# Exploring Rhythm, Chords and Metre in Music for Dance

The **RHYTHMS** of dance music always match the **STEPS** of the dance: the two are inter-related. Dance music is based on **CHORD PATTERNS**: mainly **PRIMARY CHORDS (I, IV & V7)** and has a clear **MELODY** with an **ACCOMPANIMENT (HOMOPHONIC TEXTURE)**. Different dances and their music use different **METRES/TIME SIGNATURES.**

A. Pulse, Time and Metre in Dance Music

The **BEAT** or **PULSE** of dance music is always **REGULAR.** Here is a regular crotchet pulse of 12 beats:


1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
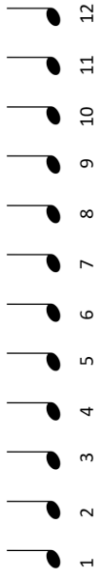
A single **BEAT** is a basic unit of musical time. In dance music, beats are grouped together to make a repeating pattern – normally made up of either twos, threes or fours.

The repeating pattern of beats gives us the **METRE** or the **TIME** of the music, shown by the **TIME SIGNATURE** at the start of a piece of music. Each repetition of the beat-pattern is called a **BAR** and bars are separated by vertical lines called **BARLINES.**

A **DOUBLE BARLINE** always comes at the end of a piece of music or section of music.

Time Signature   **Barline**   **Double Barlines**

Bar   **Bar**
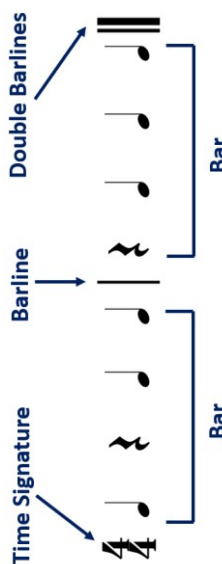
The **TOP NUMBER** of a time signature tells you how many beats there are in each bar. The **BOTTOM NUMBER** tells you what types or note values these beats are (as divisions of a semibreve = 1):
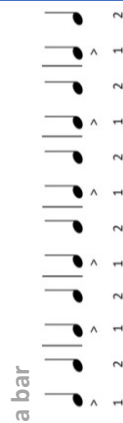
1 = Semibreve
2 = Minim   4/4 can also be
4 = Crotchet   shown by a "C"
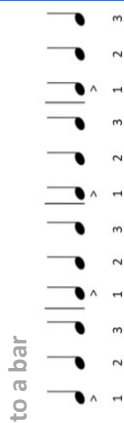8 = Quaver   meaning
16 = Semiquaver   **COMMON TIME**

B. Simple Time in Dance Music

SIMPLE DUPLE METRE: Two beats to a bar

Dance music such as **MARCHES,** the **TANGO** and **IRISH REEL** often use simple duple metre.

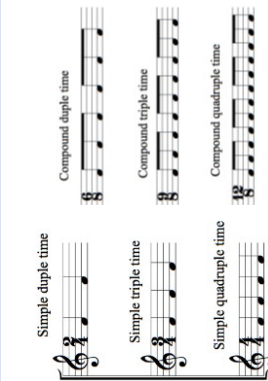**SIMPLE TRIPLE METRE: Three beats to to a bar**

Dance music such as **WALTZES** and the **MINUET, COURANTE** and **SARABANDE** from the Baroque Dance Suite often use simple triple metre.

SIMPLE QUADRUPLE METRE: Four beats to a bar

Dance music such as the **TANGO,** the **IRISH REEL,** the **ALLEMANDE** from The Baroque Dance Suite, **AMERICAN LINE DANCE MUSIC** (Country and Western), **DISCO** and **CLUB DANCE** often use simple quadruple metre.

C. Simple and Compound Time

	Simple Time Signatures	Compound Time Signatures
Duple Metre	2/2 2/2 2/8	6/8 6/4 6/16
Triple Metre	3/4 3/2 3/8	9/8 9/4 9/16
Quadruple Metre	4/4 4/2 4/8	12/8 12/4 12/16

Simple duple time
Simple triple time
Simple quadruple time

Compound duple time
Compound triple time
Compound quadruple time

Dance music such as the **IRISH JIG** and the **GIGUE** from the Baroque Dance Suite often use compound duple metre (6/8) with a "**ONE** and a **TWO** and a" feel to the music.

