6 Feb- Timbre and Texture

Timbre- tone color/quality, what makes sounds of similar pitch (frequency) distinguishable from each other/identifiable/unique

Descriptive terms for timbre are subjective and highly variable from person to person, ie: warm, bright, harsh, lush, muted, etc.

Instrumentation- what instruments (+ voice) are used in music
Orchestration- how those sounds are employed and combined, organized over time

Homogenous instrumentation- all or mostly the same type of sound (ex- string quartet, choir)
Heterogenous instrumentation- all or mostly different types of sounds (vox+drums+brass+elec guitar...)

Instrument classification- Sachs-Hornbostel system- voice is considered separate from instruments/objects of sound generation (see Alves Ch. 5 for more info)

Many instruments will have aspects of more than one classification- method of playing vs method of construction...

Chordophones- sound is created by a vibrating string [ed note- what about our vocal chords?]...
   Plucked
      Harp/Zither- resonating chamber runs parallel (the length of) or perpendicular to strings [Hong Ting- A Bit of Gold]
      Lute- strings strung across body, resonator is on one side of inst (guitar, violin, etc) [Kuruwa]
   Bowed- sound created by friction of string, allows for long, sustained sounds [Gending Erhu again...]
   Struck- piano, hammered Dulcimer, etc [Taraf de Haidouks- Sirba Lui Cacurica]

Aerophones- vibrating column of air, implies instrument is usually hollow in some fashion
   Flutes- air is blown over an opening [Gamelan Gambuh- Tabuh Gari]
   Reeds- air passes over a reed system, which vibrates, creating timbre- oboe, bagpipes [Raigmore]
   Buzzed-lip- vibration of lips in contact with open end of instrument- trumpet, didgeridoo [Yulara]

Membranophones- a skin stretched over a frame- all drums [Kodo- Lion]

Idiophones- body of object itself is what creates sound- most non-drum percussion- shaker, tambourine, woodblock, vibraphone bar, etc.
   Definite pitch- instruments tuned to specific pitches- Gamelan Gender, marimba [Gamelan Jegog- Epilog]
   Indefinite pitch- instruments with “noise” elements- [Abbilona Tambor Yoruba- Guiro II]

Electrophones- electronic signal directed through a loudspeaker- NOT the same as micing/amplicification (although you can certainly amplify electronic sounds...)- electric keyboard, electric guitar [Steve Vai- Erotic Nightmares]
Texture- relative roles and distributions of melodies, harmonies, and accompaniments

Monophonic- a single melody [Gregorian Chant- Puer Natis]
 Also included- parallel octaves- men and women singing same pitches an octave apart
 [Bata-Ketu- Chango/Xango, 1:00-3:20]

Homophonic- melody plus accompaniment- can be traditional harmonic accompaniment or drum
 accompaniment, mel + accomp can be on separate instruments (singer + guitar) or the same (RH
 and LH on the piano) [Bothy Band- Heathery Hills of Yarrow]

Polyphonic- multiple simultaneous melodic voices in different registers/tessituras, more or less equal in
 importance- choir [Eric Whitacre- Sleep]

Heterophonic- multiple simultaneous variations on a single melody- not very common in WEA or Pop
 Music [Mahavishnu Orchestra- A Lotus on Irish Streams]

Drone- a constant sound bed, usually very low in pitch, but can also be very high, on which all other
 musical material is played and related to- CAN be considered harmonic, but isn’t necessarily-
 bagpipe drones, Indian Tanpura player [Kila- The Siege of Carrickfinn International Airport]

Drum Polyphony- multiple drum voices with individual parts that create a thick, active texture- Alves
does not consider to be either melodic or harmonic in the traditional uses of those terms, but I
definitely hear melodic and harmonic aspects to drums, especially if they are tuned
appropriately [Iluyenkori- Chant et Rhythms A Elegua] vs [Ilu Ana- Ellegua]

See Timbre Texture Playlist for more track information