

When George met Arnold



When George Met Arnold

Stage 5 & 6 Teaching Resource

Sydney Symphony Orchestra

Acknowledgements

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Through intensive listening students become involved in one of the highest orders of thinking.

As a teacher, by bringing students to a concert and studying music in the classroom, you are providing your students with a special pathway to musical knowledge through direct experience of and contact with live music.”

Richard Gill AO
(1941 - 2018)

Conductor, notable educator, and advocate. Richard was the founding Artistic Director of Education at Sydney Symphony. He has inspired generations of musicians through his work and continues to inspire new generations through his legacy.

Syllabus link

NSW Curriculum

Music by George Gershwin and Arnold Schoenberg that features in the program *When George Met Arnold* covers a range of topics from the NSW syllabuses:

Years 7-10 Elective

Art Music of the 20th and 21st centuries

Music for Large Ensembles

Music 1 Preliminary and HSC

Music of the 20th and 21st centuries

Music for Large Ensembles

Music 2 Preliminary

Additional Topic: Music 1900 - 1945

Music 2 HSC

Additional Topic: Music 1900 - 1945

Syllabus Outcomes

The activities included in this kit cover a range of outcomes across the NSW Music Syllabus stages, as mapped below:

Stage 4 and Stage 5 Elective Music

Activities	Syllabus Outcomes	Ideas for assessment
Activity 1: Composition and Performance	4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6	Performance of improvisation
Activity 2: Aural and Performance	4.1, 4.2, 4.7, 4.8 5.1, 5.2, 5.7, 5.8	Written responses Performance
Activity 3: Composition and Performance and Musicology	4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8	Viva Voce or similar
Activity 4: Musicology and Composition	4.7, 4.8, 4.9 5.7, 5.8, 5.9	Composition sketches
Activity 5: Aural	4.7, 4.8 5.7, 5.8	Written responses

Stage 6 Music 1

Activities	Syllabus Outcomes	Ideas for assessment
Activity 1: Composition and Performance	P1, P2, P3, P4 H1, H2, H3, H4	Performance of improvisation
Activity 2: Aural and Performance	P1, P2, P3, P7, P8 H1, H2, H3, H7, H8	Written responses Performance
Activity 3: Composition and Performance and Musicology	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9 H1, H2, H3, H4, H7, H8, H9	Viva Voce or similar
Activity 4: Musicology and Composition	P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9 H4, H5, H6, H7, H8, H9	Composition sketches

Activity 5: Aural	P7, P8 H7, H8	Written responses
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Stage 6 Music 2

Activities	Syllabus Outcomes	Ideas for assessment
Activity 1: Composition and Performance	P1, P2, P3, P4 H1, H2, H3, H4	Performance of improvisation
Activity 2: Aural and Performance	P1, P2, P3, P7, P8 H1, H2, H3, H7, H8	Written responses Performance
Activity 3: Composition and Performance and Musicology	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9 H1, H2, H3, H4, H7, H8, H9	Viva Voce or similar
Activity 4: Musicology and Composition	P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9 H4, H5, H6, H7, H8, H9	Composition sketches
Activity 5: Aural	P7, P8 H7, H8	Written responses

Composer background

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

George Gershwin, born Jacob Gershowitz on September 26, 1898, in Brooklyn, New York, was a prolific American composer and pianist. Growing up in a bustling, immigrant family, he displayed an early aptitude for music and began studying piano at a young age. He started composing in his teens.

Gershwin's popularity grew during the 1920s, where he became renowned for blending classical music with jazz, creating a distinctive and captivating sound. His compositions, including "Rhapsody in Blue," "An American in Paris," and the opera "Porgy and Bess," demonstrated his genius for merging various musical styles, leaving an indelible mark on American music.

His collaborations with his lyricist brother, Ira Gershwin, yielded numerous hits that became standards in the Great American Songbook, such as "I Got Rhythm," "Embraceable You," and "Someone to Watch Over Me."

Beyond his musical innovations, George Gershwin was also an accomplished pianist, often performing his own works to great acclaim. His untimely death at the age of 38 in 1937 due to a brain tumour left a profound void in the music world, yet his legacy endures as his compositions continue to be celebrated and performed globally, solidifying his place as one of America's greatest musical talents.

[biography partly written by ChatGPT]

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)

Arnold Schoenberg, born on September 13, 1874, in Vienna, Austria, was a ground-breaking composer, painter, music theorist, and teacher. He is recognised as one of the most influential figures in 20th-century music due to his innovative approaches to composition and his significant contributions to the development of atonal and twelve-tone music.

