

MUSIC!!



What Is Music?

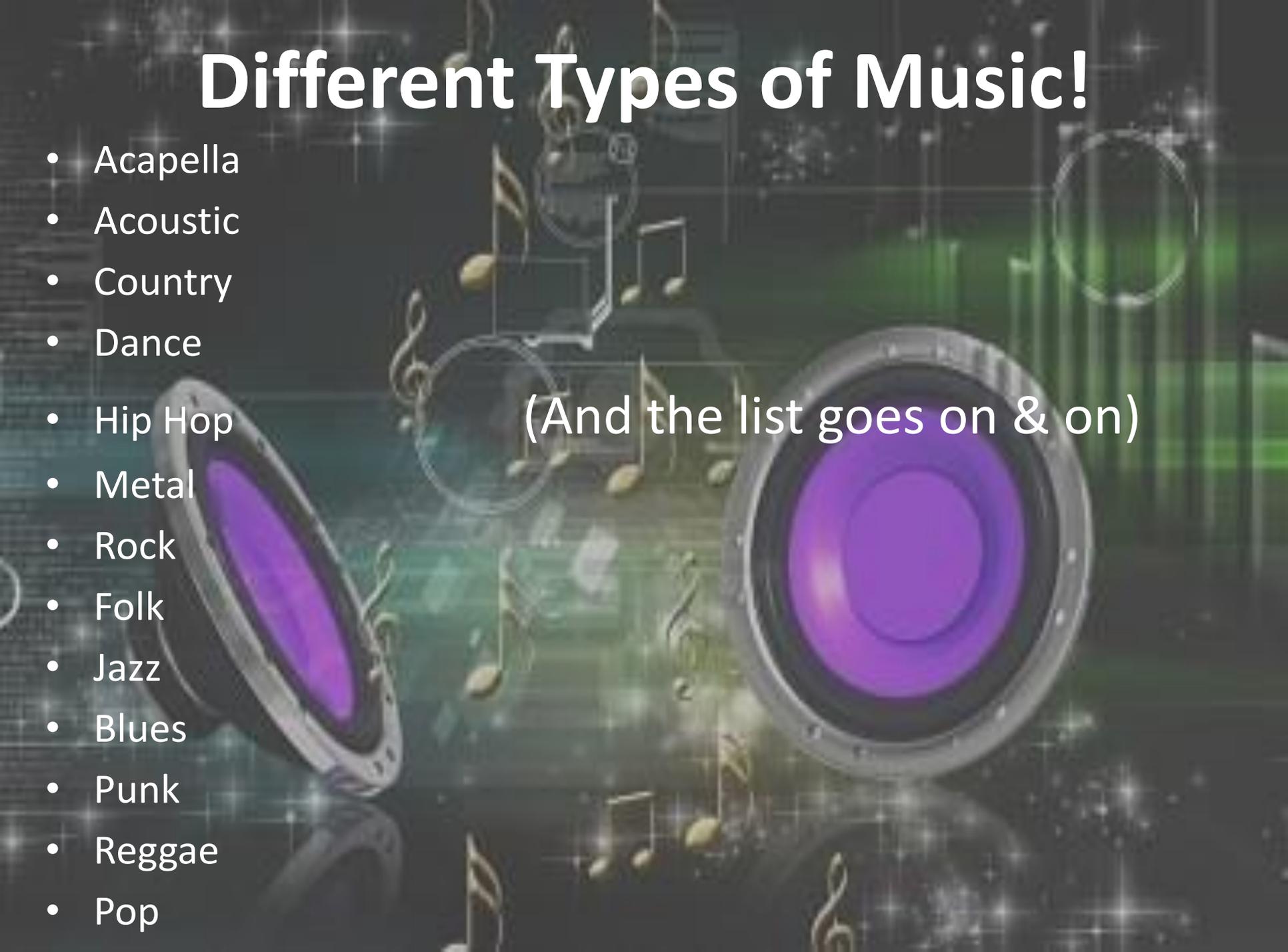
Music In its purest form is a piece of sound -- a collection of vibrations. However, music is also connected to many of our daily activities, and in that case it becomes something else.

- *Music is an experience common to all people and all nations.
- *Heinrich Heine once famously quoted: 'Where words leave off, music begins.'
- *Music is identified in various ways: in the rhythms and tunes of human invention, the chirping of birds, the sounds of water and wind and the list goes on and on.
- *It is a powerful, unique form of communication that can change the way people feel, think and act. It brings together both intellect & feeling and enables personal expression, reflection and emotional development.

Different Types of Music!

