



Nakhon Pathom
Rajabhat University

A pair of white over-ear headphones is positioned on the left side of the slide. The headphones have a white headband and large, padded ear cups. A white cable is attached to the bottom of the right ear cup and extends towards the bottom right of the slide.

WESTERN MUSIC ANALYSIS AND COMPOSITION

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Popular Music Composition

Background and Importance

Popular music refers to musical styles that gain widespread popularity within particular historical periods, including the present. Each genre possesses distinctive characteristics in musical structure, lyrical themes, performance style, and fashion. For example, punk rock emerged in the mid-1970s in the United Kingdom and the United States as a form of social and political expression, characterized by simple musical structures, fast tempos, aggressive performance styles, and anti-establishment messages. Over time, popular music has continuously evolved—sometimes becoming more complex, sometimes more accessible—while interacting with other art forms such as fashion, contemporary art, electronic music, and performance art. Overall, popular music is dynamic and constantly developing, shaped by cultural, social, and technological change.



1. Development of Popular Music



Early Formation (Early 20th Century – Post–World War II)

Popular music culture became clearly established in the early twentieth century, especially after World War II, when sound recording, radio, and mass media changed the way people accessed and consumed music.

From Sheet Music to Recorded Sound

In the nineteenth century, music was distributed mainly through printed sheet music, requiring performance skills. With technological advances, music became accessible to a broader audience through recordings and broadcasting.

Industrialization and Social Change

Industrialization and urbanization reshaped society. Influenced by ideas such as those of Karl Marx, music functioned as emotional relief for workers experiencing alienation in industrial society.

Rise of the United States as Cultural Center

During the twentieth century, the United States became a major cultural hub, particularly through the development of jazz and the blending of diverse ethnic and cultural traditions.



1. Development of Popular Music



Impact of Mass Media and Entertainment Industry

Despite economic crises and war, the entertainment industry expanded through records, radio, film, and television, creating a shared mass culture across social classes.

Critical Theory and the Culture Industry

Theodor W. Adorno viewed popular music as part of the “culture industry,” arguing that it was mass-produced for passive consumption.

Cultural Studies and Hegemony

The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham, led by Stuart Hall, applied Antonio Gramsci’s concept of hegemony, emphasizing negotiation and power dynamics within popular culture.

Continuous

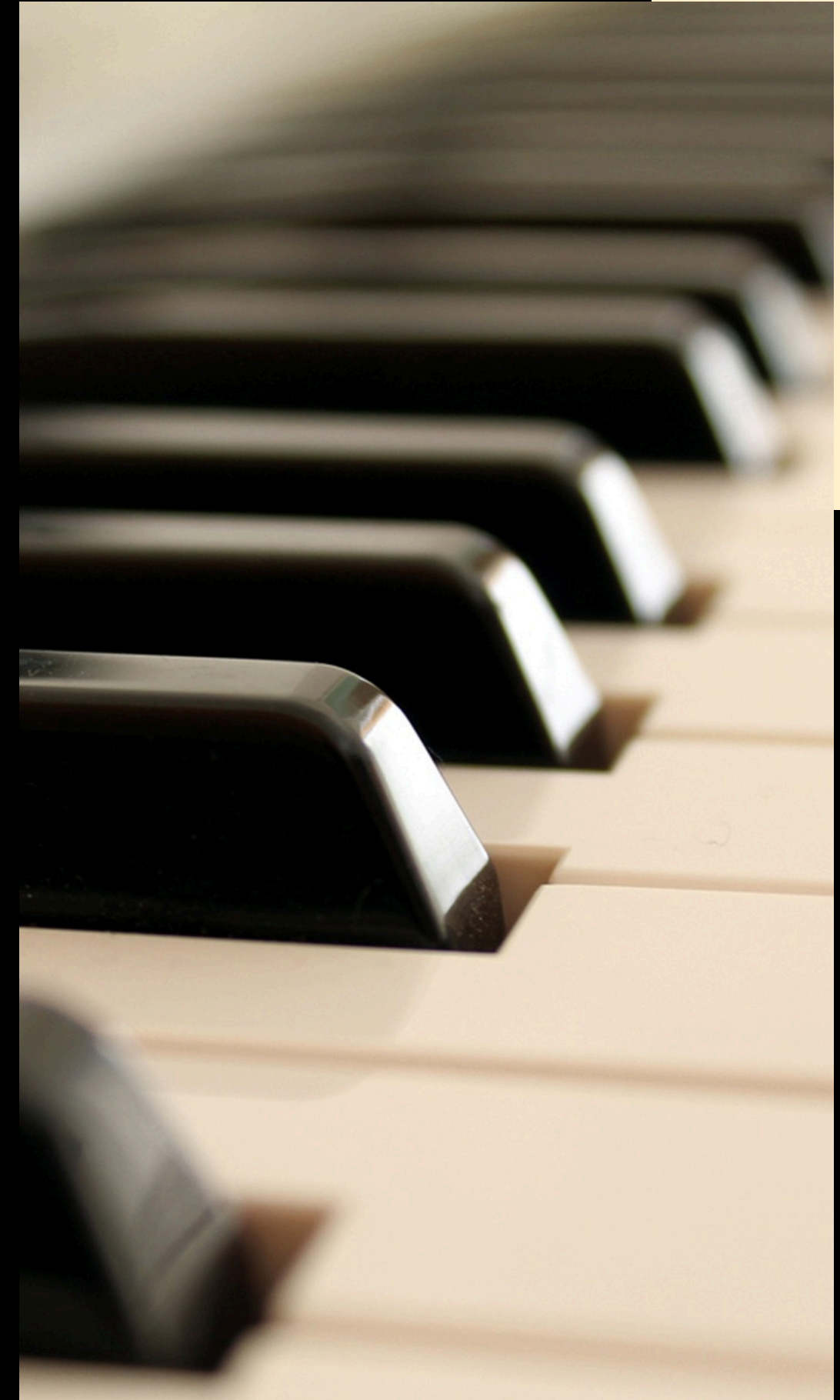
Popular music continually evolves in response to political events, economic conditions, migration, social change, and especially technological development.