D. Chords in Dance Music

Dance music is based on **CHORD PATTERNS. PRIMARY CHORDS: CHORD I, CHORD IV** and **CHORD V** are most commonly used in dance music with **SEVENTH CHORDS** featuring in popular dance music such as *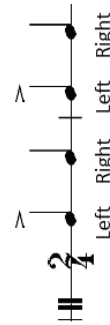*DISCO** and **CLUB DANCE** (adding a note seven notes above the root of a chord, such as and **DOMINANT SEVENTH CHORD**). All seventh chords have 4 notes. Chords are often performed in different ways as an **ACCOMPANIMENT** in dance music.
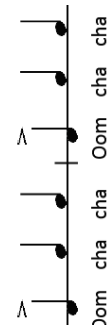

I   II   III   IV   V   VI   VII

V7
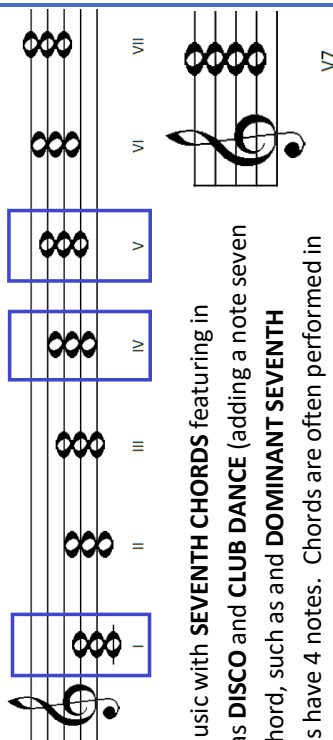
E. Characteristic Rhythms in Dance Music

The **MARCH** has a strong **LEFT,** right, **LEFT,** right rhythm:

Left Right Left Right

The **TANGO** has several rhythms:

The **WALTZ** has a strong **OOM**-cha-cha, **OOM**-cha-cha rhythm:

Oom cha cha Oom cha cha
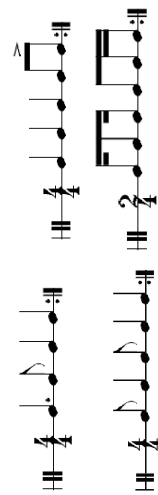
FOUR-ON-THE-FLOOR is a common rhythm in **DISCO** and more modern dance music:

Count	1	and a	2	and a	3	and a	4	and a
Bass Drum								
Snare Drum or Hand Claps								
Hi-Hat								
Cymbal								

SOUNDTRACKS

Exploring Film Music

A. The Purpose of Music in Film

Film Music is a type of **DESCRIPTIVE MUSIC** that represents a **MOOD, STORY, SCENE** or **CHARACTER** through music, it is designed to **SUPPORT THE ACTION AND EMOTIONS OF THE FILM ON SCREEN.** Film Music can be used to:

- Create or enhance a mood (though the **ELEMENTS OF MUSIC**) ->
- Function as a **LEITMOTIF** (see D)
- To emphasise a gesture (**MICKEY-MOUSING** – when the music fits precisely with a specific part of the action in a film e.g: cartoons)
- Provide unexpected juxtaposition/irony (using music the listener wouldn't expect to hear giving a sense of uneasiness or humour!)
- Link one scene to another providing continuity
- Influence the pacing of a scene making it appear faster/slower
- Give added commercial impetus (released as a **SOUNDTRACK**) – sometimes a song, usually a pop song is used as a **THEME SONG** for a film.
- Illustrate the geographic location (using instruments associated with a particular country) or historical period (using music 'of the time').

