

Intro to Composition

Learning Objectives

1. I will be able to compose simple melodic lines

Success Criteria

1. I know I've got it when I can combine instrumentation, meter, key, melodic contour and rhythm to create a melody I enjoy

What is composition?

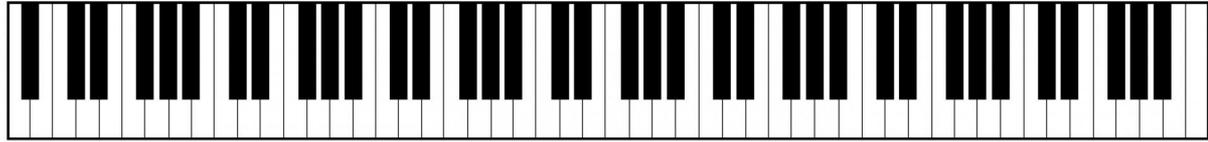


- Music composition refers to an original piece of music
- Composing is the process of creating or writing a new piece of music
- People who create new compositions are called composers

What are the avenues of composition?

- Scoring of Film/TV/ video games
- Concert music (Orchestral, band, chamber, vocal, etc.)
- Stage music (Musicals, pit band, etc.)
- Songwriting
- Improvising
- Electronic Music
- Other

TERMS



Part 1

Instrumentation

Meter & Key

Melody

Rhythm

The Idea



So you want to write your first piece?

Here are some things to consider before writing anything down.



Step #1: Instrumentation

Think about who you want to write for. Is it a group of friends? What instruments do they play? Is it for you? What instruments will be included in this new piece?

Some common instrument families to choose from:

Woodwinds: Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone, Oboe, Bassoon

Brass: French Horn, Trumpet, Trombone, Baritone, Tuba

Percussion: Drum Kit, Bells, Marimba, Tambourine, Timpani, etc.

Strings: Violin, Viola, Cello, Bass



Step #2: Time signature (AKA Meter)

How do you want the groove and pulse to feel within each bar?

Simple time signatures:

2/4, 3/4, 4/4



Compound time signatures:

6/8, 9/8, 12/8



Step #3: Key

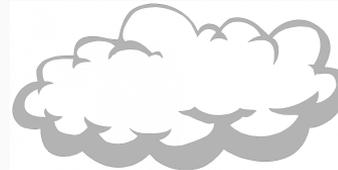
What do you want your listener to feel?

Most common scales are: major and minor

Major = happy, jolly, bright, energetic



Minor = sad, dark, evil



Step #4: Think about range and transposition

Now that you know the key and the instrument you're writing for, it's time to think about the range of the instrument and it's transposition.

- Depending on who is playing the instrument, the range you can choose to write for will differ
- It is best to keep it simple, so restrict yourself to using a certain amount of notes to choose from when writing the piece
- If you chose a concert band instrument, consider only using the first five notes of the Concert Bb scale

Step #4B: Key

First 5 notes of the Concert Bb major scale

C instruments:

Flute, oboe, trombone, tuba



Musical notation for C instruments (Flute, oboe, trombone, tuba) in 4/4 time, showing the first five notes of the Concert Bb major scale (Bb, C, D, Eb, E).

F instruments:

French horn



Musical notation for F instruments (French horn) in 4/4 time, showing the first five notes of the Concert Bb major scale (Bb, C, D, Eb, E).

Eb instruments:

Alto & baritone sax



Musical notation for Eb instruments (Alto & baritone sax) in 4/4 time, showing the first five notes of the Concert Bb major scale (Bb, C, D, Eb, E).

Bb instruments:

Clarinet, trumpet, tenor sax



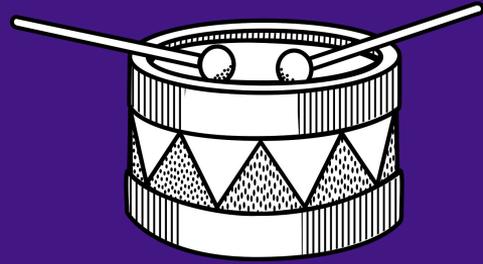
Musical notation for Bb instruments (Clarinet, trumpet, tenor sax) in 4/4 time, showing the first five notes of the Concert Bb major scale (Bb, C, D, Eb, E).

Step #5: Melody

- Look at the previous slide of the first five notes of the Concert Bb scale
- Choose a note to start on, most melodies start on the first (Tonic), third (Mediant) or fifth (Dominant) note of the scale
- From there, choose a combination of notes to come afterward
- Remember to consider how you want the contour of the melodic line to sound like

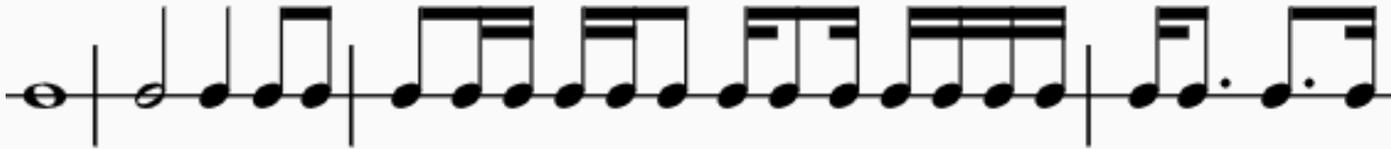
Step #6: Rhythm

Putting a rhythm to your melody!



Here are some different rhythms you can mix and match together
Don't forget that there is beauty in silence as well (AKA rests)

Rhythms that can be used in *simple time* signatures:



Rhythms that can be used in *compound time* signatures:



The background of the image is a sheet of musical notation, likely for a band instrument. It features several staves with notes, rests, and various musical markings such as 'cresc.', 'sf', 'f', and 'p'. There are also some decorative elements like a star and a floral watermark. A large purple oval with a black border is centered over the page, containing white text.

Step #7:
Play/Listen back
to your creation!

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www.bandology.ca

Composition Worksheet

PART 1

INSTRUMENTATION

Some common instrument families to choose from:

- **Woodwinds:** Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone, Oboe, Bassoon, etc.
- **Brass:** French Horn, Trumpet, Trombone, Baritone, Tuba, etc.
- **Percussion:** Drum Kit, Bells, Shakers, Tambourine, Woodblock, etc.
- **Strings:** Violin, Viola, Cello, Bass, etc.

TIME SIGNATURE - How do you want the groove and pulse to feel within each bar?

- **Simple time signatures:** With *simple time signatures*, the beat of a piece of music can be broken down into two-part rhythms. Common examples are 2/4, 3/4, 4/4.



- **Compound time signatures:** With *compound time signatures*, the beat of a piece of music can be broken down into three-part rhythms. Common examples are 6/8, 9/8, 12/8



KEY - What do you want the listener to feel?

There are many scales, modes and different collections of notes that you can choose from. Two common modes are: major and minor

- Major = happy, jolly, bright, energetic
- Minor = sad, dark, evil

Listening Log

Name: _____

Date: _____

Name of Piece: _____

1. General thoughts of the piece. Did you like it? Why or why not?

2. Examine and describe the musical elements that you can identify in this piece.

Dynamics: _____

Tempo: _____

Timbre: _____

Rhythm: _____

Texture: _____

Form: _____

Melody: _____

Harmony: _____

3. What was your favorite element (and/or combination of elements) in the piece and why?