2. Music Genres

Impact of Mass Media and Entertainment Industry

A music genre is a classification based on shared characteristics such as style, technique, structure, context, origin, and lyrical content—not only musical elements but also cultural background and presentation.





Country Music

Originated in the southern United States in the 1920s. Features simple instruments such as banjo, guitar, and harmonica, with lyrics reflecting rural life and personal struggles. It has strong popularity in both Western and Thai contexts.





Country Music





Pop Music

Derived from the word "popular." Characterized by simple song structures, memorable melodies, and themes often related to love and social trends. Its style changes across decades (e.g., rock-influenced pop in the 1960s, disco and synthpop in the 1970s–80s).





Pop Music





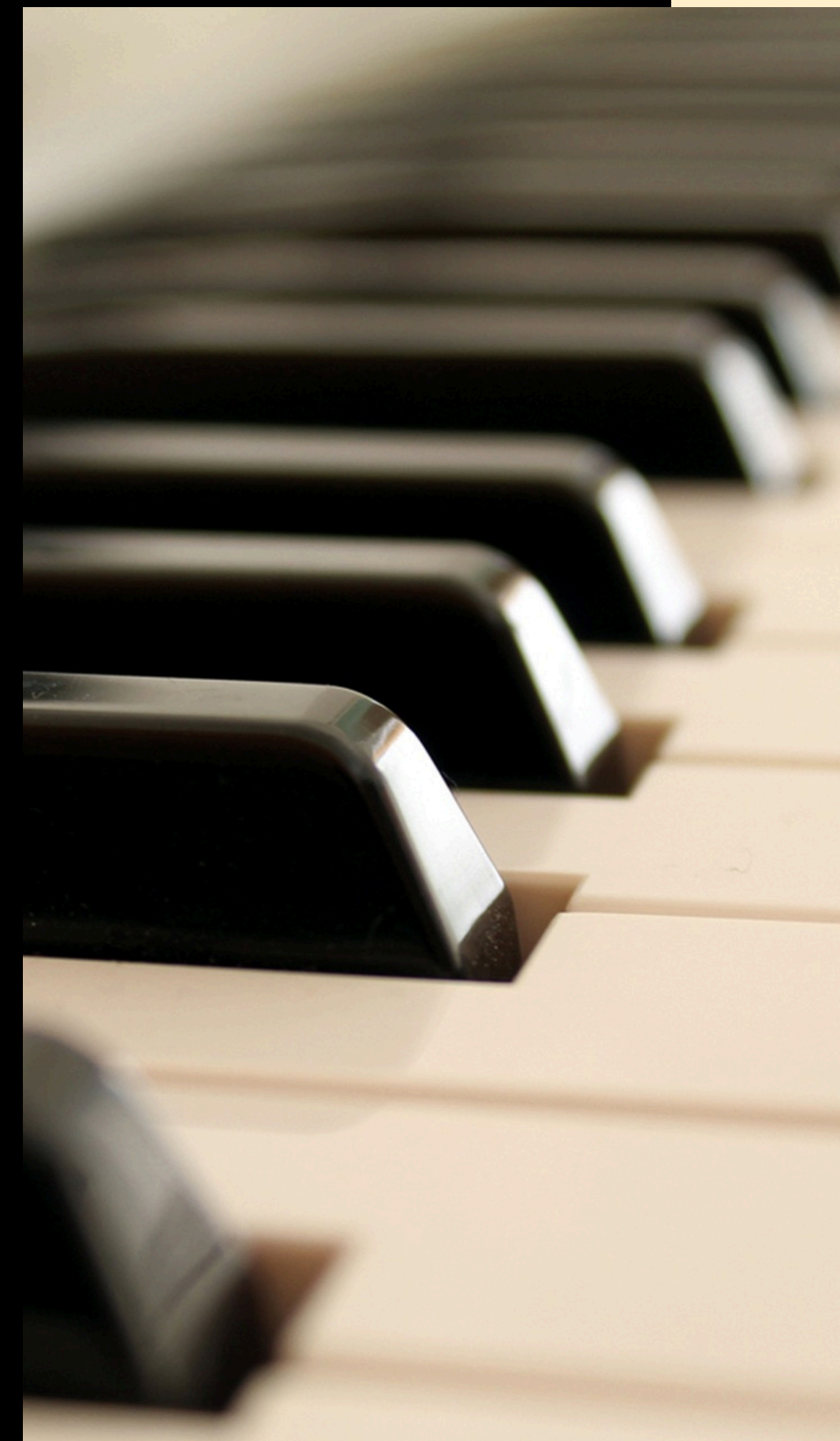
Hip Hop

Emerged in 1970s New York from African American, Latin, and Caribbean cultures. Includes rapping, DJing, breakdancing, graffiti, and distinctive fashion. Musically centered on rap over rhythmic beats.





Hip Hop





Jazz

Features instruments such as piano, bass, drums, guitar, trumpet, and saxophone. Emphasizes improvisation rather than strict structure. Can range from slow and smooth to fast and energetic styles.





Jazz

Midnight Swing

MUSIC BY AI SUNO



PICTURE BY FREEPIK





Rhythm and Blues (R&B)

Developed in the 1940s among African American musicians. Combines gospel, jazz, and folk influences. Early lyrics often addressed inequality, love, and life struggles.





Rhythm and Blues (R&B)





Rock

Originated in the 1940s from blues and R&B. Uses electric guitar, bass, drums, and vocals. Later evolved into subgenres such as hard rock, metal, and punk rock.





