London Philharmonic Orchestra



GCSE BrightSparks Resources

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Zoltán Kodály

1882-1967

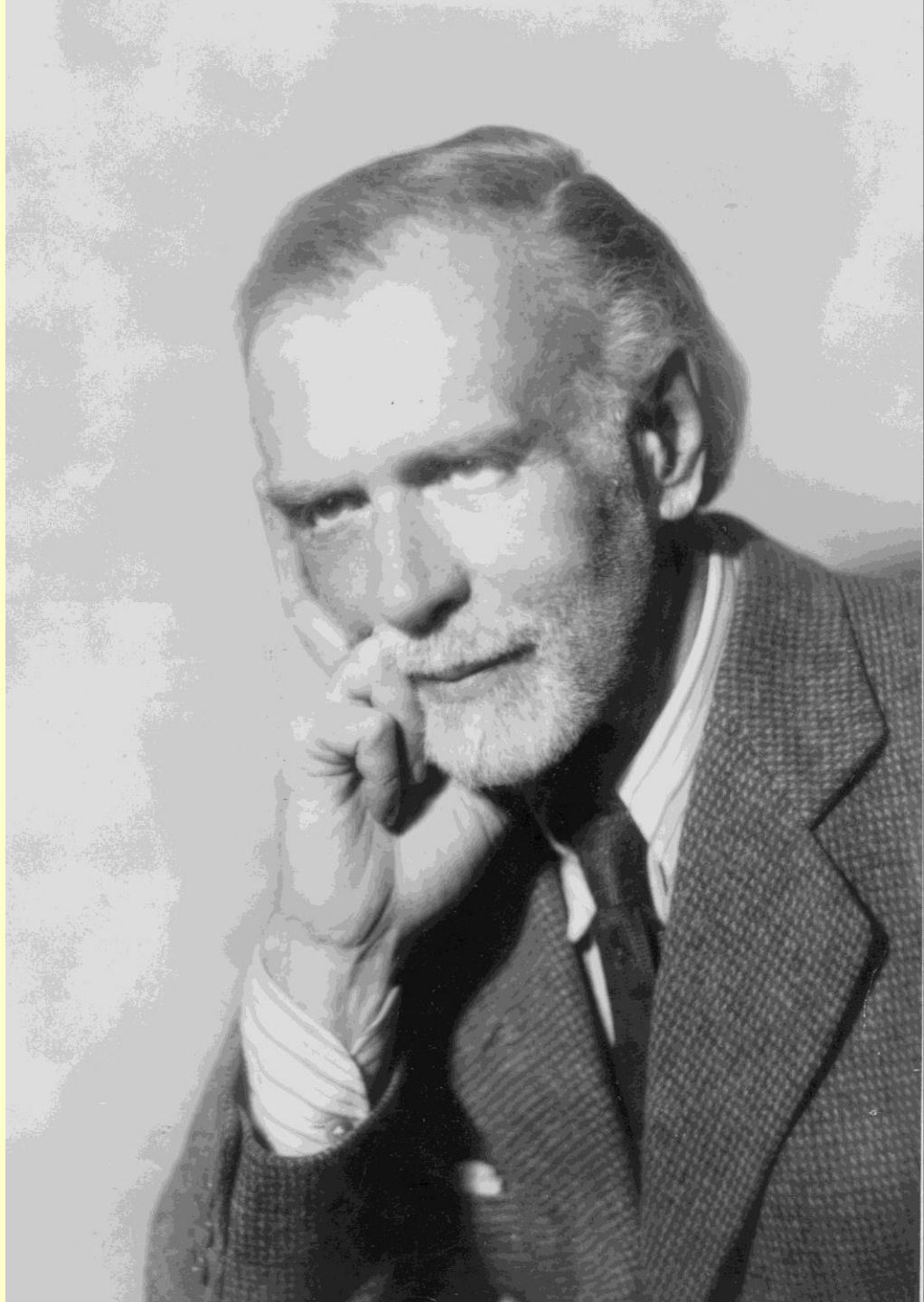
Háry János

(1926)

‘The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon’

