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Amir Ghorbanpour

English for Music Students

Basics

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Preface

This course book is designed for the beginner students of music whose first language is not English, and used either as a classroom course book or a self-study book, it provides learners with a basic course on specialised English for music.

The content of the book and the level of language covered in the texts, concerning musical knowledge, starts from the very beginning level with the basic concepts and terms used in music language. However, as for the level of English used, it assumes a minimum of intermediate knowledge of general English on the part of learners, so that they can fully understand the concepts and technical language of music as they progress through the units.

The book is organised in ten units, each of which consisting of various sections as: ‘*Word List*’, ‘*Vocabulary Practice*’, ‘*Reading Passage*’, ‘*Comprehension Exercises*’, ‘*Grammar*’ and ‘*Learn More*’. About the content of this course book, a few points need to be mentioned here:

- In each ‘*Word List*’ part, along with the (musical) meaning of the new words listed, there is information about their part of speech - noun (n), verb (v), adjective (adj), adverb (adv), etc. -; and also their pronunciation (in British English).
- In some of the ‘*Learn More*’ sections, a few of the very common words from other languages used in music are introduced, so that learners understand the meaning of them whenever encountered.
- In the ‘*Glossary*’ section, you can find all the musical terms used in this book listed in one place, with definitions, pronunciations and other information given for each.

Finally, I hope you find this book useful in your music studies. In case of any suggestions or comments, please feel free to write to me.

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Language of Music

I. Word List

a. General Words

Alteration /ɔ:lte'reɪʃ(ə)n/ (n)

variation; change

- This software is an *alteration* of the previous version.

Assign /ə'saɪn/ (v)

allocate; give

- The teacher *assigned* the students their homework.

Extend /ɛk'stend/ (v)

make larger or longer in space or time

- They want to *extend* the project to other cities.

Function /'fʌŋ(k)ʃ(ə)n/ (v, n)

work; operate; task; activity

- The new machine *functions* well.

Integrity /ɪn'tɛgrɪti/ (n)

the state of being whole; completeness; unity

- Without music, the film loses its *integrity*.

Locate /lə(ʊ)'keɪt/ (v)

place; put; find and indicate the place or position of

- The company is *located* near the airport.
- Can you *locate* your town on the map?

Neutralise /'nju:trəlaɪz/ (v) (also **Neutralize**)

make ineffective; deactivate

- The police managed to *neutralise* the bomb.

Occur /ə'kɜ:/ (v)

happen; take place

- This disease tends to *occur* in children under the age of five.

Represent /rɛprɪ'zɛnt/ (v)

signify; indicate

- The new prices *represent* a substantial increase over the last year's prices.

b. Technical Terms

Clef /klɛf/ (n)

a symbol placed at the beginning of a staff, indicating the pitch of the notes written on the staff



Flat /flat/ (n, adj, v)

a musical note lowered a semitone (half step) below natural pitch, the sign \flat indicating this; to lower the pitch of a note



Harmony /'hɑ:məni/ (n)

two or more notes sounded together (in unison); the structure of a piece of music with regard to its chords

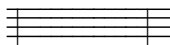
Ledger line /'ledʒə 'lɪn/ (n) (also **Leger**)

a short line added for notes above or below the range of a staff



Measure /'meɪʒə/ (n)

a subdivision (part) of time in music; a bar



Melody /'melədi/ (n)

a series of musical notes played one after another; the most recognisable part of a song

Natural /'natʃ(ə)r(ə)/ (n, adj)

neither sharp nor flat; restoring a note to its original position, the sign ♮ indicating this



Octave /'ɒktɪv/ (n)

a series of eight consecutive notes, the highest having the same alphabetical name as the lowest, but higher in pitch; the note an octave apart from a given note; two notes an octave apart sounding together



1

8 (Octave)

Pitch /pɪtʃ/ (n)

the degree of highness or lowness of a musical note

Rhythm /ˈrɪð(ə)m/ (n)

the systematic arrangement of musical sounds according to duration and periodical stress

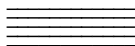
Sharp /ʃɑ:p/ (n, adj, v)

a musical note raised a semitone (half step) above natural pitch, the sign # indicating this; to raise the pitch of a note



Staff /stɑ:f/ (n) (also **Stave** /stev/)

a set of five parallel lines on which musical notes are written



Step /step/ (n)

an interval between two adjacent notes; a tone (whole step) or semitone (half step)

II. Vocabulary Practice

a. Match the words with their definitions.

___ 1. sharp	a. relative highness or lowness of a note
___ 2. step	b. the systematic arrangement of musical sounds according to duration and periodical stress
___ 3. pitch	c. operate; work
___ 4. represent	d. the symbol at the beginning of a piece of music; the first symbol that appears on the staff
___ 5. locate	e. make larger or longer in space or time
___ 6. clef	f. a series of musical notes played one after another
___ 7. rhythm	g. happen; take place
___ 8. melody	h. an interval between two notes; a tone or semitone
___ 9. extend	i. two or more notes sounded together
___ 10. harmony	j. place; put; find and indicate the place or position of
___ 11. function	k. signify; indicate
___ 12. occur	l. a note raised a half step above its natural pitch

b. Fill in the blanks with the correct words from the list.

<i>flat</i>	<i>neutralise</i>	<i>ledger</i>	<i>octave</i>	<i>half step</i>	<i>natural</i>
		<i>staff</i>	<i>measure</i>		

1. A _____ is equal to one fret on the guitar (notes right next to each other).

2. When the _____ symbol is placed next to a note, it means to cancel any sharps or flats previously used within that bar of music.
3. The _____ is comprised of five lines and four spaces. Notes are placed on these lines and spaces.
4. A _____ lowers a note one half step in pitch.
5. The bar is a subdivision of time in music. It's one _____ of a piece of music.
6. A _____ line is a small line that extends the staff for higher or lower pitches.
7. A natural will _____ a sharp or flat, so that the note reverts to its original position.
8. The _____ is the eighth note with the same name as the first one, in a set of consecutive notes.

c. Synonyms: choose the word that means the same as the given word.

1. alteration

a. equal	b. condition
c. variation	d. duration
2. assign

a. allocate	b. extend
c. remain	d. restore
3. represent

a. return	b. create
c. signify	d. clarify
4. semitone

a. whole step	b. half step
c. octave	d. bar

d. Choose the symbol that represents the given word.

1. flat



2. clef



3. sharp



III. Reading Passage

Language of Music

Music is made up of sounds that can be organised into three main elements: *melody*, *rhythm*, and *harmony*. These elements are passed from one musician to another by *music notation*, which allows a reader to precisely locate and reproduce any musical sound by a set of symbols that represent both the *pitch* of a note and its *rhythm* (placement in time).

The foundation of our notation system is a set of five lines called a *staff*. The position of notes placed on the staff represents relative highness or lowness of the pitches. The higher the pitch, the higher the note is placed on the staff.

