

Purcell Glossary



Keyword	What is the definition? How does it sound?
Henry Purcell	English Baroque composer
Baroque Era	Period of music from 1600 to 1750.
Bass Viol	A predecessor to the cello
Soprano	A high female vocal range
Harpsichord	A baroque keyboard instrument
Arpeggiated Chords	When chords are broken up and played note by note instead of altogether
Ground Bass	A repeated bass line. A classical version of a riff
Realisation	The creating or 'realising' of music from the figured bass. The harpsichord player would be doing this to accompany the piece.
Range of a 9th	The specific vocal range of the piece
Conjunct	When a melody moves in steps to the notes either side of it in the scale
Leaps	When a melody moves between notes more than a tone/semi tone apart.
Rests	Small pauses/gaps in the music to break up the phrasing
Descending Sequence	When a melody repeats a short phrase but lower in pitch each time
Ornamentation	Ways of embellishing a melody. Trills, grace notes etc.
Syllabic	When the melody has one syllable per note
Melismatic	When there is one syllable for multiple notes.
Extended Melisma	When a melisma happens for a long duration e.g eternal
Repetition	When music is played multiple times, usually for emphasis
Word Painting	When the music reflects the lyrical content. E.g A descending melody on the word 'drop'
Ternary Form	A B A structure
Ground Bass Structure	A structure that is influenced by a Ground bass.
Melody dominated Homophony	A texture where one melody is played over a chordal accompaniment
Accompaniment	The instruments that support the melody
Counterpoint	The technique in writing 2 or more melodies at the same time.
4/4 Time Signature	Simple quadruple time: 4 crotchet beats per bar.
Dotted Rhythms	Rhythms that include dotted notes.
Syncopation	When the rhythm emphasises the off beat.

Homorhythmic	When the instruments all play the same rhythm
Quavers	An 1/8 th note. A type of rhythm
Diatonic	When music sticks to the key it's in
Functional Harmony	Music that follows the rules of western harmony.
Perfect Cadence	V-I chords to end a phrase if you want it to sound resolved.
Suspensions	A type of dissonance where the 4 th or 2 nd note in a chord is played and then resolved onto the 3 rd or 1 st respectively.
Dissonance	When a harmony clashes.
False Relation	A false relation is a type of dissonance that occurs in Renaissance music. It is a harmonic clash that happens when a note in one part is played or sung at the same or immediately before or after a chromatically altered version of the same note in another part
Key signature of piece	A minor
Tierce de Picardie	When a song in a minor key ends/ or uses the major I chord E.g In Am, playing an A major chord.
Chromatic	When notes outside of the key you're in are played