

# WHAT'S MY MOTIF RESOURCE MENU

## MUSIC CONCEPTS

### Scales

C major



D major



F major



A minor



D minor



E minor



These scales are **natural** minor scales – they have the same notes as the major variant, but start a minor 3<sup>rd</sup> lower than the relative major. Try experimenting with using a **raised 7<sup>th</sup> degree** to create a **harmonic** minor scale.

### Intervals

Intervals are the distances between two notes. You can start on any note, and the distance to the one above is what we call the **interval**. It is best to learn the intervals by sound, and there are some helpful ways to remember them! Below are some songs that feature particular intervals – you can then match the song and the interval! Each interval has a particular 'quality' of sound, and this might help you reflect the ideas of your motif.

All of the intervals of our major and minor scale are below:

- **Minor 2nd:** *Jaws*, semitone, chromatic
- **Major 2nd:** *Happy Birthday*, step, scale
- **Minor 3rd:** *Smoke on the Water*
- **Major 3rd:** *Harry Potter*
- **Perfect 4th:** *Advance Australian Fair*
- **Perfect 5th:** *Star Wars*, *Last Post*
- **Minor 6th:** *The Entertainer*
- **Major 6th:** 'Dashing through the snow' (*Jingle Bells*)
- **Minor 7th:** *Somewhere* (*West Side Story*)
- **Major 7th:** Sounds yuck!
- **Perfect Octave:** *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*

These intervals exist in the scales to the left. See if you can identify them between each of the notes (don't forget the key signatures!).

### Tones and Semitones

The scales above use a particular pattern of **tones** and **semitones** – which are intervals between each note. A **semitone** is a single step (S), and a **tone** is two steps (T).

The pattern for a **major scale** is: T T S T T T S

C major scale:



The pattern for a **natural minor scale** is: T S T T S T T

A natural minor:



The pattern for a **harmonic minor scale** is: T S T T S T 1/2 S

A harmonic minor:



# USING MUSIC ELEMENTS AND COMPOSITIONAL DEVICES

## Using Pitch

Pitch relates to your melody – the notes that you use. You could use elements of pitch in the following ways:

- **Tonality** – a major or minor sound? The scale you use will have a huge impact on the mood of the motif. Basically, major is happy; minor is sad!
- A **smooth contour** or shape to convey a gentle mood, or an **angular contour** (shape) to sound more aggressive or 'jumpy'.
- A rising melody – one that progressively moves upward – might be 'optimistic' and happy; whereas one that falls might sound 'sadder' or even 'depressed'.
- A **small range** (distance between lowest and highest note of a melody) to make the music feel 'closed in' or personal, quiet or reflective; or, a **large range** to suggest expressiveness, 'largeness' or 'grandness'.
- The **intervals** you use can reflect the ideas or themes – intervals such as perfect 4ths and 5ths suggest strength or confidence; whereas minor and smaller intervals might suggest softer emotions.

## Using Duration

You could use elements of duration in the following ways:

- Change the speed (**tempo**) of your piece to reflect a specific idea or theme.
- Use specific **rhythms** to convey a particular theme or idea – say, short notes for more 'erratic', quicker, 'jumpy' music, or longer notes for slower, calmer, more gentle music.
- A **time signature** of **3/4** might sound more dance-like, whereas a **4/4** time signature might sound more balanced and 'straight'. You might even consider **6/8**, which would be more fluid and 'bouncy'.

## Using Expressive Devices

Expressive devices add exactly that, **expression** to your music. You could use expressive devices in the following ways:

- Will your motif be **loud** (*f*, *mf*) or **soft** (*mp*, *p*), and will it change through use of **crescendo** or **decrescendo**?
- Smooth **articulations**, like **tenuto**, provide a connected sound; **accents** might offer a sense of power, force or confidence; whereas, **staccato** might be delicate, fragile, light or detached in sound.

## Compositional Devices

**Compositional devices** are applied to music elements to develop ideas. They can be used to provide:

- accompaniment,
- contrast,
- development,
- themes,
- transitions,
- unity, and
- variation.

Some compositional devices that you could consider are in the purple boxes on this page.

## Repetition

Sounds repeated immediately after they have occurred.



## Sequence

Repetitions of a melodic idea in different pitches – usually moving up or down by step.



## Riff

A short, repeated melodic idea that is characteristic of the melody. *Smoke on the Water* is a well-known riff.

## Ostinato

An **extension idea** if you wish to add accompaniment to your motif. An ostinato is repeated musical pattern (under a melody).



## Drone

An **extension idea** if you wish to add basic harmony to your motif. A drone is a long note held against changing pitches in the melody.

