Music Trivia

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. How many strings are on a standard acoustic guitar?
   - A. Six
   - B. Four
   - C. Five
   - D. Eight

   Correct answer: A. Six
   The standard six-string guitar uses E, A, D, G, B, and E in its usual low-to-high tuning.

2. Which instrument family includes timpani, the large bowl-shaped drums?
   - A. Woodwind
   - B. Brass
   - C. Percussion
   - D. Strings

   Correct answer: C. Percussion
   Timpani are tuned drums. An orchestral percussionist strikes the stretched heads with mallets.

3. A score has the dynamic marking f. How does the composer want that passage played?
   - A. Softly
   - B. Loudly
   - C. More slowly
   - D. With short notes

   Correct answer: B. Loudly
   The letter f stands for forte, a marking for loud volume.

4. Whose 1967 recording of 'Respect' was added to the U.S. National Recording Registry?
   - A. Gladys Knight
   - B. Diana Ross
   - C. Etta James
   - D. Aretha Franklin

   Correct answer: D. Aretha Franklin
   Aretha Franklin's 1967 recording reworked the song written and first recorded by Otis Redding.

5. Who gave four violin concertos the seasonal titles Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter?

A. Johann Sebastian Bach
B. Antonio Vivaldi
C. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
D. Joseph Haydn

Correct answer: B. Antonio Vivaldi
Vivaldi portrayed each season in its own concerto for solo violin and strings.

6. Which instrument makes its sound with a single reed attached to a mouthpiece?

A. Clarinet
B. Oboe
C. Bassoon
D. Flute

Correct answer: A. Clarinet
A clarinet has a single reed. The oboe and bassoon use paired reeds, while the flute uses air blown across an opening.

7. Which Caribbean country is the birthplace of reggae?

A. Trinidad and Tobago
B. Barbados
C. Haiti
D. Jamaica

Correct answer: D. Jamaica
Reggae took shape in Jamaica. UNESCO added Jamaica's reggae music to its intangible cultural heritage list in 2018.

8. Which U.S. city was home to Motown Records' original Hitsville U.S.A. studio?

A. Memphis
B. Chicago
C. Detroit
D. Cleveland

Correct answer: C. Detroit
Motown's original studio was on West Grand Boulevard in Detroit and is now part of the Motown Museum.

9. The setting of 'Ode to Joy' appears in the finale of which Beethoven symphony?

A. No. 9
B. No. 3
C. No. 5
D. No. 7

Correct answer: A. No. 9
The Ninth Symphony brings solo singers and a chorus into its final movement to sing Friedrich Schiller's text.

10. Whose orchestra took up a residency at Harlem's Cotton Club in 1927?

A. Glenn Miller's
B. Count Basie's
C. Benny Goodman's
D. Duke Ellington's

Correct answer: D. Duke Ellington's
Duke Ellington's orchestra played at the Cotton Club, where radio broadcasts helped bring the band's music to a wider audience.

11. What frequency does the standard tuning reference A above middle C specify?

A. 392 hertz
B. 330 hertz
C. 440 hertz
D. 480 hertz

Correct answer: C. 440 hertz
A440 names a reference pitch for tuning. The A above middle C is set at 440 vibrations per second.

12. A part says D.C. al Fine. Where does the musician go next?

A. To the last repeat sign, then back one bar
B. Back to the start, then on to Fine
C. To the coda, then back to the start
D. To the nearest double bar, then stop

Correct answer: B. Back to the start, then on to Fine
D.C. abbreviates da capo, which sends the player back to the beginning. Fine marks where that pass ends.

13. What rotating components generated the tones of a classic Hammond B-3 organ?

A. Felt hammers
B. Paper cylinders
C. Glass discs
D. Tonewheels

Correct answer: D. Tonewheels
The organ used spinning metal tonewheels and electromagnetic pickups to produce electrical signals that became musical tones.

14. On a traditional theremin, moving a hand nearer to the upright antenna chiefly changes what?

A. Pitch
B. Volume
C. Tempo
D. Meter

Correct answer: A. Pitch
The upright antenna controls the note's pitch. A separate, usually loop-shaped antenna controls volume.

15. Where did Stravinsky's ballet The Rite of Spring receive its first performance in 1913?

A. Moscow
B. Vienna
C. Paris
D. London

Correct answer: C. Paris
The ballet premiered at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, performed by the Ballets Russes.