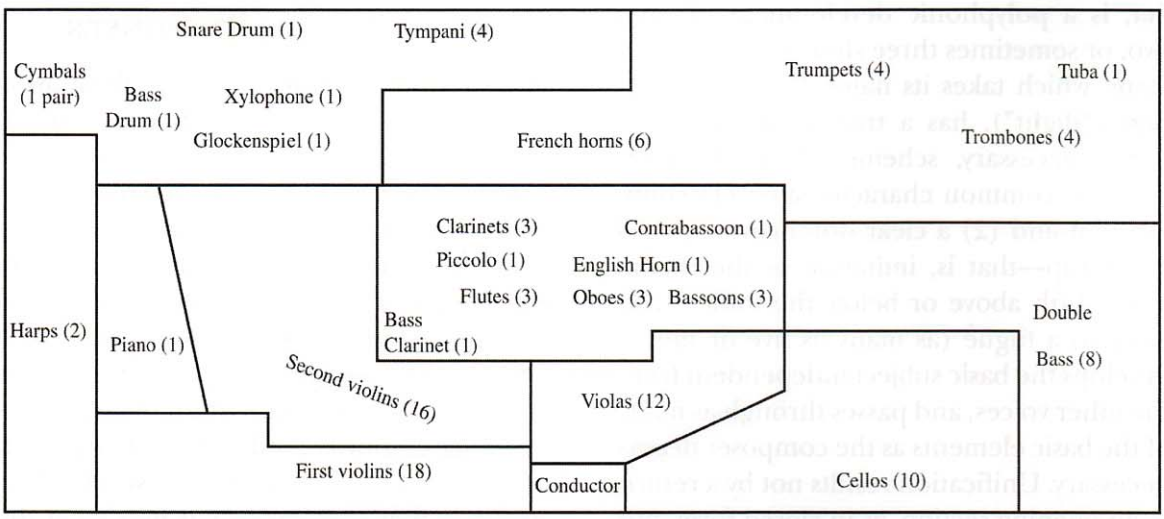

Figure 5.9 *Typical seating plan for a large orchestra (about 100 instrumentalists), showing the placement of instrumental sections.*

A large symphony orchestra can overwhelm us with diverse timbres and volumes; a string quartet cannot. Our expectations and our focus may change as we perceive the performance of one or the other. For example, because we know our perceptual experience with a string quartet will not involve the broad possibilities of an orchestra, we tune ourselves to seek the qualities that challenge the composer and performer within the particular medium. The difference between listening to an orchestra and listening to a quartet is similar to the difference between viewing a museum painting of monumental scale and viewing the exquisite technique of a miniature.

Textual suggestion can have much to do with sensual response to a musical work. For example, Debussy's *Prelude à l'après midi d'un faune* elicits images of Pan frolicking through the woodlands and cavorting with the nymphs on a sunny afternoon. Of course, much of what we imagine has been stimulated by the title of the composition. Our perception is heightened further if we are familiar with the poem by Mallarmé on which the symphonic poem is based. Titles and especially text in musical compositions may be the strongest devices a composer has for communicating directly with us. Images are triggered by words, and a text or title can stimulate our imaginations and senses to wander freely and fully through the musical development. Johannes Brahms (brahmz; 1833–1897) called a movement in his *German Requiem* "All Mortal Flesh Is as the Grass"; we certainly receive a philosophical and religious communication from that title. Moreover, when the chorus ceases to sing and the orchestra plays alone, the instrumental melodies and harmonies stimulate images of fields of grass blowing in the wind.

Harmony and tonality both stimulate our senses considerably. Just as paintings and sculpture stimulate sensations of rest and comfort or action and discomfort, so harmonies create a feeling of repose and stability, if consonant, and a sensation of restlessness and instability if dissonant. Harmonic progression that leads to a full cadential resolution leaves us feeling fulfilled; unresolved cadences puzzle and perhaps irritate us. Major or minor tonalities have significantly differing effects: major sounds positive; minor, sad or mysterious. The former seems close to home, and the latter, exotic. Atonal music sets us adrift to find the unifying thread of the composition.

Melody, rhythm, and tempo relate closely to the use of line in painting, and the term *melodic contour* could be seen as a musical analogue to this element of painting. When the tones of a melody undulate slowly and smoothly (conjunct), they trace a pattern having the same sensual effect as their linear visual counterpart—soft, comfortable, and placid.

