

### Other Aspects of Musical Sound

#### Texture

**Texture** describes the number of things that are going on at once in a piece of music. The four types of texture in Western music are **monophony**, **homophony**, **polyphony**, and **heterophony**.

#### Monophony

Monophonic music consists of a single, unaccompanied melodic line, such as the saxophone introduction from “In the Mood” or the initial trumpet melody of *Fanfare for the Common Man*. Multiple instruments are playing the one melody in **unison**.

#### Homophony

Homophonic texture has two different things going on at once: a melody and a harmonic accompaniment. The accompaniment differs from the melody. Nearly all popular songs today employ homophonic texture. Robert Johnson accompanies himself on guitar as he sings “Cross Road Blues.”

#### Polyphony

In a polyphonic texture, two or more separate melodies unfold simultaneously. Each could stand alone, but the composer created them to relate to each other on a note-by-note basis while retaining their independence. There are two main types of polyphony: **counterpoint** and **imitative polyphony**.

With counterpoint, the simultaneous melodies are usually in *different* registers. They are different melodies, but follow the same beat.

Imitative polyphony, features only one melody such as “Row Row Row Your Boat.” There is a bit of imitative polyphony midway through Aaron Copland’s *Fanfare for the Common Man*.

#### Heterophony

If two performers are producing versions of the same melody at the same time, but are not playing in precise unison—that is, each has its own slight differences—the texture is called heterophony. This texture was employed quite often in the earliest styles of jazz.

#### Instrumentation

**Instrumentation** is the instrument or combination of instruments used.

#### Timbre

The **timbre** of a pitch is also affected by the thickness and density of the instrument’s material and the amount of resonance (also called **tone color**).

In *The Banshee*, Cowell takes an old instrument—the piano—and Cowell requires the performer to employ new playing techniques, producing unexpected tone colors.

#### Dynamics

**Dynamics**, the loudness and softness of a sound, are useful for expressive purposes.

Dynamics Chart		
<i>ppp</i>	pianississimo	as quietly as possible
<i>pp</i>	pianissimo	very quietly
<i>p</i>	piano	quietly
<i>mp</i>	mezzopiano	somewhat quietly
<i>mf</i>	mezzoforte	somewhat loud
<i>f</i>	forte	loud
<i>ff</i>	fortissimo	very loud
<i>fff</i>	fortississimo	as loudly as possible

#### Articulation

Another expressive factor affecting the sound of a piece is **articulation**, the mechanics of starting and ending a sound.

#### Ornamentation

**Ornamentation** refers to localized embellishments, which are often not written down. Ethel Merman adds occasional ornaments during “I Got Rhythm.” The high woodwinds sustain a trill near the start of *American Salute*.

Articulation Chart					
symbol (applied to three quarter notes)	staccato	legato	accented or marcato	slur	tenuto
term	short	smoothly separated	sharply	connected	stressed without force
description	(tot tot tot)	(tah-tah-tah)	(TAH ta ta)	(tah-ah tot)	(taah taah taah)
tonguing on a wind instrument					