Rock





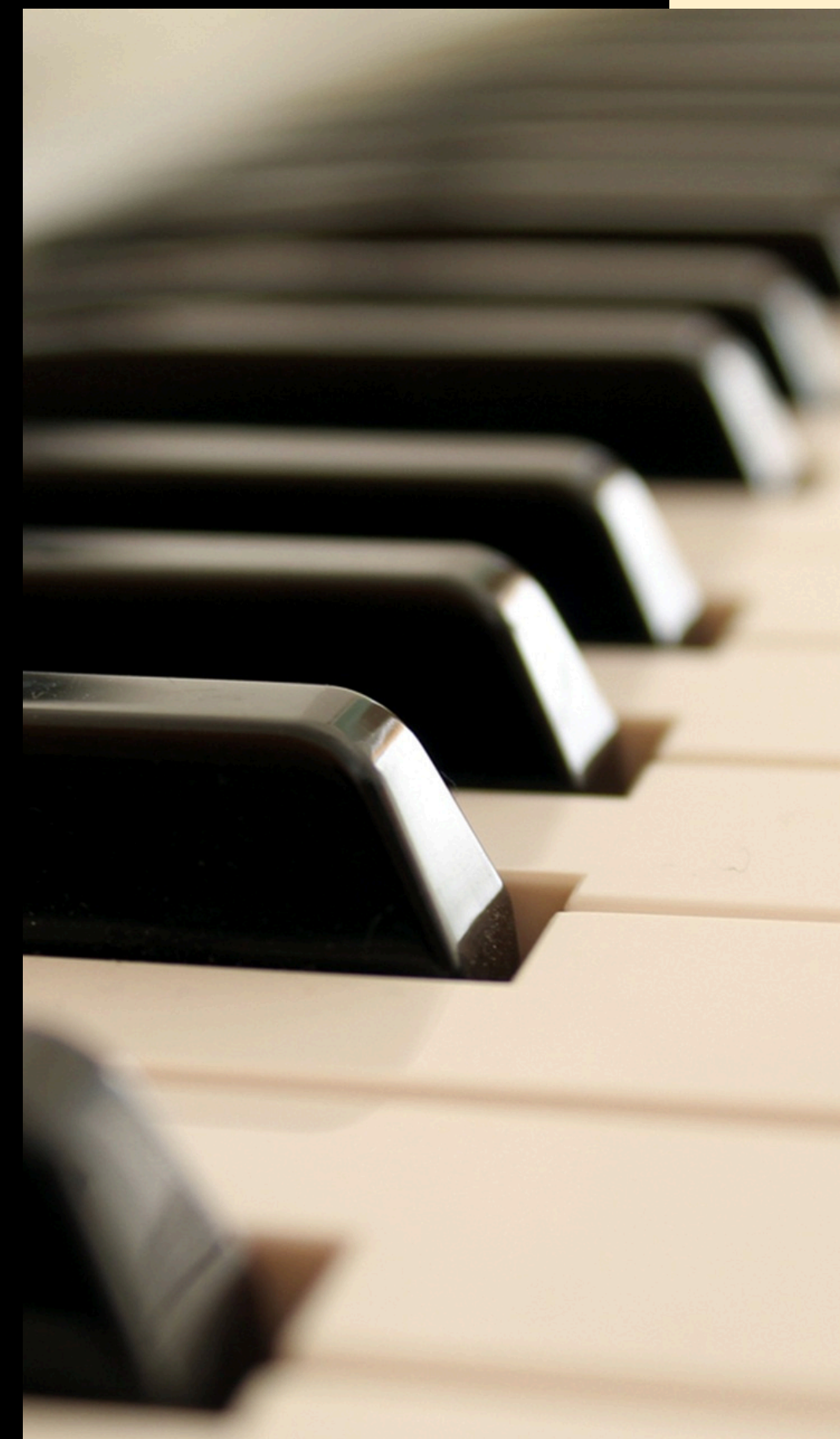
EDM (Electronic Dance Music)

Became prominent in the late 1980s. Characterized by fast beats, synthesizers, and digital production. Includes subgenres such as house, trance, techno, and dubstep.





EDM (Electronic Dance Music)





3. Composition in Popular Music

Instrumentation and Arrangement

- Roles in Popular Music Production

Song credits typically include the artist, composer, lyricist, and arranger. Melody writing often follows Western compositional principles, while arrangement may differ in instrumentation and ensemble size.

- Importance of Music Theory

Effective arrangement requires advanced knowledge of harmony, chord usage, rhythm, counter-melody, and instrumental techniques.

- Flexible Instrumentation

Unlike Western orchestral music, popular music does not have fixed instrumentation. Ensemble size depends on genre (e.g., string combo, rock band, jazz group).

- Standard Four-Piece Foundation

Many popular arrangements begin with four core instruments:

- Drumset
- Bass
- Guitar
- Keyboard





3. Composition in Popular Music



Drumset

A combined percussion setup played by one performer, responsible for controlling tempo and rhythmic feel. It evolved from various percussion traditions and plays a central role in modern ensembles.



Bass

A low-pitched string instrument (electric bass or double bass). Often aligns rhythmically with the kick drum. In pop and rock, it reinforces groove; in jazz, it may perform walking bass lines.