When music employs melodic disjunct contours and rapid tempos, the pattern and response change:

In conclusion, it remains for us as we respond to music to analyze how each of the elements available to the composer has in fact become a part of the channel of communication, and how the composer, consciously or unconsciously, has put together a work that elicits sensory responses from us.

OPERA

The composer Pietro Mascagni reportedly said, "In my operas, do not look for melody or beauty . . . look only for blood." Mascagni represented a style of late-nineteenth-century opera called *verismo* (vay-REEZ-moh), a word with the same root as verisimilitude, meaning true to life. Verismo opera treated

A Question of Style

Romanticism

Romanticism (roh-MAN-tuh-sihz-uhm). A philosophy as well as a style in all the arts and literature, dating to the late eighteenth through nineteenth centuries. In architecture, it borrowed styles from previous eras while experimenting with modern materials. It also sought an escape to the past. In painting, the style turned to emotionalism, the picturesque, and nature. It fragmented images and dramatized with personal subjectivity. In theatre, the style resulted in dazzling scenery. In literature, music, and ballet, it sought the subjective and the colorful, reflecting great diversity.

In an era of Romantic subjectivity, music provided the medium in which many found an unrivaled opportunity to express emotion. In trying to express human emotion, Romantic music made stylistic changes to classical music. Although Romanticism amounted to a rebellion in many of the arts, in music it involved a more gradual and natural expression of classical principles. Music put its primary emphasis in this era on beautiful, lyrical, and expressive melody.

One of the style's exemplars was Frédérick Chopin (sho-PAN; 1810–1849), who wrote almost exclusively for the piano. Each of his études, or studies, explored a single technical problem, usually set around a single motif. More than simple exercises, these works explored the possibilities of the instrument and became short tone poems in their own right. Chopin's "Revolutionary" *Etude in C Minor, Op. 10* has a blazing and furious quality perhaps inspired by the Russian takeover of Warsaw in Chopin's home country of Poland. As an *étude*, the "Revolutionary étude" tackles the problem of developing speed and strength in the pianist's left hand: The piece requires the performer to play rapid passages throughout. The work begins with a dramatic explosion. High, dissonant chords couple with rushing downward passages culminating in the main melody played in octaves by the right hand. The melody's rhythms and stormy accompaniment give the work a mounting tension. Near the end, after a climax, tension subsides briefly only to be followed by a fiery passage sweeping down the keyboard and coming to rest in strong closing chords.

themes, characters, and events from life in a down-to-earth fashion. In Mascagni's operas and operas of other composers of the verismo style, we find plenty of blood, but we also find fine drama and music. The combination of drama and music into a single artistic form constitutes opera. In basic terms, opera comprises drama sung to orchestral accompaniment. In opera, music comprises the predominant element, but the addition of a story line, scenery, costumes, and staging make opera significantly different from other forms of music.

In one sense, we could describe opera as the purest integration of all the arts. It contains music, drama, poetry, and visual arts. It even includes architecture because an opera house constitutes a particular architectural entity with very specific requirements for orchestra, audience, and stage space, as well as stage machinery. In its wide variety of applications, opera ranges from

A Question of Style

Impressionism

Impressionism (ihm-PREHSH-uh-nihz-uhm). A mid- to late-nineteenth-century style originating in France. In painting it sought spontaneity, harmonious colors, subjects from everyday life, and faithfulness to observed lighting and atmospheric effects by seeking to capture the psychological perception of reality in color and motion. It emphasized the presence of color within shadows and the result of color and light making an "impression" on the retina. In music, it freely challenged traditional tonality with new tone colors, oriental influence, and harmonies away from the traditional. Gliding chords—that is, repetition of a chord up and down the scale—was a hallmark.

Impressionist music can best be found in the work of its primary champion, the Frenchman Claude Debussy (deh-BYOO-see; 1862–1918), although he did not like to be called an "impressionist"—the label, after all, had been coined by a critic of the painters and was meant to be derogatory. He created fleeting moods and gauzy atmospheres. Debussy maintained that he represented "an old Romantic who has thrown the worries of success out the window," and he sought no association with the painters. We can, however, draw similarities. His use of tone color has been described as "wedges of color," much like those the painters provided with individual brush strokes. Debussy reduced melodic development to limited short motifs. He considered a chord strictly on the merits of its expressive capabilities, apart from any idea of tonal progression within a key. On a nicely subdued scale, we find Debussy's tonal colorings and gliding chords evident and combined with a simple visual image in the easily accessible piece *Claire de Lune* ("Moonlight").

tragedies of spectacular proportions involving several hundred people, to intimate music dramas and comedies with two or three characters (Figs. 5.10 and 5.11).

