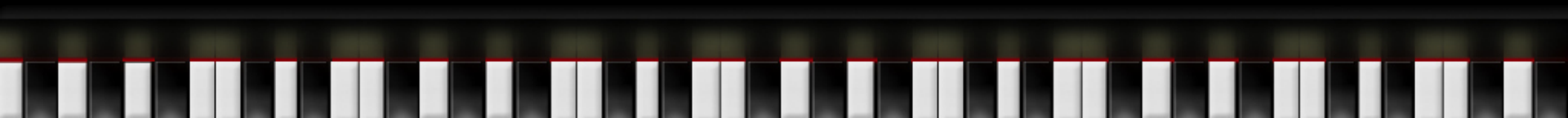


Area of Study One

Rhythm and Metre



Definition of Key Terms

Key Word	Definition
Pulse	The beat in a piece of music
Metre	The number of beats in a bar
Tempo	The speed of the music – measured in BPM and also uses metronome markings
Simple Time	Time signatures where the beat is divided into two: typically, a crotchet beat divided into two quavers
Compound Time	Time signatures based on a dotted crotchet beat, divided into three quavers, for example 6/8
Regular Time	Music which keeps to a single time signature
Irregular Time	Music where the time signature changes (usually a lot), or where the accents frequently shift
Free Time	Where the rhythm of the music is not set by regular bar lines but determined by the performer
Hemiola	Where two bars of 3/4 are played as three bars of 2/4 or one bar of 3/2
Cross rhythm	When two different rhythms of usually different metres are played together at the same time
Dotted rhythm	The effect produced when two conflicting rhythms are heard together
Triplet	Three notes being played in the time of two
Syncopation	When the notes are played off the beat
Rubato	Literally 'robbed time', where rhythms are played freely for expressive effect
Polyrhythm	When two or more rhythms are played at the same time. (Often with different pulses)
Drum fill	Usually heard at the end of a phrase, this is where the drummer plays a free rhythmic pattern

Italian Tempo Markings

Italian Term	Meaning
Largo	Slowly and broadly
Adagio	'At ease' (play slowly)
Andante	At a walking pace
Moderato	At moderate speed
Allegro	Fast
Vivace	Lively
Presto	Very quick
Accelerando	Gradually speeding up
Rallentando	Gradually slowing down
Ritenuto	Immediately slower
Allargando	Getting slower and broadening



Time Signatures

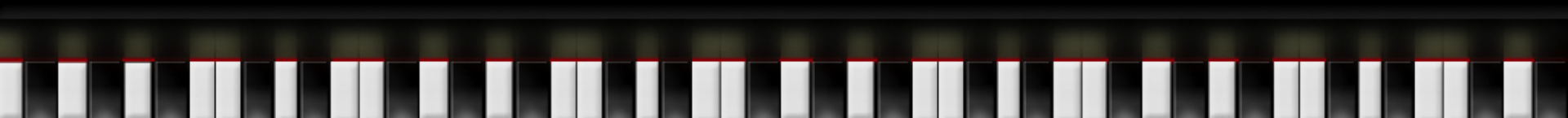
- # Time signatures contain two numbers
 - # The top number indicates the number of beats in each bar
 - # The bottom number indicates the length of each beat.
- # Common bottom numbers are:
 - # 4 = crotchet beats
 - # 8 = quaver beats
 - # 2 = minim beats



Simple Time

This is where each beat is divided into two equal parts.
Examples of simple time signatures are:

2	3	4
4	4	4



Compound Time

- # In compound time each beat is divided into three equal parts.
Examples of compound time signatures are:

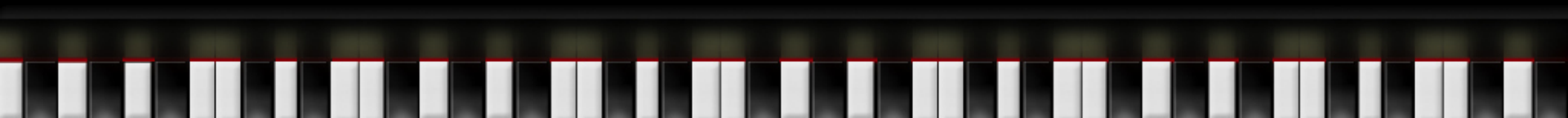
6	9	12
8	8	8

A feature of compound time signatures is their use of **dotted notes**.



Dotted rhythms

- # A dot after a note increases its value by half again.
- # For example, a dotted crotchet lasts for one and half crotchets
- # A dotted quaver lasts for one and a half quavers
- # Dotted rhythms give a dance/skipping-like feel to music



Regular rhythm

- # Most western music has regular rhythms
- # This means that when you listen to a piece of music you can feel that it is made up of regular groups (**bars**) of pulses (**beats**)
- # This is the 'time' or 'metre' of the music
- # Regular rhythms occur in duple time (2 beats to a bar, e.g. 2/4, 6/8), triple time (3 beats to a bar, e.g. 3/4, 9/8) or quadruple time (4 beats to a bar, e.g. 4/4, 12/8).



