

Lesson 1: Resource



1) Henri Dutilleux - Timbres, space, movement (*Timbre, space, movement*, 1978)

This painting is subtitled *La nuit étoilée (The Starry Night)* in reference to Van Gogh's painting. The composer wanted to translate in his composition the "almost cosmic whirling effect which (the painting) produces".

Listen to the first 90 seconds (until the orchestra returns to the original high pedal note). What do you notice?

Musical pointers for teachers:

- No violins or violas – relative emptiness/ prominent wind and percussion
- Starts with a very high pedal note, with descending single notes appearing throughout the orchestra, whilst high clusters remain on top, giving the impression of 'cosmic whirling'; after 90 seconds it goes back to the main drone.
- Fluttering wind solos represent movements of clouds and star/moonlight

2) Don McLean - Vincent (Starry Starry Night)

You can find the lyrics to this song online.

Don McLean wanted to write a song about Vincent Van Gogh and realised that his painting *Starry Night* was the essence of the artist himself. So this is quite a literal response to the painting.

Musical pointers:

- Arpeggiated guitar, simple, lots of space;
- Minor key chorus, major key verse; simple, calm, lamenting feel;
- Emphasis on lyric-writing in response to a visual stimulus