

Unit 6: Musical texture



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basic vocabularY

At once: al mismo tiempo.

Heterophonic: heterofonía.

Homophonic: homofonía.

Light: ligero, liviano.

Monophonic: monodía.

Pattern: secuencia.

To perform: tocar.

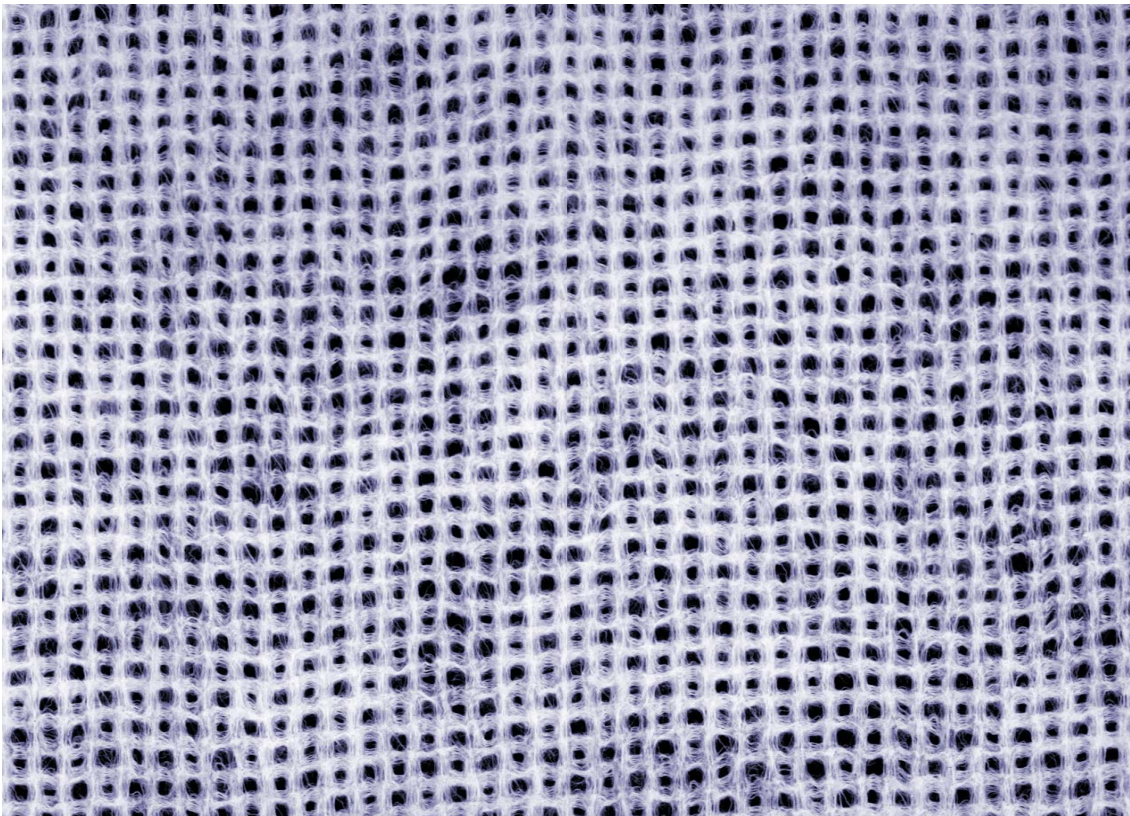
Polyphonic: polifonía.

Rough: áspero.

Sleeve: manga de ropa.

Smooth: fluido.

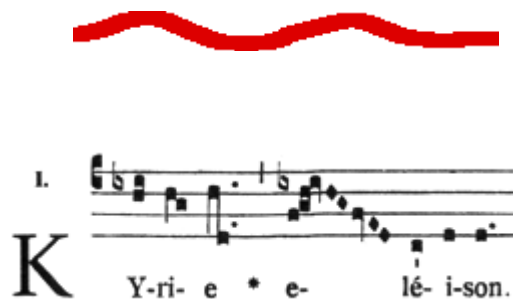
Thick: denso, espeso.



Texture is one of the basic elements of music which describes the relationship among different musical voices. A piece's texture may be described using terms such as "thick" and "light", "rough" or "smooth". The texture of a piece can be affected by the number and character of parts or melodies playing at once, the timbre of the instruments or voices playing these parts and the harmony, tempo, and rhythms used. **Texture is the sound density.**

In music some common terms for different types of texture are monophonic, polyphonic, heterophonic, homophonic and melody dominated plus chords.

