



Storytelling Through Music VOCABULARY!

Accent stressing a note or chord by increasing the volume or extending the duration of it or the symbol for it

Acclaim to praise or show appreciation

Accompaniment a vocal or instrumental part that supports the main part

Affinity a liking for something

Allegro an Italian word meaning a quick, lively tempo

Alloy material made up of two or more different metals mixed together

Alternating going back and forth between two things

Alto an instrument with a range just below the highest range reached by that family of instruments; between the soprano and tenor ranges

Ambitious showing much effort; challenging

Amplify to make something louder; to make something larger; to expand the details

Ancestors family who lived long before our time; family from whom we are descended

Ancient referring to the time in history from the beginning of the earliest known civilizations and ending with the fall of the Roman Empire in about the year 500

Andante an Italian word meaning a moderately slow tempo

Anthropologist one who studies the origins of physical, social, and cultural development of humans

Aperture an opening, hole

Applauds (applause) praise or approval usually shown by clapping hands

Apprentice a person who is learning a job from an expert in the field

Architect one who designs and oversees the construction of buildings and structures

Architecture the art and science of designing and building structures or buildings

Aria a melody or tune usually sung as a solo in an opera

Artistic having creative imagination

Art Nouveau a style of decorative art and architecture in the late 19th and early 20th centuries

Assassinated killed by a surprise attack, usually a well-known person in politics or a leader

Au revoir French word used to say “good-bye”

Backing track pre-recorded music used to accompany a performer such as a rap artist; karaoke music

Bade invited to come

Balance(d) a satisfying proportion or harmony among all of the parts

Bamboo shoots the part of bamboo that can be eaten, or dried to be used in instruments

Banjo a stringed instrument having a narrow neck and a hollow round body covered with stretched skin; usually has four strings which are plucked or strummed; often has an additional short string

Bank note a note issued by a bank that is acceptable as money

Baring uncovering; showing

Baritone a male singer whose voice is higher pitched than a bass, but lower than a tenor; an instrument that plays in the baritone range

Bass the lowest-pitched member of a family of instruments; the lowest part in a musical composition

Beat the regular pulse of a rhythm in music

Bel canto a style of singing with a full, smooth, beautiful sound; a style usually heard in operas

Bell flared opening at the end of a wind or brass instrument

Binary Form a two-part music form consisting of a beginning section, followed by a contrasting section (AB)

Blues a style of music that started among African Americans near the beginning of the 20th century; songs expressing sadness in 12 measure phrases, including syncopated rhythms and flatted thirds, fifths, and sevenths

Bonnet a hat, usually of cloth or straw, which is tied with ribbons under the chin

Boogie (Boogie-Woogie) Rock music that has a lot of rhythm; instrumental blues, especially for piano

Boundary(ies) the edge or limit of something; the greatest extent of something

Bow a narrow, slightly curved rod, pointed at one end, about 30 inches long, with horsehair stretched from end to end; used for playing an instrument in the string family, such as a violin

Brilliant(ly) having crisp, clear tones

British connected to the countries of Great Britain or their people, languages, or cultures

Brooding being deep in thought about something; to be somewhat depressed

Buddhist someone who believes in the teachings of Buddha

Burr(s) the prickly outer cover of the fruit (nut) of chestnut trees

Cadenza the part of music, near the end of a concerto or in an aria, where extra notes are often improvised

Camerata the name for a 16th century group of musicians and high-ranking people who would meet to talk about music, art, poetry, etc.

Caste a social class or rank based on wealth or race passed down through the generations

Cathedral(s) a very large and important church

Censor(s) a person who looks at printed material, such as drama scripts, movies, or music and has the power to stop them from being printed or performed if thought to be unacceptable

Chalumeau a simple, rustic, reed pipe with 6 to 8 finger holes, used in the 17th and 18th centuries; the ancestor of the clarinet; today, a term used to describe the lowest notes of a clarinet

Characteristic a feature that helps to describe something in order to identify it; a particular quality or trait

Chord the sounding of two or more pitches at the same time

Chorus a large group of singers singing together

Chromatic going by half steps (or semitones) of the scale (all 13 notes from one scale letter name to the next) instead of the regular intervals of a diatonic 8 note scale

