

# Articulation Activities

Read through the following descriptions as a class, listen to the excerpts and match the descriptions with the music.

Item	Description
1	The most common articulation in this work is a sharp attack, especially brought out by the woodblock's percussive elements. The use of ascending glissandi increases the tension. It is sometimes used at a rapid pace over an extreme range and sometimes used more slowly over a more limited range. The gradual fade to the end of the piece is in stark contrast to those sharp attacks, though some acoustic mix makes the wooden sounds ring out for a more gradual decay. The sharp attacks on woodblocks and long held pitches with extended glissandi create dramatic contrast.
2	The use of long held notes with subtle changes in pitch through glissandi contrasts greatly with the use of tremolo in percussive instruments. This is further enhanced by the use of vibrato of varying speeds, almost imperceptibly at times, then growing and fading. The lingering decay through use of sustain pedal blends one sound into another and creates a sense of layering of sound, even though the instrumentation is fairly sparse.
3	The juxtaposition of short, sharp staccato notes with legato passages is complemented by similar articulation in the accompanying instrument. Sometimes these articulations occur simultaneously, staccato matching staccato. At other times legato passages overlap staccato articulation creating contrast. Tremolo in the accompaniment; the use of grace notes, accents and tenuto notes; and the fact that articulation changes suddenly and dramatically - all add to the unpredictable, unsettled character.
4	The articulation of the accompanying parts is fairly smooth and legato initially but use of staccato coincides with this articulation in the main melody, to highlight the end of passages. A sharp, accented attack and gradual decay gives an impression of staccato as the intensity of accompanying notes fades fairly quickly after its initial statement. The main melody, while not staccato, is fairly separated. The performer uses a fairly tight vibrato and the use of aspirate elements to fade notes. They also use a 'falling off the note' technique to leave some notes. Further accompanying lines contrast by giving long held drones that fade in and out, while contrasting articulation adds to the layered effect. This use of long held, legato notes is later mirrored by the main melodic line.
5	A drone is rhythmically rearticulated with restraint to open this piece. The articulation here is legato as the overall tone is sustained, despite being restated. This rearticulation is mirrored in the vocal line but the statement of each note varies according to the lyrics. Some notes have a 'creak' or vocal fry onset. Others fall off the notes or have tight, subtle vibrato to vary each note. When other accompanying instruments enter - percussion with sharp, staccato notes are used. These notes have a slight echoing decay to longer echoing decay depending on the properties of each instrument. The electric guitar has long, legato, sustained chords that are strummed. The guitar also picks out individual notes clearly over the top of this accompaniment.
6	The variety of articulation is set up in the first few seconds of this work. Ricochet bowing in the cello, with staccato articulation; unstable upward and downward bends in the wind instruments; premature decay in the cymbal; short, attack and decay with percussive sounds and the use of trills - this variety helps create a sense of restlessness. These are also contrasting longer attacks and decays; to shorter, echoing decays; to sound being prematurely cut off.

# Harmonic Techniques

Some of the more common ways that are used to create harmony are demonstrated below. These include chords with notes played simultaneously or separately, the number of notes can make either dense or thin layers, harmony can either be complex or simple.

## 1. Block chords

Timothy Mallis

**rall.**

$\text{♩} = 120$

*mf*

*mp*

F: I V<sup>6</sup> I IV V<sup>6</sup>  $\frac{7}{3}$  I

Block chords are notes that are played together in rhythmic unison that form harmony. Here the right and left hand play many chords in rhythmic unison forming block chords. Much of the melody itself occurs in rhythmic unison, reinforcing this idea, though this is not always the case.

## 2. Broken chords

Timothy Mallis

**rall.**

$\text{♩} = 145$

*mf*

*mp*

F: I V I IV V<sup>6</sup>  $\frac{7}{3}$  I

Broken chords are chords that are split and not played simultaneously. Also known as an arpeggio. Broken chords are an example of implied harmony. Although pitches are not played at the same time, the chord outlined is still heard due to the proximity of notes played. In this example, the chords are split into single notes which are played one after the other. Mostly from bottom to top although occasionally pitches from the chord are restated.

# Form Terminology

## Verse

A section of a song that has a melody, which is repeated to different words, often varying the rhythm to fit new lyrics.

## Refrain

A repeated section of a song. This is often the most memorable through the repetition of melodic and rhythmic material. A refrain often has fewer lyrics than the verse or repeats a few words of the verse to increase its memorability. The word 'refrain' is interchangeable with the word 'chorus'.

## Chorus

See Refrain

## Coda

A closing section of a work in keeping with the style and character of that work that allows for a clear finish or completion of a piece.

## Outro

Found at the end of a song, this can be an improvised solo. It can reflect the introduction and is often faded out as the improvised solo continues. An outro is particularly popular in the rock style.

## Introduction

An opening phrase or section that introduces a piece of music.

## Bridge

A contrasting section of a song that connects, or 'bridges', the verse and the chorus.

## Trading Fours or Eights

A technique where soloists exchange improvised solos every four (trading fours) or eight (trading eights) bars. The chord progression of the work stays constant during this time, following the form. Soloists improvise over this chordal structure.

**Head** - The main theme or melody in a jazz piece. The harmonic structure of the head is then used as the basis of improvisation. Sometimes, elements of the head are referenced in these improvisations. The head returns after solo sections and is, as a result, the most memorable section of a jazz piece through repetition.

**Contrafact** - A newly composed melody based on the original harmonic structure or form in jazz music.

# Comparison Introduction

When listening to an interpretation of a known work it is hard to listen without referencing the original. There are, however, some covers that become so distinctive that the original is forgotten as the primary source.

Comparing styles ultimately opens our ears to how the elements of music are used to create character and solve musical problems.

## Some things to consider when comparing styles:

### 1. Use a table to order your thoughts

### 2. Match like with like. See the example below:

Interpretation One	Interpretation Two
<b>has a slower tempo:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• use of rubato, more relaxed approach to time</li></ul>	<b>has a faster tempo:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• steady tempo, unchanging</li></ul>
<b>has louder dynamics through:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• thicker texture</li><li>• more instrumental layers</li><li>• use of higher register</li><li>• sharper brighter tone colour of the trumpets</li></ul>	<b>has softer dynamics through:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• thinner texture</li><li>• sparse instrumentation, fewer instrumental layers</li><li>• use of mid register</li><li>• warmer, richer tone colour of the cello</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• repeated thirds</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• arpeggiated intervals</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• melodic contour more linear</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• more wave like contour</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• limited range</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• wider range</li></ul>