Unlike theatre, an opera production reveals character and plot through song rather than speech. This convention removes opera from the lifelikeness we might expect in the theatre and asks us to suspend our disbelief so we can enjoy magnificent music and the heightening of dramatic experience that music's contribution to mood, character, and dramatic action affords us. Central to an opera are performers who can sing and act simultaneously. These include major characters played by star performers as well as secondary solo singers and chorus members plus *supernumeraries*—"supers" or "extras"—who do not sing but merely flesh out crowd scenes.

Types of Opera

In Italian, the word *opera* means "work." In Florence, Italy, in the late sixteenth century, artists, writers, and architects eagerly revived the culture of ancient Greece and Rome. Opera represented an attempt by a group known as the *camerata* (cah-may-RAHT-ah; Italian for "fellowship" or "society") to recreate the effect of ancient Greek drama, in which, scholars believed, words were chanted or sung as well as spoken. Through succeeding centuries, various applications of the fundamental concept of opera have

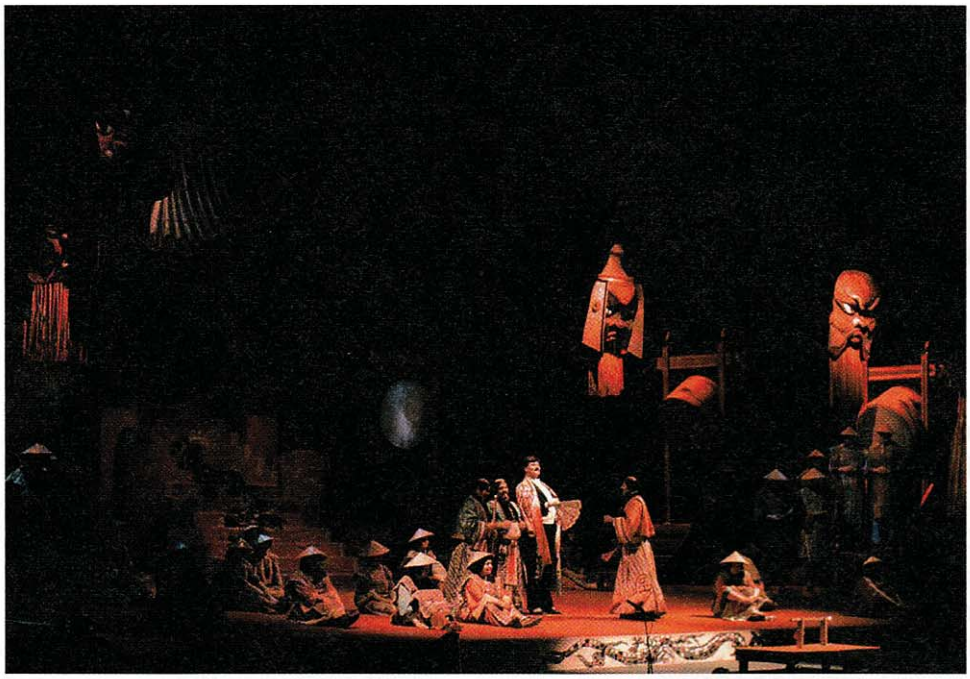

Figure 5.10 *Giacomo Puccini, Turandot, Beiteddine Festival, Lebanon.*
Source: Bill Lyons Alamy Images.

Figure 5.11 *Georges Bizet, Carmen, Arena, Verona, Italy.*
Source: © EmmePi Travel/Alamy.

arisen, and among these applications we find three basic types of opera: grand opera, opera buffa, and operetta.

Grand Opera

Grand opera, used synonymously with *opera*, refers to serious or tragic opera, usually in five acts. Another name for this type of opera is *opera seria* ("serious opera"), which usually treats heroic subjects—for example, the gods and heroes of ancient times—in a highly stylized manner.

Opera Buffa

Opera buffa is comic opera, which usually does not have spoken dialogue. Opera buffa usually uses satire to treat a serious topic with humor—for example, Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro.*

Operetta

The third variety, *operetta*, also has spoken dialogue, but it has come to refer to a light style of opera characterized by popular themes, a romantic mood, and often a humorous tone. It is frequently considered more theatrical than musical, and its story line is usually frivolous and sentimental.