Circular being in the shape of a circle or ring

Classical the name for a period in music history from the late 18th through early 19th centuries, known for music where balance, being clear, and moderation were important; art songs, chamber music, operas, and symphonies were important styles of music during this time

Coiled twisted into spirals or rings that look like a coil

Coloratura a soprano singer who sings very high and fast notes using an improvised style

Complex made up of many different parts or groups; a large building made up of smaller connected units (apartments)

Complicated made of many combined parts; difficult to understand

Composition a written musical work, often long and detailed; the structure of a written piece of music

Concave curving inward like the inside of a bowl

Concert a public performance of music by instrumentalists, singers, or both

Concertgoer someone who attends a concert

Concertmaster (Concertmistress) the first violinist in a symphony orchestra; often the assistant to the conductor

Conical shaped like a cone, round and tapering to a point

Consonant notes that sound pleasing together

Coordinate to bring together; to musically agree

Cornet a brass instrument similar to a trumpet, but less brilliant in tone quality; used primarily in bands

Counterpoint two or more separate melodies sounding at the same time

Coup de grace French word for putting someone out of his or her misery

Creature an imaginary being or an animal

Creoles people of French, Spanish, Portuguese, and/or African descent but born in the West Indies or the southern part of the United States, especially Louisiana

Cues gives a signal

Cultures(al) the usual beliefs and customs of a group of people; well-educated people

Curse putting a spell on someone; wishing harm to come to someone

Curtain call when a performer(s) returns to the stage while the audience is applauding

Cylinder(rical) having the shape of a tube or a pipe

Dawdle to take longer than needed

Debut first time to appear in public

Density the amount of something per unit measure (area, length, or volume)

Descendants people who are born from certain earlier family members; things that come from an earlier form

Descriptive about something that brings a picture to one's mind

Direction(al) showing the way

Disco popular dancing of the 1970s having strong rhythms in the bass

Dissonant notes that do not sound pleasant together; harsh sounding

Distinctive having identifying aspects that are separate or different, making it important; something that stands out or apart

Diverse made up of many different qualities

Documentary a television or motion picture based on real social, political, or historical events

Dorian the first of the church modes whose scale pattern looks like playing from D to D on the white keys of a piano; is similar to the D minor scale except having a B natural

Double reed two thin pieces of cane bound together at their thicker ends; also a class of instruments including the oboe and bassoon

Drumhead the parchment or skin that is stretched over the end(s) of a drum

Duet music sung or played by two performers

Dulcimer a stringed instrument made of metal strings stretched over a wooden sound box; a variation of the zither

Dwarfs(ves) small creatures that look like people, often appearing in stories, legends, and fairy tales

Dynamics varying degrees of loudness or softness in a musical work, and the symbols that indicate them

Earthenware pottery made from clay baked at a low heat setting

Ebonite a hard, black rubber, which can be cut and polished

Ebony a tropical tree found in southern Asia that has very hard and black in color

Eclectic a blend of the best of various styles or ideas; a mixture

Effective producing the desired result

Elizabethan referring to the time when Elizabeth I was queen of England in the 16th century

Emotion(ally) feeling in the mind, usually happening without thinking about it

Emphasis stress or forcefulness on a single beat to make it stand out or be important

Encephalitis a viral disease causing the brain to become inflamed

Endangered threatened to be completely lost from the world

Engagement a job in connection with a performing group

Enhance to improve the value of something; make it more attractive or pleasing

Ensemble a group of musicians or performers

Enthusiasm(tically) doing something with much excitement

Environment(alist) everything around you; someone who is concerned about protecting the world from pollution

Ethiopia(n) a country in the northeastern part of Africa

Essential basic; necessary

Establish(ing) start; begin; make firm

Ethnic related to a group of people who have common customs, of the same race or from the same country

Evaluation looking at (or listening to) and deciding on the value or worth of something

Express(ion)(ive) tell in words, music or art; show feelings or opinions

Falsetto the part of a man's voice that is higher than his natural voice, caused by only the edges of the vocal cords vibrating