D. Leitmotifs

LEITMOTIF – A frequently recurring short melodic or harmonic idea which is associated with a character, event, concept, idea, object or situation which can be used directly or indirectly to remind us of one not actually present on screen

E. History of Film Music

Early films had no soundtrack (**"SILENT CINEMA"**) and music was provided live, usually **IMPROVISED** by a pianist or organist. The first **SOUNDTRACKS** appeared in the 1920's and used existing music (**BORROWED MUSIC** – music composed for other (non-film) purposes) from composers such as Wagner and Verdi's operas and ballets. In the 1930's and 1940's Hollywood hired composers to write huge Romantic-style soundtracks. **JAZZ** and **EXPERIEMENTAL MUSIC** was sometimes used in the 1960's and 1970's. Today, film music often blends **POPULAR, ELECTRONIC** and **CLASSICAL** music together.

B. How the Elements of Music are used in Film Music

PITCH AND MELODY – **RISING MELODIES** are often used for increasing tension, **FALLING MELODIES** for defeat. Westerns often feature a **BIG THEME.** Q&A PHRASES can represent good versus evil. The **INTERVAL OF A FIFTH** is often used to represent outer space with its sparse sound.

DYNAMICS – **FORTE (LOUD)** dynamics to represent power; **PIANO (SOFT)** dynamics to represent weakness/calm/resolve. **CRESCENDOS** used for increasing threat, triumph or proximity and **DECRESCENDOS** or **DIMINUENDOS** used for things going away into the distance. Film soundtracks often use **EXTREME DYNAMICS** or **SUDDEN DYNAMIC CHANGES** to 'shock the listener'.

HARMONY – **MAJOR** – happy; **MINOR** – sad. **CONSONANT HARMONY OR CHORDS** for "good" and **DISSONANT HARMONY OR CHORDS** for "evil". **SEVENTH CHORDS** often used in Westerns soundtracks.

DURATION – **LONG** notes often used in Westerns to describe vast open spaces and in Sci-Fi soundtracks to depict outer space; **SHORT** notes often used to depict busy, chaotic or hectic scenes. **PEDAL NOTES** – long held notes in the **BASS LINE** used to create tension and suspense.

TEXTURE – **THIN/SPARE** textures used for bleak or lonely scenes; **THICK/FULL** textures used for active scenes or battles.

ARTICULATION – **LEGATO** for flowing or happy scenes, **STACCATO** for 'frozen' or 'icy' wintery scenes. **ACCENTS (>)** for violence or shock.

RHYTHM & METRE – 2/4 or 4/4 for Marches (battles), 3/4 for Waltzes, 4/4 for "Big Themes" in Westerns. **IRREGULAR TIME SIGNATURES** used for tension. **OSTINATO** rhythms for repeated sounds e.g. horses.

C. Film Music Key Words

SOUNDTRACK – The music and sound recorded on a motion-picture film. The word can also mean a commercial recording of a collection of music and songs from a film sold individually as a CD or collection for digital download.

MUSIC SPOTTING – A meeting/session where the composer meets with the director and decides when and where music and sound effects are to feature in the finished film.

STORYBOARD – A graphic organiser in the form of illustrations and images displayed in sequence to help the composer plan their soundtrack.

CUESHEET – A detailed listing of **MUSICAL CUES** matching the visual action of a film so that composers can time their music accurately. **CLICK TRACKS** – An electronic **METRONOME** which helps film composers accurately time their music to on-screen action through a series of 'clicks' (often heard through headphones). **DIEGETIC FILM MUSIC** – Music within the film for both the characters and audience to hear e.g: a car radio, a band in a nightclub or sound effects. **NON-DIEGETIC FILM MUSIC** – Music which is put "over the top" of the action of a film for the audience's benefit and which the characters within a film can't hear – also known as **UNDERSCORE** or **INCIDENTAL MUSIC.**

F. Film Music Composers and their Soundtracks

Jerry Goldsmith
Planet of the Apes
Star Trek: The Motion
Picture
The Omen
Alien

John Williams
Star Wars
Jaws
Harry Potter
Indiana Jones
Superman, E.T.

