

# VPMA93 Listening to Music

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FALL 2016

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# Lecture 1: Introduction to Listening and Sound

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# John Blacking, *How Musical is Man?*

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“The importance of creative listening is too often ignored in discussion of musical ability, and yet it is as fundamental to music as it is to language.”



“...it is clear that the creation and performance of most music is generated first and foremost by the human capacity to discover patterns of sound and to identify them on subsequent occasions. Without biological processes of aural perception, and without cultural agreement among at least some human beings on what is perceived, there can be neither music nor musical communication.”

“Even if a person describes musical experiences in the technical language of music, he is in fact describing emotional experiences which he has learned to associate with particular musical sounds.”

Genre

Example 1



Example 2



Example 3



Example 4



# Western Music

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“Currently recognized divisions between Art Music and Folk Music are inadequate and misleading as conceptual tools. They are neither meaningful nor accurate as indices of musical differences; at best, they merely define the interests and activities of different social groups.”

“...all music is folk music, in the sense that music cannot be transmitted or have meaning without associations between people.”

“Music is a product of the behaviour of human groups, whether formal or informal: it is humanly organized sound.”

# Sound Production

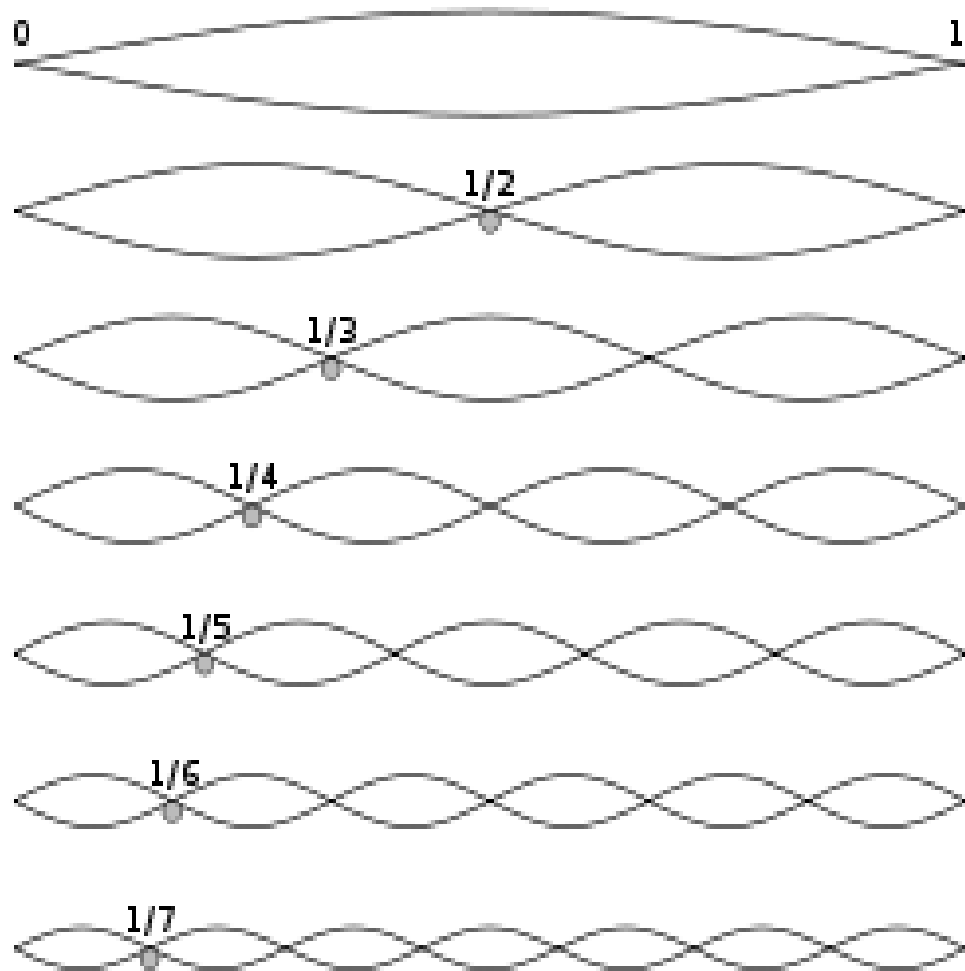
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**Frequency** – in acoustics, the number of complete vibrations or cycles per second in a vibrating system, such as a string or a column of air; frequency is the primary determinant of the listener's perception of pitch



