



GCSE Music – Dynamics, Rhythm and Structure

A: Dynamics

- **ppp** – extremely soft (pianississimo)
- **pp** – very soft (pianissimo)
- **p** – ‘soft’ Italian = piano
- **mp** – moderately soft (mezzo piano)
- **mf** – moderately loud (mezzo forte)
- **f** – ‘loud’/ ‘strong’ Italian = forte
- **ff** – very loud (fortissimo)
- **fff** – extremely loud (fortississimo)
- **molto** (‘more’) – for quicker changes e.g. molto cresc
- **poco a poco** (‘little by little’) – for slower changes e.g. poco a poco cresc
- **diminuendo** (dim.) – getting softer
- **crescendo** (cresc.) – getting louder
- **sfp** – suddenly forcing or accenting a note followed by piano
- **fz, sf or sfz** – suddenly forcing or accenting a note (forzato)
- **fp** – loud, then suddenly soft (forte-piano)

C: Structure

- **Ternary** - A B A
- **Binary** – A B
- **Rondo** A main theme (A) keeps on returning between contrasting sections - A B A C A D A....
- **Concerto** – A piece of classical music for a soloist accompanied by an orchestra. Usually has 3 movements (fast – slow – fast)
- **Popular Song** – Verse and Chorus

B: Rhythm

- **Free metre** - Where the music has no definite pulse or metre
- **Regular metre** – a time signature where all the beats are the same length.
- **Irregular metre** – a time signature where the beats are grouped together unevenly (5 or 7 beats per bar).
- **Simple time** - each beat is divided into two equal parts.
- **Compound time** - each beat is divided into 3 equal parts.
- **Syncopation** – when the weak (off beats) beats of the bar are accented.
- **Triplet** - 3 notes (or rests), all the same length, squeezed into the time of two.
- **Semibreve** – 4 beats
- **Minim** – 2 beats
- **Crotchet** – 1 beat
- **Quaver** – $\frac{1}{2}$ of a beat
- **Semiquaver** – $\frac{1}{4}$ of a beat

- **Theme and Variations** - Main theme which is then repeated several times, but changing each time.
- **Cyclic Form** - Constant repetition of a fixed number of beats or melodic pattern.
- **Ground Bass** - A melody in the bass (the lowest part) that is repeated through out the music
- **Sonata Form** – Exposition, Development and Recapitulation