Composition – TV and Film

Burwell Village College Primary

Vocabulary	
pitch	how high or low a sound is
tempo	the speed of the music
dynamics	how loud or quiet the music is
rhythm	the pattern of long and short sounds
melody	a sequence of musical notes that forms a tune
duration	how long a sound or note lasts

Musical elements are used in film and TV to create a feeling:

fast tempo → excitement, panic, action

slow tempo → sadness, calm, mystery

loud dynamics → power, danger, excitement

quiet dynamics → suspense, fear, sadness

Name	Value	Note	Rest
Semibreve	4 beats		
Dotted minim	3 beats		
Minim	2 beats		
Dotted crochet	1½ beats		
Crochet	1 beat		
Dotted quaver	¾ beat		
Quaver	½ beat		
Semiquaver	¼ beat		

Scales & Arpeggios

A **scale** is a sequence of notes that moves up or down in order.

Example: C – D – E – F – G – A – B – C

An **arpeggio** is the notes of a chord played one after another rather than at the same time.

Arpeggios can help create:

- movement
- excitement
- a sense of anticipation
- a particular mood

Sharp ♯

A sharp raises a note by one semitone. Sharps can sometimes make music sound:

- **brighter**
- **more energetic**
- **sharper or tense**
- **exciting**
- **unsettling**

For example, a raised note might make a melody feel as though it is **moving upwards**, creating anticipation or tension.

Flat ♭

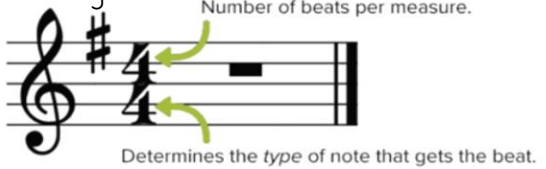
A flat lowers a note by one semitone.

Flats can sometimes contribute to music that sounds:

- **darker**
- **warmer**
- **sad**
- **melancholic**
- **mysterious**

For example, lowering certain notes can give music a more **sombre or haunting** quality.

Time signature:



A **rest** is a period of silence in music. Silence can be used deliberately in film music to create suspense, surprise the audience, make the next sound more dramatic or create feelings of anticipation.

Composers such as **Hans Zimmer** and **John Williams** don't simply use a sharp to mean "happy" or a flat to mean "sad". **The effect depends on the notes around it, the key, chords, rhythm, tempo, dynamics and instrumentation.**