

LISTENING TO MUSIC



You don't need to know much about a piece of music to enjoy it. But you may find you appreciate it more if you know a little about why it was written and how it achieves its effect. This book explains what is interesting about a whole range of musical styles - pop, blues, classical - so that you know what to listen for, and how different sorts of music developed. Once you know more about it, you may even find you like types of music that you never liked before.

As each style of music is introduced, there are suggestions for music to listen to. You can now listen to all kinds of music on the Internet, without having to go out and buy a recording. Find out more about this on pages 86-89.

WHAT MAKES MUSIC?

A piece of music is made up of lots of different elements. How it sounds depends on which of these are used and how they are combined. For instance, you could probably identify a 1950s rock and roll song just from the rhythm, the instruments used, and the style of singing.

BEAT OR PULSE

If you clap along to a piece of music, you usually find yourself clapping on the beat, or pulse.

RHYTHM

Rhythm is a pattern of long and short sounds and silences which fit around the beat.

MELODY

The melody or tune is the part which you might whistle or sing. It is a pattern of sounds, called notes, of different pitches. The pitch of a note is how high or low it sounds.

STRUCTURE

The structure is what makes the music sound organized. Most structures are based on repetition and variation of a theme or tune.

HARMONY

A chord is two or more notes sung or played together. The way that chords are made up and fit together in music is called harmony. Harmony is often used to make music sound more interesting.

TONE QUALITY

Each instrument has its own special sound, or tone. The instruments chosen for a piece of music give it a certain sound. This is called *timbre*, or tone quality.

EXPRESSION

Music played without energy and feeling sounds dead. A musician uses contrasts in volume, emphasis and so on to express the mood of the music and add vitality.

TYPES OF MUSIC

You can listen to all kinds of music on the Net: classical, rock, jazz, to name just a few. Some of these mean different things to different people, or change their meaning as time goes by. But most people tend to classify music loosely as either classical or popular. Throughout this book, you'll find suggestions for Web sites where you can listen to particular styles of music.

These Chinese drummers are performing as part of the Chinese New Year celebrations. You can find out about music in the Far East on pages 38-39.

POPULAR MUSIC

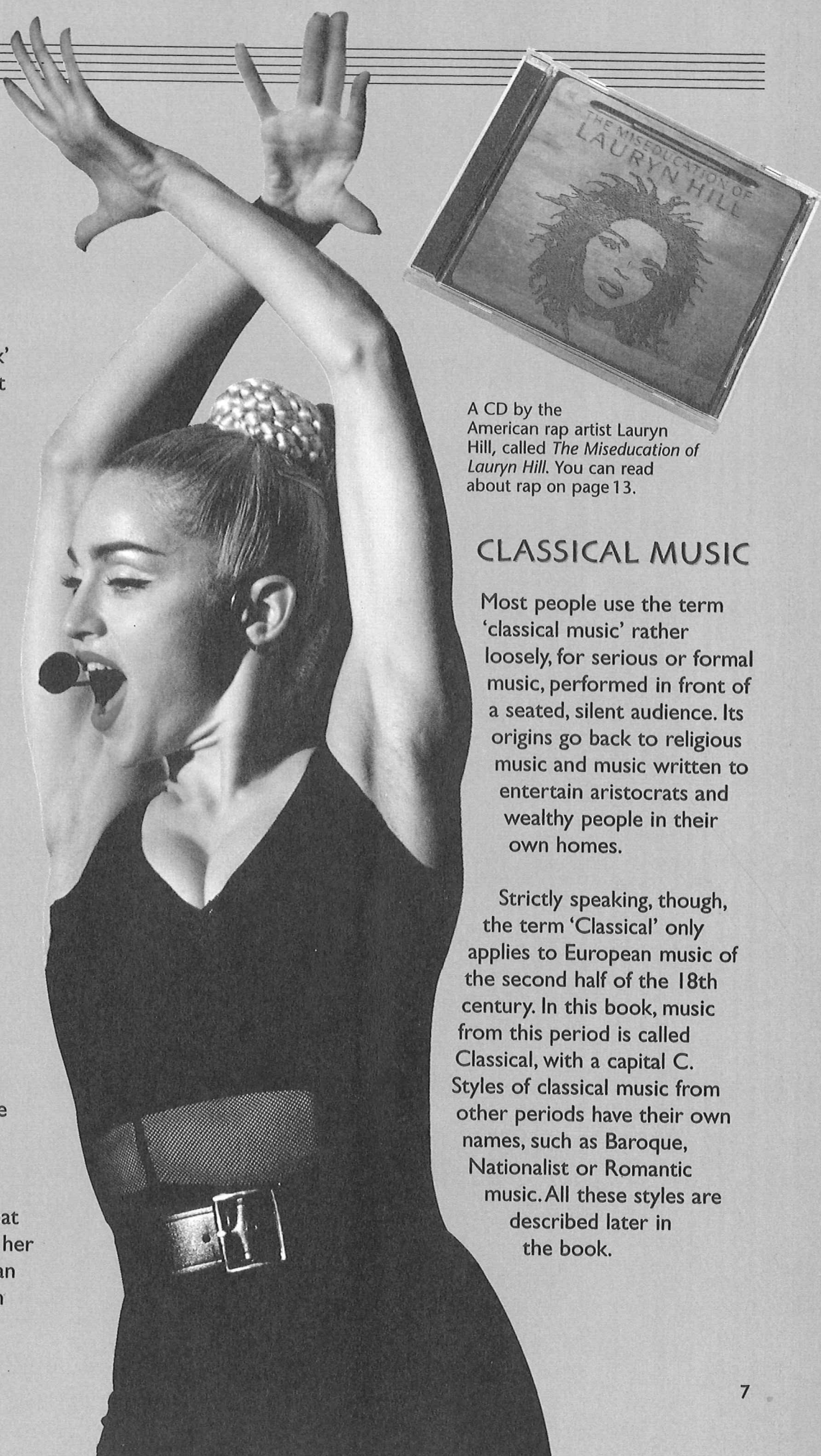
Popular music is a general term for what most people listen to for entertainment. It tends to rely on a catchy melody and a strong rhythm. It usually means any type of music - jazz, pop, rock - which is not classified as 'serious' or 'classical'.

