

Intro to World Music

- What is Pitch?
 - the perceived “highness” or “lowness” of a sound or musical tone measured in terms of frequency:
 - hertz (Hz) = measurement unit of cycles per second of a periodic phenomenon
 - Sound wave at 261.1 Hz = "middle C"
- Intervals: The Octave
 - Interval = distance between two pitches
 - Unison = 1:1 ratio between frequencies
 - Octave = 2:1 ratio between frequencies, thus...
 - A pitch of 440 Hz is one octave higher than a pitch at 220 Hz.
 - What is the frequency of a pitch an octave higher than a pitch at 440 Hz?
- Tuning Systems
 - Method by which musicians decide which frequencies will be used in a musical system
 - Examples:
 - Western music: standardized twelve-tone equal tuning
 - India: flexible tuning
 - Bali: fixed, ensemble- specific tuning
- Tonality
 - a system in music in which specific hierarchical pitch relationships are based on a central “home base,” or tonic pitch.
- Modes & Scales
 - Mode = collection of unique pitches within an octave
 - Scale = arrangement of the pitches of the mode, usually from low to high
 - Examples:
 - 5-note mode/scale: pentatonic
 - 6-note mode/scale: hexatonic
 - 7-note mode/scale: heptatonic
 - Other possibilities (e.g. 24-note “microtonal” scale)
- Modes in the West
 - Major mode & minor mode most common
 - Key refers to the specific pitch where the tonic of the mode is situated
 - Thus, the key of "F minor" means the minor mode is built upon the tonic note of "F"
- Melody
 - a succession of pitches
that makes sense when heard as a group
 - Descriptors:
 - Contour: “wavy,” “jagged,” “static”
 - Motion: “conjunct” vs. “disjunct”
 - Range (interval between highest and lowest pitch in the melody)
 - Tessitura (where the bulk of the melody's pitches lie)
- Phrases & Cadences
 - Melodies can be broken up into smaller, sentence-like units called phrases
 - Phrases are “punctuated” by brief resting points called cadences
- Ornamentation
 - quick “decorative” notes added to a melody to embellish it
 - They don’t change the character of the melodic line, but simply stylistically enhance it
 - Western example: the trill (audio: bassoon trills)