**Pitch Naming**

The pitch names in the “musical alphabet” are: A B C D E F G

Each of these pitch names can be modified by adding a sharp or flat sign.

* The sharp sign will raise the pitch by one semitone from its natural pitch.
* The flat sign will lower the pitch by one semitone from its natural pitch.
* To cancel either of these symbols, a natural sign is used.
* All three of these signs are known collectively as *accidentals*.

 ♯ ♭ ♮

 SHARP FLAT NATURAL

Clefs - Each pitch has a place on the *staff*. A staff must include a *clef* to indicate the range in which the pitches should sound.

Placing a note on the staff tells a performer which pitches should be played.



**Building the Grand Staff** – Each line or space on the staff houses a different pitch.

Treble clef:

Lines from bottom up: E G B D F
Spaces from bottom up: F A C E

**Key Signature Identification**

*Key signatures* are a collection of the accidentals found in a scale. They tell us which key our music is in and which notes will need to be played flat or sharp. For the purposes of this theory unit, you will be expected to know the Major keys up to 3 flats and 3 sharps.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sharp Key Signatures** | **Order of Sharps** | **Relative Minor***(Same key signature, starting on a different pitch – the 6th note in the major scale)* | To identify the name of a key signature containing sharps, look at furthest right sharp and count up one semitone. For example, if the key signature contains F♯ C♯ and G♯, then one semitone up from G♯ is A and therefore the key signature would be A Major. |
| G Major | F♯ | E minor |
| D Major | F♯ C♯ | B minor |
| C Major | No Sharps or Flats | A minor |

**Rhythm -** Rhythm is the way sounds are organized; the *duration*, or value, of each note or rest.

**Note and Rest Values** - Notes have relationships to each other in the same way as fractions. For example, eight “eighth” OR four “quarters” OR two “halves” will make one “whole”. We use the same words to describe note and rest values.

Whole

Half

Quarter

Eighth

Similarly, rests have the same relationship (as illustrated above). Observe in the example below the rests shown in sequence from whole rest to eighth rest.
\*Whole rests are used to indicate an entire bar of rest, no matter what the time signature may be.

**Time Signatures** – The *time signature* identified in the example above is an important aspect of organizing music. The two numbers provide different information for us. The top number tells us how many beats are in a single bar or measure. The bottom number tells us what note value gets one beat.

To easily read a time signature, simply say it like a fraction. For example, a measure with a time signature of 3/8 consists of three eighths. The key signatures you will be expected to know are 2/4, 3/4 and 4/4.

♩♩| ♩♩♩| ♩♩♩♩

**Musical Terms**

Communicating in a common language is an important aspect of musicianship. Composers and performers use an efficient system of expressive terms when describing music or providing instructions for how the music should be interpreted. Most often, these terms are provided in Italian. Some composers like Mahler, Grainger or Debussy are known to also use German, English, and French terms. The list below are terms you are expected to know for any in class quizzes as well as the final examination.

1. **Tempo**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Italian Term*** | ***English Meaning*** |
| Adagio | Slow and stately |
| Andante | At a walking pace |
| Moderato | Moderately |
| Allegro | Lively and quick |
| Accelerando | Gradually faster |
| Ritardando | Gradually slower |
| Rallentando | Suddenly slower |

1. **Dynamics**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Italian Term*** | ***English Meaning*** |
| Pianissimo (*pp*) | Very soft |
| Piano (*p*) | Soft |
| Mezzo piano (*mp*) | Medium soft |
| Mezzo forte (*mf*) | Medium strong |
| Forte (*f*) | Strong |
| Fortissimo (*ff*) | Very strong |
| Crescendo () | Gradually stronger |
| Decrescendo/Diminuendo () | Gradually softer |

1. **General Use**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Italian Term*** | ***English Meaning*** |
| Poco a poco | Little by little |
| Subito | Suddenly |
| Da capo | The beginning |
| Coda | Ending |
| Fine | The end |
| Tutti | All together |
| Solo | One single performer |
| Soli | A small group of performers |