

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer Key: Dissect Sonic DNA: A 10th Grade Elements of Music Quiz

How do composers manipulate the physics of sound to evoke specific emotions? Analyze complex polyphony, unconventional meters, and orchestral color palettes.

1. Which term best describes the specific texture when the strings play a tremolo while the brass holds a steady chord, as heard in many of Igor Stravinsky's orchestral works?

Answer: C) Timbral Layering

Stravinsky often used timbral layering—combining different instrumental 'colors' and articulations simultaneously—to create complex, modern orchestral textures.

2. In jazz fusion or progressive rock, a drummer might play in a 7/8 or 5/4 time signature. This use of non-standard beat groupings is known as _____.

Answer: B) Irregular Meter

Irregular (or odd) meters are signatures that do not divide into equal groups of two or three, challenging the standard 4/4 pulse found in most popular music.

3. True or False: In Arnold Schoenberg's twelve-tone technique, 'harmony' is derived from a pre-determined mathematical row rather than traditional major or minor scales.

Answer: A) True

Serialism (twelve-tone technique) replaces traditional tonal harmony with a systematic approach where all twelve notes of the chromatic scale are given equal importance.

4. Which dynamic marking indicates a sound that is even softer than 'pianissimo' (pp)?

Answer: C) Pianississimo (ppp)

Pianississimo (ppp) is used by composers to demand an extremely delicate, barely audible performance level.

5. When a guitarist uses a 'wah-wah' pedal or a trumpeter uses a 'harmon mute,' they are primarily altering the _____ of the instrument.

Answer: B) Timbre

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Timbre refers to the 'tone color' or quality of a sound. Mutes and effects pedals change the harmonic overtones, thus changing the timbre.

6. True or False: 'Accelerando' is a term used to describe a sudden decrease in the tempo of a piece.

Answer: B) False

Accelerando actually describes a gradual increase in speed (tempo). A decrease in speed would be described as 'ritardando'.

7. Consider the 'Dies Irae' chant used in Berlioz's 'Symphonie Fantastique.' When the melody is played twice as slow as the original, which compositional device is being used?

Answer: C) Augmentation

Augmentation involves lengthening the rhythmic values of a melody, making it sound slower while maintaining the same pitch relationships.

8. A piece of music that features two or more independent melodic lines occurring simultaneously, such as a fugue by J.S. Bach, is described as having a _____ texture.

Answer: B) Polyphonic

Polyphony involves multiple melodic voices that are horizontally independent but harmonize vertically.

9. True or False: 'Basso Continuo' was a harmonic element common in the Baroque period that required both a keyboard instrument and a bass instrument to provide a foundation.

Answer: A) True

Basso continuo provided the harmonic 'glue' of a piece, typically featuring a harpsichord or organ along with a cello or bassoon.

10. In South Indian Carnatic music, what is the term for the melodic framework—similar to a scale but with specific rules for ornamentation and movement?

Answer: B) Raga

A Raga is a complex melodic system in Indian classical music that dictates how notes are used to create specific moods or 'colors'.