

Classical Music Appreciation (Grades 3-4 / Lesson 4)

Summary

Using excerpts from Strauss's 'Also Sprach Zarathustra', students develop listening skills by using a 'music map' to identify musical events.

Materials

Classical Music Start-Up Kit CD 2 and CD player; A copy of the 'Also Sprach Zarathustra' music map (W-7) for each student

Background for Teachers

Composer Profile

Composer

Richard Strauss (ree-KARD STROWs)

Nationality

German

Birth - Death

1864 - 1949

Excerpt

Introduction to Also Sprach Zarathustra (zah-rah-TIIOO-strah)

Era

Post-Romantic

Not to be confused with Johann Strauss of Venice, who composed waltzes and ballets, Richard Strauss was a modern man who wrote considerably wilder music. He wrote this piece about 100 years ago, just before the 1900s began. Things were starting to change very quickly (see timeline) and people looked forward to the 20th century with a mixture of fear and excitement. The music is called a 'symphonic poem' because, like a poem, it is emotionally descriptive, but it uses music instead of words. Based on the writings of a philosopher named Nietzsche, it's the story of a man named Zarathustra. He doesn't like other people, so he's lived alone on a mountaintop for 10 years, enjoying the solitude. But on this morning, he wakes and watches the sun rise, and he starts to think that maybe the only reason the sun likes to come up in the morning is because it likes to give light to the people and animals on the earth. After this realization, he decides to leave the mountain and go back to live with other people again, teaching them not to get too caught up in the busy lives they've created. He wants them to realize that man and nature are not in competition, but that they exist FOR one another. Strauss dedicated this piece to the Twentieth Century. He wanted it to serve as a reminder of what people should strive for in the coming century.

Vocabulary

form

- the constructive or organizing element in music, the way a composer takes a basic theme and then repeats it, alters it, and/or makes contrast to it.

timbre

- (also called tone color) the quality that distinguishes the sound of one instrument or voice from another; a clarinet and an oboe playing the same note, or a male voice and a female voice singing the same note, are said to have different timbres.

melody

- a pleasing succession of musical tones; the tune.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will develop listening skills by using a 'music map' to identify musical events.

Instructional Procedures

See CMA Table of Contents See composer's profile and picture:

Listen

Play the piece (selection 18) and have the students try to follow along on the map, identifying what's happening in the music by looking at what is pictured. Do they recognize the horns? The timpani? Can they hear the music getting louder? How is that represented on the map (the crescendos, the different-sized X's, and the Latin notations *p*, *f* and *if*) What do they think the X's represent?

Activity

Give copies of the music map on the Zarathustra worksheet (W - 7) to each student or pair of students. Tell them that the symbols and pictures on the worksheet represent different things in the music, just like symbols on a map. Have the students look at the map before the music is played and see if they can guess what certain symbols represent. Some may recognize some of the symbols they've seen on musical scores.

Close

After listening once, ask the students if they think they heard everything they saw on the map. Ask what they think different symbols mean, especially the actual musical symbols (defined below). Tell them what those symbols are called and clarify their meanings.

Listen again, and see if the students are able to follow along more closely. Was there anything that they heard in the music that is NOT represented on the map? If so, how would they represent what they heard?

Extensions

Beyond

Related topics

the 21st century

map reading

poetry

sunrise

Extension Ideas

Listen to Ravel's 'Sunrise' (selection 21) and compare the two musical descriptions of a sunrise. What is different about them? What is the same? Why are two descriptions of the same event so different?

One is a sunrise from a mountain top, one from the woods--can they hear that difference in the music? What other differences can they hear?

Using the timeline, talk about all the big changes that have happened in the 20th century. Talk about what might happen in the 21st century. What have the students heard or seen about its arrival? Do people seem excited or nervous about it? Have them write about or draw things they think might happen in the next 100 years.

Additional Resources

Goudey, Alice. *The Day We Saw the Sun Come Up*. New York: Scribner, 1961.

Morris, Scott E., ed. *How to Read A Map*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1993.

Oxlade, Chris. *Maps and Map-Making*. New York: Crolier Publishing, 1995.

Janeczko, Paul B. *Poetry from A to Z: a guide for young writers*. New York: Bradbury Press, 1994.

Editorial Board, Roth Publishing, Inc. *The World's Best Poetry for Children*, vols. 1 and 2. New York: Poetry Anthology Press, 1986.

~ Strauss: Also Sprach Zarathustra Chicago Symphony/Fritz Reiner RCA 09026-61709

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