Irregular rhythm

- # Irregular rhythms are those that do not fit into the usual rhythmic patterns of duple, triple or quadruple times
- # Irregular rhythms often have time signatures such as $5/4$, $5/8$, $7/4$, $7/8$, where each bar is made up of combinations of two- and three-beat note patterns



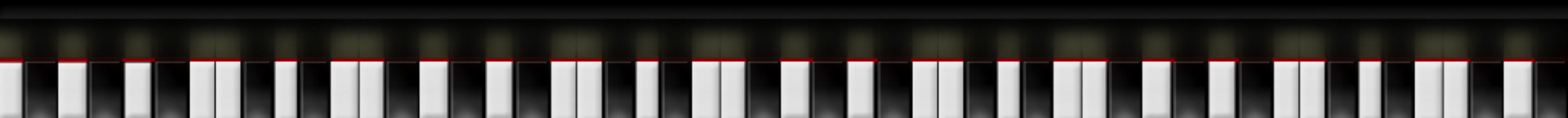
Free rhythm

- # Music that is in free rhythm has no definite metre or pulse
- # In this kind of music you will not be able to detect a regular or irregular pattern of beats
- # Accents may come in different places, giving the impression that the time signature changes every bar, or you may feel that there is no real accent or pulse



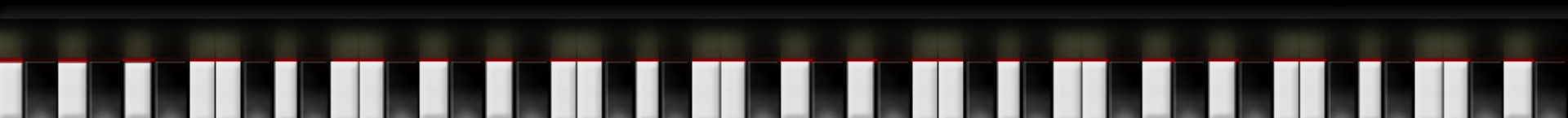
Augmentation and Diminution

- # Augmentation is where a melody or series of notes is repeated using notes of a longer duration
- # Diminution is the opposite: the note-lengths of the original melody are shortened when it is played again



Hemiola

- # A hemiola rhythm has a 'three against two' metrical feel
- # Hemiolas are found in all types of music, but were often used in dance music during the Renaissance and Baroque periods, where they give the regular $3/4$ pulse a rhythmic change



Cross rhythm

- # A cross-rhythm occurs when two different rhythms are played together at the same time
- # Usually the rhythms contrast in some way, for instance a rhythm with a triple metre feel against a rhythm with a duple or quadruple metre feel



Syncopation

- # Syncopation occurs when a composer changes the usual stress of the beats in a bar
- # This might be by placing an accent on a weak beat or part of a beat, or by placing a rest on a strong beat
- # It is a common rhythmic feature of many musical styles, particularly popular music and dance music



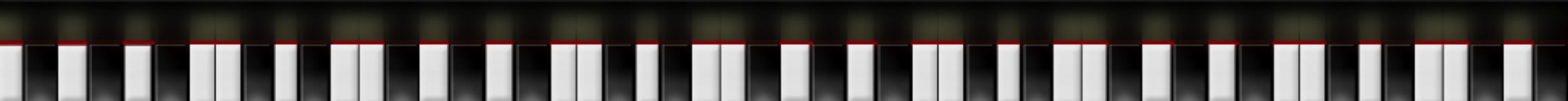
Tempo and Rubato

- # Tempo is the speed of the music, the speed at which you count the beats
- # This is often indicated either by an Italian word or by a metronome marking, or both, and will not change in a piece of music unless indicated
- # However, performers sometimes speed up or slow down, even if not indicated, in response to the way the music makes them feel
- # These unwritten tempo changes are called rubato
- # Sometimes composers add the words *rubato* or *tempo rubato* to the score, indicating that they do not want a strict tempo



Polyrhythm and bi-rhythm

- # A polyrhythmic texture is created when two or more different rhythms are played at the same time
- # Like cross-rhythms, the parts usually contrast in metre and accent, producing a rich, complex texture
- # They are often found in African and Afro-Cuban music
- # A bi-rhythm is a specific type of polyrhythm, consisting of two independent rhythms played simultaneously



Drum fills

- # A 'fill' is a short passage of music which helps to bridge the gaps between sections or phrases of a melody in a piece of music
- # Any instrument can do this, but the drum fill has become a regular feature of much popular music
- # Most pop styles have their own characteristic fills but in general they are all short and simple and do not change the tempo, so that the flow of the music is maintained

