



Spring Term 2025
Tan Dun
1957 – Current
Classical/World Music



Session 1

Retrieval: knowing more, remembering more

Test the Knowledge (Use Google Classroom)

Mozart (Autumn 2)

- What instruments did Mozart play?
- Where was he born?
- Name one of his famous pieces?
- What are some of his biggest achievements?



Errollyn Wallen (Autumn 1)

- What instruments did Errollyn Wallen play?
- Where was Errollyn Wallen born?
- Where did she settle?
- Name one of her famous pieces?
- What are some of her biggest achievements?



Question:

Name the composer/piece.





Carterhatch
Junior School

Answer:

Composer: Mozart

Piece: Eine kleine nachtmusik



Question:

Name the composer, piece and setting!

Clue:

Sporting event





Carterhatch
Junior School



Answer:

Composer: Errollyn Wallen

Piece: Spirit in Motion
(Paralympics)



Carterhatch
Junior School

Can you remember Mighty River?

Composer: Errollyn Wallen

This piece uses a full orchestra with strings, brass, woodwinds, and percussion. It tells the story of the journey from slavery to freedom.

Time Signature

Type Of Beat	Duple Time	Triple Time	Quadruple Time
Crotchet Beat	$\frac{2}{4}$ ♩ ♩	$\frac{3}{4}$ ♩ ♩ ♩	$\frac{4}{4}$ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩

Major



Minor



Instruments



Let's recap the Elements of Music

Chant:

Pitch is high and low

Tempo is fast and slow

Rhythm is a pattern of long and short sounds

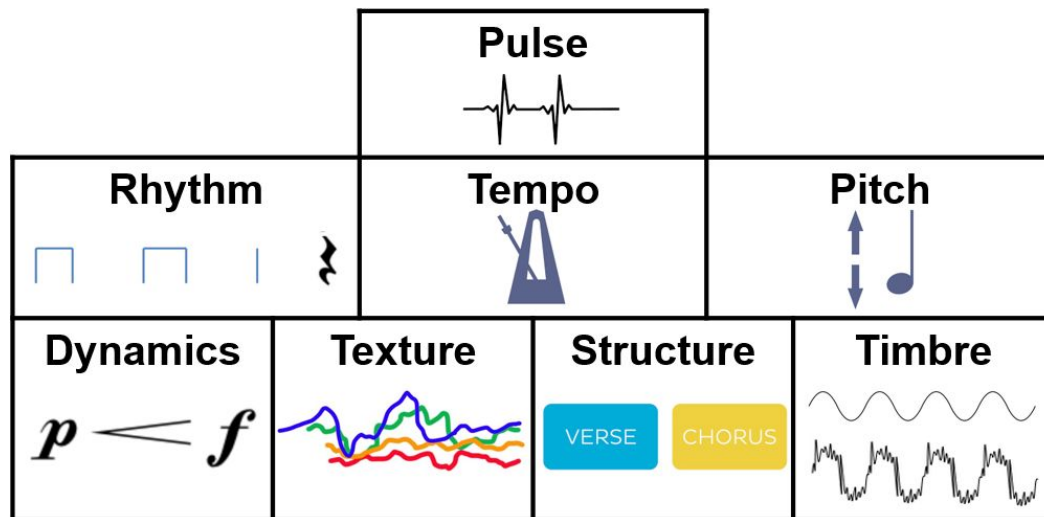
Dynamics are Loud and Soft

Texture is Thick or Thin
(how many layers of instruments are present)

Extra elements to discuss:

Structure - The order of the music (verse/chorus)

Timbre - The tone or quality of the sound.
Adjectives that describe the sound
(harsh/smooth/sharp etc).

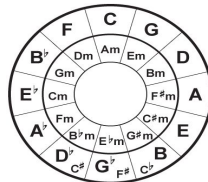


Elements of Music

Pitch



Tonality



Harmony



Metre

4
4

Rhythm



Pulse/Tempo



Dynamics

p < *f*

Texture/Instrumentation



Structure

VERSE

CHORUS



Composer of the Half Term Spring Term: Who is Tan Dun?

- **Full Name & Birth:** Tan Dun is a famous Chinese composer and conductor.
- He was born on 18th August 1957 in Hunan Province, China.





Composer of the Half Term

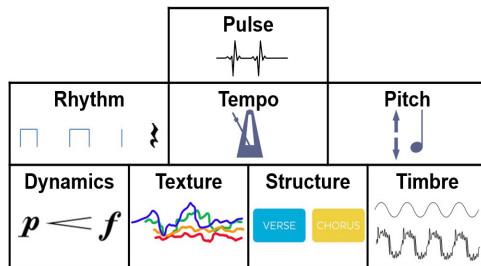
Spring Term: Who is Tan Dun?