Famished extremely hungry

Fanciful showing much imagination

Fanfare a short, loud, and lively piece of music played by brass instruments, usually trumpets

Fate outcome; destiny; doom

Feast something that gives you great joy; a huge delicious meal

Fellowship money given for further study, research, or performance

Fierce violent; threatening

Fingerboard the narrow part of most stringed instruments (such as a violin) where the fingers press the strings to change pitches

Flair natural talent; ability

Folklore the traditional, unwritten stories, legends, superstitions, and customs of a group of people that have been told for many generations

Folk Music music of everyday people who have learned these songs by hearing them from older people and repeating them, rather than by reading music

Folk Tale a narrative of real or imaginary events; a story handed down by oral tradition

Form the design or structure of a musical composition

Formula a usual way of doing something; method

Fortissimo an Italian word meaning very loud

Frail physically weak; easily broken

Fretted having ridges across the neck of the instrument, like a guitar

Friction the result of rubbing one thing against another

Fugue a polyphonic composition in which the theme is repeated in different voices at different times

Function to have a purpose or to act in a specific manner

Fundamental an important part to a larger whole, the necessary part of any system; the first or lowest note in a series of notes

Funk music that is a combination of jazz, blues, and soul, and having a heavy, repeating bass

Gamut a complete range of styles

Generation(s) a group of people born about the same time; time between the birth of parents and the birth of their children

Geographer(s) one who studies the earth and its features in addition to its distribution of life

Gestures moves arms to express an idea

Glissando a rapid slide through a series of consecutive tones in a scale like passage

Goblin(s) an ugly elf-like creature in fairy tales who makes trouble for people

Gourd a fruit with a hard rind that is from a plant related to pumpkins and squash, which is dried and used for ornaments or musical instruments

Gourmet especially fine food and drink

Graffiti drawings or writings on outside walls

Grammy Award an award given by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences for outstanding recordings

Grandeur being magnificent, great, splendid, stately

Greek Tragedy a story or drama in medieval Greece where the main character has serious problems

Gut strips of dried lamb intestines, tightly twisted together and polished, used for instrument strings

Hackberry a kind of tree found in the southern part of the United States that has tiny flowers and little berries; also called a sugarberry

Haiku a type of Japanese poem having three lines of five, seven, and five syllables which do not rhyme, usually about something in nature

Hassled argued with; bothered

Harmonic having to do with the structure, progression, and relationship of chords

Heed listen to; take advice

Heroic myth a type of made-up story about men and women who were descended from the gods, known for their strength, courage, and bold deeds

Horsehair hair from the mane or tail of a horse, used in making bows to play stringed instruments

Illustrator an artist who makes pictures for books, magazines, etc.

Iamb in poetry, a metrical foot made up of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable

Iambic a poem that is written with iambs (unstressed syllable, followed by stressed syllable)

Iambic Pentameter a poem written with five iambs (unstressed syllable, followed by stressed syllable) in each line

Imaginative having a creative imagination; enjoys make-believe

Immigrants people who move into a country different from the country in which they were born

Impeccably perfectly

Imposed forced; demanded

Impresario a manager for entertainers

Impressionism(tic) the period during the late 19th/early 20th centuries when composers used melodies, harmonies and rhythm to write blurred musical descriptions of moods or places, often in nature

Improvise make up music on the spot without preparing it previously; create a new variation on a melody

Inaccurate not correct

Incorporating combining; including

Influential having the ability to change or affect something

Inspiration an influence; something causing you to want to do better

Insurance policy paying for protection from a loss or injury

Intergalactic happening between galaxies (stars, planets, etc.) in outer space

Integrate join with something else; unite

Interlude a short piece of music between longer pieces or sections

Interpret to show the meaning by creating a musical work; to represent the meaning

Introduction a short musical section at the beginning of a longer work or movement

Intuitive knowing naturally, without being taught

Islamic having to do with the religion of Islam, which recognizes Muhammad as the main prophet of God

