



## Mini-Lessons: Explore the Concepts & Musical Elements in *Sweet like that*

---

### OVERVIEW

Students will have an enhanced understanding of the music they are performing if they are able to define the musical elements contained in *Sweet like that* and know what to listen for to recognize those same elements in other pieces they are performing. The following six mini-lessons focus on the main musical elements that occur in *Sweet like that*. Students will identify the elements of music contained within *Sweet like that* 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 many days. The musical elements that comprise *Sweet like that* are identified in the musical Music Map 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 *Sweet like that*
2. [Recording of \*Sweet like that\*](#) (click link for download or email [bandquest@composersforum.org](mailto:bandquest@composersforum.org) for a free Catalog CD)
3. Student copies of Mini-Lesson Readings:
  - [The Chorale](#) (referred to as gospel choir in Music Map - mm. 7-12, 14-25, 59-67, 75-114)
  - [Repetition & Imitation In Music](#) (mm. 4-5, 12, 18-20, 67-75)
  - [Scales & Scale Fragments Used as Melodic Material](#) (referred to as "fast fives" in the Music Map - mm. 4-5, 12, 18-20, 67-75)
  - [Ostinato](#)
  - [Syncopation](#)
  - [Changes in the Feel of Beat](#)
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 *Sweet like that* that contain the focus element or concept.

Cont.

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.

### **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.



# The Chorale

---

If you have ever heard a church **hymn**, you have heard an example of a **chorale**. The beginnings of the modern chorale date back to German protestant churches during the early 1500s. The earliest chorales or hymn tunes consisted of a single-line melody sung by the congregation with no **accompaniment**. Over time, **harmony** was added to make the hymn tunes more elaborate. Many hymn tunes are written in 4-part harmony – soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. The soprano is the highest part. The alto and tenor are middle parts. The bass is the lowest part.

When the bass, tenor, and alto parts are creating harmonies to go along with the soprano part, the texture of the piece is called homophonic. Much of the time the chords move along rhythmically the same as the soprano part. Occasionally the other parts change harmony while one part holds a longer note.

When instrumental music is written in the same style as a hymn tune – with a soprano, alto, tenor, and bass part in a homophonic texture – the music can be described as in a chorale style, even though there may be no sacred (religious) or secular (non-religious) lyrics created to go with the music.

*Sweet like that* contains sections of music that are written in a chorale style. Where are those sections in the music? Sometimes part of the band is playing a chorale and other parts are playing faster moving **scales**, rhythmic patterns, or melodic patterns that are not part of the chorale. If the music in this section had lyrics and was sung, it might sound similar to the music of a **gospel choir**. What parts in those sections would you leave out to have only instruments playing that are part of the chorale? Check out measures 7-12. Does it sound like the parts that have half notes and whole notes together sound like a hymn or a chorale?

Are there any other pieces you are rehearsing or pieces you have listened to that are written in a chorale style? Listen to these pieces for more examples of chorales:

- *Salvation Is Created* by Pavel Tchesnokov
- *Dear Old Shi* from “Wicked” by Stephen Schwartz
- *On A Hymnsong By Philip Bliss* by David Holsinger
- *Adagio for Strings* by Samuel Barber
- *Evening Prayer* from “Hansel and Gretel,” Act II by Engelbert Humperdinck

# Repetition & Imitation in Music

---

What does it mean to imitate something? It means to copy or impersonate. **Imitation** is often used in music. You will hear a melody introduced by a voice or instrument and then later hear it again by either another voice or instrument or by the same voice or instrument in a different range (either higher or lower.) Sometimes the entire form or structure of the piece is based on imitation. If you listen to a **fugue** from the **Baroque** period of classical music, you will hear a tune introduced by itself, later it is echoed in a higher or lower part, then in a third part, and finally in a fourth part. When a melody is repeated exactly as it was heard before, it is called strict imitation. Imitation is a very elaborate form of repetition.

Sometimes the use of repetition isn't quite so elaborate or complex. A short phrase or even a fragment of a melody (a small section rather than the entire melody) can be repeated or imitated by other instruments. The effect can sound like one instrument or voice echoing the other. When the same melody or fragment of a melody is passed back and forth by groups of instruments or singers, this musical effect is called antiphonal.

There are several places in *Sweet like that* where 16th notes in the flute, oboe, clarinet, alto saxophone and tenor saxophone parts are passed back and forth, imitating one another.

To hear examples of other music that use repetition, listen to the following pieces:

- *Fugue in G minor* ("Little") by J.S. Bach – strict imitation; an entire melodic line is imitated in four different parts.
- *Canzon Septimi Toni No. 2* by Giovanni Gabrieli – antiphonal music
- *Second Suite in F for Military Band, Mvt. I. March* by Gustav Holst - the low brass part in the first measure answered by the upper woodwinds in the first two measures.

