

### 3. Musical beat

#### *Movement or tempo*

Tapping your foot? Moving your head to the music? You have probably found yourself doing this when listening to your favourite song, right?

It's instinctive. It means you have found the underlying "beat" or "pulse" of the music as it goes along.

On the following pages, we will be looking at the way musical beat is constructed – the driving force of music.

You will see how a piece of music can have different speeds depending on its beat, and you will learn each of the musical terms we use to define these beats.

This way, you will be able to classify movement or *tempo* and apply this to any music you want to listen to.

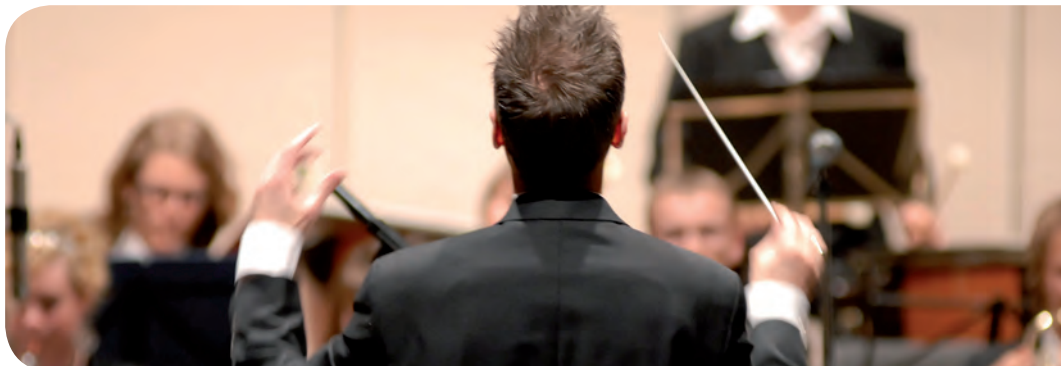
## SECTION 1 MUSICAL CONTEXT

**Movement**, or *tempo* is the speed at which a piece of music is played.

To find out the speed, you have to find its "beat" or pulse, which is the regular rhythm you naturally discover when you tap your feet, move your head or hand to the sound of the music.

Some music has a regular beat that is easy to follow, as it remains constant throughout the whole piece. In such cases we say that the music has a **regular beat** or a **uniform movement**.

In works like these the composer gives us a set of **tempo markings** or **uniform tempo markings** that tell us the speed at which the piece should be played.



## 1. UNIFORM *TEMPO* MARKINGS

These *tempo* markings are given in Italian words above the staff to indicate to the players that the speed of the composition will remain the same throughout the piece until another marking indicates otherwise.



Here are some of the **uniform *tempo* markings** ordered from slowest to fastest:

- **Grave, largo, lento:** very slow
- **Adagio:** slow
- **Andante:** moderate
- **Allegro:** fast
- **Vivo, vivace, presto:** very fast

These terms may be given **superlative endings** (ending in *-issimo*) to increase them, and **diminutive endings** (ending in *-etto*), to decrease their speed.

- **Allegretto** means slower than Allegro.
- **Allegro** means faster than Allegro

In addition, there are **adverbs** that increase or decrease the speed when combined with the above uniform *tempo* markings:

- |                                     |                                |                        |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Assai</b> (very)                 | <b>Molto</b> (very)            | <b>Poco</b> (a little) |
| <b>Non tanto</b> (but not too much) | <b>Non tanto</b> (not so much) | <b>Meno</b> (slower)   |
| <b>Quasi</b> (almost)               | <b>Più</b> (faster)            |                        |



You should remember that you can use a **metronome** to measure uniform tempo markings by making each indication of measure or *tempo* coincide with the number of beats per minute. Here is a reference:



Largo 40-60	Adagio 66-76	Moderato 108-120	Presto 168-200
Larghetto 60-66	Andante 76-108	Allegro 120-168	Prestissimo 200-208



Sometimes, however, the composer wants to achieve more expressiveness, and doesn't want the speed to remain constant throughout the piece. In these cases, the beat is harder to find, or it changes very often, and this is why we can say that in these cases the music has an **irregular, non-uniform** or **variable tempo**.

In these pieces, the composer provides clear indications using **variable tempo markings** as to how much the speed should change.

## 2. VARIABLE TEMPO MARKINGS

When a composer decides to introduce variations in the uniform *tempo* of a piece, he makes use of variable *tempo* markings that indicate a gradual increase or decrease of the pre-established speed.

Here are the four most widely used variable *tempo* markings, although there are many more:

- **Ritardando (rit.)** or **Rallentando (rall.)**, indicating a progressive decrease in speed.
- **Accelerando (accel.)** or **Animando (anim.)**, indicating a progressive increase in speed.



