AURAL TESTS: Gd. V-VIII
General Perception of Style and Period

Early & Baroque Form

Dance forms:

Allemande	4/4	
Bourrée	2/4 or 4/4 (often starts on upbeat)	
Sarabande	3/2; quite slow & melodic	
Gavotte	2/2; starts on 2nd beat	
Gigue	6/8, 9/8, 12/8; fast	
Minuet	3/4; moderate	

Others:

|	
Binary	2 self-contained sections: A - B
Ternary	3 self-contained sections: A - B - A
Fantasia	Improvisatory; no fixed structure
Prelude	Usually binary form or fantasia-like
Toccata	Fast running passages to show off technique
Variations	Theme, followed by several variations

Early & Baroque Texture

Useful terms:

Polyphony (polyphonic)

Counterpoint (contrapuntal)

Imitation (imitative)

Canon (canonic)

Fugue (fugal)

Homophony (homophonic)

Early & Baroque Harmony

Either **modal** or **tonal**.

> ***The Modal system*** generally applies to music earlier than the time of J.S.Bach. It is a system of 'scales' (called *modes*) based on all the white notes of a keyboard.

f' indicates the 'final', or primary pitch of the mode.
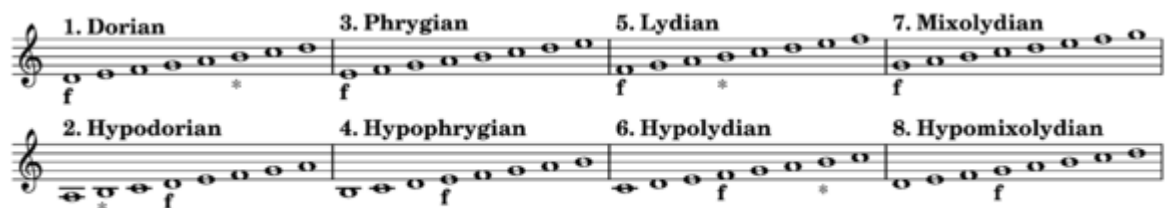
* Under certain conditions, the B is flatted in modes 1, 2, 5, and 6.

> ***The Tonal system*** became the standard way of harmonising around the time of J.S.Bach.
> In this system, all scales are made up of patterns of tones and semitones that are consistent. Sharps and flats are required to make all scales sound the same. The pattern found in the 1st mode is used for all major scales. Minor scales (melodic & harmonic) have different patterns. This system makes modulation possible - a new key can be reached via a cadence: a sequence of chords that leads to the new Tonic.
> The degrees of the major and minor scales are named, and triads (chords) formed upon them:

I	-	TONIC	V	-	DOMINANT
II	-	SUPERTONIC	VI	-	SUBMEDIANT
III	-	MEDIANT	VII	-	LEADING NOTE
IV	-	SUBDOMINANT	(VIII	-	TONIC)

Early & Baroque - General comments & Composers

Early music is most easily identified by its modal harmony & contrapuntal texture (although homophonic styles are not unknown). There is often a lot of ornamentation and embellishment. Several 'melodies', or themes are likely to be heard intertwining and often imitating each other; single-line melody with separate accompaniment is rare for this period.

Composers: Gabrielli

Palestrina

Byrd

Tallis

The Baroque style introduces more structured dance-forms (often grouped together into Suites) and the tonal system, which allows form and harmony to work together - e.g. Binary movements may use the Tonic key for the 'A' section, start the 'B' section in the Dominant key, and move back to the Tonic to end.

Counterpoint (polyphony) and ornamentation are important; homophonic textures are also used; single-line melody with accompaniment is used, but less common in keyboard music.

Composers: J.S.Bach

Handel

Corelli

Vivaldi

Purcell

Classical Form

The *Sonata*:   Important new form for keyboard & solo instruments. Usually comprises 3 or 4 'movements', the first usually using 'Sonata Form' (see below)

Dance forms: **Minuet & Trio** (often used as a middle mvt. in a Sonata)

Others: **'Sonata' form**
> Exposition (1st & 2nd subjects (themes);
> tonic key moves to dominant)
>
> Development (same ideas embelished - other keys)
>
> Recapitulation (1st & 2nd subject; end in tonic)

Rondo A-B-A-C-A-D-A etc. (often last mvt. of Sonata)

Fantasia

Binary A-B   **Ternary** A-B-A

Theme & Variations (often middle mvt. of a Sonata)

Classical Texture

Often more homophonic than earlier styles, although single-line melody with accompaniment is very common. 'Alberti' bass is an obvious feature (based on rocking broken-chord figures) of piano music. Extended trills are often used at cadence-points, which are constructed to formula - perfect, imperfect, plagal and interrupted.

'A' and 'B' themes are often contrasting in texture - e.g. 'A' theme has melody with accompaniment; 'B' theme is homophonic.

Also listen out for running passages of scales & arpeggio-type figures.

Classical Harmony

The tonal system of major and minor keys is used almost without exception in this period. Expect to hear extended use of the Tonic & Dominant keys - there tends to be less rapid movement from one key to the next than is found in the Baroque or Romantic periods.

As a general rule, there is not much in the way of chromaticism (use of notes that do not belong to the current key), although it may be used as a 'special effect' from time to time.