James Horner
Titanic
Apollo 13
Braveheart
Star Trek II/Aliens

Ennio Morricone
The Good, The Bad and The Ugly
For a Few Dollars More
The Mission

Danny Elfman
Mission Impossible
Batman Returns
Men in Black Spider Man

Hans Zimmer
The Lion King
Gladiator
Dunkirk
Blade Runner 2049 No Time to Die

Bernard Hermann
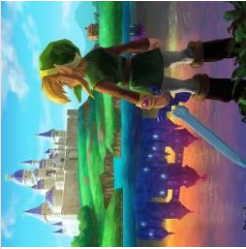*Psycho*
Vertigo
Taxi Driver

Computer and Video Game Music

Early Computer and Video Game Music

Early video game music consisted primarily of **SOUND EFFECTS** (an artificially created or enhanced sound used to emphasize certain actions within computer and video games), **CHIPTUNES** or **8-BIT MUSIC** (a style of electronic music which used simple melodies made for programmable sound generator (PSG) sound chips in vintage computers, consoles and arcade machines) and early sound **SYNTHESISER** technology (an electronic musical instrument that generates audio signals that may be converted to sound). **SAMPLING** (the technique of digitally encoding music or sound and reusing it as part of a composition or recording) began in the 1980's allowing sound to be played during the game, making it more realistic and less "synthetic-sounding".

How Computer and Video Game Music is Produced

Fully-orchestrated **SOUNDTRACKS** (video game music scores) are now popular – technology is used in their creation but less in their performance. The composer uses **MUSIC TECHNOLOGY** to create the score, it is then played by an **ORCHESTRA** and then digitally converted and integrated into the game. Video game **SOUNDTRACKS** have become popular and are now commercially sold and performed in concerts

How Computer and Video Game Music is used within a Game

Music within a computer or video game is often used for **CUES** (knowing when a significant event was about to occur). Video game music is often heard over a game's title screen (called the **GROUND THEME**), options menu and bonus content as well as during the entire gameplay. Music can be used to **INCREASE TENSION AND SUSPENSE** *e.g. during battles and chases*, when the player must make a decision within the game (a **DECISION MOTIF**) and can change, depending on a player's actions or situation *e.g. indicating missing actions or "pick-ups"*.

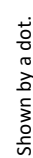## Musical Features of Computer and Video Game Music

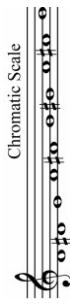|	STACCATO ARTICULATION	CHROMATIC MOVEMENT	SYNCOPATION
JUMPING BASS LINE Where the bass line often moves by **LEAP (DISJUNCT MOVEMENT)** leaving 'gaps' between notes	Performing each note sharply and detached from the others. Shown by a dot.	Melodies and bass lines that ascend or descend by semitones. Chromatic Scale	Accenting the weaker beats of the bar to give an "offbeat" jumpy feel to the music.

Character Themes in Computer and Video Game Music
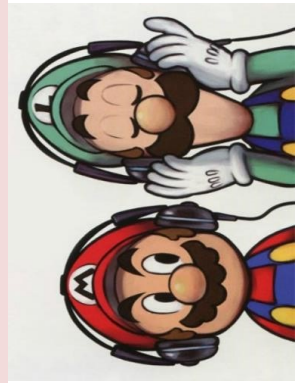
Characters within a video game can also have their own **CHARACTER THEMES** or **CHARACTER MOTIFS** – like **LEITMOTIFS** within Film Music. These can be manipulated, altered and changed – adapting the elements of music – **ORCHESTRATION** (the act of arranging a piece of music for an orchestra and assigning parts to the different musical instruments), **TIMBRE, SONORITY, TEXTURE, PITCH, TEMPO, DYNAMICS** – depending on the character's situation or different places they travel to within the game.

Famous Computer and Video Game Music Composers and their Soundtracks

Koji Kondo
Super Mario Bros. (1985)
The Legend of Zelda (1986)

Michael Giacchino
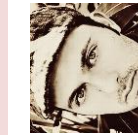*The Lost World: Jurassic Park (1997)*
Medal of Honour (1999) Call of Duty (2003)

Mieko Ishikawa
Dragon Slayer (1993)

Martin O'Donnell and Michael Salvatori
Halo (2002)

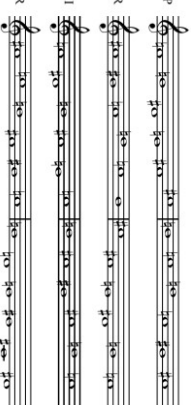**Daniel Rosenfield**
Minecraft (2011)

Rom Di Prisco
Fortnite (2017)

New Directions

Exploring ways to develop music from small ideas in c20th Music

There were many different types, styles, genres and movements of music in the twentieth century. These include:
Impressionism, 20th Century Nationalism, Jazz Influences, Polytonality, Atonality, *Expressionism*, *Serialism*,
Microtonality, Electronic Music, Experimentalism, *Minimalism*, Pointillism and Music Concrète.