- Acapella
- Acoustic
- Country
- Dance
- Hip Hop
- Metal
- Rock
- Folk
- Jazz
- Blues
- Punk
- Reggae
- Pop

(And the list goes on & on)



Music & The Early Church

Music and science were closely connected from early civilization. Pythagoras was the inventor of a geometric theorem; he was also the formulator of laws of music theory. Pythagoras considered himself a healer and used music as a remedy in many of his ailments.

In an attempt to rationalise these philosophies, the early Christian church accepted that Pythagoras's arithmetic theories links in science and music in line with universal order.

In the late second century, Clement of Alexandria used music to promote the perfect truth of Christianity as opposed to paganism. In his paper 'Exhortation to the Greeks', he referred to (Psalm 98) "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise and rejoice and sing praise." He interpreted the idea of 'musica humana'. He likened the human body to a 'musical instrument' and Jesus to the 'musician'.

The Purpose of Music

The basis to all the philosophies concerning music had its origins from God and was a part of 'natural order'. Like all other manifestations (truth, beauty, goodness and love) 'Music' also fits into God's plan of natural order.

The book of Genesis depicts all of God's creation as being carefully planned and describes everything as being 'very good' (Genesis 1:31). Therefore, just like the earth and its resources; music is an integral part of God's great act of creation.

Music shares in the goodness of the Creation and reflects different aspects of the divine nature of God. Music can therefore be seen as telling us not only about the artist performing it, but also about the God who has given it. Like other creative gifts, it expresses something of the mystery, the order and the glory of creation and its Creator. God therefore uses music as a medium to speak to us of Himself.

Therefore, through music we can catch sight of God's majesty and His simplicity, His power and His gentleness, His mystery, His love, His righteousness and His mercy.

The Purpose of Music (cont..)

- As well as speaking to us about God, music has other uses – medicinal, therapeutic, emotional, spiritual, boosting self-esteem, enhancing achievement and strengthening memory, and in special education.
- It is used to help people and animals to relax. It can also assist in the process of therapy e.g. David was employed to play to help the demented Saul (1 Samuel 16:23).
- Researchers have shown that humans are born with certain brain cells that respond to musical sounds, hence babies recognise and respond to music. Therefore Music participation and training at an early age helps develop logical and sequential thinking and boosts higher cognitive abilities.

Paul was a spiritual leader, not a psychologist, artist or social worker. However, he knew how to motivate and encourage the Ephesians. He instructed them to live as children of light and imitate God. He also said to them, "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

(Ephesians 5: 19, 20)

Purpose of Music (cont)....The Change in focus- from God to man

There was a fundamental revolution in taste and artistic expression at the end of the eighteenth century. The notion of human expressiveness first crept into music with people like 'Cicero' slowly building up the music of the Romantic composers- where the voice of the individual became most important. Therefore the scale and emphasis shifted from the cosmic and spiritual, to the human- concentrating more on the performer and composer as personality, than the music itself.

Many Christian musicians believe this move began with the late string quartets of Beethoven. In much of the music of the late Romantics, there is a strong sense of self contemplating and the theme of the freedom and individuality of man takes on a more empathetic tone.

Musical Choices!

Like all of God's good gifts- music can be abused!!! Music is a language and is therefore able to be used to express that which is evil, as well as good.

*The Bible speaks clearly against idolatry and we must never allow our art to dominate us. With this in mind, we need to question our attitudes to all styles of music, including the whole popular culture. (**Gen 4 : 21-22**)

*However we cannot presume that all Christian music is good music and only all non-Christian music is bad. The Western church music traditions is itself evolved from many different ethnic and cultural styles; Opera, rock, classical, music by Buddhists, capitalists and Christians are all written and performed by musicians of the fallen race.

*The views and state of mind of those who compose and perform it obviously influence the content and effect of music.

Musical Choices (Cont..)

- *Music is relative and people associate their ideas powerfully into music; so a piece of music can mean something very different to various people.
- *Music is not morally neutral. Music is easily attached to what surrounds it, and this is the danger. The more a piece of music is repeated in the same context, the more it will begin to represent that context, and even equate with the context. Through its power of expression, music will then appear to possess that particular context. When lyrics are added to music; the ideas & meaning become even more direct.
- *As Christians, we have to be careful when we consider which popular and world music we listen to. We must be aware of the context a piece of music has adopted and how it can influence our thoughts and actions, and those of our influential friends and family, to whom much undesirable music is directed.

“Whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things” (Philippians 4:8

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Criteria for 'acceptable' songs!!

- Lack of profanity
- Lack of verbal abuse of any race, gender, religion or culture
- Supporting any good cause e.g. charity
- Glorifies the name of God
- Does not take you away from praising God

FINALLY..

Remember music is a part of God's creation and everything God created was 'very good and for his glory'.... (Genesis 1:31)

So always ask yourself- Is the music I am listening to Glorifying God or not? IF not...chances are its glorifying IDOLTARY!!!!