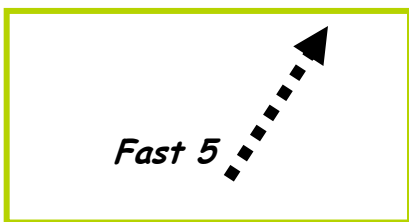


# Scales and Scale Fragments Used as Melodic Material

---

Does your band teacher ever ask you to practice **scales** on your instrument? There is good reason to master performance of the various major and minor key signatures and scales. It helps musicians read and perform music written in a variety of keys and develops technical skill and finger dexterity or accuracy in hitting the correct bars on a melodic percussion instrument.

Scales are also frequently used as the basis of a melody, **countermelody**, or **accompaniment** to a melody. Sometimes an entire scale is used. At other times, composers may use just a portion or fragment of the scale. In *Sweet like that*, the flutes, oboes, clarinets, and saxophones have fragments of scales that are performed in a 16th-note pattern in measures 4-5, 12, 18-20, and 67-75. The Music Map that is provided for *Sweet like that* refers to these **scale fragments** as “fast fives,” because the 16th notes used in this section of the piece are made up of the first five notes of an Eb concert scale.



Can you locate places in other pieces you are performing that use either an entire scale or a portion of a scale in a melody or an accompaniment? Can you figure what scale it is that is being used? Is it a major scale? A minor scale? A chromatic scale? Notice that a scale moves in stepwise motion. It doesn't jump from one note to another. It always moves to the note that is right next door, either a whole step or a half step away. Do you recognize a scale when you hear one?

Listen to the following pieces of music as examples of the use scales in the main melodies:

- *Overture to the Marriage of Figaro* by Wolfgang A. Mozart
- *Festive Overture* by Dmitri Shostakovich (clarinet solo after the opening fanfare)

These musical selections use scale fragments as melody or accompaniment:

- *Don't Stop Believing* by Journey (the guitar solo after the first verse)
- *Second Suite in F for Military Band, Mvt. I. March* by Gustav Holst (the low brass part in the first measure answered by the upper woodwinds in the first two measures)



# Ostinato

---

Sometimes a rhythm or a few measures of pitches are repeated over and over again in music as an **accompaniment** to a melody. Repeated rhythms on non-pitched percussion instruments can create a rhythmic feel or “groove” that helps to make the music move along. Repeated melodic notes can provide a **harmony** or **countermelody** for the main melody of a piece of music. A repeated rhythm or short melody is called an **ostinato**.

*Sweet like that* has both rhythmic and melodic ostinati. The drum set and egg shaker parts at the beginning of the piece provide a pulse and energy for the parts played by the other instruments. The percussion rhythmic ostinato becomes even more driving when the bass drum and bongo parts enter at measure 25.

A rhythmic ostinato doesn't have to be performed on a non-pitched instrument. Sometimes a melodic instrument can play a rhythm on the same pitch over and over again. Even though the instrument is playing a specific pitch, since the pitch never changes, the effect is more rhythmic rather than melodic. For example, listen to the alto



saxophone I, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, and French horn part at measure 75. Notice that those instruments are playing a rhythm on the same pitch over and over again. You hear their parts as a repeated rhythm rather than as a repeated melody.

Now compare those parts to the flute, oboe, clarinet I, and alto saxophone II parts at measure 25. Those instruments also have a repeated pattern over and over, but this time the pattern includes a variety of pitches – more like a short melody. This is an example of a melodic ostinato.

Are you performing any other pieces that have either a rhythmic or melodic ostinato? Do you recognize an ostinato when you hear it?

The following pieces contain examples of a rhythmic ostinato:

- *Bolero* by Maurice Ravel
- *Canto* by Francis McBeth
- *Music for Pieces of Wood* by Steve Reich
- *Augurs of Spring: Dance of the Young Girls* from “The Rite of Spring” by Igor Stravinsky
- *Mars, The Bringer of War* from “The Planets” by Gustav Holst

The following pieces contain a melodic ostinato:

- *Iron Maiden* by Black Sabbath
- *Take Five* by Dave Brubeck
- *O Fortuna* from “Carmina Burana” by Carl Orff
- *25 or 6 to 4* by Chicago



# Syncopation

When you listen to music, you hear and feel a pulse or a beat. Some of the beats are stronger and some of the beats are weaker. For instance, when there are four beats in a measure, the first and third beat are stronger and the second and fourth beats are weaker. Most of the time you can easily hear and feel the first beat or downbeat. In a three beat measure, like that which is used in a waltz, the first beat really sticks out. You hear ONE-two-three, ONE-two-three or STRONG-weak-weak.