A. Features of Music in the Twentieth Century (How Composers used the Elements of Music)

A1. Melody & Dynamics	A2. Harmony	A3. Rhythm	A4. Timbres and Sonorities
CONJUNCT - wide leaps, angular and spiky.	**ATONALITY** – no (sense of) key.	**SYNCOPATION** – half beat followed by full beat emphasising and sonorities.	Strange, intriguing, and exotic sounds; striking, sometimes explosive, contrasts.
CHROMATIC -uses all 12 notes (black and white) of the **CHROMATIC SCALE**.	**POLYTONALITY** – two or more keys played at once.	**PERCUSSION** – expanded in orchestra and more emphasis on percussion timbre	**PERCUSSION** – expanded in orchestra and more emphasis on percussion timbre
DISSONANCE - harsh sounds.	**IRREGULAR ACCENTS** (>) – e.g. *The Rite of Spring*	Unfamiliar sounds from strange instruments such as **EXTREME PITCH RANGES**	Unfamiliar sounds from strange instruments such as **EXTREME PITCH RANGES**
EXTREMES OF DYNAMICS - *(pppp-ffff)* No clear melody/"tune".	**DISCORDS** – dissonant, clashing chords.	**IRREGULAR TIME SIGNATURES** – 5 or 7 beats per bar.	and playing instruments in different and unusual ways.
		TOTALLY NEW SOUNDS often involving **ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT** and **MAGNETIC TAPE**.	**TOTALLY NEW SOUNDS** often involving **ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT** and **MAGNETIC TAPE**.

B. Minimalism

Based on **CELLS** or **MOTIFS** – short simple ideas.

Use of **REPETITION** – also called **LOOPING**.

LAYERED TEXTURES

NO CLEAR MELODY

GRADUAL CHANGES OVER

TIME

PHASE SHIFT (PHASE IN/OUT) – when two or more motifs or cells begin in **UNISON** and gradually become "out of sync" with each other through displacement, either forwards or backwards. **METAMORPHOSIS** – tiny changes are made over time to one note or to one part of the rhythm. This can go a "full circle" and end up exactly the same at the end.

ADDITIVE MELODY – adding notes to an original melodic cell gradually.

ISORHYTHMIC OVERLAP – combining different length motifs or ostinato patterns

AUGMENTATION – doubling the note values of a motif or cell.

DIMINUTION – halving the note values of a motif or cell.

RETROGRADE/INVERSION/RETROGRADE INVERSION (see D. Serialism)

Famous Minimalist Composers include: Terry Riley, Steve Reich, Philip Glass, Michael Nyman.

C. Expressionism

"Expressionism" is borrowed from painting and is concerned with dark, secret terrors, mental breakdowns, and fantastic visions.

ATONAL, DISSONANCE, DISJUNCT, LARGE ORCHESTRAS, UNUSUAL AND STRANGE TIMBRES AND SONORITIES.

Expressionist composers often use

HEXACHORDS as a form of **ACCOMPANIMENT.**

are chords formed of **SIX** notes. A hexachord can be formed on the **CHROMATIC SCALE**, but must follow a strict pattern of **TONES** and **SEMITONES:**

Semitone – **Tone** – Semitone – **Tone+Semitone** - **Semitone** – **Semitone**   The notes can then be arranged in any order in different (and often extreme!) pitch ranges.

Hexachords **NOTES.** A any note of

Famous Expressionist Composers include:

Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, Anton Webern

D. Serialism

TONE/NOTE ROWS – use the 12 notes of the **CHROMATIC SCALE** into an order (the **PRIME/ORIGINAL**) on which the entire composition is based. All 12 notes are of equal importance and none should appear out of turn.

As well as being used in its **PRIME/ORIGINAL**, the tone/note row could also be used in:

INVERSION (intervals upside down)

RETROGRADE (backwards)

RETROGRADE INVERSION (the inversion row backwards)

These 4 rows would then become the bases of the composition, used either vertically (as chords) or horizontally (as melody).