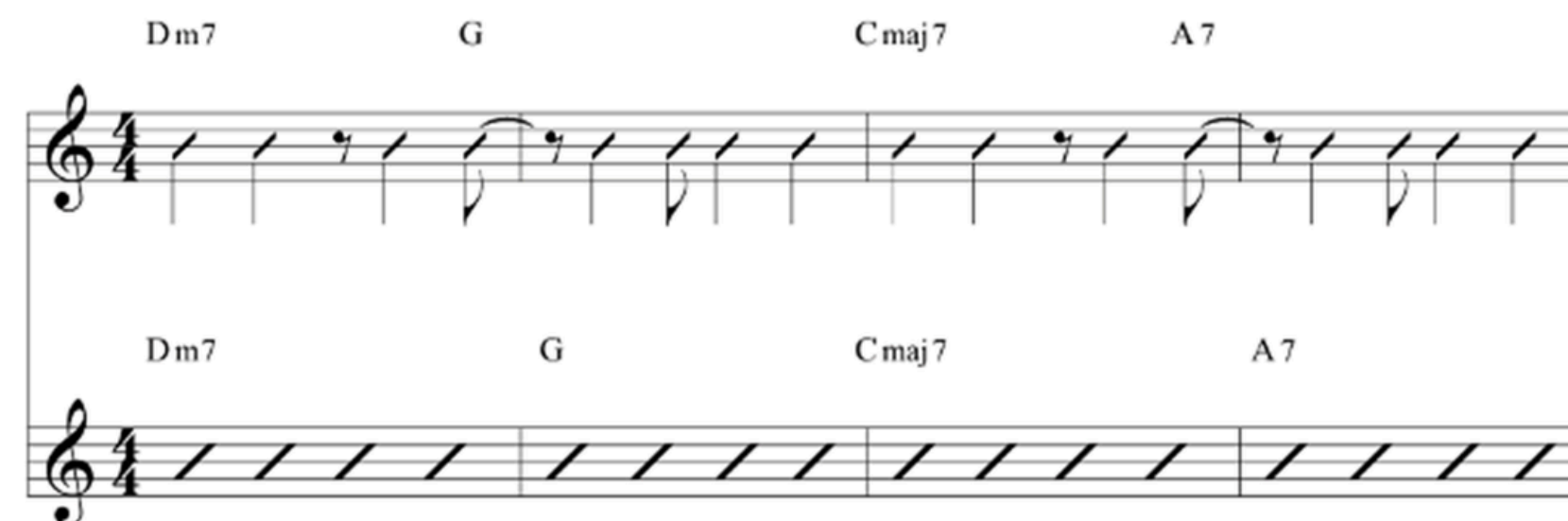


3. Composition in Popular Music



Guitar

Available as acoustic or electric. Commonly provides harmonic support through chords, but may also perform melodic solos. Capable of playing multiple notes simultaneously.



Keyboard

An electronic instrument derived from the piano. Capable of producing diverse timbres and harmonic textures. Often plays chords, counter-melodies, or synthesized sounds.





Rhythm and Bass Movement



Swing Rhythm

Originating in jazz, swing features uneven eighth notes (Swing Eighth feel). The rhythmic flow is flexible and cannot be precisely notated. Bass often performs walking bass, moving primarily in quarter notes with arpeggios, scale motion, and chromatic passing tones.



Walking Bass Characteristics

- Mostly quarter notes
- Begins with the root of each chord
- Uses arpeggios and stepwise motion
- Frequently includes chromatic transitions
- Common in jazz improvisation contexts



Rhythm and Bass Movement



Walking Bass Characteristics

C maj 7 Am 7 Dm 7 G7 C maj 7 Am 7 Dm 7 G7

A musical notation for a walking bass line in 4/4 time. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The notation consists of a single staff with a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes, with a consistent eighth-note pulse. The notes are: C2, D2, E2, F#2, G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F#3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F#6, G6, A6, B6, C7, D7, E7, F#7, G7, A7, B7, C8, D8, E8, F#8, G8, A8, B8, C9, D9, E9, F#9, G9, A9, B9, C10, D10, E10, F#10, G10, A10, B10, C11, D11, E11, F#11, G11, A11, B11, C12, D12, E12, F#12, G12, A12, B12, C13, D13, E13, F#13, G13, A13, B13, C14, D14, E14, F#14, G14, A14, B14, C15, D15, E15, F#15, G15, A15, B15, C16, D16, E16, F#16, G16, A16, B16, C17, D17, E17, F#17, G17, A17, B17, C18, D18, E18, F#18, G18, A18, B18, C19, D19, E19, F#19, G19, A19, B19, C20, D20, E20, F#20, G20, A20, B20, C21, D21, E21, F#21, G21, A21, B21, C22, D22, E22, F#22, G22, A22, B22, C23, D23, E23, F#23, G23, A23, B23, C24, D24, E24, F#24, G24, A24, B24, C25, D25, E25, F#25, G25, A25, B25, C26, D26, E26, F#26, G26, A26, B26, C27, D27, E27, F#27, G27, A27, B27, C28, D28, E28, F#28, G28, A28, B28, C29, D29, E29, F#29, G29, A29, B29, C30, D30, E30, F#30, G30, A30, 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3. Composition in Popular Music



Bossa Nova

Developed from samba and influenced by cool jazz harmony and improvisation. Typically in 2/4 or 4/4 meter. Bass follows a root-fifth pattern and aligns closely with the kick drum in a two-measure rhythmic cycle.

