

Composing Motifs

Learning Intentions

Pupils are learning to:

- **perform** melodies with a repeated motif;
- **compose** a melody based on an initial motif; and
- make ideas real by experimenting with different elements of music, their actions and outcomes (Being Creative).

Suggested Success Criteria

Pupils can:

- perform the *O Fortuna* theme on various instruments;
- discuss and experiment with the elements of music to develop a motif; and
- use ostinato, drone and/or chords appropriately.

Suggested Further Listening

- *Symphony no. 5*, first movement (Beethoven)
- *In the Hall of the Mountain King* from *Peer Gynt* (Grieg)
- *Hebrides Overture* (Mendelssohn)

Learning Activities

Introduction

Discuss the Learning Intentions and Suggested Success Criteria relating to this activity.

Explain that a motif is a catchy, repeated idea in a piece of music. Ask your pupils:

- Can anyone think of an example of this?
- What makes it successful?

Activity

Focus on encouraging your pupils to learn to play the theme of *O Fortuna* from *Carmina Burana* (Carl Orff). Point out that the motif is based on only three notes.

Play *O Fortuna* in class and encourage your pupils to suggest the ways in which Orff manipulates this motif. As a starter activity, encourage the class to sing the main theme and link to the use of this music in popular television shows.

Key Stage 3 Music

Ask your pupils to form pairs, then encourage each pair to create and perform their own motif using only three notes. Through discussion, encourage them to experiment to find as many ways as possible of manipulating their motifs, for example by:

- changing the rhythm;
- changing the melody;
- adding notes; or
- playing it backwards.

Give them an opportunity to demonstrate and discuss their ideas with the rest of the class.

In groups, ask your pupils to choose one of their motifs to create a longer piece of music.

Encourage them to compose accompaniments for their melodies using techniques such as:

- ostinato;
- drone;
- introduction of percussion; and
- use of chords.

Ask your pupils to perform and appraise their compositions, linked to the shared Suggested Success Criteria from the outset.

Plenary

- How did experimenting with musical ideas help to develop your performance skills?
- How did you use ideas from 'O Fortuna' to develop your own composition?
- Which elements of music were most effective in performing and composing in this activity?