Famous Serialist Composers include: Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, Anton Webern, Igor Stravinsky

SAMBA

Samba is a musical genre and dance style with its roots in Africa via the West African slave trade and African religious traditions. Samba is an expression of Brazilian cultural expression and is a symbol of carnival. Samba schools form and compete bringing people together.

A. Key Words and Terms in Samba Music

CALL AND RESPONSE – one person plays or sings a musical phrase, then another person/group responds with a different phrase or copies the first one.

CYCLIC RHYTHM – a rhythm that is repeated over and over again.

IMPROVISATION – making up music as you go along, without preparation.

OSTINATO – a repeated pattern. Can be rhythmic or melodic; usually short.

PERCUSSION – Instruments that are mostly hit, scraped or shaken to produce sound. Samba uses many percussion instruments which together are called a **BATERIA**.

POLYRHYTHM – the use of several rhythms performed simultaneously, often overlapping each other to create a thick texture.

PULSE – a regular beat that is felt throughout music

RHYTHM – a series of notes of different lengths that create a pattern. Usually fits with a regular beat or pulse.

SYNCOPATION – accenting or emphasising the weaker beats of the bar (often a half beat (quaver) followed by a full beat (crotchet)) giving the rhythm an **OFFBEAT** feel.

SAMBISTA – the leader of a Samba band or ensemble, often signalling cues to the rest of the band of when to change sections within the music with an **APITO** (Samba whistle)

B. Form and Structure of Samba

Samba music often starts with an **INTRODUCTION** often featuring **CALL AND RESPONSE RHYTHMS** between the Samba Leader and ensemble. The main Ostinato rhythm of Samba is called the **GROOVE** when all the instruments of the Samba Band play their respective rhythms over and over again **(CYCLIC RHYTHMS)** forming the main body of the piece. The **GROOVE** is broken up by **BREAKS** - 4 or 8 beat rhythms providing contrast and **MID SECTIONS** – one or two instruments change the rhythm of their ostinato and the others stay the same or stop. Sometimes **BREAKS** and **MID SECTIONS** feature a **SOLOIST** who "shows off" their rhythms. The **SAMBISTA** must signal to the group when to change to a different section which is normally done with an **APITO** (Samba Whistle – loud!). A piece of Samba can end (this section is called the **CODA**) with either a **CALL AND RESPONSE** pattern or a pre-rehearsed ending phrase of rhythm. The **FORM AND STRUCTURE** of a piece of Samba may look like the following:

Intro	Groove	Break	Groove	Mid-Section	Groove	Mid-Section	Groove	Break	Groove	Coda

C. Texture of Samba Music

Texture varies in Samba music, often **MONOPHONIC** where a single rhythm is heard as in **CALL AND RESPONSE** sections, sometimes **POLYPHONIC** where sections of the Samba band play different rhythms **(OSTINATOS)** creating **CROSS-RHYTHMS** (when two rhythmic patterns that "conflict" with each other occur simultaneously) creating a thick texture of interweaving and interlocking rhythms – a **POLYRHYHM** or a **POLYRHYTHMIC TEXTURE**.

D. Dynamics of Samba Music

The dynamics of Samba music are normally **VERY LOUD** – it is music designed to be performed outdoors at carnivals and is played by large numbers of instrumentalists and to accompany dancers and processions with large audiences watching and listening. Sometimes, a **CRESCENDO** is used at the end of a piece of Samba music for dramatic effect.

E. Tempo of Samba Music

Samba music is generally **FAST** at around 104 bpm and keeps a constant tempo to assist the dancers or processional nature of the music. Sometimes the **SAMBISTA** (Samba leader) uses **(TEMPO) RUBATO** – tiny fluctuations in tempo for expressive effect.

F. Instruments, Timbres and Sonorities of Samba

SURDO	REPINIQUE	TAMBORIM	CHOCOLO	RECO-RECO	APITO	AGOGO BELLS	CAIXA DE GUERRO

What Makes a Good Song?

