

SCHEME OF WORK 2: What processes for evaluating pupil work can be adopted to give constructive feedback and encourage peer review?

LESSON 3

TOPIC AND PURPOSE

Deepening the tone row compositions. Creating pupils' own criteria for, and confidence in, evaluating their atonal compositions.

OBJECTIVE

To create a chart showing the “expressive value of intervals”. Use this chart to develop tone row compositions. Evaluate own and peer melodies.

ENGAGEMENT

Formative assessment and group discussion will aid learner engagement.

STICK-ABILITY

Intervals have an expressive value – they feel different from each other, and different people experience them differently. Trust your own judgement!

DIFFERENTIATION

Embedding:

Learners may require support to ensure that all pitches are used, to place the pitches appropriately on their instruments, and be encouraged to be bold in their choices.

Enhancing: Many learners will compose a tone row melody with some thought as to where to place pitches.

Extending: Some will go beyond this and will use intervals and tessitura strategically to create distinctive melodies which are dramatic.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To listen closely to the expressive power of intervals.

For pupils to develop their confidence in sensing an interval's expressive value.

ACTIVITY ONE:

Play a C major then an A minor chord.

Discuss the difference between major and minor chords. What are the feelings, images or colours associated with each?

Write these on a table with 2 columns headed "major" and "minor".

STARTER

Quiz – what is an interval? How many can the pupils recognise by ear? How many can they play – if given a C, can they work out which note is a major 3rd higher? Which intervals are inverted from which others?

Commentary on Activity One:

Use chords (actual sounds) rather than keys (abstract notion). Our associations with major and minor chords are reasonably consensual. It will be less so with intervals.

ASSESSMENT

Reflection and self-evaluation of musical elements.

In groups explore the expressive value of the compositions, this can be led by the teacher who can observe practice and offer feedback to the groups.

ACTIVITY TWO:

Now create a table with 3 columns. Head the first with “Interval”; the second with eg and the third with “expressive value/feeling/image”.

Ask someone to play a C and then a note a minor second away. Fill in the “interval” column (minor 2nd) and “eg” column (C – Db). Hear the interval again and ask the class to decide on a feeling or image that they feel matches the sound.

There will be various ideas, possibly quite diverse. Write all of these down – they are all valid! The expressive range for intervals is richer and more subtle than for major and minor.

ACTIVITY THREE:

Repeat Step 2 for each interval up to a diminished 5th. You now have a table of expressive values of intervals.

Commentary on Activity Two:

Importantly: Play the intervals melodically i.e. one note then the other, not as a dyad.

The group may be most comfortable working in pairs before sharing their ideas.

Encourage the group to explore the intervals as raw sounds – not, for example, as if the semitone is a happy trill on the flute – what is it generally, when played *melodically* and slowly?

Commentary on Activity Three:

The other intervals are inversions or compound versions of the first 6 intervals. You could continue but it becomes more laborious.

ACTIVITY FOUR:

Explain that the other intervals are inversions of these intervals. Demonstrate the difference in feel between a minor 2nd and a major 7th. (plus others).

Demonstrate compound intervals (9th, 10th), and extreme compound intervals over several octaves.

Discuss briefly differences in feel.

Commentary on activity four:

Compound intervals can be very striking when used melodically, and can skew the sense of melodic line to dramatic effect.

ACTIVITY FIVE:

On instruments, take the first 3 notes of one person's note row. The challenge is to take turns for each person in the group to play the 3 notes in different inversions and registers. No 2 versions should be identical. See how far you can get around the class. Which ones sound the most dramatic? The strangest? The most striking?

Commentary on activity five:

Feed back as each one is played – eg “starting at the bottom and going up then even higher; low to high to low” etc. Model objective evaluation rather than judgement “that was good”.

ACTIVITY SIX:

Given the massive variation possible, ask the pupils to compose a melodic line from their tone rows, for their instruments. They must use each note only once, and keep the order of the pitches. They should exploit their knowledge of the expressive values they have created for intervals, and use range, tessitura and inversion to create drama and contrast. Use the table of expressive values and knowledge of inversions to make choices about which intervals to exploit to create drama.

Commentary on activity six:

Write each note as a semibreve on the staff, or write the letter names with arrows indicating whether pitches should go up or down from note to note.

Each note in the melody is currently a long note.

ACTIVITY SEVEN:

Play one of these as a series of long notes.

Evaluate as a class – how is drama achieved? Which bits stand out as the most dramatic? Use the table of expressive values to help focus your listening to the intervals used. Ask the composer: are there particular sections that you like or dislike?

Commentary on activity seven:

This might be an extension activity, whilst some pupils are finishing off earlier stages of the work. It is to demonstrate the focus of the next session – adding a rhythmic element.

ACTIVITY EIGHT:

Play the melody again, improvising a rhythmic element. When you do this, group the notes into small phrases of 3 or 4 notes, and use ONLY long or very short rhythmic values – demonstrate that you can avoid pulse at this stage (this will enable greater flexibility later on as melodies may be layered up or slotted together).

Commentary on activity eight:

See commentary for activity seven.

HOMEWORK.

Finish melodic aspect of compositions.

RESOURCES:

Percussion instruments.

Pupils' own instruments,

White board or flip chart,
Magic Square worksheets
(completed)

Manuscript or plain paper for
writing melodies.