## 3. FREE TEMPO MARKINGS

Occasionally, composers may try to be even more expressive by allowing the musician or the conductor to decide at which speed to play the music. To do this, they need to stop the regular measure or *tempo* momentarily. At times like these, the following terms are used, although, again, there are many more:

- **Ad libitum (ad lib.)** meaning "as you like".
- **A piacere** meaning "at your pleasure".



## 4. TERMS THAT RESET BEAT OR TEMPO

Just as there are words that lend variety to the uniform *tempo*, composers also use words to reset the *tempo* back to the way it was. They usually appear after momentary stops in the beat, or free *tempo* markings above:

- **A tempo (a tpo.)** meaning "in time".
- **In tempo** meaning "at the same *tempo*".



Here is a table of the terms you have learned.

### UNIFORM *TEMPO* MARKINGS

Indicating a speed that is constant throughout the musical piece

- ✓ • **Largo, lento, grave** (*very slow*)    • **Adagio** (*slow*)    • **Andante** (*moderately slow*)
- **Allegro** (*fast*)                                • **Vivo, vivace, presto** (*very fast*)
- ✓ Words that end in *-issimo* and indicate a gradually faster speed.  
Ex. *Vivacissimo*
- ✓ Words that end in *-etto* and indicate a gradually slower speed.  
Ex. *Adagietto*
- ✓ Adverbs that combine with these other words to indicate a precise degree of speed:  
**Assai** (*enough*), **Molto** (*a lot*), **Poco** (*a little*), **Non troppo** (*not too much*),  
**Non tanto** (*not so much*), **Quasi** (*almost*), **Più** (*a little*), **Meno** (*less*)

### VARIABLE *TEMPO* MARKINGS

These introduce occasional changes in the general speed of the musical piece.

- ✓ words that gradually increase the speed: *Accelerando* (accel.) - *animando* (anim.)
- ✓ words that gradually slow down the speed: *Ritardando* (rit.) - *rallentando* (rall.)

### FREE *TEMPO* MARKINGS

These suspend the initial *tempo* indication.

- ✓ **Ad Libitum** (ad lib.)
- ✓ **Piacere**

### TERMS THAT RESET *TEMPO*

These re-establish the original *tempo*.

- ✓ **A Tempo** (a tpo.)
- ✓ **In Tempo**



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Now do the exercises given in your  
WORKBOOK.

## SECTION 2 LISTENING

Now that you know the various types of **tempo markings** to indicate the speed of a musical work, let's try to distinguish them by listening to some musical fragments.



pages 34-41

Now do the exercises given in your WORKBOOK.

### CURIOSLY ENOUGH

To apply mathematical precision to the measurement of the *tempo* or movement of a piece of music, we use a metronome. The metronome consists of a pyramid-shaped box with a clockwork mechanism that moves a pendulum. The number of times the pendulum swings per minute gives the quantity of beats per minute on the scale of the box. Thus, a musical composition could be made to coincide with a number of beats per minute, and the timing would always be the same. This system is called “metronome marking”, written at the beginning of a score. A precursor to the metronome was made by the Frenchman, Sauver, although it was perfected by Maëzzel, who made the device known today in 1820. Electronic metronomes are now made using digital technology. Digital metronomes are so frequently used that musical compositions have been made in which they are the “solo instruments”, as you can see and hear in the following video.



## SECTION 3 CULTURAL CONTEXT



Expressiveness in music depends, among other factors, on the speed at which it is interpreted. Composers in all periods have used *tempo* or speed to create rhythmic influences that transmit different emotions and sentiments. Below you can study the way **movement** or *tempo* has been used in different historic musical periods.

### 5th-14th C

#### ✓ The Middle Ages

With no present-day movement or *tempo* markings, the rhythm in religious music was provided by the text rather than any instruments.

But in profane music, as played by troubadours and minstrels intended for entertainment and fun, there was a more uniform *tempo* derived from dance music.



### 15th-16th C



#### ✓ The Renaissance

Religious music continued without any specification of *tempo* markings, and the rhythm depended on the piece of work in question and the way it was played, although the "tactus", or rhythmic pattern, first appeared at this time.

Profane music is more widely used in social events, where dancing is quite frequent, so this kind of music presents a more regular rhythmic pattern.



### 1600-1750

#### ✓ The Baroque

In this period great changes came to musical notation, with the introduction of bars or measures, barlines, and the metric order of notes, giving rise to regular *tempos* and mechanical rhythms. Expressiveness in music depends, among other factors, on the speed at which it is interpreted.

1750-1800

✓ The Classical Period

There is great interest in order and symmetry, giving rise to natural but strict rhythms, with *tempos* that were clear, regular, uniform and well balanced.

