

KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER: GCSE Music AoS 1 *Devices*



Within the GCSE Music syllabus, **Area Of Study 1 (AoS1)**, is known as **FORMS AND DEVICES**.

A **compositional DEVICE** is a musical idea used by composers to manipulate the music to achieve a certain feel.

Learning and understanding these devices can help us in many ways; firstly to write our own music successfully.

It can also help us understand and analyse the music written by others. Some devices are more common in certain time periods, so they can help us identify the age of a piece of music.

Melodic Devices

Conjunct Movement: this type of melody moves in *steps*, using notes which are close together within a scale or key.

Disjunct Movement: The opposite to conjunct. Here, the melody uses notes that are far away from each other, also known as *leaps*.

Broken Chords: If you use the notes of a chord, but play them separately instead of at the same time, it is known as a broken chord. This pattern is also known as an arpeggio, but only if the notes are played in ascending (low to high) or descending (high to low) order e.g. 1-3-5-8 or C-E-G-C.

If the pattern of your broken chord is 1-5-3-5, this is known as **Alberti Bass**, which is common in the Classical era of music.

Sequence: A melodic sequence is a pattern of notes that are repeated, but at a higher (or lower) pitch each time e.g. C-D-E-D D-E-F-E E-F-G-F *and so on..*

Rhythmic Devices

Ostinato: *plural Ostinati*. A continuously repeated figure or phrase.

On the beat: When a rhythm has emphasis on the 'strong beats', e.g. beat one of each bar.

Syncopation: Occurs when an accent is placed on a weak beat to create an 'off-beat' feel, or when a rhythm has dots added to tie it over between beats.

REPETITION AND CONTRAST

One of the most successful devices used in music is **Repetition**. Throughout time, composers have used repetition to create catchy, memorable pieces of music.

Contrast is also important in music, as things that are too repetitive become less interesting. You need a balance of both!

Motif: A motif is a short musical idea. That is usually repeated. You can have either a **rhythmic** or **melodic** motif.

Canon: Where a melody from one part or instrument is repeated exactly after the other, usually overlapping.

Imitation: When one part copies another

Pedal: A harmonic device where the same note is sustained or repeated above or usually below the other notes as the chords change.