Keywords

a capella
Without accompaniment from musical instruments, ie voices only.

appraising
Listening carefully.

arrangement
How voices and instruments are used in a song; where they occur within the song.

back beat
Beats 2 and 4 in a drum-line or if we are clapping along with the music.

backing
The accompaniment to a song.

balance
The level of volume at which players sing or play; if the balance is good then everyone can be heard.

ballad
A gentle love song.

band
Playing/singing/performing together.

bridge/middle 8
Contrasting section which leads back to main material.

chord
More than one note played at the same time.

chorus
A repeated section in a song which gives the main message.

coda
Short section which brings the song or piece to an end.

cover
A version of a song performed by someone other than the original artist that might sound a bit – or very – different.

composing
Creating and developing musical ideas and 'fixing' these.

crossover
Can be a mixture of different styles which introduces new music to different audiences.

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decks

Equipment used by DJs, MCs and Rappers to mix sounds from different records and to make effects like scratching. First used in the late 1970s.

drumloops

A loop is a sequence of sounds/music that is recorded, maybe sampled, and reproduced digitally or electronically.

dynamics

How loud or quiet the music is.

ending

Short section which brings the song or piece to an end.

ensemble

A French word used to describe playing/singing/performing together.

groove

The rhythmic part of the music that makes you want to move and dance.

harmony

Different notes sung or played at the same time, to produce chords.

hook

A term used in pop music to describe a short catchy phrase or riff that we can't stop singing; the bit that 'hooks' us in; the main musical idea from a song that we remember.

improvise

To make up a tune and play it on the spot; there is an assumption that it can never be recreated.

interlude

A passage of music played between the main themes

introduction

Music heard at the beginning of a song or piece of music bridge; a section of music that can take us from a verse to a chorus, just as a bridge over a river takes us from one place to another.

lyrics

The words of a song.

melody

Another name for a tune.

melodic

Melody or tune.

notation

Ways to visually represent music.

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offbeat

If a piece of music has 4 beats in a bar ie 1 2 3 4, to clap on the offbeat you would clap on beats 2 and 4 not 1 and 3.

original

The first ever version of a song.

ostinato

A short repeated pattern.

outro

Short section which brings the song or piece to an end.

pentatonic scale

A fixed five-note pattern eg the five black keys on a piano.

performing

Singing and playing instruments.

phrase

A musical sentence.

pitch

The range of high and low sounds.

pre-chorus

A short section in a song, before the chorus.

pulse/beat

The heartbeat or steady beat of a song/piece of music.

recurring theme

A tune that repeats again and again in a piece of music.

rhythm

The combination of long and short sounds to make patterns.

riff

A short repeated phrase, often played on a lead instrument such as guitar, piano or saxophone.

roots reggae

Music that deals with social and racial issues and brings in elements of Rastafari.

sampling

Record a sample of music, a small section, and re use it in another piece of music or song. Used frequently in hip hop and other pop music.

secular

Non religious

solo

An Italian word used to describe playing/singing/performing on our own.

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structure/form/shape
: How the sections (verses and choruses etc) of a song are ordered to make the whole piece.

style
: The type of music eg blues or rock.

style indicators
: Identifiers that show us the genre of the music.

syncopation
: Music with lots of rhythmic variety, often quite difficult. The strong beats occur in unexpected places.

tag
: (Usually) a short ending, tagged on to the main part of the song.

tempo
: An Italian word used to describe how fast/slow the music goes.

texture
: Layers of sound in music.

timbre
: The quality and character of the sound.

urban contemporary
: Modern music that uses elements of soul, hip hop, funk, jazz, r&b that appeals to young people.

verse
: A section in a song which has the same tune but different words.

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