and

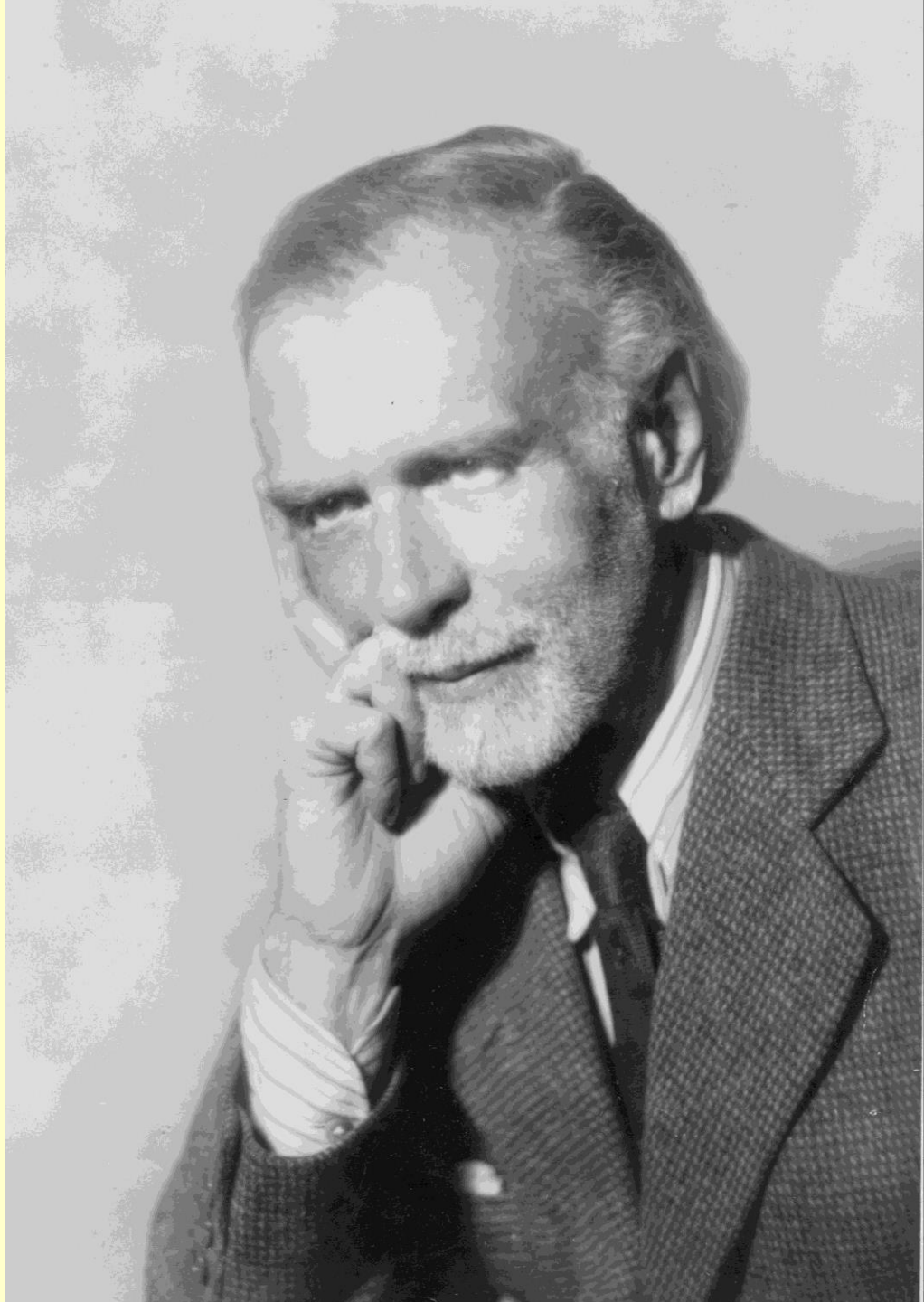
‘Intermezzo’