20th C

✓ Romanticism

Since in this period music expressed sentiments passionately, interpreters sometimes take liberties with *tempo* markings, even "irrationally" on occasions, so rhythms could be changing and unstable at times.




20th-21st C

✓ 20th C

New ways to indicate speed, irregular rhythms, poly-rhythmic forms and even a complete absence of movement are some of the resources used by modern composers to break with tradition in their search for new forms of expression.



 Now do the exercises given in your **WORKBOOK.** page. 42



### 3. THE DOT

The dot is a stop (·) placed to the right of a notehead (never the stem). It can also be placed next to a rest.



The dot increases the time-value of the note by one half. In other words, the dot itself does not have an absolute time value, and its value depends on the note it accompanies.

#### SOME EXAMPLES

$$4+2 = 4 + 2$$

**6 beats**

$$2+1 = 2 + 1$$

**3 beats**

$$1+0.5 = 1 + 0.5$$

**1.5 beats**

### 4. THE DOUBLE DOT

The double dot has two stops placed to the right of a note or a rest. A dot, as above, adds one half to the time-value of the note it accompanies, and the double dot adds one half again of the first dot, i.e., a total increase of one-half plus one-quarter.

#### SOME EXAMPLES

$$4+2+1 = 4 + 2 + 1$$

**7 beats**

$$2+1+0.5 = 2 + 1 + 0.5$$

**3.5 beats**



Now do the exercises given in your  
**WORKBOOK.**

**pages 43-45**

## SECTION 5 MUSICAL INTERPRETATION

This section provides activities with melodic instruments that will help you to play and enjoy the music that we offer for interpretation.

### INSTRUMENT PRACTICE

Practise F#



Musical notation for Exercise 9, consisting of four staves of music in 4/4 time. The notes are as follows:

- Staff 1: 1 (F#), 2 (rest), 3 (F#), 4 (rest), 5 (F), 6 (rest), 7 (F#), 8 (rest)
- Staff 2: 9 (F), 10 (rest), 11 (F#), 12 (rest), 13 (F), 14 (rest), 15 (F#), 16 (rest)
- Staff 3: 17 (F), 18 (rest), 19 (F#), 20 (rest), 21 (F), 22 (rest), 23 (F#), 24 (rest)
- Staff 4: 25 (F), 26 (rest), 27 (F#), 28 (rest), 29 (F), 30 (rest), 31 (F#), 32 (F)



Musical notation for Exercise 10, consisting of three staves of music in 4/4 time. The notes are as follows:

- Staff 1: 1 (F), 2 (F#), 3 (F), 4 (F), 5 (F), 6 (F), 7 (F), 8 (F#), 9 (F)
- Staff 2: 10 (F), 11 (F), 12 (F), 13 (F), 14 (F), 15 (F)
- Staff 3: 16 (F), 17 (F), 18 (F#), 19 (F), 20 (F#), 21 (F)



Recorder 2

*Ghost*

*A. North - M. Jarré*

2 3 4 5 6 7 8

9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

25 26 27 28

29 30 31 32

33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40

41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48

49 50 51 52 53

54 55 56 57 58 59

# White Christmas

Irving Berlin



2 3 4 5

I'm drea-ming of a white christ-mas just like the

6 7 8 9 10

ones I u-sed to know, where the tree - tops glis-ten and

11 12 13 14 15 16

chil - dren lis-ten to hear sleigh bells in the s now.

17 18 19 20 21

I'm drea-ming of a white Christ-mas with e - very

22 23 24 25 26

Christ-mas card I write, May your days be me-rry and

27 28 29

bright, and my all your

30 31 32 Repite dos veces

Christ - mas - es be white. (2ª vez instrumental- 3ª vocal)

## WHITE CHRISTMAS

I'm dreaming  
Of a white Christmas  
Just like the ones  
I used to know  
Where the tree-tops  
Glisten  
And children listen  
To hear sleigh bells  
In the snow  
I'm dreaming  
Of a white Christmas

With every Christmas card I write  
"May your days be merry  
And bright  
And may all your Christmases  
Be white".  
I'm dreaming  
Of a white Christmas  
With every Christmas card I write  
"May your days be merry  
And bright  
And may all your Christmases  
Be white".





The title of this musical piece in Spanish is *Una colérica obstinación* (in English *A Furious Struggle*) and it was composed by Juan del Encina when he was in the service of the Duke of Alba. It refers to a historical event - the taking of Granada - in which it expresses the viewpoint of the vanquished, as indicated by the title, with the words pronounced by the Moorish king.

## *Una sañosa porfía*

Juan del Encina

7 8 9 10 11

12 13 14 15 16

17 18 19 20 21 22

23 24 25 26 27

28 29 30 31 32 33

34 35 36 37 38

39 40 41 42 43 44

45 46 47

48 49 50 51