

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

Part 8: Composing with Scores

Overview

- This section brings together all that a composer does – you're a composer too!
- Throughout the videos, we have been exploring how Mendelssohn and our musicians do what they do, but it's important to remember we can all be musicians and composers.
- Your students will create a graphic score, and then interpret it, turning it into their own piece of music.

Before you start

- Ensure pupils have access to a pen and paper.
- Explore some sounds with voices or bodies, or use classroom percussion.
- You could show pupils an example of other graphic scores such as [these](#).

Exercise length: 35 minutes OR split over multiple sessions

Activity set-up: group work

Materials required: pen and paper / classroom instruments (optional)

Musical learning: graphic scores; notation; performing

During the Exercise

Creating the graphic score

- Allow the pupils time to create their graphic scores. This could take about 10 minutes, but you could allow more time.
- Encourage them to consider what sounds they want to represent, or how their shapes might be interpreted.
- This could be done individually or as a group using a larger piece of paper.

Interpreting the graphic score

- Put your students into groups of around 5.
- Choose one graphic score - this might be one created by an individual in the group, or you could select one from another pupil. Look for one with varied shapes that might create different sounds.
- Encourage the groups to choose a starting place on the graphic score, and which way up to hold it.
- Consider the qualities of each mark, feel free to use some musical language like articulation, dynamics and pitch, and demonstrate these ideas for younger children.
- Once you've decided on sounds for each shape, decide on an order of the piece: work out who will signal the moves from each section. Try to make sure as many children as possible take some responsibility in the piece.

Finishing the Session

- Allow each group to share their graphic score performances with the other groups.
- Invite open questioning and constructive feedback.

Extension Exercises

- You could interpret a new graphic score in groups.
- You could continue this exercise by hiding the graphic score for a performance, and having the audience draw a new one based on what they hear: how similar does it look to the original?
- Alternatively, hide the graphic score, and ask pupils to guess from a selection which they were working from. While there may be no right or wrong answers, the debate may be interesting and encourage pupils to use more descriptive words and musical terms to give their reasoning.