Early in his career, Schoenberg was influenced by the late Romantic style, composing lush and expressive works. However, he later pushed the boundaries of traditional tonality, pioneering the twelve-tone technique, also known as serialism, in which all twelve pitches of the chromatic scale are given equal importance. This revolutionary method liberated composers from the constraints of traditional tonal systems, whilst facilitating structural coherence in their compositions.

Schoenberg with his students Alban Berg and Anton Webern became known as the 'Second Viennese School'. Schoenberg's writings on music theory, such as "Harmonielehre" (Theory of Harmony), were very influential.

Fleeing the rise of Nazism, Schoenberg migrated to the United States in 1933, where he continued to compose, teach, and influence generations of musicians. His compositions, including "Pierrot Lunaire," "Verklärte Nacht," and his twelve-tone works, remain emblematic of his pioneering spirit and enduring impact on the evolution of music.

[biography partly written by ChatGPT]

Approximate Instrumentation for this concert

The When George Met Arnold concert will showcase a variety of compositions by George Gershwin and Arnold Schoenberg. The orchestration will feature a sizeable ensemble, including a solo piano. Below is an approximate representation of the instrumentation you can expect to see at the concert.

Woodwind	Brass	Percussion	Strings
3 Flutes (Piccolo)	4 Horns in D	Solo Piano	Violin I
2 Oboes	3 Trumpets	Timpani	Violin II
Cor Anglais	3 Trombones	Celesta	Viola
Clarinet in E flat,	Tuba	Percussion	Cello
Clarinet in A and B flat			Double Bass
Bass Clarinet			Harp
2 Bassoons			
Contrabassoon			

Listening Guide George and Arnold

The following listening guide overview covers a breadth of works features in the *When George Met Arnold* concert. Access the following [Meet the Music Spotify playlist](#) for the audio recordings.

Gershwin: *Girl Crazy Overture* Arr. Don Rose 1930

Access the *Girl Crazy Overture* audio recording by [clicking this link](#).

Girl Crazy was a musical with music by George Gershwin and lyrics by his brother Ira which premiered on Broadway in 1930. Like many operatic and theatrical overtures. This one consists of a medley of music from the show that is to follow. This includes some sequences of the dance music, as well as some of the songs that were premiered in this show. *Girl Crazy* contains three of Gershwin's very greatest songs: *I Got Rhythm*, *Embraceable You*, *But Not For Me*. All these songs feature in this overture.

Gershwin: *Promenade (Walking the Dog: The Real McCoy)* Arr. Berkowitz 1937

Access the *Promenade (Walking the Dog: The Real McCoy)* audio recording by [clicking this link](#).

This short work is simple, engaging and designed to make the listeners smile. It is in ternary structure (ABA), the middle section featuring a lush, legato string sound. The A section music on either side is primarily characterised by a wonderful clarinet solo in what was known as the 'hot' style.

Gershwin/Tedeschi: *Shall We Dance Variations* (improvised)

Shall We Dance with the title of a 1937 film starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. George Gershwin provided the orchestral score for the movie as well as a small number of songs with lyrics by his brother Ira. The song *Shall We Dance*, which Fred Astaire sings as a finale to the movie, as an unusual melody in the chorus, in that it starts on the 7th degree of a scale over the tonic chord. A singular characteristic like this is often a boon to an improviser. Please note that this music has no connection to the 1951 song of the same title (titles cannot be copyright) by Rogers and Hammerstein from the musical *The King and I*.

Schoenberg: *Notturmo for Strings and Harp*

Access the audio recording of *Notturmo for Strings and Harp* by [clicking this link](#).

This *Nottorno*, or night music, is an early work. It was composed when Schoenberg was 22 and he regarded it somewhat as a study, a piece written for him to hone his developing technique as a composer. He did not include it in his list of opus numbered compositions, that is to say pieces he considered central to his output as a composer. Nevertheless, this short work, which starts and ends with a chorale in the violas and cellos, is beautifully crafted and charming.

Schoenberg: *Five Pieces for Orchestra Op. 16 Mvt 3. Farben*

Access the audio recording for *Five Pieces for Orchestra Op. 16 Mvt 3. Farben* by [clicking this link](#).

The five pieces for orchestra were composed in 1909 for a very large ensemble, and revised 40 years later for a more manageably sized orchestra. The third of these is a fascinating exploration of a single chord. Harmony here is purely decorative, never functional. The movement explores the way in which tone colour can subtly, gradually and constantly change on the same restricted pitch set to produce a beautiful, shimmering effect.

Gershwin: *Rhapsody in Blue* (full orchestra, 1942) Berens edition

Access the audio recording of *Rhapsody in Blue* by [clicking this link](#).

