

I Like It, But Is It Music?

Are you frustrated when you try to explain your taste in music? Fortunately, one of the benefits of learning a musical instrument is a better understanding of your own musical taste. Learn to play an instrument, and soon you will be able to discuss what works or doesn't work for you, in music.

Learn to Describe What You Like through Musical Education

It may come as a surprise, but the European tradition is rife with arguments not only about whether a song is good or bad, but also whether a song is music at all. John Cage, a composer famous for taking the position that any sound could be music, sometimes left portions of his compositions to chance and would use non-standard instruments. Often, arguments about music are really about whether you are able to express your opinion.

Let's take a look at the music fundamentals. When you understand the concepts of pitch, melody, harmony, rhythm, and articulation, you will be well on your way to expressing your opinions about music.

? Pitch: Simply put, when you say a sound is high or low, you are describing the pitch. Each note in music is a pitch defined.

? Melody: You could think of a melody something you hum. A melody is a series of notes played in succession. This is sometimes called the "horizontal" part of music, in reference to written notes on a scale.

? Harmony: Harmony is what happens when multiple notes are played simultaneously. This is sometimes called the "horizontal" part of music. The combined sound adds depth to the melody. "Chords" consist of three or more notes played simultaneously, with each chord named for notes.

? Rhythm: Most Western music relies on an even beat beneath the music. Each note takes up one of these beats or a portion of it. Other cultures such as Indian and African use more complex rhythm systems. "Irrational rhythms" are irregular beat systems created mathematically.

? Articulation: Just as important as the notes that are played is the way you play them. Music composed and written on paper includes "articulations" written with a series of marks. A common example is the "tie," a curved line connecting two notes of the same pitch to show that two notes should be played as one. Articulation also includes the amount of silence between the notes.

By reading this article, you have taken the first step toward developing your musical vocabulary. Nowhere have we told you what to like or dislike; that's up to you.

Make it a priority to learn to play a musical instrument. As a result, you will have a better appreciation of music in all its forms. You will understand your own musical tastes, and even be able to express your opinions about music with confidence.

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About the Author

Duane Shinn is the author of the popular free 101-week online e-mail newsletter titled "Amazing Secrets Of Exciting Piano Chords & Sizzling Chord Progressions - Intelligent Piano Lessons For Adults Only!" available at <http://www.playpiano.com> with over 84,400 current subscribers.