Examples continued

Tone Colour
(Expressive Element)

From the beginning, the tone colours of the instruments are layered one on top of the other, beginning with the bright, ringing sound of the cymbals, the dull thudding of the bass drum and the sharp pattering of the sticks hitting the skin of the drum.

The clear, bright sound of the piano blends harmoniously with the reverberant, mellow sound of the double bass when it enters. The melody, played by the saxophone, has a breathy, reedy quality which supports the mellow, smooth timbre of the quartet as a whole.

Texture

At the start, the texture is very sparse with only the drum kit being played. As each instrument is added to the accompaniment, the texture thickens and becomes full, while retaining clarity. It remains homophonic with a clear melody (saxophone) and a harmonic (piano and double bass) and rhythmic (drums) accompaniment.

Balance of Music Lines
(Expressive Element)

As each instrument is added, the music line takes prominence for its first four bars and draws your attention fully to it, then moves into the rhythmic and/or accompaniment role it has for the rest of this excerpt. Once all four instruments are playing, the saxophone is playing quite loudly and is the instrument most clearly heard (in the foreground), with the drums next clearest (in the middle ground) while the piano and bass are in the background.

Blend of Instrumental Voices
(Expressive Element)

Once all instruments are playing, the accompaniment (piano and double bass) blends well due to the similar tone colours of the instruments being applied and the same dynamic being played. The saxophone stands out due to the fact it has the melody, is in a higher register and has quite different tone colours to the piano and the double bass. The drum kit is also quite distinct in the mix due to its tone colour and rhythmic role in the blend.

Practice Task

Choose an element of music and a short excerpt of any piece of music. Listen to the excerpt twice then write down at least three words that apply to the chosen element.