Jackal a wild mammal related to a dog that eats plants and smaller animals

Labels something acting as a means of identification

Lacquered made smooth and shiny with a clear coating; made glossy

Landscape architect(ure) a person who designs gardens and lawns

Larynx the part at the very top of the windpipe (in the throat), which holds the vocal cords

Latch the part of a door that holds it closed

Limerick a silly poem, which has five lines; lines 1, 2, and 5 rhyme and lines 3 and 4 rhyme

Lute an early stringed instrument with a pear-shaped body, a neck, a bent back, and a fingerboard with frets, that is played by plucking the strings with the right hand

Lyre a stringed instrument in the harp family, used by Greeks in ancient times to accompany a singer or someone reading poetry; stringed instrument having two curved arms connected at the upper end with a crossbar

Lyrical something that suggests singing with deep emotion

Major referring to a scale from one key note to the next, which consists of all whole steps, except for half steps between the third and fourth notes and seventh and eighth notes; going from C to C on all white keys of a piano; solfeggio scale do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-ti-do

Magic seeming to have supernatural powers; enchanting

Mallet a light hammer with a rounded head used for playing certain percussion instruments

Manual a keyboard of an organ, harpsichord, or piano that is played with the hands

Measure the space between two bar lines on a music staff; bar

Mechanism the way the parts of something work together to produce the effect wanted; the physical process involved for an action

Medieval related to the time of the Middle Ages, primarily in Europe between 476 and 1453 A.D.

Melancholy very serious or thoughtful; showing sadness or gloom; somber

Mellow soft and rich in quality

Meter basic grouping of beats and accents within the measure as indicated by the meter signature

Meter signature a sign used at the beginning of a piece of music to tell the basic grouping of beats

Metrical arranged in a regular rhythm

Metronome (metronomic) a mechanical or electronic device used to indicate tempo by means of regular ticks or flashes at adjustable intervals

Milestone an important event in a person's life

Millennium referring to a thousand years

Minor referring to a scale from one key note to the next, which consists of all whole steps, except for half steps between the second and third notes, sometimes between the fifth and sixth notes, and sometimes the seventh and eighth notes depending upon whether it is the natural (going from A to A on all white keys of a piano) or melodic minor scale; the harmonic minor scale has a step and a half between the sixth and seventh notes

Monuments enduring markers valued for their historic significance

Moral lesson to be learned from a story concerning good or bad, right or wrong

Mosque(s) a house of worship for those of the Islamic faith

Motive a short tune that is repeated with variations through a music composition

Movement a section of a larger musical composition which is complete within itself

Musical something or someone making music; a drama with music in it

Mute a device placed in (or on) an instrument to muffle or soften its tone

Mysterious something about which we are curious but it is difficult to explain

Myth (mythology) a traditional imaginary story; study of myths

Necessarily always having to be

Nobility being of high rank or born into a class of privileged people

Nylon a synthetic (man-made) material used in plastics, fabric, or instrument strings

Obscene disgusting; offensive

Officially done with approval of the persons in charge

Omen a sign that something is going to happen

Operatic related to a drama set to music

Oral said out loud in words; from the mouth

Orchestral relating to an orchestra; performed by an orchestra

Orff, Carl a German music teacher who started a well-known system (Schulwerk) to teach music to children with percussion instruments, movement, language, and improvisation

Originate to start or begin to exist

Ornamentation a note or notes added to a melody for added interest; embellishment

Ornate lavishly decorated, including words, actions, art, music, and architecture

Oscar Award an award given by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for an accomplishment in movies

Overhand with the hand turned palm down

Panhandle a narrow strip of land (looking like a “panhandle”) extending from a larger area, like the northern and eastern panhandles of West Virginia

Peasant a person who is from the country, often a farmer

Peers people of equal rank or status

Pentatonic system using the first, second, third, fifth, and sixth tones of a major scale

Philharmonic related to a symphony orchestra; appreciating music

Phrygian one of the medieval church modes whose scale pattern looks like playing from E to E on the white keys of a piano

Pianist someone who plays the piano (pianoforte), especially someone who is very skilled

Pianoforte (piano) a musical instrument with a manual keyboard activating hammers that strike wire strings, producing sounds that may be softened or sustained by means of pedals; also called a fortepiano