The Opera Production

Like theatre, opera, a collaborative art, joins the efforts of a composer, a dramatist, a stage director, and a musical director. At its beginnings, an opera emerges when a composer sets to music a text, called a *libretto* (and written by a *librettist*). As we suggested earlier, the range of subjects and characters in opera may be extremely broad, from mythological to everyday. All characters come to life through performers who combine singing and acting. Opera includes the basic voice ranges we noted earlier (soprano, alto, tenor, bass), but divides them more precisely, as indicated in the following list.

Coloratura soprano	Very high range; capable of executing rapid scales and trills
Lyric soprano	Fairly light voice; cast in roles requiring grace and charm
Dramatic soprano	Full, powerful voice, capable of passionate intensity
Lyric tenor	Relatively light, bright voice
Dramatic tenor	Powerful voice, capable of heroic expression
Basso buffo	Cast in comic roles; can sing very rapidly
Basso profundo	Extremely low range, capable of power; cast in roles requiring great dignity.

Because the large majority of operas in the contemporary repertoire are not of American origin, the American respondent usually has to overcome the language barrier to understand the dialogue and thereby the plot. Performing operas in their original language makes it possible for the best singers to be heard around the world. Think of the complications that would arise if Pavarotti, for example, had to learn a single opera in the language of every country in which he performed it. In addition, opera loses much of its musical character in translation. We spoke of tone color, or timbre, earlier in this chapter. Timbre characteristics implicit, for example, in the Russian, German, and Italian languages get lost when translated into English.

Experienced operagoers may study the score before attending a performance. However, every concert program contains a plot synopsis (even when the production is in English), so that even the neophyte can follow what is happening. Opera plots, unlike mysteries, have few surprise endings, and knowing the plot ahead of time does not diminish the experience of responding to the opera. To assist the audience, opera companies often project translated lyrics on a screen above the stage (super titles), much like subtitles in a foreign film.

PROFILE

Hildegard of Bingen

One of the significant musical and literary figures of the time, the German nun Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179; Fig. 5.12) was educated at the Benedictine cloister of Disibodenberg and became prioress there in 1136. Having experienced visions since a child, at age forty-three she consulted her confessor, who reported the matter to the archbishop of Mainz. A theological committee confirmed the authenticity of her visions, and a monk was appointed to help her record them in writing. The finished work, *Scivias* (1141–1152), consisted of twenty-six visions, prophetic, symbolic, and apocalyptic in form. About 1147, Hildegard left Disibodenberg to found a convent at Rupertsberg, where she continued to prophesy and to record her visions in writing.

She is the first composer whose biography we know. She founded a convent, where her musical plays were performed. She wrote music and texts to her songs, mostly liturgical plainchant honoring saints and the Virgin Mary. She believed that music provided the means of recapturing the original joy and beauty of paradise and that music was invented and musical instruments made in order to worship God appropriately. She wrote in the plainchant tradition of a single vocal melodic line. She wrote seventy-seven chants and the first musical drama in history, which she entitled "The Ritual of the Virtues."

Hildegard of Bingen wrote her music for performance by the nuns of the convent she headed. She combined all her music into a cycle called *The Symphony of the Harmony of the Heavenly Revelations (Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum)*. Illustrative of Hildegard's composition, "O Viridissima Virga" moves in monophonic texture and undulating, free rhythm common to chant.

Figure 5.12 *Hildegard of Bingen. Bermersheim 1098-Kloster Rupertsberg 17.9.1179,* Inspiration of Hildegard, *Woodcut, 1524. From: The legend of the blessed virgin Saint Hildegard (. . .), Oppenheim (J. Köbel) 1524. Later colouring.*
Source: akg-images.

The text of the song praises the Virgin Mary using the metaphor of the "greenest branch" (*viridissima virga*). The opening stanza salutes the Virgin: "O greenest branch, I greet you, you who budded in the winds of the questioning of the saints."

Hildegard believed that many times a day humans fall out of sorts and lose their way. Music formed the sacred technology that could best redirect human hearts toward heaven. It could integrate mind, heart, and body and heal discord. Hidegard's numerous other writings include a morality play, a book of saints' lives, two treatises on medicine and natural history, and extensive correspondence, in which we find further prophecies and allegorical treatises. Her lyrical poetry, gathered in *The Symphony of the Harmony of the Heavenly Revelations*, consists of seventy-seven poems (all with music), and these works together form a liturgical cycle.