TRADITIONAL MUSIC

Traditional music (also known as folk, or world, music) is the national popular music of any country. The origins of many traditional styles go back hundreds of years.

Traditional music is not usually written down, but passed on, just by being played, from one generation to the next. Lots of this type of music is improvised: the players make up the music, or part of it, as they go along. You can find out about different styles of traditional music on pages 38-43.





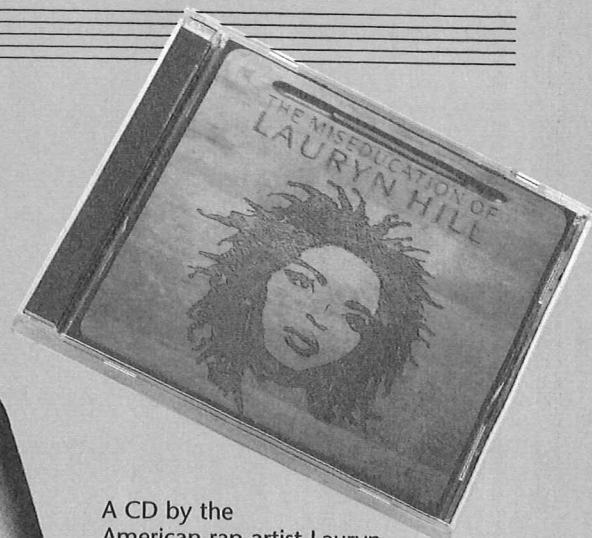
Since the 1980s, Madonna has been one of the world's most successful pop singers.

ROCK AND POP MUSIC

People use the terms 'rock' and 'pop' to mean different things. Pop is short for 'popular music', but it usually only means music that has been in the charts, now or in the past. Rock is a particular style of music that first developed in the 1960s. Nowadays it is used as a more general term, to describe several different categories of pop music, such as reggae, punk or heavy metal. You can read about some different types of rock and pop on pages 10-13.

JAZZ

Jazz began in the early 1900s in the southern states of the U.S., but has since evolved into several different styles. Some are easy to listen to. Others are more complex, but many people find these the most exciting. A lot of jazz is improvised, which means that each musician brings his or her own ideas to a piece. You can find out more about jazz on pages 16-19.



A CD by the American rap artist Lauryn Hill, called *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*. You can read about rap on page 13.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Most people use the term 'classical music' rather loosely, for serious or formal music, performed in front of a seated, silent audience. Its origins go back to religious music and music written to entertain aristocrats and wealthy people in their own homes.

Strictly speaking, though, the term 'Classical' only applies to European music of the second half of the 18th century. In this book, music from this period is called Classical, with a capital C. Styles of classical music from other periods have their own names, such as Baroque, Nationalist or Romantic music. All these styles are described later in the book.