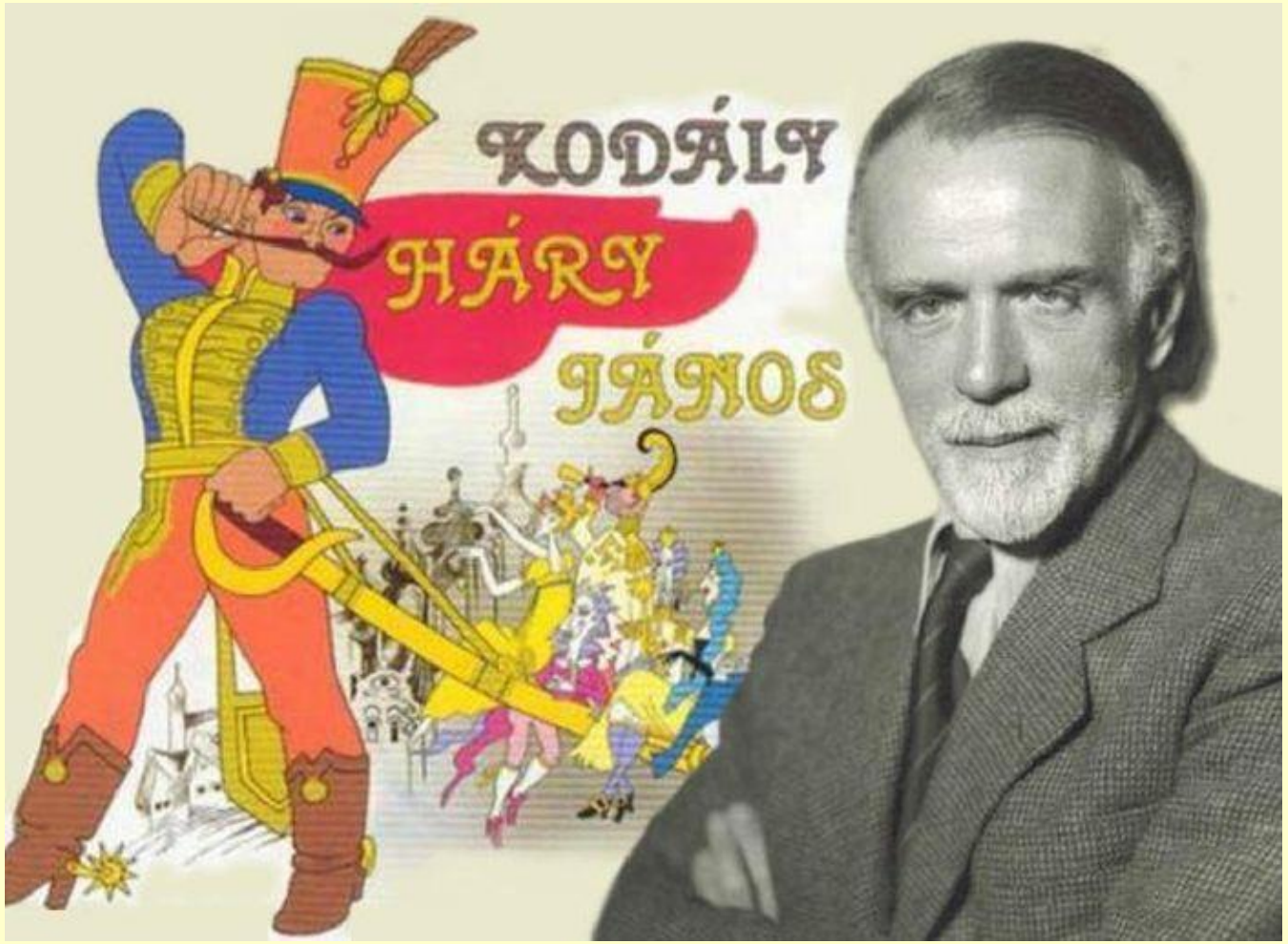
Zoltán Kodály

1882-1967

- Hungarian composer
- Famous for:
  - Inventing a system of music education
  - Saving thousands of folk songs with friend Béla Bártok
  - *Háry János* (1926 opera)



***Háry János* (1926)**



- *Háry János* is an opera
- Tells the story of a soldier and his adventures
- Kodály created a suite

Suite = here means ‘best bits’ for orchestra

Kodály – The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon – 1926

The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon



Written for:

- Woodwind (3 piccolos, alto saxophone)
- Brass (3 trumpets, 3 trombones, bass tuba)
- Percussion (triangle, bass drum, cymbals, tambourines)
- **No** string section!

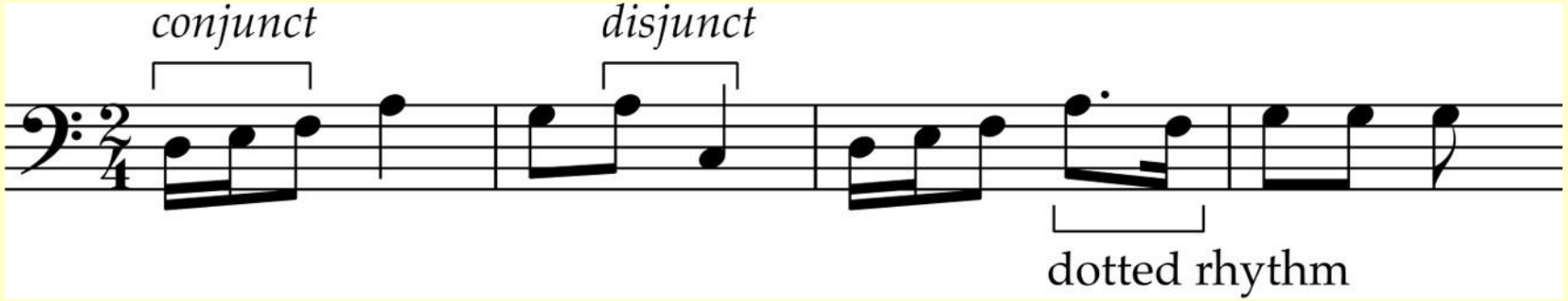
Kodály – The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon – 1926

Analysis

Kodály – The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon – 1926

Military Theme

- Begins with percussion
- Starts *p*, then *crescendo* to *f*
- Melody uses dotted rhythms, and is angular (disjunct) and sometimes stepwise (conjunct)
- Dorian mode (all white notes D-D)



