

Inside the Music: A Midsummer Night's Dream Teacher's Resources

Part 6: Music for Occasions

Overview

- This section is all about situations where music is used; particularly special occasions and celebrations.
- Your students will consider where they encounter music in their lives.
- Your students will describe a series of contrasting excerpts of music.

TIP: You could link this to English or Drama, explaining how music is used to highlight key moments in films and theatre. There may also be some occasions you're studying in RE or History that have musical links.

Before you start

- Decide whether your students will attempt dramatic speaking, speaking in time, or singing the words: you can repeat this multiple times.
- You could look at spoken word performances, or discuss a production or show they might have seen.

Exercise length: 30 minutes

Activity set-up: individual work

Materials required: pen and paper

Musical learning: active listening; using musical language to describe excerpts

During the Exercise

- Collect ideas after each piece of music and look for a mix of musical language and creative words.

TIP: Check the Model Music Curriculum for a list of appropriate musical terminology for your year group.

Finishing the Session

- Throughout the exercises, lead class discussions to allow students to share their thoughts on each piece.
- Note similarities and differences between your observations!

Extension Exercises

- Choose some occasions you're learning about in other topics and select the music for them.
- Take a story you're studying, or one someone has written. Make a playlist of songs that would fit the different parts of the story – think outside the box!

Excerpts used

Excerpt 1: From the Intermezzo, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' by Felix Mendelssohn

This section of the music comes at the end of the Intermezzo, and sets the scene for a meeting in the woods.

Excerpt 2: Hava Nagila; traditional Hebrew folk song

This song is traditionally sung at Jewish celebrations. The melody is based on a Hassidic Nigun and was composed in 1915. The title translates as "Let us Rejoice".

Excerpt 3: Wedding March from 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' by Felix Mendelssohn

This section of music comes toward the end of the play, when all three pairs of characters get married!

Excerpt 4: Radetzky March by Johann Strauss Senior

This march was composed in 1838 and was dedicated to Field Marshal Radetzky. It is traditionally used at New Year's Day concerts in Vienna.

Excerpt 5: Evening Prayer from 'Hänsel and Gretel' by Engelbert Humperdinck

This section of music is used in the opera Hänsel and Gretel and is sung by the children before they go to sleep, alone and lost in the woods.