

## The Elements of Music Important Vocabulary Words

### **Duration**

- beat (strong vs. weak beats)
- rhythm (whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, eighth notes, sixteenth notes, etc.) (and rests too!)
- fast moving notes (like sixteenth notes) vs. longer notes (like whole notes) (and rests too!)
- metre/time signatures (4/4, 3/4, 2/4, 6/8 etc.)
- tempo (speed) (*grave, lento, largo, adagio, andante, moderato, presto, allegro, vivace, presto, prestissimo*)
- fermata (pause or hold)

### **Pitch**

- high pitches vs. low pitches
- treble clef vs. bass clef
- instruments that play high (treble) notes vs. instruments that play low (bass) notes
- ledger lines (lines that extend the staff higher or lower)
- intervals (unisons, steps, skips, leaps) (up and down)
- melodic contour (a lines you draw to show what happens to the pitch)
- major keys (happy sounding) vs. minor keys (sad sounding)
- trills (going back and forth between two pitches)

### **Dynamics and Other Expressive Controls**

- dynamics (louds and softs) (volume)
- Italian terms for dynamics (*pianissimo, piano, mezzo piano, mezzo forte, forte, fortissimo, crescendo, decrescendo, accents*, etc.)
- articulation (how you join or separate the notes)
- legato (smoothly), slur (*not* tongued or separated), staccato (short)

### **Timbre**

- sound “colour” (what makes each instrument sound unique)
- families of instruments (string, woodwind, brass, percussion, keyboard, electronic, voices)
- the individual sounds of each instrument (i.e. flute is light and airy, trumpet is bold and brassy, snare drum is short and sharp sounding, etc.)
- ensembles (groups of musicians) (i.e. orchestra, rock band, choir, etc.)
- why composers choose the instruments they do in their compositions (i.e. the use of the flute to imitate bird sounds)
- mood (the feelings a piece of music will create in the listener)

### **Texture**

- harmony (how notes/pitches/rhythms are combined)
- monophony (one line of music)
- homophony (melody with chords to accompany it)
- polyphony (many different lines of music happening at the same time)

### **Form**

- the structure (how a piece of music is put together)
- phrases (a “musical sentence”)
- call and response
- 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> endings
- binary form (AB form)
- ternary form (ABA form)
- Verse and Chorus form (pop, rock, etc.)
- AABA form
- Rondo form (i.e. ABACADA form)
- Theme and Variations form
- 12-Bar Blues form