Classical - General comments & Composers

The Classical style is characterised by :

- clear melodic lines
- formal structures (easily recognisable forms)
- phrases of regular length (2- 4- or 8-bar phrases)
- tonal harmony that establishes keys with much use of chords I, VI and V and cadences at ends of phrases
- broken-chord/arpeggio/Alberti bass accompaniments

Composers: Haydn

Mozart

C.P.E. Bach

Beethoven was an important 'bridge' between the Classical and Romantic styles. He used many of the established Classical forms in his compositions, but his use of harmony is more progressive than that of Haydn & Mozart. Beethoven would use more chromatic notes, and often made unusual and frequent key-changes. His use of dynamics was also more dramatic and extreme, as was his use of the piano keyboard.

If an extract does not seem to fit happily into either the Classical or Romantic styles, it may be worth suggesting Beethoven as an educated guess.

Romantic Form

The **Sonata**: Still a prominent form for keyboard & solo instruments

Dance forms: **Scherzo** (literally 'Joke') takes the place of Minuet & Trio. Often used as middle mvt. in a Sonata. Can be used with or without a *Trio* section.

Waltz in 3-time; 'oom-pah-pah' bass figure

Polka in 2-time; quite lively

Mazurka Polish dance in 3-time; distinctive dotted rhythm in the melody

Polonaise virtuosic Polish dance in 3-time

Others: **Rondo** (see above)

Programme Music, Character Pieces & Miniatures
- music that is descriptive (may have a title, such as *'Butterflies'*, *'the Horseman'*, etc. Usually in one movement & often avoiding set forms. Other popular titles: *Impromptu, Ballad, Song Without Words*

Study (or Etude)
a piece written to develop a particular technique

Prelude a piece that stands on its own, but is not particularly descriptive. (May portray a 'mood')

Theme & Variations
This may be found as middle mvt. of a Sonata, but often exists on its own

Romantic Texture

Music of the Romantic period often uses more complex and wide-ranging textures than previous styles. Listen out for use of counterpoint, melody & accompaniment, virtuosic running passages, chordal texture, etc.

The music may use a very wide range of techniques and registers (i.e. high to low on the keyboard). Because the piano was becoming a larger and more powerful instrument, big chords may feature, or perhaps a broad arpeggio-type accompaniment, covering several octaves and with much use of sustain pedal.

Romantic Harmony

The tonal system of major and minor keys is still the main basis for harmony in this period, although there may well be frequent modulations. Sometimes the music may never seem to settle in any one key for more than a few beats.

Chromaticism (use of notes that do not belong to the current key) is an obvious feature of Romantic style - the more chromatic the music, the later it was written (by the end of the 19th century, music was barely tonal any more, because of the degree of chromaticism)

Romantic - General comments & Composers

The Romantic Style is characterised by :

- very lyrical melodies (long, flowing & 'singable')
- less formal structures
- programmatic music (telling a story/creating a mood)
- increasing use of chromaticism (within tonal harmony)
- extreme & dramatic effects (use of dynamics, contrasting textures/changes of tempo/contrasting moods, etc.)

Composers: Beethoven (Sonatas)

Schumann (programme music - very lyrical)

Brahms (miniatures - not programmatic)

Liszt (very chromatic & dramatic)

Chopin (dance forms)

The Impressionists fall into the period of time around the end of the 19th and start of the 20th century. Debussy and Ravel were the two main composers who wrote in this style, which was often highly chromatic and/or modal. Their music is usually without recognisable form or structure, since it is nearly always programmatic. The piano, in particular, is often used to create a 'wash' of sound - painting an image or mood, rather than stating musical themes. Sometimes, however, a character is depicted by means of a distinctive rhythmic figure (e.g. '*Puck*', or '*Minstrels*'), or melody (e.g. '*The Little Shepherd*'). The characteristic French sound that these composers create is mainly achieved by the combining of tonal and modal scales, as well as by the use of added notes in standard triads (e.g. added 6th chord; chords with 9th's & 13th's, etc.)

Twentieth-Century Form

The **Sonata**: Still a prominent form for keyboard & solo instruments

Dance forms: Not frequently used (perhaps in Jazz - Ragtime/Swing etc)

Others: **Programme Music, Character Pieces & Miniatures**
- music that is descriptive (may have a title, such as *'Butterflies'*, *'the Horseman'*, etc. Usually in one movement & often avoiding set forms.

Study a piece written to develop a particular technique

Prelude a piece that stands on its own, but is not particularly descriptive. (May portray a 'mood')

Theme & Variations

Experimentalism & the Avant-Garde Movement

Up to the middle of the century, traditional forms still formed the basis of composition, although many composers were beginning to adapt these forms, and to explore their limits. In the 1950's the 'Avant Garde' movement became prominent, and Form was often dictated by the music itself, rather than vice-versa.

Twentieth-Century Texture

Listen for anything that is extreme, quirky or highly contrasting. Traditional melody-with-accompaniment is less common than before.

Twentieth-Century Harmony

The traditional tonal system (major and minor keys) is now more-or-less outdated. Expect to hear extreme chromaticism, or major/minor keys that seem to go 'wrong'! Also listen out for unexpected & frequent key-changes. If there is no real use of tonality at all, then the music may be called 'Atonal'.

Jazz harmonies are also used from the beginning of the century.

Twentieth-Century - General comments & Composers

The Twentieth-Century is characterised by :

- dissonance
- lack of conventional tonality (use of atonality)
- quirky rhythmic patterns
- less formal structures (often short, contrasting sections)
- irregular phrase-lengths
- programmatic music (telling a story/creating a mood)
- extreme & dramatic effects
- jazz
- some use of folk-song

Composers: Bartok (often folky; very distinctive rhythms)
Berg (atonal)
Britten (tonal, but very dissonant)
Gershwin ('classical' jazz style)
Joplin (ragtime)
Prokofiev (tonal; not very dissonant)