

Bach Glossary



Dynamics Rhythm Tonality Structure Melody Instrumentation
Texture Harmony

Keyword	Definition/Explanation
Concerto Grosso	Literally 'Large Concerto'. A piece with a group of soloists and a string orchestra with a continuo part as well.
Concertino	The soloists in a concerto grosso. Usually 2 violins, in this case a violin, the flute and the harpsicord
Ripieno	The accompanying section in a concerto gross Usually a string section with a continuo part (a harpsichord and one or more bass instruments)
Virtuosic	When the parts in the piece are difficult to play.
Harpsicord/ Cembalo	An early keyboard instrument. Like a piano but pressing a key plucks a string, not hammers a string like in a piano
Continuo	An accompanying part, often consisting of a chordal instrument (like a harpsicord) and a bass instrument. The chords were improvised using figured bass
Baroque Flute	An instrument that is made of wood and had finger holes similar to a recorder.
Scalic	When a melody uses flourishes of a scale
Ornaments	Melodic decorations, to develop the melody and make it more interesting
Trills	Common type of ornament, repeating 2 notes next to each other rapidly
Sequence	Common Baroque device, when a short ostinato is repeated moving it up or down each time.
Ternary Form	A-B-A structure. Common in Baroque and classical era.
Polyphonic/ Contrapuntal	A texture with multiple independent 'lines' or melodies
Fugal	Special type of polyphony that uses imitation. Involves a 'Subject' 'Answer' and 'counter subject'
Imitation	When one melody line copies another, immediately after it.
The subject & answer	Part of the Fugue. The Subject is the original melody, the answer is the melody that respond/imitates it
Two-part and four- part counterpoint	When there are 2 or 4 independent melody lines at once.
Pedal Note	A long held note on the Tonic note (The first note of the scale)

2/4 Simple Duple Time	2 crotchet beats in a bar. Simple= the beat is divided into 2s Duple = there are two beats
Baroque Gigue	A type of baroque era dance, usually in compound time (6/8).
Allegro	A fast tempo.
Triplets	3 notes played in the space of 2. Notated with the number 3 above the notes.
Dotted Rhythms	Rhythms that have dotted notes.
Semiquaver Runs	Passages of just semiquavers
Functional Harmony	Harmony typical of the western tradition, where the chords follow a logical pattern and each chord has purpose and intent
Primary Chords	Chords I – IV and V in a scale
Perfect Cadence	the chords V-I. Sounds resolved.
Suspensions	A Basic triad where you replace the 3 rd with the 4 th or 2 nd . Will usually resolve itself to the 3 rd or 1 st respectively.
Dominant 7th Chords	A major triad with a flat 7 th in it. Mostly played on the 5 th note of the scale. Resolves to the I
Key Signature	The sharps or flats at the beginning of the piece that show what key you are in. This piece is in D major but modulates to the Dominant (A major) and the relative minor (B minor).
Relative Minor	The minor key that starts on the note 3 semitones below the major key of the key signature
Diatonic	When a piece uses notes of the key. (Opposite of chromatic)
Modulation	When a piece changes key.