Kodály – The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon – 1926

Disjunct = features jumps and leaps

Conjunct = moves stepwise

Kodály – The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon – 1926

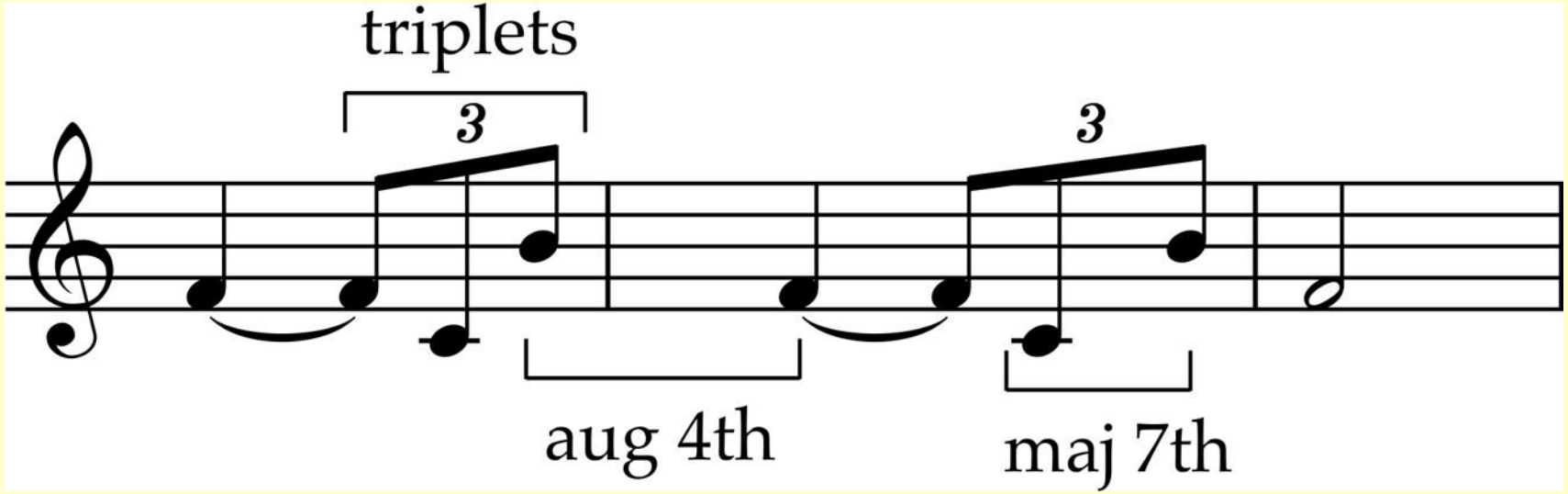
‘Explosion’

- Piccolo tremolando (two notes alternating quickly)
- Grace notes on brass (little swoops upward)
- Cymbal crash
- Descending chromatic scale
- Saxophone semitone ‘lean’
- Dissonant harmony (clashing, not in a key)

Kodály – The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon – 1926

Fanfare

- Trumpets and trombones
- Triplet rhythms
- 2 interesting intervals - major 7th and augmented 4th



Kodály – The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon – 1926

Military Theme, Explosion, Fanfare repeat

- ‘Footsteps’ added from trombones and third trumpet
- More percussion
- Woodwind join the military theme at Figure 3
- Crescendo tells us the army is approaching
- Added instruments and thicker texture indicate that the army is confident
- Explosion features trills
- Saxophone added to Fanfare

Kodály – The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon – 1926

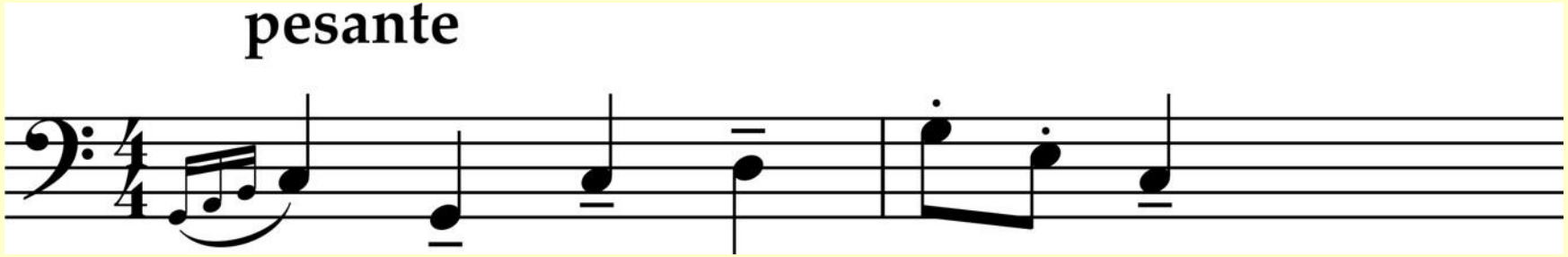
Repetition = ideas repeat (without change)

Contrast = subsequent ideas are vastly different

Kodály – The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon – 1926

Napoleon Theme

- *Pesante* = heavily
- Parody of French National Anthem:



- Fanfare figures (triplets, 5ths, triads) interject between phrases

Kodály – The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon – 1926

Napoleon Theme repeats

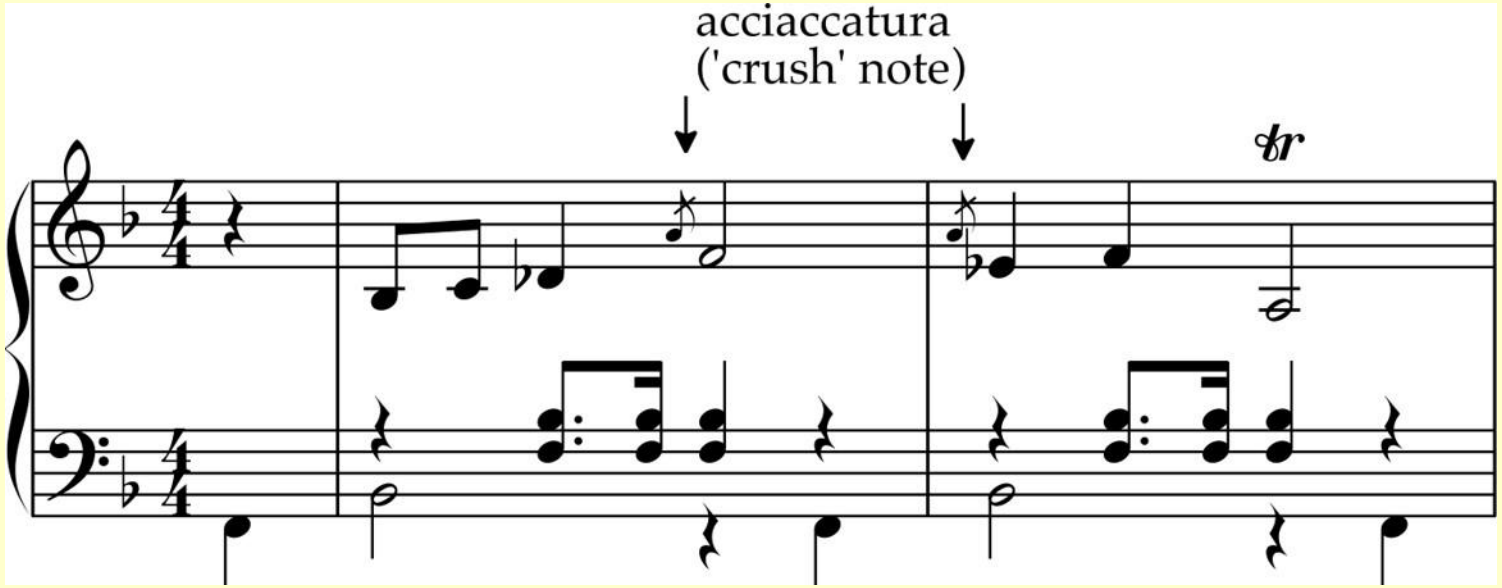
- Bigger and grander
- In B major (down a semitone)
- Piccolos have long trills
- Abrupt stop
- Bar of silence (lunga pausa)



Kodály – The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon – 1926

Funeral March

- March-like accompaniment
- In B flat minor
- Saxophone solo with ornaments (like Hungarian folk music)



Kodály – The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon – 1926

Structure Summary

Kodály – The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon – 1926

Section 1: Build-up to the battle

- Introduction
- Theme A (military)
- Theme A repeats
- Figure 1: Explosion
- Fanfare
- Theme A repeats
- Theme A repeats again
- Explosion repeats
- Fanfare repeats

Kodály – The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon – 1926

Section 2: The Arrival of Napoleon

- New section introduced by percussion
- Theme B (Napoleon)
- Theme B (Napoleon) repeats
- Lunga pausa = long silence

Kodály – The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon – 1926

Section 3: The Defeat of Napoleon

- Theme C (Funeral March)
- Funeral march fades away

Morendo = dying away

Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926

Intermezzo

- A short connecting piece between acts of a play or opera

Cimbalom

- A type of string instrument from Hungary
- Played with two beaters



Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926

What is a cimbalom?



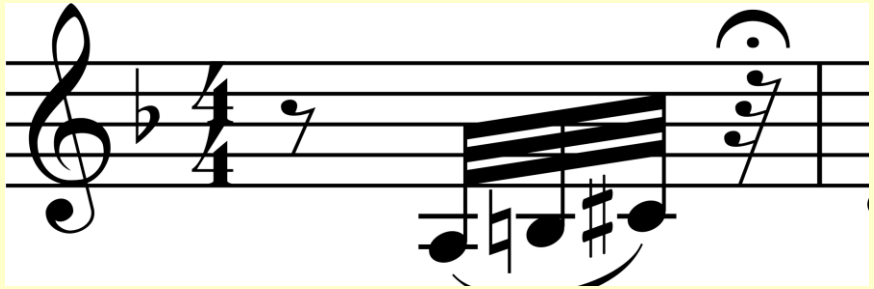
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62x1HkiaWQA

Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926

Analysis

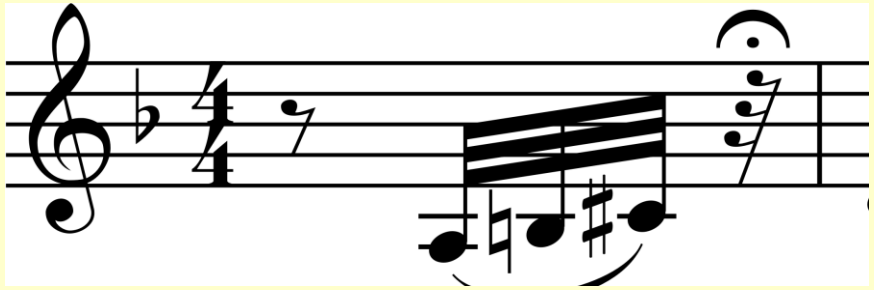
Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926

- The piece starts on the upbeat with a short upward flourish made up of three demisemiquavers



Quiz Question: What is it called when the phrase starts on the upbeat?

Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926

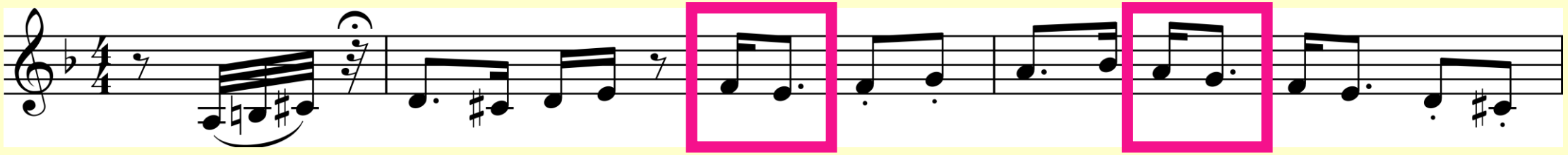


Answer: Anacrusis!

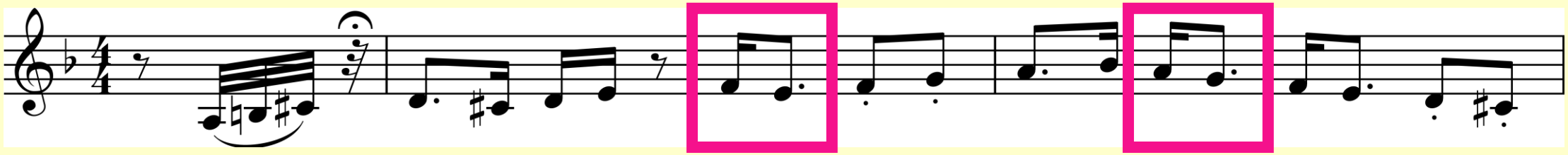
Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926

Section A: Main Theme

- Played by clarinet and strings
- It features a scotch snap rhythm – a semiquaver followed by a dotted quaver
- In D major
- The cimbalom plays a variation of the melody but using a constant stream of semiquavers

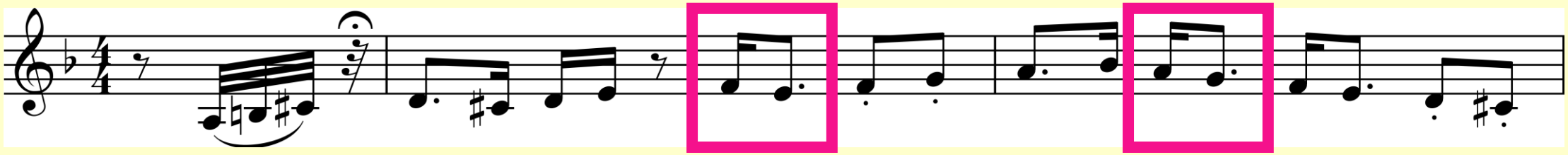


Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926



Quiz Question: The melody moves stepwise.
What is this called?

Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926



Answer: Conjunct

Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926

Section A: Main Theme repeats

- ♫ Flute is added an octave higher
- ♫ Bassline becomes chromatic which changes the chords and harmonies
- ♫ Theme ends on dominant chord (A minor)

Main theme (1st and 2nd version) repeat again

Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926

Bar 17: *poco pesante* = a little heavily

Bar 18: *Tempo* = speed

Quiz Question: What does it mean when ‘tempo’ is written above the stave?

Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926

Bar 17: *poco pesante* = a little heavily

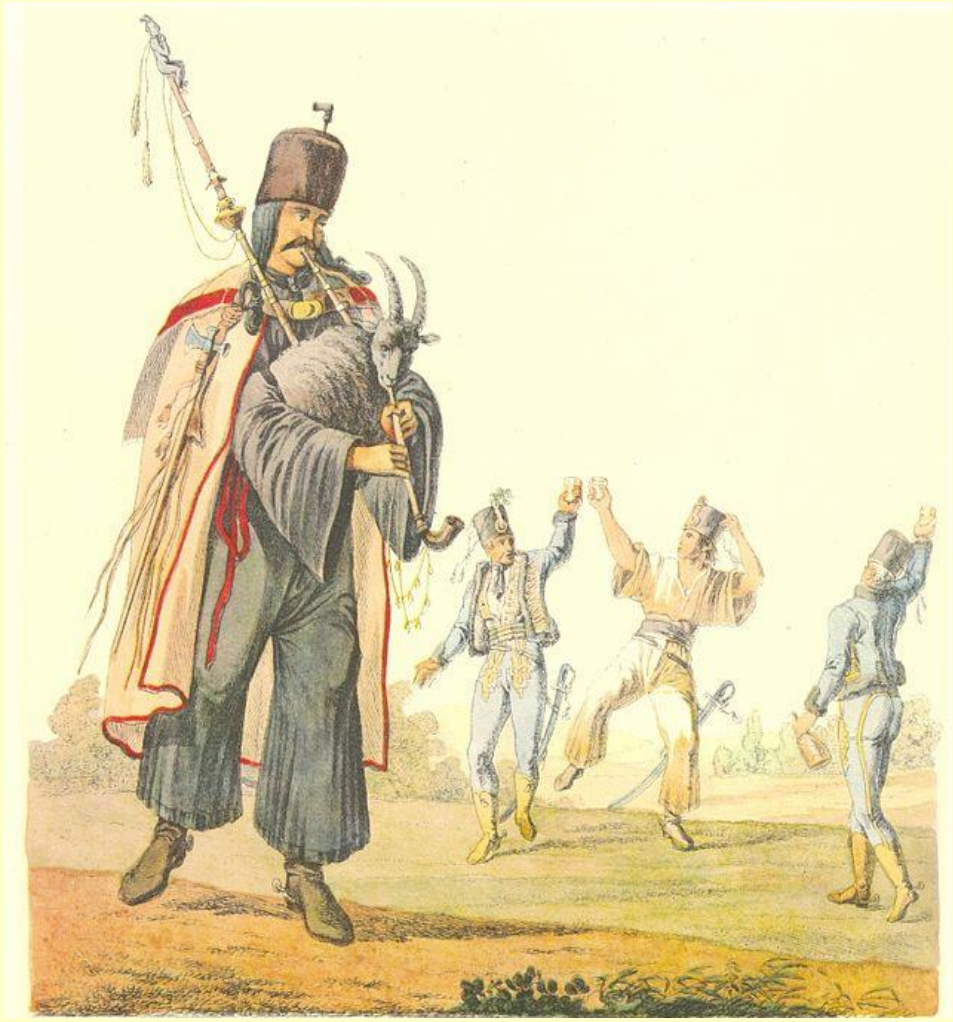
Bar 18: *Tempo* = speed

Answer: Return to the original speed

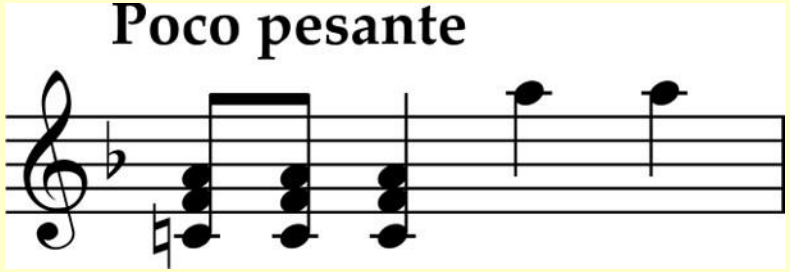
Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926

Section A: Verbunkos

- ♫ Music slows just for bar 17, in the style of a Verbunkos
- ♫ Verbunkos = a Hungarian dance performed by two people
- ♫ Slow bar danced by an important older soldier
- ♫ Faster music danced by younger soldiers

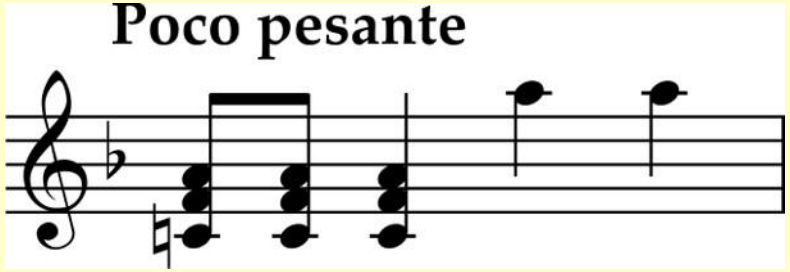


Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926



Quiz Question: This slow bar features a leap.
What's the technical term for this?

Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926



Answer: Disjunct

Melody that follows is conjunct – it moves by step

Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926

- ♫ The cimbalom decorates the melody
- ♫ At bar 25 it plays some offbeat chords

Quiz Question: What's the technical term for music played on the offbeats?