Exploring Popular Songs and Musical Arrangements

A. Popular Song Structure

SONG STRUCTURE – How a song is made up of or divided into different sections (see below) and the order in which these sections occur. To work out the structure of a song, it's helpful to analyse the **LYRICS and** listen to a recording for the song (for instrumental sections). **INTRO** – often shortened to 'intro', the first section of a song which sets the mood of the song and is sometimes, but not always, an instrumental section using the song's chord pattern.

VERSES – songs normally have several verses. Verses introduce the song's theme and have the same melody but different lyrics for each verse which helps develop the song's narrative and story. Songs made up entirely of verses are called **STROPHIC.**

LINK – a optional short section often used to join different parts of a song together, often instrumental, and sometimes joins verses together or appears at other points within a song.

PRE-CHORUS – an optional section of music that occurs before the **CHORUS** which helps the music move forward and "prepare" for what is to come.

CHORUS – occurs several times within a song and contains the most memorable **HOOK/RIFF.** The chorus relays the message of the song and is repeated with the same melody and lyrics each time it is heard. In popular songs, the chorus is often repeated several times towards the end of the song.

MIDDLE 8/BRIDGE – a section (often 8 bars in length) that provides contrasting musical material often featuring an instrumental or vocal solo using new musical material allowing the performer to display their technical skill on their instrument or voice.

CODA/OUTRO – The final section of a popular song which brings it to an end (Coda is Italian for "tail"!)

B. Key Words

LYRICS – The words of a song, usually consisting of **VERSES** and a **CHORUS.**

HOOK – A 'musical hook' is usually the 'catchy bit' of the song that you will remember. It is often short and used and repeated in different places throughout the piece. Hooks can be either **MELODIC, RHYTHMIC** or **VERBAL/LYRICAL.**

RIFF – A repeated musical pattern often used in the introduction and instrumental breaks in a song or piece of music. Riffs can be rhythmic, melodic or lyrical, short and repeated.

MELODY – The main tune of the song often sung by the **LEAD SINGER.**

COUNTER-MELODY – An 'extra' melody often performed 'on top of' the main melody that 'fits' with it a DESCANT or INSTRUMENTAL SOLO.

TEXTURE – The layers that make up a song e.g., *Melody, Counter-Melody, Hooks/Riffs, Chords, Accompaniment, Bass Line.*

C. Lead Sheet Notation and Arrangements

A **LEAD SHEET** is a form of musical **NOTATION** that contains only the essential elements of a popular song such as the **MELODY, LYRICS, RIFFS, CHORDS** (often as guitar chord symbols), and **BASS LINE**; it is not as developed as a **FULL SCORE ARRANGEMENT** and is open to interpretation by performers who need to use and adapt the given elements to create their own musical **ARRANGEMENT:** their "version" of an existing song.

COVER (VERSION) – A new performance, remake or recording by someone other than the original artist or composer of the song.

D. Conjunct and Disjunct Melodic Motion

CONJUNCT MELODIC MOTION – Melodies which move mainly by step or use notes which are next to or close to one another.

DISJUNCT MELODIC MOTION – Melodies which move mainly by leap or use notes which are not next to or close to one another.

MELODIC RANGE – The distance between the lowest and highest pitched notes in a melody.

E. Song Timbre and Sonority (Instruments that are used to Accompany Songs)

Pop Bands often feature a **DRUM KIT** and **PERCUSSION** to provide the rhythm along with **ELECTRIC GUITARS (LEAD GUITAR, RHYTHM GUITAR** and **BASS GUITAR)** and **KEYBOARDS.** Sometimes **ACOUSTIC INSTRUMENTS** are used such as the **PIANO** or **ACOUSTIC GUITAR. ORCHESTRAL INSTRUMENTS** are often found in pop songs such as the **STRINGS, SAXOPHONE, TROMBONE** and **TRUMPET.** Singers are essential to a pop song - **LEAD SINGER** – Often the "frontline" member of the band (most famous) who sings most of the melody line to the song. **BACKING SINGERS** support the lead singer providing **HARMONY** or a **COUNTER-MELODY** (a melody that is often higher in pitch and different, but still 'fits with' the main melody) and do not sing all the time but just at certain points within a pop song e.g. in the chorus.