



**TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE – ATAR MUSIC
MUSICAL LITERACY**

Compositional Devices – Questions

- 1. True or False: The key difference between sequence and imitation is that a sequence occurs in the same voice and imitation is between two or more voices.**
 - a) True
 - b) False
- 2. True or False: An ostinato only occurs in the bass register.**
 - a) True
 - b) False
- 3. True or False: Inversion is a melodic line backwards.**
 - a) True
 - b) False
- 4. What compositional devices are used in the following excerpts? HINT: Some excerpts demonstrate more than one.**
 - a) Shostakovich: String Quartet No.8

Largo (♩ = 63)

- b) Bach: Prelude No.5 from the Well-Tempered Keyboard Book 1

c) Bartók: Mikrokosmos No.79

Calmo ♩ = 69

First system of the piano score for Bartók's Mikrokosmos No. 79. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The music features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the bass and a melody in the treble with accents and slurs.

Second system of the piano score for Bartók's Mikrokosmos No. 79, continuing the two-staff format from the first system.

d) Pärt: Cantus in memory of Benjamin Britten

First system of the orchestral score for Pärt's Cantus in memory of Benjamin Britten. It features five staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/4. The Violin I part begins with a melodic line marked with a fermata and a dynamic marking of *8^{va}*. The other instruments have rests.

Second system of the orchestral score for Pärt's Cantus in memory of Benjamin Britten, starting at measure 12. The Violin I part continues with a melodic line, while the other instruments play sustained notes with long slurs.

Compositional Devices – Answers

- 1. True or False: The key difference between sequence and imitation is that a sequence occurs in the same voice and imitation is between two or more voices.**
 - a) True
 - b) False
- 2. True or False: An ostinato only occurs in the bass register.**
 - a) True
 - b) False. An ostinato can occur in any register
- 3. True or False: Inversion is a melodic line backwards.**
 - a) True
 - b) False. Inversion is a 'mirror' of the melodic line. The inversion of one step upwards would be one step downwards
- 4. What compositional devices are used in the following excerpts? HINT: Some excerpts demonstrate more than one.**
 - a) Shostakovich: String Quartet No.8

Largo ($\text{♩} = 63$)

This is an example of imitation. In this case, the viola enters up a Perfect 5th from the cello, the 2nd violin enters up a Perfect 4th (in octave unison to the cello) and the 1st violin enters a Perfect 4th up from that.

- b) Bach: Prelude No.5 from the Well-Tempered Keyboard Book 1

A pedal point occurs from bar 27-29. Additionally, there is a strong use of sequence in the right hand. Beginning at bar 25, notice how there is a 2-beat sequence that rises in pitch before arriving at the pedal point. (marked in red)

c) Bartók: Mikrokosmos No.79
 Calmo ♩ = 69

This demonstrates imitation and inversion. Notice how rhythmically, the right-hand comes one beat later than the left-hand – this is the imitation part. Now notice how the intervals move in the opposite direction. (This is melodic inversion, not exact inversion). The overall effect is an inverted canon.

a) Pärt: Cantus in memory of Benjamin Britten

Arvo Pärt is a living Estonian composer who wrote this work in memory of the British composer, Benjamin Britten. The above example shows imitation. Each voice enters an octave lower and, incredibly, at half the speed of the preceding voice. The

melodic line has been augmented so that each note value is twice as long in each new occurrence of the melodic line. (Study the note value of the first note of each new voice). This is an augmented canon. It's not entirely shown above, but the double basses' first note is 32 beats long. How many time slower than the 1st violins is this?