**Syncopation** is a term that is used to describe a rhythm where a weak beat or weaker part of the beat is given additional emphasis, stress, or weight that makes what normally gets less emphasis stand out more. The following is an example of syncopation where a weak beat is emphasized:



Not only are there stronger and weaker beats, but there are also stronger and weaker parts of a beat. The off-beat or up-beat is the weakest part of the beat (e.g. the second eighth note in a group of two eighth notes in 4/4 time):



In *Sweet like that*, composer Christopher Theofanidis begins the piece with the following syncopation:



By surrounding the off-beats — the “+” of beats 2 and 3 — with silences, the off-beats are given additional emphasis. In measures 114-116, *Sweet like that* ends with the same syncopated rhythm that began the piece. Can you find examples of syncopation in other music you are rehearsing?

Other pieces that use syncopation include:

- Mvt. I. *The Cakewalk* from “Suite of Old American Dances” by Robert Russell Bennett
- *Hambone* by Libby Larson - the melody in the trumpet part answered by upper woodwind parts after the percussion introduction
- *Fanfare* by Hugo Montenegro





# Changes in the Feel of Beat

When you hear the beat of a march, you feel a strong beat followed by a weak beat: ONE-two, ONE-two. When you hear a waltz, you feel one strong beat followed by two weak beats: ONE-two-three, ONE-two-three. A time signature tells you how many beats there are in a measure and what kind of note gets counted as a beat. *Sweet like that* is written in 4/4 time. That would mean that there are four beats or pulses in each measure and a quarter note gets counted and felt as the beat. That would normally feel like ONE-two-THREE-four or STRONG-weak-STRONG-weak.



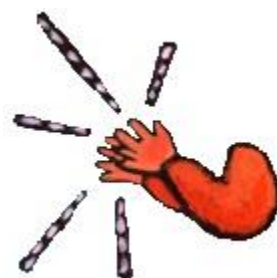
**Duple meter** (2-beat), **triple meter** (3-beat), half-time (twice as slow), and double-time (twice as fast) are all terms that describe different “feels” of beat. Sometimes composers organize their music in ways that the time signature does not always represent how the listener feels strong and weak beats. This causes interesting musical effects to happen. In *Sweet like that* the composer, Christopher Theofanidis, sometimes creates a feel of beat that is different from what would be expected by the written time signature. He also mixes different feels of beat that occur at the same time in the music - duple and triple feel.

Play *Sweet like that* from measure 25 through measure 30. The time signature keeps alternating between 4/4 and 2/4, which would make you feel like the music is organized in a

duple or 2-beat feel. You would expect to feel ONE-two-THREE-four, ONE-two or STRONG-weak-STRONG-weak, STRONG-weak.

Now just have the drum set, trumpet 1, and trombone 2 part play. The feel of beat for those instruments’ parts sounds different. It sounds like they are playing in a triple feel, with a feel of STRONG-weak-weak, STRONG-weak-weak or ONE-two-three, ONE-two-three. Now play and listen to measures 31 and 32. The whole band comes together to agree — STRONG-weak-STRONG-weak, STRONG-weak — everyone playing with a duple feel. Measure 33 sounds similar to measure 25. The effect of duple and triple feel together at the same time is repeated, except with more instruments added to the mix. Can you find other places in *Sweet like that* where there seems to be different feels of beat happening at the same time?

Here is a way to hear what it sounds like to have a duple feel and triple feel happen at the same time. Half the band should clap in a duple feel, clapping louder on



the first beat and softer on the second beat. At the same time the other half of the band should clap a triple feel, with a louder beat one and softer beats two and three. The speed of the beat for both groups should be the same. Notice how sometimes the strong beats line up and sometimes they don’t?



cont.



There is another interesting change in the feel of beat that happens later in the piece. If you compare measures 51-67 with measures 67-90, you can hear a shift from a beat that sounds half-time to a beat that sounds double-time. The bass drum of the drum set changes from playing on beat one and four starting at measure 51 to playing on all four beats in each measure starting at measure 67 and suddenly the music seems twice as fast, even though the speed of the beat never changed.

Now let's do an experiment. Half the band will play a scale or even just a repeated pitch in whole notes. The other half of the band will clap all four beats while the whole notes are being played. Now play and clap again, except this time clap half notes instead of quarter notes (in other words two times per whole note instead of four times per whole.) Even though the speed of the beat never changed, did you notice the pace of the performance seemed twice as slow?

Listen to measures 90-97. Does the feel of beat in this section remind you of anything you already heard before earlier in the piece? How about in measures 98-113? The time signature may always tell you how many written beats there are in a measure, but as a performer and listener, it is up to you to determine the feel of beat. It may not always be obvious based on the written time signature!