**Pitch** – the relative position (high or low) of a musical sound, depending on its fundamental frequency (the number of cycles per second of the sounding object); the faster the vibrations, the higher the pitch

**Tone** – a sound with a definite, consistent pitch



**Harmonics** – a series of frequencies, all of which are integral multiples of a single frequency termed the fundamental; the secondary tones above a fundamental pitch that, taken in sum, help form the totality of that sound

**Overtone** – a secondary vibration in a sound-producing body, which contributes to the overall tone colour; also called *partial*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

The image shows a musical score for Debussy's Syrinx, measures 1 through 16. The score is written on two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The notes are as follows:

Measure	Treble Clef	Bass Clef
1		G <sub>2</sub>
2		F <sub>2</sub>
3		E <sub>2</sub>
4		D <sub>2</sub>
5	C <sub>3</sub>	
6	B <sub>2</sub>	
7	A <sub>2</sub>	
8	G <sub>2</sub>	
9	F <sub>2</sub>	
10	E <sub>2</sub>	
11	D <sub>2</sub>	
12	C <sub>3</sub>	
13	B <sub>2</sub>	
14	A <sub>2</sub>	
15	G <sub>2</sub>	
16	F <sub>2</sub>	

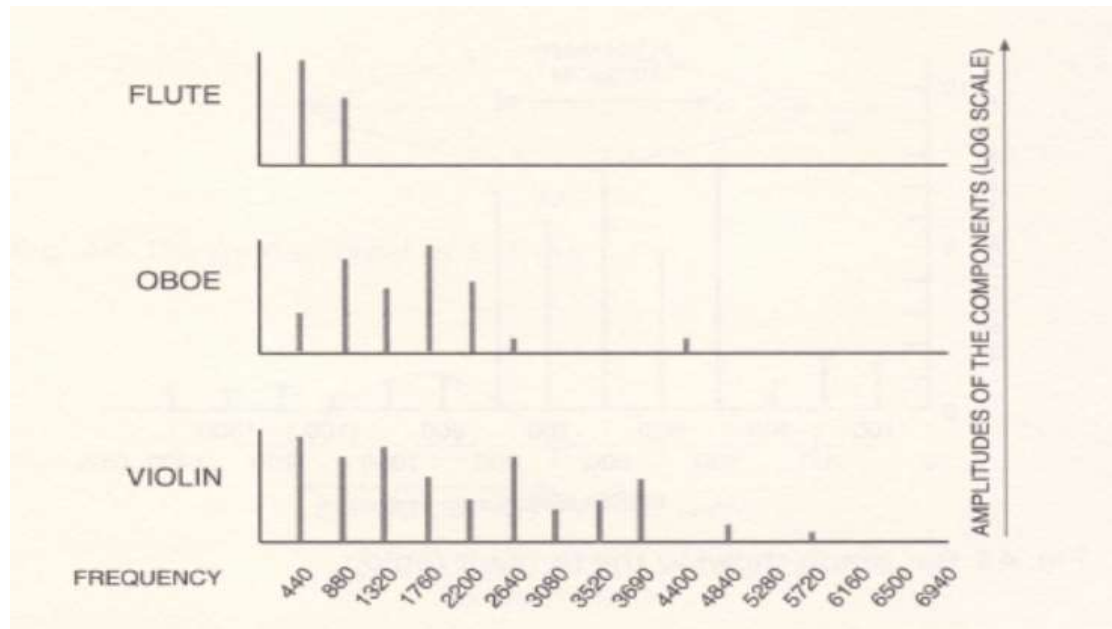
 Debussy, *Syrinx*

 Oboe

 French Horn

 Violin

Clarinet 







# Harmonics on brass instruments

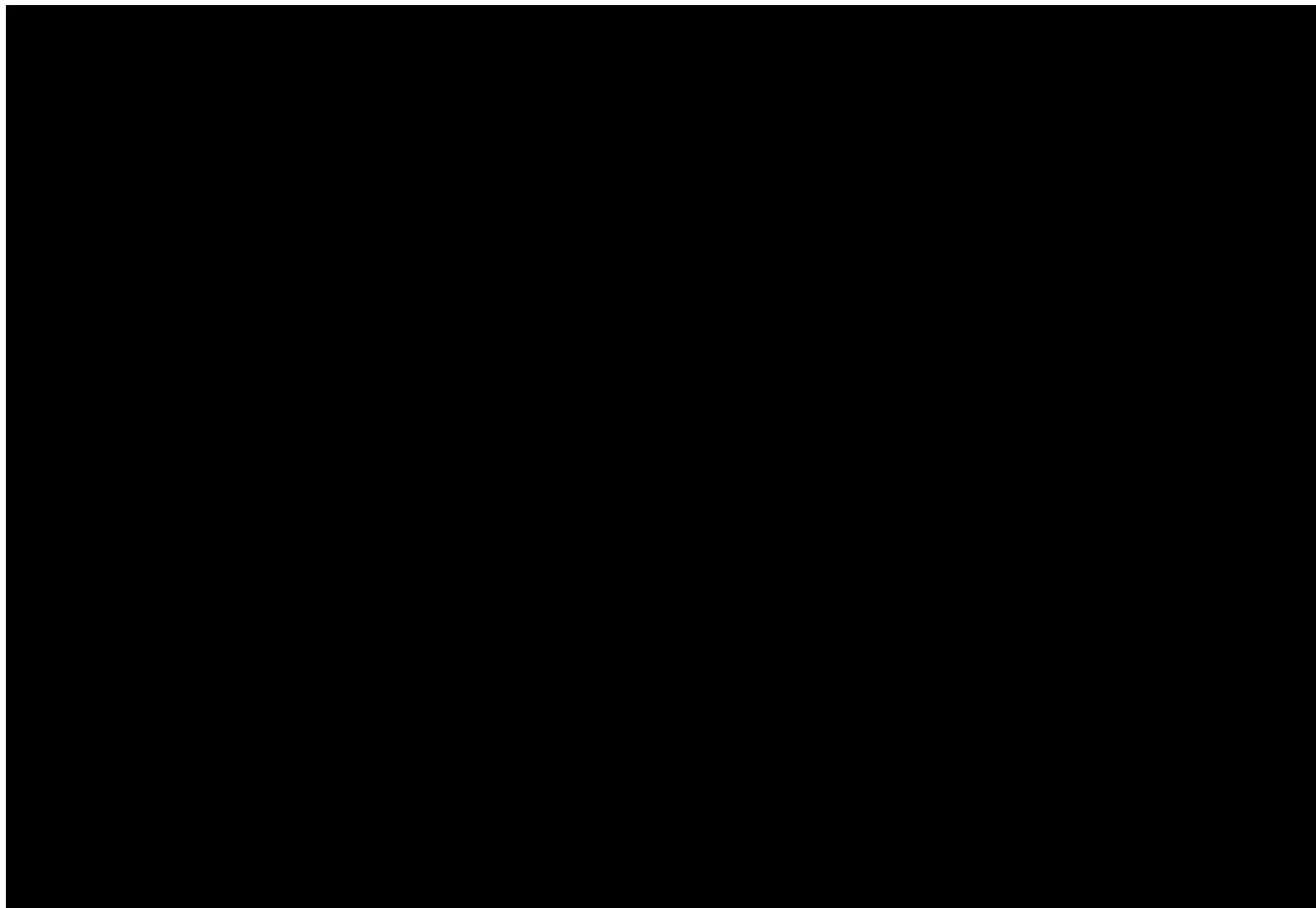


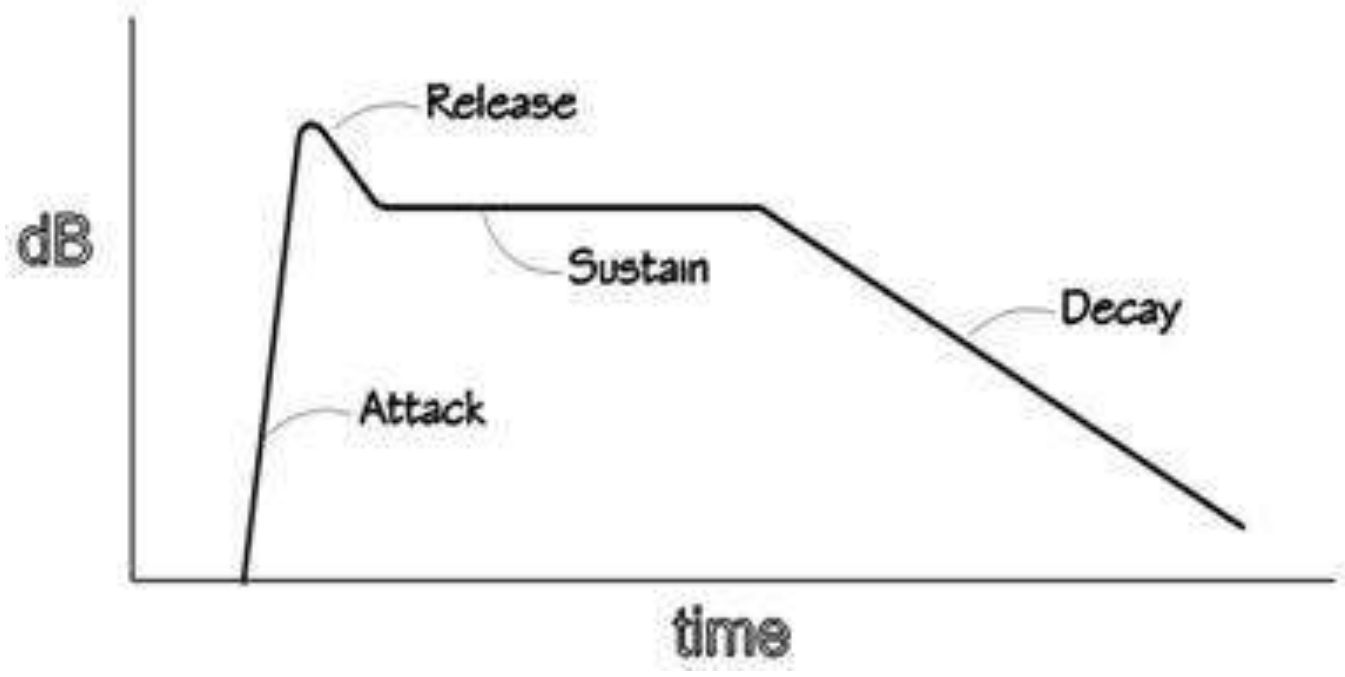


