

## 10 min Tips to Teach Music Podcast Week 5: What is Contrast in Music?

In music and musical form, contrast is the difference between parts or different instrument sounds. The three basic types of contrast are rhythmic contrast, melodic contrast, and harmonic contrast.

Here is an example of a response to the question about Contrast. You can see in the response that there are reasons given for the point of the contrast.

- (b) Explore how contrast is achieved in this excerpt.

4

Variety of instruments sharing the melody using call & response. VN and Cor Anglais uses ornaments to vary the melody. There is an oompah accompaniment at the start that contrasts with the lyrical melody. Ascending crotchets played with a rall leads into Violin melody. Antiphony between Violin and sax contrasts in tone colour and rhythmic values (sax long values, Violin short fast values). Violin melody contrasted by metallic glock sound playing crotchets. Again a rall used to contrast the waltz feel.



## What are best samples to look at for contrast?

The music of Peter Schickele (aka P.D.Q. Bach) often combines perfectly-executed baroque forms with utterly silly themes and instruments. If you've never heard him before I suggest [The Wurst of P. D. Q. Bach](#), which contains the Concerto for Horn and Hardart (an instrument that has a unique timbre for every note); Iphegenia in Brooklyn, a cantata which features double reeds (without the instruments) and trumpet (mouthpiece), plus wine bottle; the Schleptet; and New Horizons in Music Appreciation, which imagines what it would be like if symphony concerts were announced like sports.

[Postmodern Jukebox](#) are great to look at contrasts particularly with their different versions of popular songs.

[Bye Bye Blackbird](#) - from Fosse

Ravel's Bolero as mentioned in the Podcast.

SAMPLE SCORE:

How is contrast used in this excerpt?

m.38

rising 3rd - falling 7th (transposed -3) rising 3rd - falling 7th (transposed -3) rising 3rd - falling 7th

Violas 1+2 Violin 1+Viola 2

"turnaround" figure "turnaround" figure

Melody in RH uses a sequence which contrasts against the moving quaver pulse set by the LH part using mostly parallel thirds. Harmonically, the turnaround figure in the LH allows the sequence to descend by a major third then a minor third.



# Klerrisa Custom Music

Providing quality materials for Entertainers & Educators

## **SOME TIPS TO HELP WITH THE CONCEPTS:**

### **THE ELEMENTS OF MUSIC:**

You've heard about them, you're supposed to write about them in your responses•

Duration • Dynamics and Expressive Techniques • Pitch (harmony, melody)• Structure • Texture • Tone Colour

### **DURATION is all about time (long/short).**

It can refer to: • The length of individual notes or even whole songs • Beat and pulse • Rhythmic patterns: o Notes, rests, duplets, triplets, o Time signatures like 3/4, 4/4, 6/8 etc • Syncopation, polyrhythms • Tempo • Rhythmic features that belong with particular genres and styles

### **DYNAMICS is all about volume (loud/soft).**

It can refer to: • The volume of individual notes or even whole songs • Changes in volume; sudden (block dynamics) and gradual (crescendo, decrescendo) • Accented notes • Use of technology to control dynamics (compression, automation) • Articulation • Dynamic features that belong with particular genres and styles

### **PITCH (MELODY) is all about the horizontal arrangement of sound.**

It can refer to: • A sequence of single notes (sung or played) • The contour of the melody • Patterns such as phrases, riffs, sequences, motifs • Ornamentation or Embellishment • Modulation • Pitch bends, slides or electronic pitch adjustment • Range and register • Intonation • Melodic features that belong with particular genres and styles

### **PITCH (HARMONY) is all about the vertical arrangement of sound.**

It can refer to: • Chords such as triads, 7ths, 9ths, 11ths or 13ths • Diatonic tonality such as major, minor and dominant • Tension and resolution, consonance and dissonance • Atonality • Countermelodies • Modal harmony • Accompaniment styles • Modulation • Intonation • Harmonic features that belong to particular genres and styles

### **STRUCTURE is all about sections of the music.**

It could refer to: • Intro, Verse, Pre-Chorus, Chorus, Bridge, Middle eight, Collision, Instrumental solo, Ad lib, AABA form, Theme and Variation, Compound AABA form (A1, A2, B1, A3 etc..) • Repetition, variety, contrast, development or unification • Treatment of material such as samples and sequencing • Well known forms such as 12 bar blues, verse and chorus, through composed, theme and variation • The design of particular musical works such as rock opera or musicals • Structural features that belong to particular genres and styles



**TEXTURE is all about density.**

It may refer to: • The number of instruments or tracks • The way a recording has been mixed using effects such as reverb and delay • Musical voicings • The way an instrument's tone affects its timbre (distorted vs clean guitar) • Musical textures such as monophonic, homophonic, polyphonic, • Textural features that belong to a particular genre and style

**TIMBRE or TONE COLOUR is all about tone or the sound.**

It may refer to: • The way particular instruments or voices sound • Different tonal techniques used on an instrument (muting, fingertips, picks, bowing, scratching, tapping) • Electronic altering of tone using EQ, effects, pedals etc. • Tonal features that belong to particular genres and styles

Link for Audio of Shostakovich Waltz No 2:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7UIHI0oJEpg>