- **Full Name & Birth:** Tan Dun is a famous Chinese composer and conductor.
- He was born on 18th August 1957 in Hunan Province, China.



Early Life:

Tan Dun was born in a small village in Hunan Province during a difficult time in China called the Cultural Revolution. Even as a young boy, he listened to traditional Chinese music, especially the sounds from village ceremonies and shamanistic rituals. These experiences shaped his unique musical style and creativity. Tan's childhood was filled with melodies that told stories and connected him to his culture.



After the Cultural Revolution, Tan Dun began his studies at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing in 1978. Here he learned from renowned teachers and discovered the beauty of western classical music.

In 1986, he moved to the United States to further his education at Columbia University, where he explored modern composition methods under the guidance of Chou Wen-chung and earned a doctorate.

By the 1990s, Tan Dun became known worldwide for his remarkable ability to blend different musical traditions, creating a unique sound that inspires people around the globe.

Early Life:

He learned to play local instruments, such as the **erhu** (two-stringed fiddle).

His family were farmers and he worked in rice fields as a child. Despite this, his creativity flourished as he made his own instruments and absorbed the natural sounds around him, such as water and wind, which later became key elements in his compositions.

During the Cultural Revolution, Western music was banned in China, but Tan Dun secretly studied classical music, inspired by works such as Beethoven's "**Ode to Joy**" and Bach's "**Brandenburg Concertos**."

1. Crouching Tiger (2000) Overview: Tan Dun won an **Academy Award for Best Original Score** for the iconic film "Crouching Tiger" directed by Ang Lee. The score blends Western orchestral music with traditional Chinese elements. It is composed as a Cello concerto. [Listening example](#)

2. Water Concerto (1998) Overview: This is a groundbreaking piece of work that uses water as a central instrument. Musicians interact with water-filled bowls, splashing, hitting, and pouring to create percussive and melodic sounds. [Listening Example](#)

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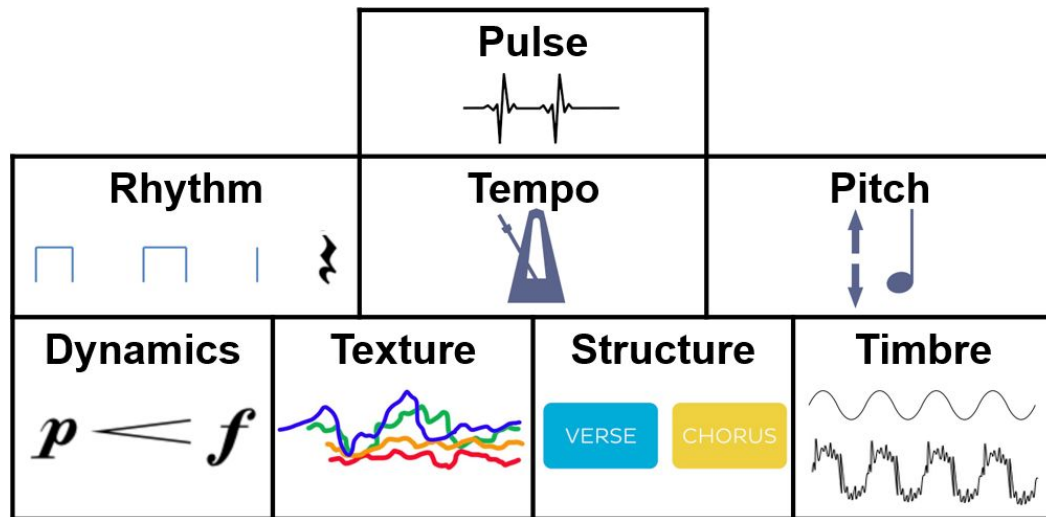
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(how many layers/instruments are present)

Extra elements to discuss:

Structure - The order of the music (verse/chorus)

Timbre - The tone or quality of the sound. Adjectives that describe the sound (harsh/smooth/sharp/bright etc).



What elements of music can you hear in the piece?

Piece: Crouching Tiger (Film)

Composer: Tan Dun

How does it make you feel?
What musical elements are being used?
What is the time signature?
Major or Minor key?