The overture marks the opening element in an opera. This orchestral introduction may have two characteristics. First, it may set the mood or tone of the opera. Here the composer works directly with our sense responses, putting us in the proper frame of mind for what is to follow. In his overture to *I Pagliacci* (ee pahl-YAH-chee), for example, Ruggiero Leoncavallo (1857–1919) creates a tonal story that tells us that we will experience comedy, tragedy, action, and romance. If we listen to this overture, we will identify these elements and, in doing so, understand how relatively unimportant the work's being in English is to comprehension. Add to the "musical language" the language of body and mime, and we can understand even complex ideas and character relationships—*without* words. In addition to this type of introduction, an overture may provide melodic introductions—passages introducing the arias and recitatives that will follow.

The plot unfolds musically through *recitative* (reh-sih-tah-TEEV or ray-chee-tah-TEEV), or sung dialogue. The composer uses recitative to move the plot along from one section to another; recitative has little emotional content to speak of, and the words are more important than the music. *Recitativo secco* (SEH-ko) has very little musical accompaniment for the singer or none at all. Any accompaniment usually takes the form of light chording under the voice. The second type, *recitativo stromento*, gives the singer full musical accompaniment.

The real emotion and poetry of an opera lie in its *arias*. Musically and poetically, an aria reflects high dramatic feeling. The great, familiar opera songs are arias, such as "Dido's Lament" by Henry Purcell (1659–1695).

Every opera contains duets, trios, quartets, and other small ensemble pieces, as well as chorus sections in which everyone gets into the act. In addition, ballet or dance interludes are not uncommon. These may have nothing to do with the development of the plot, but add more life and interest to the dramatic production and, in some cases, provide a *segue* from one scene into another.

Bel canto, as its name implies, means a style of singing emphasizing the beauty of sound. Its most successful composer, Gioacchino Rossini (1792–1868), had a great sense of melody and sought to develop the *art song* to its highest level. In bel canto singing, the melody provides the focus.

Richard Wagner (VAHGH-nuhr'; 1813–1883) gave opera and theatre a prototype that continues to influence theatrical production—*organic unity*. He integrated and shaped every element of his productions to create a work of total unity. Wagner was also famous for the use of *leitmotif* (LYT-moh-TEEF), a common element in contemporary film. A leitmotif is a musical theme associated with a particular person or idea. Each time that person appears or comes to mind, or each time the idea surfaces, the leitmotif occurs.

Sample Outline and Critical Analysis

The following very brief example illustrates how we can use some of the terms explained in the chapter to form an outline and then develop a critical analysis of a musical work. Here is how that might work regarding Joseph Haydn's (HYDN; 1732–1809) Symphony No. 94 in G major.

Outline	Critical Analysis
Classical form Symphony Theme	Haydn's Symphony No. 94 in G major contains four movements, of which I will concentrate on the first, although the second movement contains the simple theme and dramatic musical surprise that gives the symphony its popular name—the "Surprise Symphony." The orchestra begins with a soft statement of the theme. After presenting the theme a second time, even more quietly, a very loud chord appears—the surprise.
Sonata form Triple meter Tempo Exposition	In the opening movement, Haydn uses sonata form preceded by a pastoral introduction in a slow, singing style, in triple meter. The introductory material alternates between the strings and the woodwinds. The tempo switches to very fast, and the strings quietly introduce the first theme in G major (the exposition). The last note of the theme is very loud (forte), and at this point the full orchestra joins the violins in a lively section. Just before a pause, the orchestra plays a short phrase that recurs throughout the movement.
Scale Motif	The first theme then reappears with a slightly altered rhythmic pattern. A quick series of scales in the violins and flutes leads to the introduction of a second theme, a lyrical theme with trills and a falling motif. The exposition section closes with a short scale figure and repeated notes, and then the entire exposition is repeated.
Development Key Dynamics Recapitulation	The development section opens with a variation of the first theme and then goes through a series of keys and dynamic changes. The recapitulation starts with a return to the first theme in the original key. A passage based on motifs from the first theme, a repeat and brief development of the first theme, a pause, and finally, another repeat of the first theme follow. Then the second theme appears again, now in the home key, and the movement closes with a short scale passage and a strong cadence.