

Unravelling Music

March of the **Candy Cane** **Soldiers**



Unravelling Music

Welcome to the Unravelling Music Christmas Special: “March of the Candy Cane Soldiers”

Who said that ear training couldn't be fun? Enjoy learning while listening to great music on your iPod.

The Unravelling Music series is designed to help you learn, wherever you are – just by listening to music. Spend a little time getting to know the track using the extra clips and track notes provided, and then simply listen to the track to reinforce what you've learned.

For this Christmas special, the audio examples will help train your ears to hear **arpeggios**, **key modulations**, **chord progressions** and **repeated rhythmic patterns**. And you'll learn about the **circle of fifths** and what a musical **coda** is.

This Christmas, improve your musical skills at the office, in your bedroom, enjoying Christmas dinner with family – or at the gym afterwards working it off!

Ear Training has never been so much (festive!) fun...

Audio Index

There are 7 audio tracks which make up this Christmas special. The main music track and 6 example clips:

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How to use this album

The albums in the Unravelling Music series are designed to let you learn just by listening to music.

First listen to the main track and get familiar with the music.

Then listen through to the corresponding example tracks and read through the simple explanations in the “Track Notes” section below. These tell you what each example is demonstrating.

Then listen again to the main track. The example tracks and explanations should have helped tune your ear into what’s happening in the music and you’ll hear and understand more than you did before!

After that you can just listen to the main track from time to time, to remind yourself of the learning points.

Basic musical terms

If you haven't studied much music before - no problem! But you may find some of the terms used in the track notes are unfamiliar. Here are a few explanations to help you get started:

➤ Chord:

A chord is 2 or more notes played at once.

➤ Chord Progression:

*A sequence of chords forms a 'chord progression'.
There are lots of standard chord progressions
whose sound you would recognise.*

➤ Arpeggio:

*An arpeggio is a chord played one note at a time,
in ascending or descending order.*

➤ Key:

*A set of notes which define the musical context a
song is written in. Using only these notes gives
the song a coherent musical sound.*

*“Major” keys have a bright, happy sound, while
“Minor” keys have a darker, sadder sound.*

➤ Scale:

*A set of notes used to compose music. These
normally match the key of the song.*

➤ Relative Minor

*Every major key has a 'relative minor': the minor
key which shares the same notes. Songs will often
use both keys of the pair to create contrasting
moods.*

➤ Duple Time:

*A rhythmic context where each measure can be
divided into two halves. “2/4” and “4/4” are
common time signatures of duple time.*

Note: When you see a time marker like [01:23] that means
you should listen from 1 minute and 23 seconds in the track.

Track Notes

Ex. 1: [0:00] Harp Arpeggio

The March of the Candy Cane soldiers begins with an **arpeggio** in the harp. An arpeggio is a chord separated into its separate notes. In this example, you hear the C major chord played C-G-E. Arpeggiated chords are usually used as accompaniment figures to the melodic line.



Ex. 2: [1:34] Drum Cadence

Unlike a *harmonic* cadence, a **drum cadence** is a repetitive rhythmic figure, usually in duple time, performed on percussion instruments like the bass drum, cymbals, and snare drum.

Drum cadences have military roots and are used to help keep soldiers marching in sync. To help keep a steady beat, the downbeat (beat 1) is usually played by the bass drum and/or cymbals. The snare drum can have a more complicated rhythmic figure over the top. In this example, the snare drum is playing a simple triplet rhythm:

1:34 ♩ = 190

Snare Drum

Bass Drum

4

S.Dr.

B. Dr.

8

S.Dr.

B. Dr.

1:44

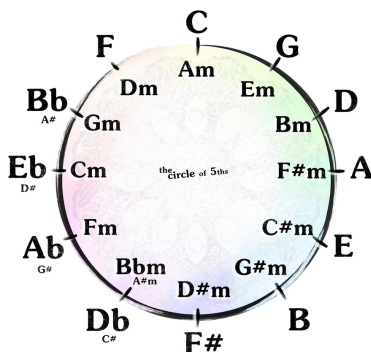
Ex. 3: [0:46] Modulation to Relative Minor

Almost any song will travel harmonically from one scale to another scale. This keeps a song sounding fresh and exciting, and sometimes gives a song a different overall feel.

In *March of the Candy Cane Soldiers*, there are a few changes of scale and key. In this example, you can hear the progression from C Major to A Minor. A Minor is the “relative minor” of C Major. You can hear the overall sound go from a “happier” and lighter feel to one that has a little more mystery and maybe even a touch of melancholy.

Ex. 4: [0:46] Circle of Fifths Chord Progression

The chord progression C Major – G Major – D Minor – A Minor helps smooth out the key change from C Major to A Minor by using the **circle of fifths**:



The circle of fifths is a musical device that builds harmony through closely related keys a fifth apart. You can see that

the C, G, D, and A keys all occur in a sequence next to each other on the circle.

