

MELODY is...

a line of musical notes with varying pitches that is satisfying to listen to.

Anacrusis:

a note (or notes) that come before the first strong beat in a piece. Sometimes called the 'up-beat' or 'pick-up'.

Motif:

a short melodic or rhythmic idea.

Leitmotif:

a recurrent musical idea representing a person, place, feeling or idea.

Countermelody:

a 2nd melody played at the same time as the main theme.

Pitch:

whether the musical notes are high, middle-sounding or low.

Range:

the distance from the lowest sounding note to the highest sounding note in a piece of music.

Ornaments:

used to 'decorate' the music, e.g. trill, mordent, turn.

Chromatic:

when the tune moves in semitones (like a chromatic scale).

Pentatonic:

a musical scale based on 5 notes.

Intervals:

distance between 2 pitches

Microtone

smaller than a semitone

Semitone



Tone / major 2nd



Major 3rd



perfect 4th



Perfect 5th



Major 6th



Major 7th



Perfect 8th (Octave)



Question and answer phrases:

an initial idea (the questioning phrase) balanced by a 2nd idea (the answering phrase).

Theme:

the main musical idea in a piece of music.

Sequence:

repetition of a musical idea at a higher or lower pitch.

Imitation:

when a musical idea is copied in another part.

Repetition:

when musical ideas are repeated.

Contrast:

when there is some type of difference in the music.

Fanfare:

a musical 'announcement', based on the pitches of a chord.

Blue notes:

the flattened notes in a Blues scale.

Types of scales:

Major, Minor, (up to 4 sharps and flats), Pentatonic, Blues.

Useful terms and their meanings

Conjunct:

Stepwise movement in a melody (scalic).

Disjunct:

When the melodic movement includes lots of leaps or intervals.

Arpeggio / broken chord:

When the notes of a chord are played separately and in succession.

Anticipation note:

When a note of the next chord is played early, preparing for the intended pitch in the chord.

Triadic:

Musical movement that uses the notes of a triad.

Pentatonic melody:

Melody based on a 5-note scale.