Time Signature

Type Of Beat	Duple Time	Triple Time	Quadruple Time
Crotchet Beat	$\frac{2}{4}$ ♩ ♩	$\frac{3}{4}$ ♩ ♩ ♩	$\frac{4}{4}$ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩

Major



Minor



Summary: 1. Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (2000)

Overview: Tan Dun won an **Academy Award for Best Original Score** for this iconic film, directed by Ang Lee. The score blends Western orchestral music with traditional Chinese elements, including the **erhu**, performed by virtuoso Yo-Yo Ma.

Instruments





Activity 1: Tan Dun

Starting points

- Where was he born (location)?
- What year was he born (date)?
- What instruments does he play?
- What are some of his achievements?

On your speech bubble, I want you to write down 4 facts about **Tan Dun**

Research facts on google classroom

We will share our facts at the end of the lesson

Summary

Class discussion about their findings

Session 2

A5 paper or A4 paper cut in half

Colour pencils

Pencil

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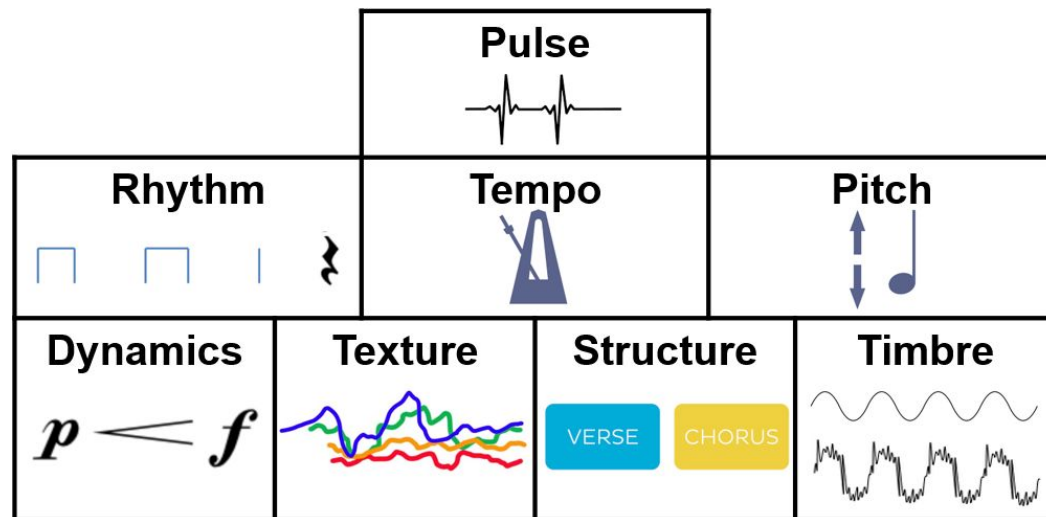
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What elements of music can you hear in the piece?

Recap: Eine Kleine Nacht Musik

Composer: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Eine kleine Nachtmusik, or "A Little Night Music," is a lively and cheerful piece by Mozart that he wrote in 1787. It was meant to be background music for a social gathering, with four sections, or movements, that are fun and catchy. With its bouncy rhythms and memorable melodies, it has remained one of Mozart's most famous and loved pieces for over 200 years!

Time Signature

Type Of Beat	Duple Time	Triple Time	Quadruple Time
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Major



Minor



Instruments



Piece: Water Concerto 1998

Composer: Tan Dun

Water Concerto (1998)

- Overview:** This is a groundbreaking piece of work that uses water as a central instrument. Musicians interact with water-filled bowls, splashing, hitting, and pouring to create percussive and melodic sounds.

Time Signature

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Minor



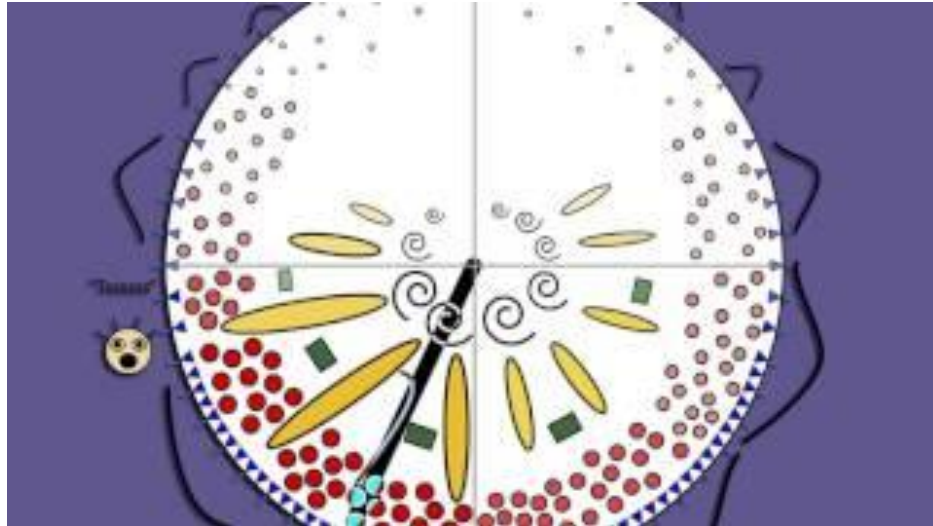
Instruments



Activity 2: Graphic Score

We're going to create a graphic score while listening to Eine Kleine Nacht Musik.