Disco

A dance-oriented genre popular in the 1970s. Characterized by steady “four-on-the-floor” kick drum patterns. Bass commonly uses arpeggio patterns (1–5–8) to reinforce groove.



3. Composition in Popular Music

Bossa Nova

Electric Bass

Drum Set

Cm7 Cm7 Fm7 Fm7

The image displays a musical score for an electric bass and a drum set. The electric bass part is written in 4/4 time, featuring a steady groove with eighth and quarter notes. The drum set part is also in 4/4 time, featuring a steady groove with eighth and quarter notes. The chords Cm7, Cm7, Fm7, and Fm7 are indicated above the electric bass staff. The electric bass staff is marked with a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature. The drum set staff is marked with a drum clef and a 4/4 time signature. The electric bass staff is marked with a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature. The drum set staff is marked with a drum clef and a 4/4 time signature.





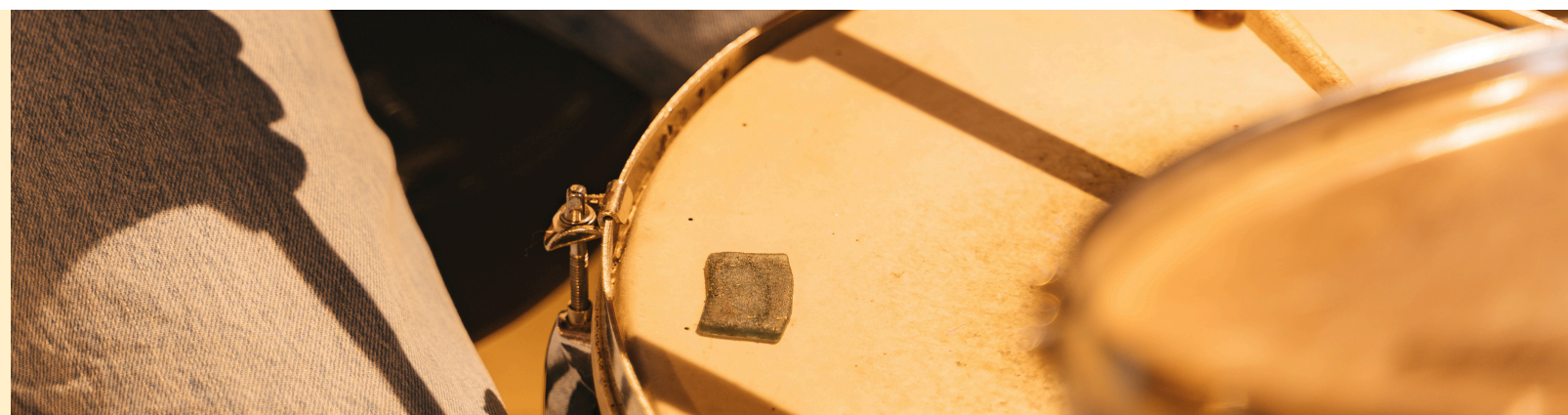
3. Composition in Popular Music

Disco

Electric Bass

The musical score is written for two staves in 4/4 time. The top staff is for the Electric Bass, using a bass clef. It contains a sequence of notes: G2 (half), F#2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), D2 (half), C2 (half), B1 (quarter), A1 (quarter), G1 (half), F#1 (quarter), E1 (quarter), D1 (half), C1 (half), B0 (quarter), A0 (quarter), G0 (half), F#0 (half). The bottom staff is for the Drum Set, using a common time signature. It features a series of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them, indicating a specific drum pattern. The notes are: G1 (half), F#1 (quarter), E1 (quarter), D1 (half), C1 (half), B0 (quarter), A0 (quarter), G0 (half), F#0 (half), E0 (half), D0 (half), C0 (half), B-1 (quarter), A-1 (quarter), G-1 (half), F#-1 (half).

Drum Set





Rhythm and Bass Movement



Waltz

In 3/4 meter, emphasizing the first beat ("strong-weak-weak"). Bass plays the root note on beat one, while harmonic instruments support beats two and three. Also adaptable to compound meter (6/8).

