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Review of Basic Music Elements

Music is an intermingling of primary elements that include MELODY, HARMONY, and RHYTHM, and can be said to exist with the singular presence of any of the three. There are also secondary elements, chief among which are TEXTURE and FORM.

MELODY is that musical element that we sing alone. It is a succession of pitches, made memorable by contour and repetition. Melody is a linear (horizontal) musical element.



HARMONY results when two or more pitches (musical notes) are sounded simultaneously. Harmony is a vertical musical element, although it can be implied by melodic construction. The music explored in this jazz text concerns harmonies organized into CHORDS, which are consonant (pleasing) combinations of notes.



RHYTHM refers to the placement of notes in time, and their relationship to a beat (pulse). Rhythm is a linear element and is the propulsive engine of melody and harmony.



While melody, harmony and rhythm combine to give music its linear and vertical dimensions, it is TEXTURE that provides an aural dimension of "depth." Texture refers to how musical voices are combined into melodic and accompaniment components.

Among textures there is COUNTERPOINT, which is the simultaneous occurrence of two or more melodic voices. In jazz music, there typically exists a counterpoint between melody and bass.



FORM is the organization of musical statements and themes. Form is the "roadmap" of music, and it allows the listener to follow the journey.

Exercises

Track 1

- 1 Listen to the three excerpts of CD Track 1 and describe the rhythm for each:
 - a. Repeated / Varied
 - b. Driving / Calm
 - c. Syncopated (jerky) / Even
- 2 This excerpt has a form consisting of four musical statements. The first statement (phrase) is labeled "A" and the second is labeled "B." Label the third and fourth statements, using either the letter "A" or "C" for each.

