

Stage 5 unit overview

Title	Unit duration	Musical concepts	Resources
International Jazz Day	6 weeks	Duration, pitch, dynamics, texture, timbre, structure	James Morrison International Jazz Day videos Classroom percussion instruments Melodic instruments Recording device

Content	Outcomes
Performing	MUS5.1: Performs repertoire with increasing levels of complexity in a range of musical styles demonstrating an understanding of the musical concepts MUS5.3 Performs music selected for study with appropriate stylistic features demonstrating solo and ensemble awareness
Organising sound	MUS5.4: Demonstrates an understanding of the musical concepts through improvising, arranging and composing in the styles or genres of music selected for study
Listening	MUS5.7: Demonstrates an understanding of musical concepts through the analysis, comparison, and critical discussion of music from different stylistic, social, cultural and historical contexts

Sequence of learning experiences

1. What makes a good melody?

Refer to video 1. Discuss phrasing and what it means. James Morrison compares musical phrasing with verbal phrasing, as in a sentence. How is a musical phrase similar to a verbal sentence? Create a short list of the elements that are important in a sentence. Discuss how these elements can then be used in creating a musical phrase? How long is a good phrase or a good sentence? Do they go on and on or do they tend to be short and concise? What happens at the end of a phrase or sentence?

2. Context in a melody:

Refer to video 1. Discuss what is meant by context? In music it is the overarching mood or approach taken to the storyline of a song. For example, is it a sad or happy story? Is it a story of determination and overcoming adversity? There are many contexts you could consider. In class, create a list of possible contexts in which to set a song. Listen to two versions of 'Autumn Leaves' and discuss how the same melody can sound different when approached in a different context. The [Cannonball Adderley and Miles Davis version](#) and [Chet Baker and Paul Desmond version](#) are two contrasting versions of this piece. What makes these two versions sound so different?

3. Creating a melody with context:

Using the 'Happy Birthday' melody change the context from major (buoyant) to minor (melancholy). Experiment with the melody in the key of C major (C, D, E, F, G, A, B) and C harmonic minor scale (C, D, Eb, F, G, Ab, B). In the key of C major use 3 chords to accompany your melody: C major (chord I – C,E,G); F major (chord IV - F,A,C) and G7 (chord V – G,B,D,F). Experiment to find the most suitable chord for the melody at specific points. For the minor version use the chords C minor (chord I – C, Eb, G); F minor (chord IV - F, Ab, C) and G7 (chord V – G, B, D, F). Again, match chords to fit your melody. Discuss how these changes of context affect the melody.

4. How do composers create a melody?

Watch video 2. Rhythm is one of the most important elements in a melody. Discuss how a musical phrase and rhythm work together. The silence or pause at the end of a phrase gives us time to hear and understand it before moving onto the next phrase. To explore the concept of phrasing, create a circle in class and have students keep a beat together with their feet. Going around the circle, each student has 2 bars to clap a simple rhythm (or phrase) before moving to the next student. The key is to keep time throughout and for students to clap a pattern that makes sense. Then have the students create their 2 bar phrase that relates or continues the idea from the previous student. In this way students begin to create a musical storyline where one phrase links logically to the next – just as a good melody would do. You can do this exercise with percussion instruments also.

5. Adding notes to a rhythm:

From the exercise above remember (or notate if possible) two of the 2 bar patterns that work well together and join them. This creates a four bar musical phrase. Provide the students with a simple scale in which to select notes to add to their rhythm. Some good scales to use include: C major pentatonic (C, D, E, G, A); C major scale (C, D, E, F, G, A, B); E Blues scale (E, G, A, Bb, B, D). To change context consider a minor scale sound such as A minor (A, B, C, D, E, F, G#) or A minor pentatonic (A, C, D, E, G).

Sequence of learning experiences

6. Melodic structure:

Now that we've created a single phrase, how does this contribute to a complete melody? In video 2 James discusses repetition in a melody using 'Waltzing Matilda': line 1 = phrase 1; line 2 = new phrase (phrase 2); line 3 = phrase 1 repeated; line 4 = phrase 2 repeated. In this way a whole sixteen bar melody has been created with just two phrases. Discuss 'contrast' and how phrase 1 and phrase 2 may be different. How they also similar?

Using the methods above have students create another four bar phrase that contrasts with their original one. Now join together in the manner above for a full sixteen bar melody.

7. Formal structure:

Jazz pieces generally follow two main overall song structures – binary form (AB) and ternary form (AABA). Discuss these in class. In binary form a piece is usually sixteen bars (A) then a similar 16 bars (B) with a slightly different ending. In ternary form a piece is usually eight bars (A), then repeated again (A), a bridge with quite different melodic material (B), then a final return to the original melody (A). Note that the majority of jazz pieces have thirty two bars. Take a number of jazz pieces and identify which format each piece falls into. Some suggestions include: 'But Not For Me'; 'A Foggy Day'; 'Don't Get Around Much Anymore'; 'Satin Doll'; and 'There Will Never Be Another You'.

8. The bridge in ternary form:

What makes the B section (or bridge) different in ternary form? Listen to a number of jazz pieces in ternary form and list some elements that make the B section different to the A sections. Some ideas could include: key (does it move to a different key centre?), tonality (does it move from major to minor, or vice versa?), rhythm (is the B melody rhythm quite different from the A melody rhythm?), rhythm or phrasing (does the B melody move faster or slower than the A?).

9. Take me to the bridge – creating a bridge melody:

A bridge (or 'B' section) melody contrasts with the 'A' melody. In point 3. above there are examples of musical elements that can create a contrast. From the melody construction exercises above create a 2 bar and then 4 bar melody that is in contrast to the main 'A' melody. You can then double this melody with a slightly different finish to the first 4 bars and you now have a contrasting 'B' section.

10. Telling a story through sound:

Have students create stories with a partner using ternary form (AABA) as the structure. Therefore: a main story theme (A); the main theme retold with possibly a slight variation at the end (A); a new theme to the story (B) and then a return to the original main theme once more to finish (A).

Create a soundscape to overlay the narration of this story. The soundscape can be created with classroom instruments or a digital music program such as GarageBand or Mixcraft. Ensure that the soundscape follows the shape of the structure (ternary form) to match the story.

Sequence of learning experiences

11. What do I need to make my own melody?

Listen to a number of jazz songs and decide on which structure you would like to write your melody in – either binary or ternary form. Using the methods above, compose a four bar melody and then extend this to an eight bar melody. This will become your main theme. If using ternary form now create a new 8 bar melody using the same process. This new melody could still have some references to your original melody. This could be through rhythm, phrasing, similar intervals. Or it could be a completely different melody. Put your complete thirty two bar melody together and perform, record and refine on whatever instrument you are comfortable on. Do the musical phrases answer each other as suggested through video 2? Refine, edit and repeat this process until satisfied.

12. How can I improve my melody?

Perform for the class, discuss and refine. Finish with a recording ready to be submitted for the competition. Good luck you've worked hard!

Assessment

1. Are the students able to establish a solid rhythmic two bar pattern through improvisation. Do they need extra time for preparation or are they able to improvise? Are they able to expand this successfully to a four bar pattern?
2. Is the student able to apply to melodic concepts discussed to their rhythmic patterns to create a melody? What success do they have and are they comfortable using the set scales. Do they explore beyond one or two notes to include a whole scale? Which scale?
3. How does the student use the concept of structure to support their composition? Are they able to incorporate their melodic structure into a formal musical structure? Which structure do they chose and why? Can they explain their choice?