Electric Guitar

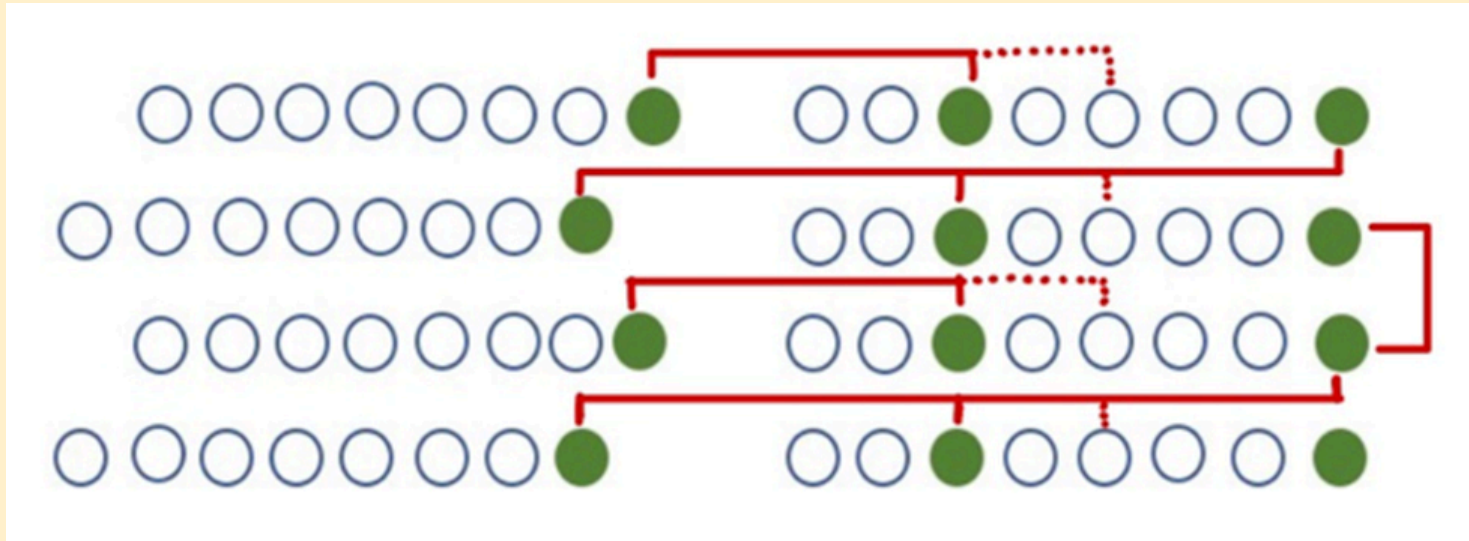
Electric Bass

Drum Set

The image shows musical notation for three instruments: Electric Guitar, Electric Bass, and Drum Set, all in 3/4 time. The Electric Guitar part is in treble clef and consists of four measures of chords. The Electric Bass part is in bass clef and consists of four measures of single notes. The Drum Set part is in a common time signature (C) and consists of four measures of a drum pattern. The notation is written on a white background with black lines and notes.



Prosody (Poetic Structure)



Definition of Prosody

The system governing poetic composition, including rules of rhyme, syllable count, and structural organization. Proper prosody enhances musical flow and euphony.

Poetic Forms in Thai Tradition

Thai poetic forms include:

Khlong, Rai, Lilit, Klon, Kap, Chan and Kon

Importance of Rhyme

Rhyme enhances smoothness and memorability in lyrics. Words must share vowel sounds and final consonant patterns without repeating identical sounds improperly.

Types of Rhyme

- **External Rhyme** : Required rhyme between different lines or phrases. This is structurally essential.
- **Internal Rhyme** : Rhyme within the same line; optional but improves flow.
- Vowel Rhyme : Same vowel and final sound (e.g., similar vowel endings).
- Alliteration : Repetition of similar consonant sounds or consonant families.



Common Lyric Forms in Songs



Klon Paet

Frequently used in traditional songs. While classical form requires eight syllables per line, modern songwriting adapts syllable count to fit melody.

Klon Hua Diao

Uses the same ending rhyme throughout multiple lines. Common in folk songs and modern rap. Simpler and more direct than Klon Paet.



Lyric Content

Primacy

While rhyme is important, content is the core of lyric writing. The theme determines the emotional direction of the music.