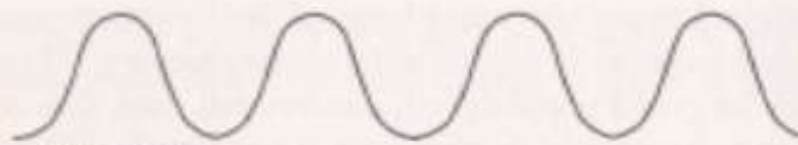
Tuvan throat singing



# Overtone singing



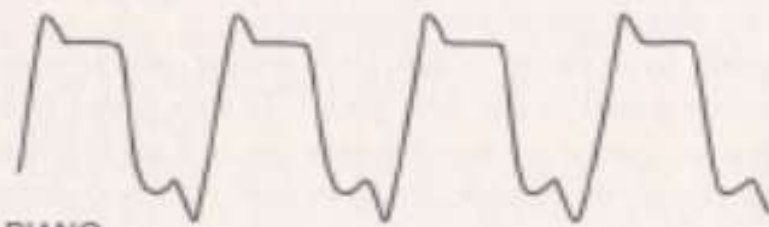




SINE WAVE



VIOLIN



PIANO



**Sound envelope** – the combination of characteristics defining the attack, steady state, and decay of a tone

**Timbre** – the character or quality of a musical sound as determined by its harmonics and sound envelope

[OpenStax on the Harmonic Series](#)

# For Monday, Sept. 12

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Please watch the following videos:

Evelyn Glennie: *How to truly listen*, TED talk (2003)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IU3V6zNER4g>

Britten, *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yfFFqxnQBul>