

Lesson 21



A History of Western Classical and popular music.

This unit is slightly different as it covers the history of music from Baroque to contemporary pop. Each lesson has a brief history animation detailing historical and stylistic facts. In each of these lessons there is a composition task relating to the era of music studied.

Romantic 1780-1910

 The next period of music overlaps in the timeline with the classical period, this is because Beethoven and other composers would have written music in both the Romantic and Classical eras.

 The romantic period refers to the pastoral ideal of life. The perfect countryside using folk songs and folk tales and mythology

 Notable composers of the Romantic period are Schubert and Chopin. Clara Schumann had a musical career that spanned 6 decades performing and writing many notable works for the piano.

 Wagner is one of the giants of the Romantic era and is best known for his operas. His opera 'The Ring Cycle' is actually 4 operas to be performed consecutively on 4 different days if performed in one sitting it would last 15hrs.

 Tchaikovsky is best known for his Ballets he wrote the nut cracker and swan lake.

 Some composers such as Vaughn Williams, Sibelius and Grieg sought to preserve the musical traditions of their countries by using folk songs and ideas within their pieces.

Performance of "Swan Lake"

 Watch the video of the performance of the Swan Lake by Tchaikovsky

 Note the use of dynamics within this piece of music.

Composition task “The Lonely Shepherd”

-  The task here is to write both a broken chord accompaniment and a simple melody and also add Dynamics
-  The first and last chords are given as a C, again this gives the piece a beginning and an end. The number of bars you use is up to you, a rough guide has been given.
-  As Melody (the tune) and Harmony (the chords) are so interrelated the piece must be written together, you cant compose a melody then chords as this could make a piece which doesn't work.
-  It is best to begin with the chords, remember you can use any of the chords we have learnt to this point, you can make it as easy or as complicated as you like. C F G Am Dm. These chords can be strummed or you can use the broken chords or a mixture.
-  The melody will be dictated by the chords initially. The melody can just be the highest note of the chord, so whatever is being played on the A string will give you the note. For example strum a G major chord the note on the A string is a B (2nd fret A string) this will be your melody note. If there is time or you want to extend this activity extra notes can be added between these notes giving movement to the melody.
-  Once the piece has been written you can add some dynamics, remember we are looking for a good mix from Piano to Forte. These can be crescendo and diminuendo or just Forte and Piano.