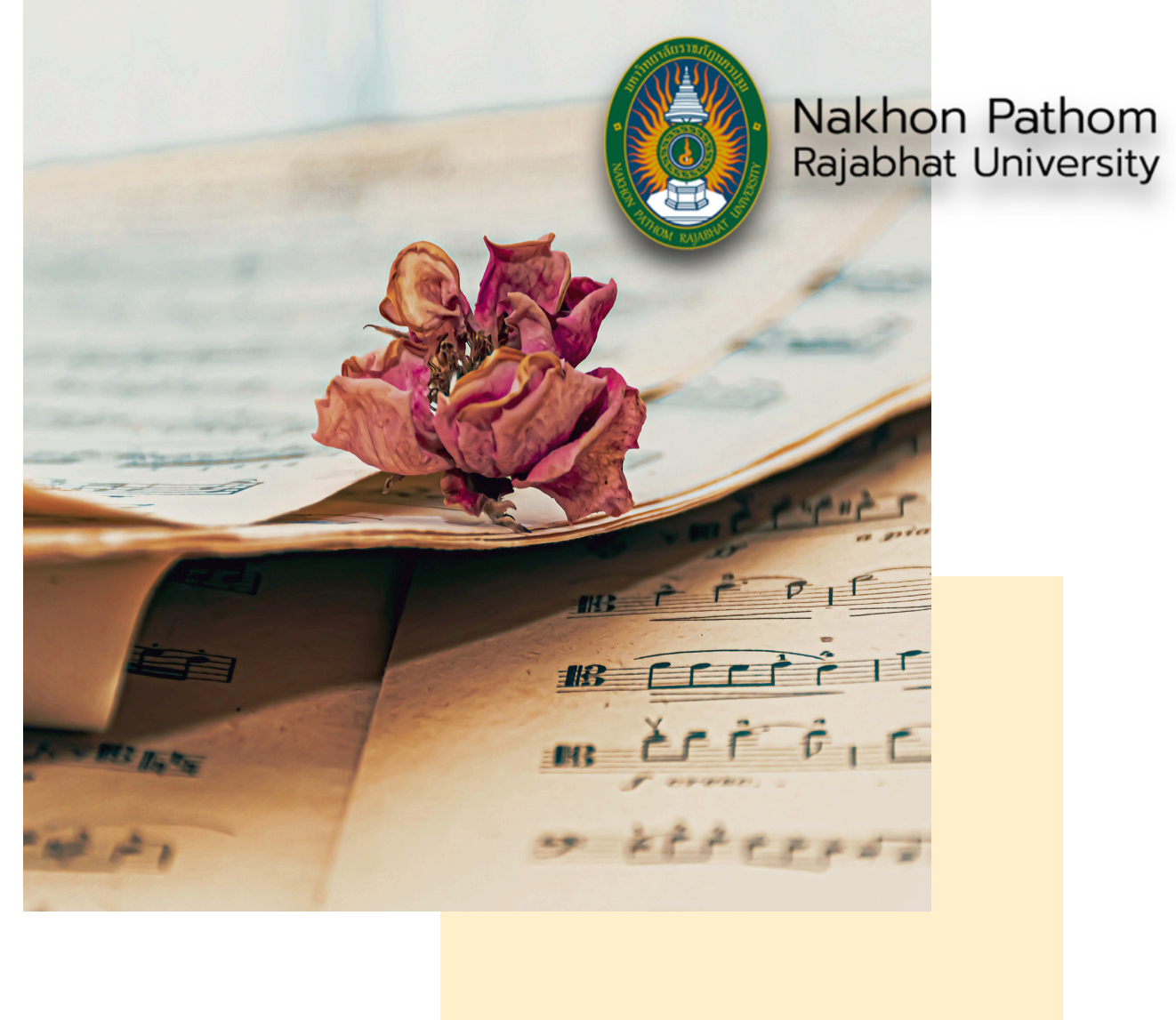
Theme

Topics may arise from personal experience or fictional narratives. A clear thematic focus guides the entire composition.

Role of the Hook (Chorus)

The hook typically presents the central message or emotional climax of the song.

The verse provides narrative details or context that lead toward the hook.



Unity Between Lyrics and Music

Emotional tone in lyrics (e.g., sadness, joy, longing) should align with harmony, melody, and arrangement to create expressive coherence.



4. CONCLUSION

Music has continually evolved across historical periods, giving rise to what is now known as popular music. In composing popular music, it is essential to analyze the chosen genre—such as Country music, Pop music, Hip hop music, Jazz, Rhythm and blues, Rock music, and Electronic dance music—in order to understand stylistic characteristics and appropriate compositional approaches. Structural analysis is equally important, including chord progressions and sectional organization (such as verse and hook), which provide a framework for songwriting. Lyric writing also requires attention to poetic devices and rhyme schemes, particularly traditional Thai forms such as Klon Paet and Klon Hua Diao, to ensure smoothness and musicality. Ultimately, successful popular music composition integrates genre awareness, harmonic structure, and meaningful lyrical content into a coherent and expressive whole.

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