Perspicacity having a sharp understanding of something; being very perceptive or intelligent

Pitch the highness or lowness of a note, as determined by how fast its vibrations are moving

Pizzicato an Italian word that means to play by plucking rather than bowing the strings

Plaintive sad; expressing suffering or woe

Plainsong single line music from medieval times usually sung without accompaniment; Gregorian chant

Planetarium a room containing an instrument for projecting images of celestial bodies onto a domed ceiling

Planners generic umbrella term for various professions that deal with social, physical, economic, and environmental community issues

Plantation(s) a large farm using laborers who live on the property

Plaque a flat plate, usually engraved and hung on a wall or statue for information

Platinum a rare and expensive, hard metal used to make parts of some flutes

Plectrum a small, thin piece of bone, plastic, or something similar, which plucks the strings of certain instruments

Podium a platform raised above the level of the floor so the person on it can be seen

Pointe dancing on the tips of the toes in ballet

Portrayed represented or caused a mental image to be formed through music

Prelude an instrumental music piece played to introduce something that is coming after it

Premier(ed) first to happen or first in importance

Presto an Italian word meaning to be played with a very fast tempo or speed, usually faster than allegro but slower than prestissimo

Prey a victim; taken by force; something hunted

Primarily in the first place; mainly

Profession an occupation or job that requires training and advanced study in a specific field

Professional(s) person working in a job as a career; an expert

Progression a set pattern of chords, which often repeats

Prolific producing many results; fruitful

Pulitzer Prize one of the awards given every year since 1917 for excellent work in American journalism, literature, or music

Quill another name for plectrum (a small, thin piece of bone, plastic, or something similar), used for plucking clavichord-type stringed instruments

Ragtime a kind of jazz music using a syncopated rhythm in the melody with a steady accented beat in the accompaniment, usually for the piano

Range the total number of tones that an instrument can produce; or, the full variety of different activities

Rapper a type of popular music in which the words are spoken or chanted over a syncopated, repeating rhythmic pattern; a person who performs rap music

Recitative part of a song where the singer sings the words in the natural flow of speaking, often heard in operas, oratorios, or cantatas

Reed a small strip of cane or wood attached to the mouthpiece of some woodwind instruments, which makes a vibration when air goes over it

Reflects shows

Reggae a style of popular Jamaican music, which combines calypso and rhythm and blues, known for the strong accents on the off beats

Rehearsal practicing alone or with a group before giving a public performance

Renaissance a period in history around the 15th and 16th centuries which was a revival of learning and the arts, and when music became smoother and livelier

Renowned someone or something that is famous

Repertoire a French word meaning the list of musical pieces a group is prepared to perform or can perform

Representations expressions of something; realistic likenesses; ways to stand for something; mental images of something

Reprise the repeat of a theme or melody, usually in a shorter form and later, in a musical theatre production

Resin product coming from spruce and pine trees, which is distilled and made into resin; high quality pine resin is used as bow rosin

Resonator a hollow tube, open at both ends, which can magnify sound

Revise to make a new version; to change and improve something

Revolution a major change in the way of thinking about something or doing things

Rhyme when words have the same ending sounds (such as same – became), used in poetry at the ends of some lines

Rhythm and Blues music that combines blues and jazz, having strong off beats (backbeat), variations, and syncopated rhythms; also known as R & B

Ritornello a short piece of music that returns over and over, usually between solo sections

Rondo a musical composition with the same main melody (theme) returning each time after different melodies enter; often the form of the last movement in a sonata

Rosewood wood from a tropical tree known for its dark red color with a strongly marked, black grain; valuable as a cabinet wood, as well as for the bars on a marimba

Rural relating to people or things found in the country, not the city

Samaritan a person who helps others in their time of need and not expecting to be paid

Scale a series of notes, going up or down in a definite order of half steps and whole steps

Scherzo a lively, humorous movement in a sonata or a symphony, usually in 3/4 time

Score written directions for a musical piece; the notation for each instrument, written as separate parts but lined up vertically as they will sound

Shofar a Hebrew word meaning an ancient, natural trumpet made from a ram's horn; played during religious ceremonies and as a warning in battle