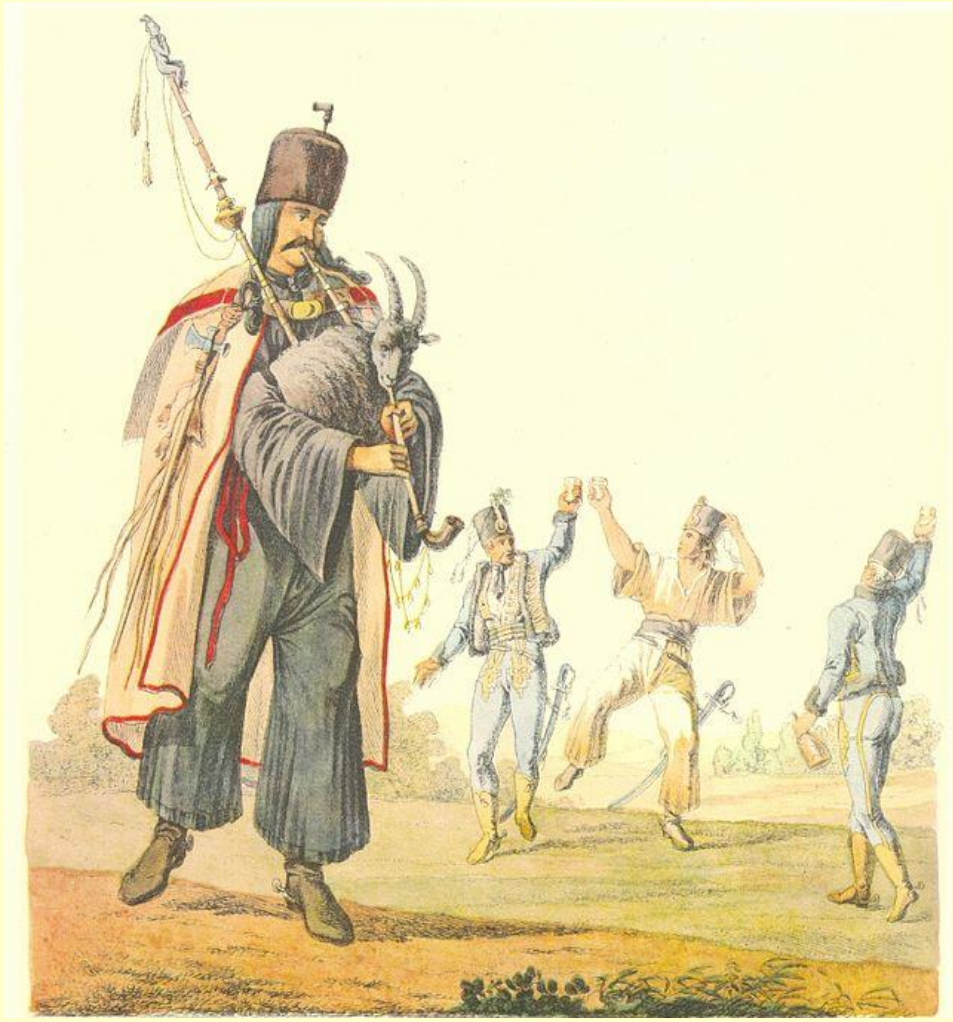
Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926

Answer: Syncopation

Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926

Section A: Verbunkos theme repeats at Figure 1

- ♫ Fuller orchestra
- ♫ Trumpets are added to the end of the theme



Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926

- ♫ After the Verbunkos theme is repeated, we move to a new, contrasting section

Quiz Question: This piece is in ternary form.
What is the structure of ternary form?

Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926

Answer: ABA

♫ We have now arrived at the B (middle) section

Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926

- ♫ We have now arrived at Section B
- ♫ Contrasts with Section A
- ♫ Begins with a solo instrument

Quiz Question: Which solo instrument plays at Figure 2?

Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926

- ♫ We have now arrived at Section B
- ♫ Contrasts with Section A
- ♫ Begins with a solo instrument

Answer: Horn

Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926

Section B

- ♫ Horn solo accompanied by tonic and dominant harmonies in D major
- ♫ Lots of ornaments added to the melody
- ♫ Melody made up of 4-bar phrases – balanced (regular phrasing)
- ♫ Figure 3: melody moves to clarinet, bassoon, viola and cello

Regular phrasing = phrases of equal length

Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926

Section B

- ♫ Bar 57 – variation on horn melody
- ♫ Briefly modulates to B minor, then E minor
- ♫ This section ends with a clarinet solo
- ♫ Kodály explores different timbres through different combinations of instruments

Timbre = the character or quality of the sound

Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926

- ♫ The variation is repeated
- ♫ At the end, the clarinet solo is taken over by a solo on a different instrument

Quiz Question: Which solo instrument plays at bar 68?

Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926

- The variation is repeated
- At the end, the clarinet solo is replaced by a solo on a different instrument

Answer: Flute

- The phrase ends on a perfect cadence which marks the end of Section B

Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926

Section A repeats

- Main theme and Verbunkos theme repeat as before
- Piece finishes with a modified perfect cadence:
  - Features a flattened 9^{th} chord shifting to a regular dominant 7^{th}, finishing with the tonic chord

Kodály – Intermezzo – 1926

Section A

- Main theme (with anacrusis)
- Main theme repeats
- Verbunkos theme
- Verbunkos theme repeats

Section B

- New theme (solo horn)
- New theme repeats
- Variation of new theme (clarinet solo)
- Variation repeats (flute solo)

Section A

- Main theme (with anacrusis)
- Main theme repeats
- Verbunkos theme
- Verbunkos theme repeats
- Modified perfect cadence

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For more information about concerts, education projects, resources and recordings, visit lpo.org.uk

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