



Mini-Lessons: Explore the Concepts & Musical Elements in *Paper Cut*

OVERVIEW

Students will have an enhanced understanding of the music they are performing if they are able to define the musical elements contained in *Paper Cut* and know what to listen for to recognize those same elements in other pieces they are performing. The following mini-lessons focus on the main musical elements that occur in *Paper Cut*. Students will identify the elements of music contained within *Paper Cut* and learn to apply that knowledge by analyzing other pieces of music. The lessons may also support literacy initiatives in schools by helping students to become familiar with the technical terminology of the discipline.

These lessons are designed to be used individually, spread throughout several days. The musical elements that comprise *Paper Cut* are identified in the musical Music Timeline in the Teacher's Guide.

LEARNING GOALS

Students will:

1. Apply knowledge of selected concepts and elements by identifying them in various pieces of music.
2. Enhance their understanding of the music they are performing by being aware of the components that make up the music.

RESOURCES & MATERIALS

1. The individual parts to *Paper Cut*
2. [Recording of *Paper Cut*](#) (click link for download or email bandquest@composersforum.org for a free Catalog CD)
3. Student copies of Mini-Lesson Readings:
 - [Ostinato](#)
 - [Dots & Ties](#)
 - [Key Signatures and Tonality](#)
4. Other band pieces that students are rehearsing
5. Audio examples of other music that contains the musical elements in this lesson

PROCESS

Have students:

1. Read the description of the musical element or concept provided for each mini-lesson.
2. Listen to and perform the sections of *Paper Cut* that contain the focus element or concept.
3. Listen to audio examples of other music that illustrates the element.*
4. Apply what they learned by analyzing other pieces they are rehearsing.

*Additional listening examples that illustrate the musical elements are cited in some of the lessons. The listening examples are commonly available online. You may want to cue up the listening examples in advance so that the musical element being demonstrated can be heard right away when it is contained in a longer excerpt.

Cont.

ASSESSMENT

1. Ask students to share audio recordings of their own that they believe illustrate a particular concept or element.
2. Play audio excerpts for the class and asking which element is being represented.
3. Have the students identify particular elements in other pieces they rehearse throughout the year.



Dots & Ties

How do you increase the length of a note? Dots and ties are two symbols that you can add to musical notation to change duration or length of the sound (notes) or silence (rests).

First let's begin with ties. A tie combines two or more shorter notes into one longer note. Sometimes two or more notes are tied together within the same measure. By tying the eighth note to the half note in the following example, the tied note would be held for two and a half beats — the sum of a half note (two beats) plus an eighth note (a half of a beat):



Sometimes the tie links notes that reside in more than one measure:



When counting rhythms that are tied, you count and feel the rhythms the same you would if they were separated.



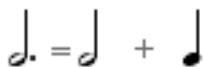
Here's a challenge for you. For how many beats would you hold the following note?



When you add a dot to a note or rest, you increase its length or duration by half of its original length or duration. This can be a confusing statement, but is easier to understand if you compare music with money. If money was affected by dots the same way musical notation is, how much money would you have if you added a dot to a dollar bill? Half of a dollar bill is worth 50¢, therefore a dollar with a dot would be worth \$1.50. In other words, a dollar plus half of a dollar.



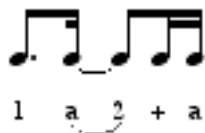
In a time signature where a quarter note gets a beat, like 4/4 or 3/4 time, a half note is equal to two beats. If you add a dot to a half note, it would equal 2 beats plus half of two beats (one beat or a quarter note), for a total of three beats.



A rhythm that includes a dotted eighth note followed by a 16th note is used throughout *Paper Cut*. A dotted eighth note is equal to an eighth note plus half of an eighth note. Half of an eighth note would be equal to a sixteenth note. A dotted eighth note would take up the same time as three sixteenth notes.



An additional sixteenth note is needed to complete the rest of the beat. A dotted eighth note and sixteenth note tied to an eighth note followed by two sixteenth notes occurs throughout *Paper Cut*. This rhythm combines both the use of a dot and a tie.



Locate other rhythms that contain dotted notes and/or ties in *Paper Cut* and other music you are rehearsing. Can you figure out how the dot or tie affects the counting? By the way, the tied rhythm shown above would be held for a total of 14 beats!

Without printed music to look at, it is difficult to aurally identify tied notes, therefore no audio examples of ties are provided.

