Understanding Music 8/26/15

Sound – A disturbance in a sound producing medium (Vibrations)

* We establish connections with sounds at a very early age
  + Knock at the door = someone on the other side
* We learn to structure sound
  + Communication
* We learn to catalogue silence or absence of sound
  + Crossing the street listening for cars

Noise – Not musical tone. Any sound producing a series of irregular unpredictable pulsations. Can be part of music making

Musical Tone – Sound producing a series of regular definitive pulsations

Pitch (Frequency) – Vibrations of something. Faster vibs = high sound and vis versa

* Soprano: Highest pitch register. Highest female voices in modern choirs
* Alto: Lower female voices
* Tenor: Upper mens voices
* Bass: lowest pitch register. Lowest mens voice
  + Strings
    - Violin is soprano string.
    - Viola is alto string
    - Cello is bass/tenor string
    - String bass is bass string
    - Harp has all registers
  + Woodwind instruments
    - Flute is soprano
    - Oboe
    - Clarinet
    - Bassoon
  + Brass
    - Trumpets
    - French horns
    - Trombone
    - Tuba

Staff – Consists of 5 lines and 4 spaces used to graphically indicate the relative highness or lowness of pitch

Ledger Lines – Lines added above or below staff to indicate higher or lower pitches

Clef – symbol on a staff to designate a central note from which all notes will relate

* Treble (G clef)
  + Middle C up
* Bass (F clef)
  + Middle C down

Flat – lower pitch a half step

Sharp – raises pitch a half step

Interval – lines between notes (C to D is 2nd, C to E is 3rd, etc.)

Octave – (C to C)

Dynamics (Amplitude) – Volume, or how loud or soft something sounds

Duration – how long or short a musical tone is perceived

Timbre (Tone Color) – Sonorous quality or richness of a particular voice or instrument or group of these. Depends of amount and proportion of overtones present.

* First overtone to hear is octave
* Then the 5th
* Then the 4th
* Then the 3rd

Scale – collection of pitches composers pick for a piece

* Chromatic scales
  + Movement by half-steps
* Diatonic Scales
  + Major Scales: 2 whole steps, 1 half, 3 whole, 1 half
  + Minor Scales: 1 whole, 1 half, 2 whole, 1 half, 2 whole

Rhythm – organization of sound and its opposite silence through time

* Metric rhythm, measure
  + Duple meter (2): strong 1, weaker 2. Think marches
  + Triple meter (3): strong 1. Think waltz
  + Quadruple meter or common time (4): strong 1 and 3, weaker 2 and 4.
* Harmonic rhythm
* Melodic rhythm

Syncopation – Deliberate displacement of rhythm in music (think jazz). Sometimes called a backbeat, common in bluegrass and rock and roll

Tempo – Rate at which metric pulses progress

Melody – A succession of single pitches going somewhere with appeal to the senses

Song – A relatively short composition for solo voice that is often but not necessarily accompanied and is usually very simple

Motive, motif – A short musical idea consisting of at least two notes forming the basis of development in music (Beethoven’s 5th). Kind of like a logo

Phrase – A sequence of notes that form a unit in music, each leading to the next

Chord – Represents 3 or more notes played or sung simultaneously with the melody as embellishment

Harmony – A combination of musical notes that usually form chords. The vertical component of music

Cadence – Notes that give pause or end to a piece of work. Like punctuation.

Consonance – Intervals or chords that sound relatively free of tension or discord

Dissonance, discord – Intervals or chords that sound relatively tense, harsh, or biting.

Texture – Used to describe the various sounds happening concurrently. Brassy, bassy.

* Monophony – Single sound
* Homophony – One main melody with harmony
* Polyphony – two or more melodies of relatively equal importance happening at the same time
  + Imitative – Melodies that are the same but played at different times
  + Non-imitative – Melodies that are not the same and played at different times

Tonality – Music that has one pitch that is at the top of the hierarchy. One pitch that carries out through the piece