

Exercise 4

Write this passage an octave higher in the treble clef, and an octave lower in the bass clef.

J. S. Bach, B minor Mass (Kyrie)

Largo

**Transposition
up or down a
major second**

When instruments 'in B flat' (such as clarinets in B \flat , trumpets in B \flat) play middle C, the note you will hear is the B \flat below. In other words, instruments in B \flat produce sounds that are a major 2nd lower than the written notes. For example, a melody written like this:

actually sounds like this:

The pitch at which the music is actually heard is called **concert pitch** or **sounding pitch**.

For an instrument in B \flat to produce these sounds:

the notes have to be written a major 2nd higher – this is called **written pitch**:

As you can see in the examples above, the key signatures as well as the notes are transposed.

Remember! Concert pitch describes the naming of notes as they actually sound, as opposed to how they appear on the page. For example, on a B \flat instrument such as trumpet or clarinet, 'written C' is the same as 'concert B \flat '.

Accidentals

You also need to be careful with the accidentals that occur in a melody. Note that:

- ▶ An accidental may have to be changed in the transposed version: e.g. on page 16, the F natural in the first example becomes E flat in the transposed version.
- ▶ A chromatically altered note must be replaced by its exact equivalent and not by an enharmonic substitute. (It is true that, for various special reasons, composers do occasionally use enharmonic substitutes, but these are exceptions.) The F natural in the first example (flattened 7th in G major) becomes E flat in the transposed version (flattened 7th in F major) – not D sharp.

Until the early 20th century, horn and trumpet parts were written without a key signature, whatever the key: accidentals were added before individual notes as necessary. However, in the following exercises, and in the Grade 5 exam, you should assume that a key signature is to be used unless there is an instruction to the contrary (as in Exercise 11, page 22).

Except where a transposed part is written without a key signature (as in Exercise 11, page 22), every accidental in the original requires a corresponding accidental in the transposed version. Do not try to 'improve' on the given music by leaving out an accidental where one in the original was not strictly necessary. (The composer might have put it there as a sensible precaution, e.g. something being played by another instrument might cause confusion.)

Practise your transposing skills in the following exercises. Remember to make the necessary changes to key signatures.

Exercise 5

These passages are notated for instruments in B \flat . Write them out at concert pitch, i.e. a major 2nd lower. (The beginning of (a) has been done as an example.)

(a) Clarinet in B \flat

Allegro Schubert, Octet (1st mvt)

etc.

Allegro

(b) Trumpet in B \flat

(Andante) *rubato* Gershwin, An American in Paris

Weber, Clarinet Concerto No. 1 (1st mvt)

(c) Clarinet in B \flat

(Allegro)

(dolce)

Exercise 6

Transpose these passages up a major 2nd, so that they will sound at concert pitch when played by instruments in B \flat . (The beginning of (a) has been done as an example.)

Allegro amabile

Brahms, Clarinet Sonata No. 2 (1st mvt)

(a)

p etc.

Allegro amabile

Clarinet in B \flat

p

Larghetto

Mozart, Divertimento, K.Anh.229 No. 2

(b)

p

Clarinet in B \flat

(Presto ♩ = 152)

Elgar, 2nd Wand of Youth Suite ('The Wild Bears')

(c)

ff simile

Trumpet in B \flat