Moving in fifths makes the transitions sound smooth, as adjacent keys on the circle have very similar sets of notes. For example, the key of C does not have any accidentals (sharps or flats), the key of G has one sharp, the key of D major has two sharps, the key of A major has 3 sharps, etc. The keys were altered slightly here to move to the minor scales through what is called **modulation**. You will find that many popular tunes use the circle of fifths for transitions and bridges.

Here's the chord progression used for the transition:

0:45 C G Dm



Am Am

1:01



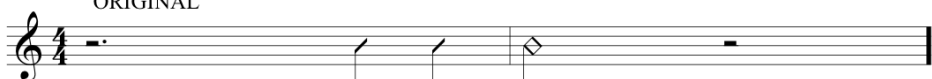
Ex. 5: [1:02] Rhythmic Augmentation

The trumpet plays a recurring rhythmic pattern (also called a 'figure' or 'motif') of two short notes and one long note.


Using your ear training skills, listen for the rhythmic motif repeated several times in the trumpet melody, and later on in other brass instruments throughout the song.

In this example, the rhythmic figure is augmented (made longer) and syncopated (the rhythm falls on the offbeats):

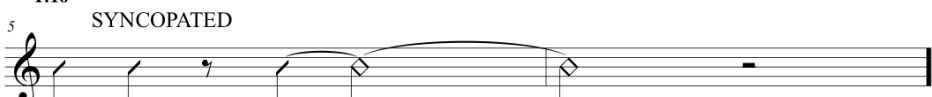
1:02 ORIGINAL

Musical notation for the original motif in 4/4 time. It consists of a quarter rest, followed by two eighth notes beamed together, and then a dotted half note.

1:05 AUGMENTED

Musical notation for the augmented motif in 4/4 time. It starts at measure 3 and consists of four eighth notes beamed together, followed by a dotted half note.

1:16 SYNCOPATED

Musical notation for the syncopated motif in 4/4 time. It starts at measure 5 and consists of a quarter note, an eighth rest, a dotted eighth note, a quarter note, and a dotted half note.

Ex. 6: [2:52] Coda

Sometimes a composer will return to the beginning of a piece to finish a work. This is called the **coda**.

The coda often repeats familiar melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic figures from the earlier parts of the song, but with changes in key, instrumentation, and dynamics.

In March of the Candy Cane Soldiers, the coda returns to the beginning section but with the addition of the marching percussion cadence, the timpani instrument, and several extra measures at the end to finish the composition. Listen for the similarities and differences between the beginning of the song and the final coda section.

While the term 'coda' is normally only used in classical music, the same concept is used in many pop tunes! Listen out for it next time you have the radio on...



Further Training and Support

If you need any help using these tracks to develop your ears come join our discussion forums at:

<http://www.EasyEarTraining.com/Forums>

You can also find support information and links to further training resources at the **Unravelling Music** series homepage:

<http://www.EasyEarTraining.com/UnravellingMusic>

Want to continue your training?

The first Unravelling Music album, **Introducing Intervals** is the best place to start:

- Learn intervals - even if you don't know music theory!
- 5 special MP3 tracks with 22 supporting audio clips demonstrate the intervals in real use.
- 28-page PDF guide explains everything you need to know. Get started with just a few pages.



<http://www.EasyEarTraining.com/store/introducing-intervals/>

About the composer

Intermedia composer, percussionist, author, and obsessive sci-fi buff, **Sabrina Peña Young** composes mind-numbing electroacoustic works heard in Asia, North America, Australia, and Europe.



Her music has been heard in film festivals, radio, electronic dance clubs, random boom boxes in France, and as not-so-pleasant background music. Her multimedia works have been performed at venues like the Beijing Conservatory, the International Computer Music Conference, Miramax's Project Greenlight, the Athena Festival, the New York International Independent Film Festival, Art Basil Miami, Turkey's Cinema for Peace, and Pulsefield International Exhibition of Sound Art.



Origins, a riveting album of cinematic soundscapes, pulsating rhythms and enigmatic vocals, was released on CD Baby and iTunes in 2008. Origins includes **World Order #1**, a pounding dance piece about nuclear war and **Looking Glass**, a nightmarish musical poem.

Sabrina is currently producing a futuristic "Virtual Opera" called **Libertaria**, set in the year 2125, which combines experimental electronic music with popular rhythms, creating a fusion of the avant-garde and the familiar.



Visit Sabrina's website for news and information:

<http://sabinapenayoung.blogspot.com/>

Want more great music? Buy "Origins" here:

<http://www.cdbaby.com/Artist/SabrinaYoung>

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