Let's have a look at an example of a graphic score! Does it represent the music?



Second Listening: Water Concerto

We're going to listen to "Water Concerto" while creating a graphic score! A graphic score is a way of using symbols to represent music! Draw whatever you feel while listening to the piece! Use colour pencils to add more texture.

Try and capture the emotional nuances in the music. Identify moments of tension, release and emotions conveyed in your graphic score.



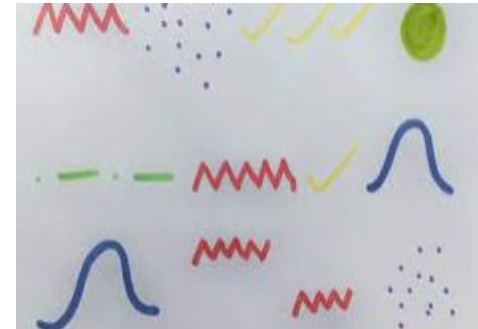
Example 2



Example 1

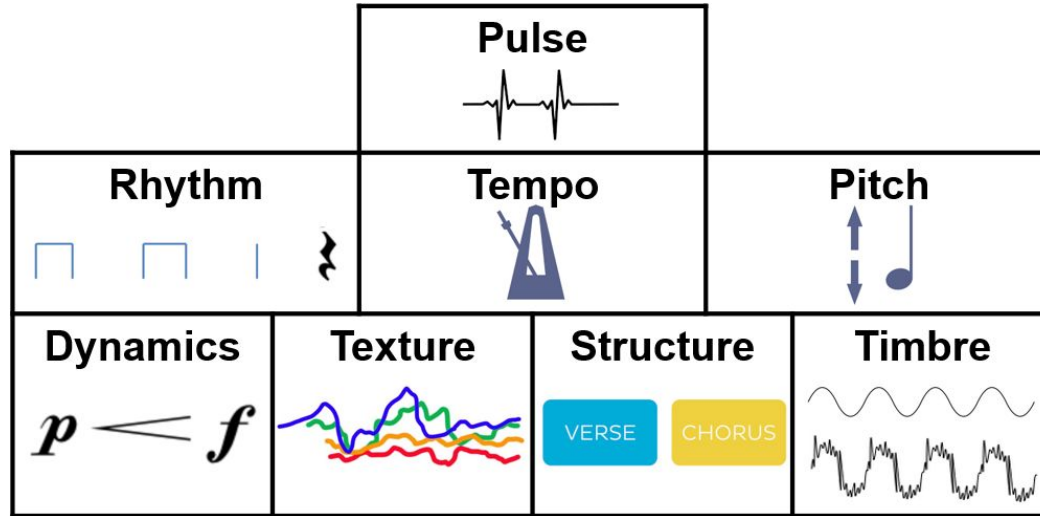


Example 3



Summary:

What did you enjoy most about this piece?



Can you use any of the elements of music in your answer?

Summary

How did the piece make you feel?
Class discussion!