The following musical examples feature dotted quarter/eighth note rhythms:

Hark, The Herald Angels Sing by Felix Mendelssohn

On Wisconsin by William T. Purdy

“Largo” (Mvt. II) from the *New World Symphony* by Antonin Dvořák

The following musical examples feature dotted eighth/sixteenth note rhythms:

“Toreador Song” from *Carmen* by Georges Bizet

Minuet in G by Ludwig van Beethoven

Winter Wonderland by Dick Smith and Felix Bernard



Key Signatures and Tonality



Look at the following example of *Freres Jacques*:



The tune starts and ends on a Bb, and all the pitches that are used in the tune are taken from the following scale:



If you have been learning key signatures and practicing scales, you will notice that the example is written in the key of Bb major. It has the appropriate key signature (2 flats) and the fundamental pitch that the tune seems to be built upon is Bb. All the pitches that make up the tune were all from the Bb major scale.

When you are trying to identify the key of a piece of music, the key signature is a good place to start. However, sometimes the written key signature can be deceiving. For various reasons, sometimes tunes are in a different key than what is indicated by the key signature. Look at the following version of *Freres Jacques*:



Notice that the exact same pitches in this version of *Freres Jacques* are the same as those used in the first version. If you were only looking at the key signature for this example, you might assume that the tune is in the key of C major (no flats or sharps). However, the accidental (flat) that is applied to the pitches of B and E still make the key Bb major.

The same situation happens in *Paper Cut*. The written concert key is no flats or sharps, with appropriate transpositions for all instruments:

Piccolo
 Flute
 Oboe
 Keyboard Perc.
 Clarinet in B
 Bass Clarinet
 Tenor Saxophone
 Trumpet
 Alto Sax.
 Bari Sax.
 Horn in F
 Trombone
 Baritone
 Tuba

This musical score shows the concert key notation for the piece *Paper Cut*. The key signature is C major (no sharps or flats). The instruments are arranged in five systems. The first system includes Piccolo, Flute, Oboe, Keyboard Perc., Clarinet in B, Bass Clarinet, Tenor Saxophone, and Trumpet. The second system includes Alto Sax. and Bari Sax. The third system includes Horn in F. The fourth system includes Trombone, Baritone, and Tuba. The notation shows various notes and rests for each instrument, with some notes having accidentals (sharps and flats) to indicate the actual pitches used.

The pitches used to make up the piece, due to the accidentals applied to pitches in all the parts, are actually these:

Piccolo
 Flute
 Oboe
 Keyboard Perc.
 Clarinet in B
 Bass Clarinet
 Tenor Saxophone
 Trumpet
 Alto Sax.
 Bari Sax.
 Horn in F
 Trombone
 Baritone
 Tuba

This musical score shows the actual pitches used in the piece *Paper Cut*, taking into account the accidentals applied to the notes. The key signature is C major. The instruments are arranged in five systems. The first system includes Piccolo, Flute, Oboe, Keyboard Perc., Clarinet in B, Bass Clarinet, Tenor Saxophone, and Trumpet. The second system includes Alto Sax. and Bari Sax. The third system includes Horn in F. The fourth system includes Trombone, Baritone, and Tuba. The notation shows various notes and rests for each instrument, with many notes having accidentals (sharps and flats) to indicate the actual pitches used.



When the term tonality is used in music, typically major and minor scales and the harmonies that are created when using a combination of notes from those scales is what is meant. The notes in the scales fulfill particular musical functions that cause tension and release of tension, also known as dissonance and consonance. This traditional definition of tonality especially applies to music from the Baroque and Classical periods of Western (European) music history. It is also true of most popular music still currently being created and recorded today.

As we entered the 20th and 21st centuries, traditional tonality gave way to more contemporary (modern) ways of organizing scales and chords created from those scales. For many pieces, you can no longer identify a specific key, such as Bb major or A minor, although there may still be a fundamental pitch on which the set of pitches used in the piece is built. For instance, although *Paper Cut* is not written in Bb major or Bb minor, you can still hear a concert Bb note as the fundamental pitch on which the set of pitches used in the piece is built. When the bass instruments play the final Bbs at the end of the piece, it definitely sounds like they have landed on a logical ending note. The key signature for a piece constructed in this way no longer represents traditional tonality, but rather is a way to symbolize — along with the accidentals that are applied directly to the notes—the sharps or flats that should be played.

Listen carefully to the other pieces you are rehearsing. Do you hear traditional major and minor scales? Does the music seem to be in a specific key? Can you identify the fundamental pitch on which the set of pitches used in the piece seems to be based? There is still a lot of band music that is composed using traditional tonality, but the diversity of new ways that are used to put notes together in composing music today makes listening to and performing music challenging and exciting.

