

## Features of Musical Periods, Styles and Genres

### Musical Features of the Baroque Period

Diatonic harmony

Strings are the basis of the orchestra with harpsichord (continuo) filling out the harmonies. Some use of individual woodwind instruments (oboe, flute, bassoon).

Popular forms in this period include ground bass where a repeated bass line provides the basis of the music.

The textures used tend to be contrapuntal (polyphonic) or a melody and accompaniment style.

Continuo – accompanying part in instrumental music of the Baroque period. Played by a bass instrument (such as cello) and a harmony instrument (harpsichord or organ).

Use of cadences

### Musical Features of the Classical Period

Harpsichord falls out of use and is replaced by the piano.

Simple harmonies based around the Primary Chords (I, IV, V). Regular cadence points.

Question and answer phrases

Phrase length of even-numbered bars – balanced phrases

Use of elegant melody over a chordal accompaniment

Contrasting dynamics

Homophonic texture – melody with chordal accompaniment

Melodic decoration / ornamentation

Orchestra – melody often played by the violins. Woodwind instruments used for added colour / variety of timbre. Use of horns to provide timbre. Trumpets and Timpani often used together.

### **Musical Features of the Romantic Period**

Freedom of form and design. It was more personal and emotional.

Song-like melodies (lyrical),

Richer, more-chromatic harmonies and discords.

Dramatic contrasts of dynamics and pitch.

Big orchestras, due mainly to brass and the invention of the valve.

The piano is an important instrument – they became more advanced with the use of pedal (sustain pedal and 'una corda' (soft) pedal)

Great technical virtuosity displayed in pieces.

### **20<sup>th</sup> Century Music.**

Use of dissonance

Still some use of standard harmony and cadences

Prominent use of individual instruments

Larger role for brass and percussion instruments compare with earlier periods.

More extreme range of dynamics used (ppp-fff)

Lack of singable melody – angular melodies

Uneven phrase lengths

### **Musical Features of Blues Music**

Blue notes

12-bar blues structure – major chords – I, IV and V.

Subject matter that describes loss

Melodic repetition – repetitive phrases.

Short vocal phrases.

Vocal rhythms follow the natural rhythms of the lyrics –syllabic.

Use of portamento

### **Musical Features of Rock and Roll**

4 beats in a bar

Emphasis on beats 2&4 – back beat.

Major Chords

Small range of chords used

Rock and Roll instrumentation – bass guitar, electric (rhythm) guitar, drum kit.

Drum fills

Short phrases – repetitive melodic phrases

Use of riffs.

Hook

### **R&B music.**

Strong backbeat

Common time / 4/4

Clear melodic lines

Repetitive phrases

Use of melodic fills (at the end of vocal phrases)

Consonant harmonies

Clear harmonic progressions

### **Musical Features of Contemporary Latin Music**

4/4 time signature

Dance rhythm / cha cha

Syncopation

Piano

Drum Kit

Trumpet

Vocals

Ostinato

### **Musical Features of British Folk Music**

Use of folk instruments – Acoustic guitar, banjo, accordion etc.

Simple harmonic progressions

Repeated chord sequences

Repetitive melodies

Pentatonic melodies

Modal harmonies / tonality

### **Minimalist Music**

Repeated rhythmic phrases / cells / ostinato

Repeated melodic ideas / cells / melodic ostinato

Layered textures

Polyphonic textures

Gradual changes in texture, rhythm and melody

Phase shifting

Static harmonies