1. MONOPHONIC TEXTURE



A melody performed alone is the simplest pattern of musical texture. This is called "monophonic texture." Whenever a single melodic voice is present, the texture is monophonic. Remember, a melody performed by one or many musicians represents a single musical voice if the same notes are performed by everyone.

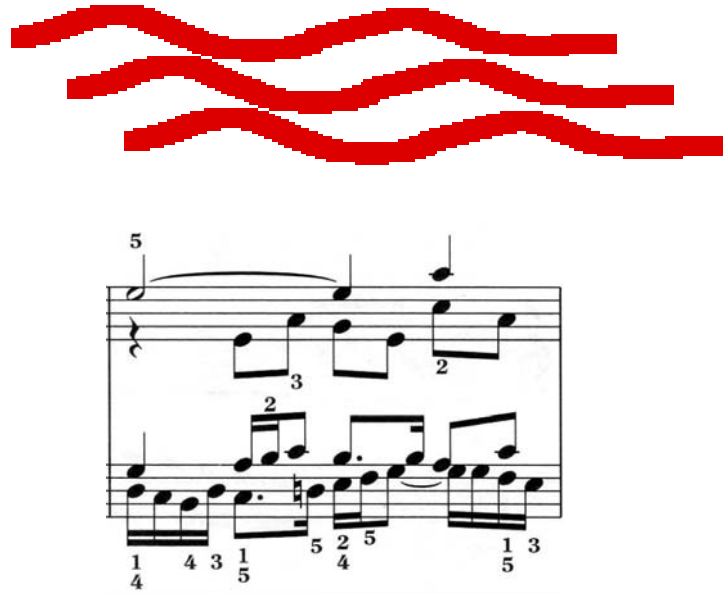
One way to remember the term monophonic is to consider its parts:

"mono" + "phonic" = "monophonic"

"one" + "sound" = "one sound"

Remember, monophonic texture consists of a single melody.

2. POLYPHONIC AND HETEROPHONIC TEXTURES



In Unit 3 we studied that in music, when two or more different notes are sung or played at the same time, there's a harmony. Harmony may be created when two or more different melodies are performed at the same time in different musical voices. When the multiple melodic voices are independent from one another we called this texture "polyphonic texture."

One way to remember the term polyphonic is to consider its parts:

"poly" + "phonic" = "polyphonic"

"many" + "sounds" = "many sounds"

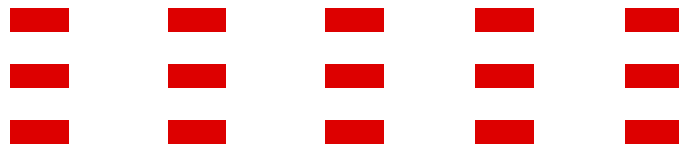
Remember, polyphonic texture consists of several melodies independent from one another performed together at the same time.

Sometimes you can hear two or more voices simultaneously performing variations of the same melody. We call this type of musical texture heterophonic.

3. HOMOPHONIC AND MELODY-DOMINATED HOMOPHONY

Chordal Harmony is characterized by pitches occurring simultaneously and moving together with similar rhythm in a voice or group of voices; a clear vertical relationship is present among pitches. When chordal harmony is present, "homophonic texture" is created.

Sop. If ye love me, keep my com- mand- ments,
 Alto If ye love me, keep my com- mand- ments,
 Ten. If ye love me, keep my com- mand- ments,
 Bass If ye love me, keep my com- mand- ments,



One way to remember the term homophonic is to consider its parts:

"homo" + "phonic" = "homophonic"

"same" + "sounds" = "same sounds"

