Your notes

GCSE Music: revision notes

# Rhythms of the World: Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East

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## Greek music

- Greek folk music uses the **bouzouki** (a long-necked plucked lute), along with violin, clarinet and accordion.
- Many Greek dances use irregular, additive time signatures, such as 7/8 counted 3+2+2 in the kalamatianos dance. The syrtos is a popular line dance.
- The sirtaki (from the film Zorba the Greek) starts slowly and speeds up (accelerando).
- Rebetiko is a Greek urban folk style, often sad, played on **bouzouki** and baglamas.

## Arabic music

- Arabic music is built on **maqam**: modes that can include quarter tones (**microtones**), notes between the notes of Western scales.
- Rhythms follow iqa', repeating rhythmic patterns played on the **darbuka** (a goblet drum) and riq (a tambourine).
- Instruments: oud (a fretless lute), qanun (a plucked zither) and ney (an end-blown flute).
- Features: **heterophony** (several players decorate the same melody at once), melisma, rich ornaments, and **taqsim**, an improvised solo with no fixed beat.

## Israeli and Palestinian music

- The hora is an Israeli circle dance, often to Hava Nagila, which speeds up as it goes on.
- **Klezmer** is Jewish folk music for celebrations, with clarinet and violin crying and sliding. It often uses a scale with an augmented second, which sounds exotic to Western ears.

- The dabke is a Palestinian and Levantine line dance with stamping feet, accompanied by the mijwiz (a double-reed pipe) and drums.
- Across the region, listen for **additive rhythms**, accelerando, ornaments, drones, call and response, and instruments such as **bouzouki**, oud and **darbuka**.

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## Key terms

| | |
|---|---|
| **Bouzouki** | A Greek long-necked plucked lute. |
| **Additive rhythm** | A bar made of unequal groups, such as 7/8 as 3+2+2. |
| **Maqam** | An Arabic mode, which can include quarter tones. |
| **Microtone** | An interval smaller than a semitone, such as a quarter tone. |
| **Oud** | A fretless lute used in Arabic music. |
| **Darbuka** | A goblet-shaped drum from the Middle East. |
| **Heterophony** | Several players decorating the same melody at once. |
| **Taqsim** | An improvised solo in Arabic music, with no fixed beat. |
| **Klezmer** | Jewish folk music for celebrations, led by clarinet and violin. |

## Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. What is a bouzouki?
2. How is the 7/8 of the kalamatianos dance usually grouped?
3. What is an additive rhythm?
4. What is a maqam?
5. What is a microtone?
6. What is the oud?
7. What is a darbuka?
8. What is heterophony?

### Answers

1. A Greek long-necked plucked lute
2. 3+2+2
3. A bar made of unequal groups of beats
4. An Arabic mode, which can include quarter tones
5. An interval smaller than a semitone
6. A fretless lute used in Arabic music
7. A goblet-shaped drum
8. Several players decorating the same melody at once

## What to do next

**Practise 10 questions on this topic**

**Try 3 exam questions, with mark schemes**

**Read the lesson, one step at a time**

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