

Mastering the Art of Composition with Max the Monkey

Learning objective: To understand the fundamental elements of musical composition and how to structure original pieces of music.

Use these flashcards to test your knowledge of musical composition. Max the Monkey has hidden the answers on the back of each card to help you practise your music theory!

Tempo

The speed at which a piece of music is played, often measured in beats per minute (BPM).

Dynamics

The volume of the music, ranging from very quiet (pianissimo) to very loud (fortissimo).

Ostinato

A short, rhythmic or melodic pattern that is repeated continuously throughout a section of music.

Structure

The overall shape or organisation of a piece of music, such as verse-chorus form or A-B-A form.

Melody

A sequence of musical notes that are satisfying to the ear; the 'tune' of the composition.

Rhythm

The pattern of long and short sounds and silences in music.

Texture

The way different musical layers or voices are combined, such as thick (many layers) or thin (few layers).

Timbre

The unique 'colour' or quality of a sound that distinguishes one instrument or voice from another.

Pitch

How high or low a musical note sounds, determined by the frequency of vibrations.

Silence

An essential element in composition used for dramatic effect, phrasing, or to create anticipation.