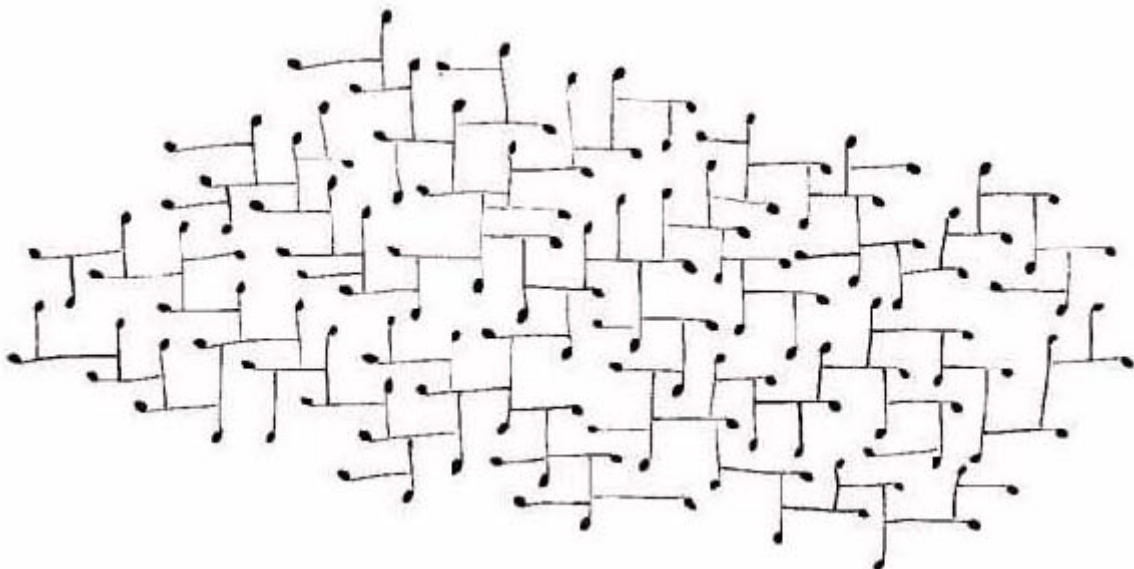
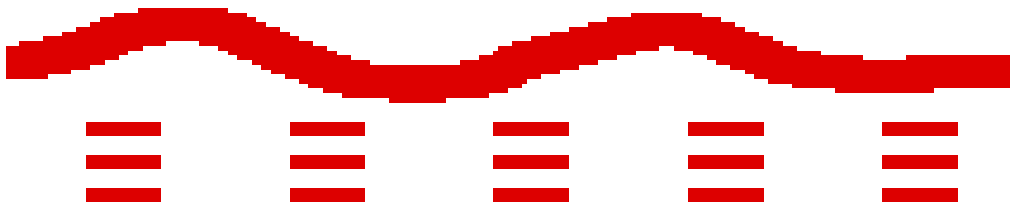
Homophonic Texture consists of a melody with chordal accompaniment, or chordal harmony alone.

Often in homophonic texture, there is a melodic voice and another voice, or group of voices which contain chords. In melody-dominated homophony, accompanying voices provide chordal support for the lead voice, which assumes the role of the melody. The excerpt below is an example of homophonic texture because it contains a melody and chordal accompaniment.

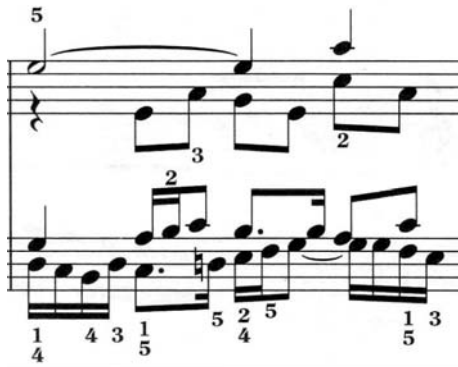
Frédéric Chopin: Nocturne, Op. 62 No. 2

Lento

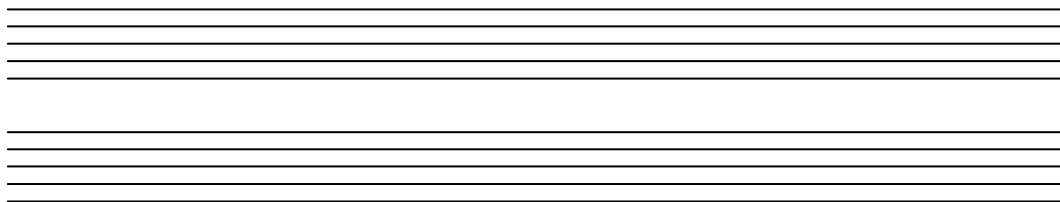
Pa * Pa * Pa * Pa * Pa *



Exercise 1: Look at the picture and explain why this is not monophonic texture. Explain what kind of texture it is and why.



Exercise 2: use this staff to write a composition with homophonic texture:



Exercise 3: Match with arrows.



Monophonic



Homophonic



Polyphonic



Melody dominated homophony

Exercise 4: Listen to the musical examples and try to guess the texture.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____