Significant having much meaning; important

Simulate to imitate the appearance, form, or sound of something or someone

Simultaneously happening or done at the same time

Sinfonia an instrumental music composition like a prelude, usually with three movements, similar to a symphony only smaller

Slavic relating to the area in Eastern Europe where Russian, Serbo- Croatian, and Polish languages are spoken

Snares wires or cords stretched across a drumhead to vibrate against it

Society a group of people with common interests and culture; the total of human relationships of all human beings

Sociologist(s) one who studies human behavior

Solemn serious; sedate; somber

Somber sad; gloomy; serious

Sonnet a 14-line poem in iambic pentameter with a specific rhyme pattern

Sorcerer one who practices magic; a wizard

Soulfully expressing deep emotions

Soundboard a thin board placed in a string instrument to strengthen its tones
by reinforcing the vibrations

Soundtrack music in a movie or the recording of it

Spinning Wheel a machine with a hand-driven wheel and spindle used for making yarn or thread

Spiritually related to spirit, not material things; related to something sacred

Spirituals deeply emotional, religious folk songs begun by African- Americans in the southern part of the United States

Sprung steel steel which can bend and go back to its original shape without breaking

Squeamish becomes easily disgusted, offended, or sick to the stomach

Stanza part of a poem that has a common pattern of meter, rhyme, and number of lines

Stately dignified; grand; impressive

Stereotype(s) an opinion people have about something that is often untrue or only partly true

Strophic using the same melody for each verse (strophe) of a song

Structure(al) the way the parts are put together to make the whole thing; the organization of something

Style(istic) manner of presentation, especially in music; the choices that a composer or performer makes from among the available possibilities

Suburban related to an area where people live just outside of a big city

Suspense being anxious or worried about something unknown about to happen

Suspended hanging freely except where supported from above

Sustained continuing for a long time without becoming weaker

Synagogues houses of worship and instruction for people of the Jewish faith

Syncopation putting the accent or stress on a normally weak beat

Synthesizers electronic machines, which can imitate musical instrument sounds, usually played with a keyboard like a piano

Technique the method used to accomplish a goal

Tenure length of time during which a position or job is held

Ternary form a three-part form in which the middle section is different from the first and last sections (ABA)

Theme the main melodic phrase in a piece; a tune associated with a character in a story; related to the melody

Theme and Variations form in which a melody is stated and is followed by a series of modifications (or changes) of that melody

Theory the general principles of an art or science, as the theory of music; the study of the way music works

Timbre a French word meaning tone color or quality

Tone the particular quality of a sound including pitch, length, color, loudness, and expression

Trait a feature that is a distinguishing quality

Transfiguration changing in appearance; metamorphosis

Transform to change the appearance, form, or nature of something

Trolls a small make-believe creature in folklore that lives in caves or hills or under bridges

Tuberculosis an infectious disease affecting the lungs; pulmonary consumption

Tubular shaped like a pipe or tube

Tusk a very long, pointed tooth of animals such as an elephant, walrus, or wild boar

Unaccompanied usually a soloist performing without other instruments playing

Unique the only one like it

Unspoiled not damaged, left in an essentially original form

Upbeat being cheerful or happy; the last unaccented beat in a measure of music

Urban related to life in a big city

Utopian an idealistic concept in social and political reform

Valves devices in brass instruments, which can quickly direct the air flow through extra tubes in order to change the pitch of the tones

Velvety a smooth and soft sound, like velvet

Versatile able to do many different things well

Vibrate (vibration) to move back and forth quickly and regularly, usually resulting in a sound

Vibrato a rapid, slight variation in the pitch, used by instrumentalists and singers to add warmth to the tone

Viennese related to life in Vienna, Austria

Vivace an Italian word meaning a lively or quick tempo

Western music music that is written in Europe and the Americas by classically trained composers

Wilderness a big area of land that is left to grow wild, like a large forest, a desert, or an ocean; a place where no people live

Zither a stringed instrument made of 30 to 40 wires stretched over a wooden sound box and played with the fingertips of both hands at the same time, a plectrum, or a bow