

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT
Making Musical Connections

Music | National 5

Timbre/Dynamics

These are the **voice types** you need to know:

Female	Soprano	High
	Mezzo Soprano	Mid
	Alto	Low
Male	Counter Tenor	Very high
	Tenor	High
	Baritone	Mid
	Bass	Low

Melody/Harmony

When a group has **Sopranos, Altos, Tenors and Basses**, it is an **SATB** chorus. The chorus are also the group of singers heard in a musical/opera.

> Listen to *Story of my Life* from *Shrek the Musical*.

A cappella means a singer or a group of singers are singing with no accompaniment. The opposite would be **accompanied**, where singers are supported by other instruments.

> Listen to RANGE singing excerpts from the 2016 Tony nominations.

There are two types of **wordsetting**. **Syllabic** means every syllable of the word is given its own note. **Melismatic** means some syllables of the word are stretched out over several notes.

> Listen to Rend Collective singing *Ding Dong Merrily on High*.
'Ding dong merrily on high' is syllabic; 'gloria' is melismatic.

A descant is a melody sung above the main melody. They are mostly heard in the last verse.

> Listen to King's College Choir singing the 'sing choirs of angels' verse in *O Come All Ye Faithful*.

Scat singing is a type of vocal improvisation found in jazz, where the singer uses made up words.

> Listen to the ending of *Feeling Good* performed by Nina Simone.

A riff (or an **ostinato**) is a short repeated pattern played over and over and over and over...

> Listen to the bass riff in *Summer Nights* from *Grease*.

When singers or instrumentalists play the same notes at the same time, they are in **unison**.

> Listen to *One Vision* from *We Will Rock You*.

When they play or sing different notes at the same time, they are in **harmony**.

> Listen to *Revolution Children* from *Matilda the Musical*.

Texture/Structure/Form

If the texture is **homophonic**, you will hear many sounds moving at the same time.

> Listen to *At the End of the Day* from *Les Miserablès*.

If the texture is **polyphonic**, you will hear many sounds weaving in and out of each other.

> Listen to *Will I?* from *Rent*.

If the texture is **contrapuntal**, you will hear several melodies at the same time.

> Listen to *One Day More* from *Les Miserablès*.

If a song is **strophic**, it uses the same tune for each verse/chorus.

> Listen to *So Long, Farewell* from *The Sound of Music*.

Styles

An **opera** is a large-scale production featuring soloists, a chorus and an orchestra.

> Listen to *Libiamo Ne' Lieti Calici* from *La Traviata*.

Individual pieces in an opera are known as **arias**. You will hear a soloist singing with an orchestra.

> Listen to the Queen of the Night aria from *The Magic Flute*.

Between arias you might hear **recitative**, where singers 'half-speak/half-sing' to move the story along. The accompaniment strips back to minimum.

> Listen to the 'there was a time when men were kind' opening of *I Dreamed a Dream* from *Les Miserablès*.

Gospel is usually sung by a choir. The lyrics will have a Christian theme.

> Listen to the FBCG Combined Gospel Choir singing *O Happy Day*.

Musical Theatre features soloists, chorus and an accompanying band or orchestra.

> Listen to Idina Menzel performing *Defying Gravity* from *Wicked*.

Folk music is traditional music that is passed down through families.

> Listen to Glasgow Madrigals performing *The Circle March*.

Hymns are usually sung in church for Christian worship by a choir and congregation. The texture will be homophonic.

> Listen to *Eternal Father, Strong to Save*.

Rhythm/Tempo

Accelerando means the music is becoming gradually faster.

Rallentando or **ritardando** means the music is becoming gradually slower.