

**CONTEXT:**

- GROUND BASS was musical structure first developed in the BAROQUE period (1600-1750)
- A Ground Bass is a repeating bassline or chord pattern with changing material over the top
- A particularly well-known example of a Ground Bass piece is Pachelbel's Canon in D, which is often still played at weddings and featured on TV.
- Many popular songs over the last 50 years have used the chord sequence from Pachelbel's canon, with some also quoting some of the melody lines too.
- The techniques used in Ground Bass, of gradually building up texture and more complexity over a simple repeated bass, also feature prominently in many examples of electronic dance music.

**VOCABULARY**

**GROUND BASS** – a repeating bassline or chord sequence with developing material over the top

**BAROQUE PERIOD** – a period in musical history between 1600 and 1750 when Ground Bass pieces first became popular

**CHORD SEQUENCE** – set of chords in an order which are repeated

**TEXTURE** – layers in music

**DYNAMICS** – how loud/quiet the music is

**RHYTHM** – note durations (shorter note values can be used to give an effect of developing complexity without the overall TEMPO changing)

**MELODY** – main tune or layer of interest

**ORNAMENTATION** – adding extra notes to decorate a melody line

**FAMOUS BAROQUE COMPOSERS**

PACHELBEL

PURCELL

BACH

HANDEL

**SONGS THAT REFERENCE PACHELBEL'S CANON**

“Go West” – Village People/Pet Shop Boys

“All together Now” – The Farm

“C U When U Get There” – Coolio

“Don't Look Back In Anger” – Oasis

“Memories” - Maroon 5

And there are plenty of others – listen out and see if you can find some!

**PACHELBEL'S CANON TRANSPOSED TO C MAJOR**

**CHORDS**  
CEG GBD ACE EGB FAC CEG FAC GBD

**BASS**  
C G A E F C F G

**Melody 1**  
E D C B A G A B

**Melody 2**  
C B A G F E F G

**Melody 3**  
C B C E G B C E G A F E D F E D C B A G F E D B

**Melody 4**  
E F G E F G G A B C D E F E C D E E F G A G F G F G F A G F E D E D C D E F G A F A G A B C B A B C D E F D

**'Memories' melody**  
G E F G E F G E C D E C D E C D E D C A A A A G A G G G G A A C B B B B C