

## Music Theory Trivia: Questions, Answers, and Facts Printable Trivia Pack

Music Theory trivia explores the concepts musicians use to describe and organize sound, including scales, intervals, chords, meter, and musical form. Rooted in traditions that stretch from ancient theory to modern analysis, it offers a fun way to recognize the patterns and principles behind the music people hear every day.

### HARD MUSIC THEORY TRIVIA

1. In serial technique, what is the name for a presentation of a tone row that runs from its last pitch class back to its first?

Answer: Retrograde

2. Which term names the operation in twelve-tone practice that flips every intervallic direction of a row while preserving interval sizes in opposite directions?

Answer: Row inversion

3. Before any pitch class can return in a strict twelve-tone row, how many distinct pitch classes must appear?

Answer: 12 pitch classes

4. What early-20th-century compositional approach is defined by ordered use of all twelve pitch classes?

Answer: Twelve-tone composition

5. In pitch-class set theory, which label refers to the most compact normal ordering of a set?

Answer: Prime form

6. Under Forte-number naming, the set class shared by both major and minor triads is which one?

Answer: 3-11

7. Which specialized tetrachord is defined by containing every interval class from 1 through 6 exactly once?

Answer: All-interval tetrachord

8. In Schenkerian analysis, what is the term for the fundamental descending line?

Answer: Urlinie

9. Name the Schenkerian bass concept built as a tonic-dominant-tonic arpeggiation.?

Answer: Bassbrechung

10. Which tuning system divides the octave into 12 equal logarithmic steps?

Answer: Equal temperament

11. If a tuning method is generated by stacking pure perfect fifths, what system is being described?

Answer: Pythagorean tuning

12. What tuning approach bases intervals on simple whole-number frequency ratios?

Answer: Just intonation

13. What is the name of the small pitch discrepancy between a just major third and a Pythagorean major third?

Answer: The syntonic comma

14. Which 1725 treatise by Johann Joseph Fux codified species counterpoint?

Answer: Gradus ad Parnassum

#### FUNNY MUSIC THEORY TRIVIA

1. In dynamics, which marking says 'loud,' even though in everyday Italian it means 'strong'â the multilingual overachiever?

Answer: forte

2. True or false: pianissimo means 'very piano,' as if the instrument itself got extra piano-ish.?

Answer: False

3. Which term tells performers to go 'very loud' rather than merely 'please annoy the neighbors a little' ?

Answer: fortissimo

4. A double sharp is music theory's way of saying 'no really, move it up' by how many semitones?

Answer: Two semitones

5. Which accidental lowers a note by two semitones, giving it the full basement treatment?

Answer: double flat

6. What do you call notes that sound the same in equal temperament but show up wearing different spellings?

Answer: enharmonic notes

7. In 12-tone equal temperament, which note is enharmonic to C: B-sharp, C-flat, or fortissimo?

Answer: B-sharp

8. Which note is enharmonic to B in 12-tone equal temperamentâ the one that looks like it took the scenic route on paper?

Answer: C-flat

9. The spooky nickname 'Devil's Interval' most commonly points to which interval?

Answer: the tritone

10. When a cadence sets up your ears for one ending and then swerves from V to vi in a major

key, what is that fake-out called?

Answer: deceptive cadence

11. Traditional species counterpoint tends to avoid which texture move, as if two voices got caught copying each other's homework?

Answer: parallel fifths

12. What is the name for ending a minor-key passage with a major tonic chordâ the musical equivalent of a surprise sunbeam?

Answer: Picardy third

13. Which device hangs onto a note to create temporary dissonance and then politely resolves downward by step?

Answer: suspension

### FUN MUSIC THEORY TRIVIA

1. Which interval is the octave's perfect splitter, slicing 12 semitones into two equal chunks of six?

Answer: The tritone.

2. If keys are lined up by jumps of perfect fifths, what famous diagram are you looking at?

Answer: The circle of fifths.

3. In scale-degree terms, what is the fifth step called?

Answer: The dominant.

4. True or false: In a major scale, the leading tone is scale degree six.?

Answer: False

5. Which mode gets its signature sparkle from a raised fourth scale degree?

Answer: The Lydian mode.

6. Which mode stands out from the major scale by lowering the seventh degree?

Answer: The Mixolydian mode.

7. What scale is famous for sneaking in a lowered fifth often called a blue note?

Answer: The blues scale.

8. Which came later, bebop or the swing era?

Answer: Bebop came later.

9. Who is a central figure in bebop improvisation: Charlie Parker, Walter Piston, or Leonard Bernstein?

Answer: Charlie Parker.

10. Which arrived on the scene first: rock and roll or hip-hop?

Answer: Rock and roll.

11. Arnold Schoenberg gave one of his theory books a straightforward name. What was it?

Answer: Theory of Harmony.

12. Who wrote the textbook titled simply Harmony?

Answer: Walter Piston.

13. Mark Levine is the author of which widely known text?

Answer: The Jazz Theory Book.

#### MUSIC THEORY FAMILY TRIVIA

1. On a piano, after how many notes does the keyboard pattern start repeating?

Answer: The pattern repeats every 12 notes.

2. Which set of syllables goes Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Ti?

Answer: They are the seven syllables of movable-do solfège.

3. The Kodály method got its name from which Hungarian composer?

Answer: Zoltán Kodály.

4. Which music-learning approach is centered on movement?

Answer: The approach developed by Émile Jaques-Dalcroze.

5. If a piece is a duet, how many performers is it written for?

Answer: Two performers.

6. Three friends share one piece of music. What is that kind of piece called?

Answer: A trio.

7. When everyone sings or plays the exact same pitch together, what is that called?

Answer: Unison.

8. In music, what do you call a melody that is copied by another voice after a delay?

Answer: A canon.

9. True or false: Round singing is a type of canon?

Answer: True

10. What symbol tells a musician to hold a note or rest longer than written?

Answer: A fermata.

11. If the notes should sound short and detached, which marking would you expect to see?

Answer: Staccato.

12. Which word tells a player to connect the notes smoothly?

Answer: Legato.

#### EASY MUSIC THEORY TRIVIA

1. In standard Western equal temperament, how many semitones are in an octave?

Answer: 12 semitones

2. Which three chord tones make up a major triad?

Answer: A root, major third, and perfect fifth

3. What are the notes of a minor triad built from its root?

Answer: A root, minor third, and perfect fifth

4. In scientific pitch notation, what is Middle C called?

Answer: C4

5. What is another name for the treble clef?

Answer: The G clef

6. The bass clef is also known by what letter name?

Answer: The F clef

7. How is common time written?

Answer: 4/4

8. In 4/4 time, how many beats does a whole note last?

Answer: Four beats

9. A half note is equal in length to how many quarter notes?

Answer: Two quarter notes

10. In 4/4 time, a quarter rest means how many beats of silence?

Answer: One beat

11. An authentic cadence most often moves from which chord to which chord?

Answer: V to I

12. Simple meter divides each beat into groups of what size?

Answer: Two

13. Which major key has no sharps and no flats?

Answer: C major

Source: <https://triviagong.com/themes/music-theory>