Session 3

Resources: Music response sheet & pen/pencil

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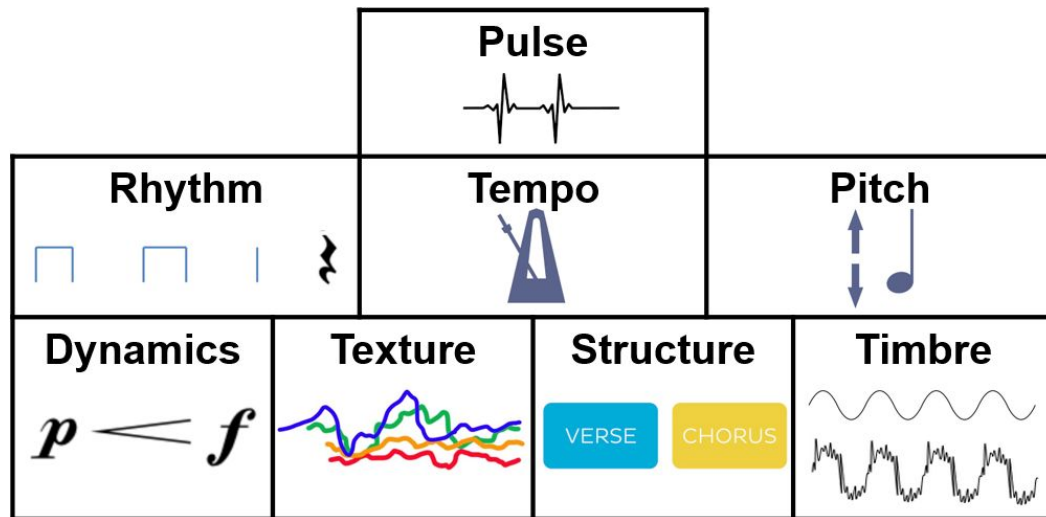
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Extra elements to discuss:

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(harsh/smooth/sharp etc).



What elements of music can you hear in the piece?

Piece: Ghost Opera

Composer: Tan Dun

3. Ghost Opera (1994)

Overview: Written for string quartet and pipa (Chinese lute), this work is inspired by ancient Chinese shamanistic rituals and Western traditions like Bach chorales.

video introduction



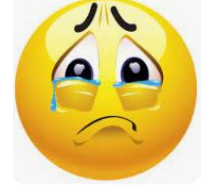
Time Signature

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Major



Minor



Performance video



Piece: Ghost Opera

Composer: Tan Dun



Name: _____ Class: _____ Piece: _____

This is what I imagine when I listen to the piece

The composer uses the following instruments:

Describe this piece using two words.

This music makes me feel:



Other: _____

Did you like this piece of music?



Explain why: _____

Adagio
slow
(60-70)



Moderato
medium
(100-120)

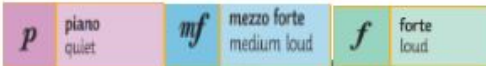


Allegro
quickly and bright
(120-140)



What is the tempo of the music? How fast or slow is it?

Describe the changes.



What are the dynamics of the music? Are there quiet and loud parts? Describe the changes.

beginning

middle

end

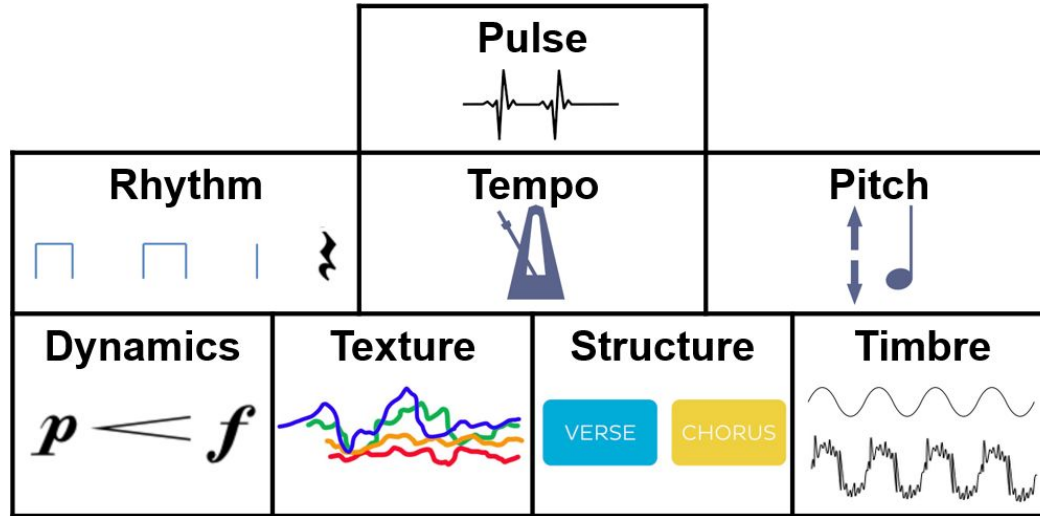
beginning

middle

end

Summary:

What did you enjoy most about this piece?



Can you use any of the elements of music in your answer?

Summary

What do we know and remember?

Test the Knowledge

1. What are some of Tan Dun's most famous pieces, and what themes do they convey?
2. How did Tan Dun's childhood in rural China shape his musical journey?
3. What cultural influences have impacted Tan Dun's compositions?
4. What challenges did he face when trying to learn music as a child in China?
5. How does Tan Dun incorporate elements from nature and everyday life into his music?



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