2024 marks the centenary of the first performance of *Rhapsody in Blue*, Gershwin's most famous orchestral piece and one of the best known pieces in the entire repertoire. The sound world of *Rhapsody in Blue* is often used to evoke energy of America and Americans. The work was originally scored for piano and 23 musicians, but was shortly after reorchestrated for piano and full orchestra. The work is based on six related but contrasting and instantly recognisable themes. This concert features the second half of *Rhapsody in Blue*. This starts with the piano solo playing the foxtrot theme,



first with thoughtful rubato and then in tempo and rhythmically. This leads to a short but flamboyant cadenza, after which the orchestra enters with the love theme,



a lush and expensive melody which some say is reminiscent of Tchaikovsky. This theme is repeated fortissimo with the piano adding a counter melody. The piano then has another solo passage, this one based on the love theme, which is both tender and virtuosic. A more rhythmic solo piano passage then leads to the brass playing the love theme but quickly and rhythmically. This builds to a climax and is followed by the reintroduction of the Blues theme,



played by piano and full orchestra in a stride style. The theme from the very opening of Rhapsody in blue is reintroduced as a coda and it finishes in grandiose style.

Schoenberg: *Begleitungsmusik zu einer Lichtspielszene, Op.34*

Access the audio recording of *Begleitungsmusik zu einer Lichtspielszene, Op.34* by [clicking this link](#).

This is a highly unusual work, in that it is a film score for a film that does not exist. Schoenberg had a complex and ambivalent relationship with cinema. The opening section, 'threatening danger', features the interval of a minor third quite heavily, which is symbolic of tension.

The small ensemble used in this work enables Schoenberg to explore sparse textures. After a slow and quiet opening come up there follows an oboe solo with an angular melody accompanied by rhythmic and dissonant chords mainly in the strings. 4 woodwinds in unison then take up the theme in a musical texture whose constant restlessness evokes the title, 'threatening danger', very well. After an impassioned violin solo, the music builds to a climax and stops for a moment. It follows a passage in strict tempo whose tension derives from its dissonant intervals both melodic and harmonic. The extremely high tremolandos in the violins at the end of this passage seem to scream in horror.

Gershwin: *Catfish Row: Symphonic Suite from Porgy and Bess*

Access the audio recording of *Catfish Row: Symphonic Suite from Porgy and Bess* by [clicking this link](#).

The opera *Porgy and Bess* was Gershwin's last major work before his early death from a brain tumour. It was the work of which Gershwin himself was the proudest. Shortly after its

premiere in 1935, Gershwin himself composed an orchestral suite using music from the opera. This is in five movements. We are hearing the second, entitled *Porgy Sings*. It starts with a jaunty melody based on the song *I Got Plenty of Nothing*. Like so many of Gershwin's popular songs, this uses an AABA structure. After lyrical interlude on solo cello, the strings play the song *Bess, You is My Woman Now*, the great romantic theme from the opera.

Schoenberg: *String Quartet No. 2 Op. 10*

Access the audio recording of *String Quartet No. 2 Op. 10* by [clicking this link](#).

This is the second of four string quartets Schoenberg composed in his career. The arrangement for string orchestra was made by the composer himself. The original string quartet was composed in 1908 and, most unusually, features a soprano singer in later movements. We are to hear the opening movement in F# minor. This piece was composed in the period before Schoenberg started writing in the 12 note style, and has a more conventional tonal centre. However, it is a highly emotional work, and in order to express that emotion fully the tonality shifts rapidly and radically and the harmony is highly chromatic. Using pitch in this way for expressive purposes was it characteristic of certain European composers at the turn of the last century.

Gershwin: *Piano concerto in F*

Access the Piano Concerto in F by [clicking this link](#).

Gershwin's only Piano Concerto was composed in 1925 and Gershwin himself was the first soloist. It is in conventional fast slow fast form and the finale, which we are to hear, is a fast paced Rondo. Its principal theme is built around repeated semiquavers and a syncopated figure with a flat, or blue, third. Its episodes sometimes use more expansive themes, including themes from the first movement. However, the relentless and frenetic energy in this movement is ever present, until a stroke on the tam-tam announces the very grand coda.

Schoenberg: *Five Pieces for Orchestra Op. 16*

Access the audio recording for *Five Pieces for Orchestra* by [clicking this link](#).

The *Five Pieces for Orchestra* represent a transitional period in Schoenberg's output and in the history of 20th century music. Composed in 1909, this work finally severs all attachment to the tonal system and may be said to be freely atonal. Like the second string quartet, it is an excellent example of Expressionism in music where a variety of techniques to do with instrumental colour, texture, expressive techniques and, particularly, pitch combine to produce the maximum amount of emotional expression. We are hearing the first of these five pieces whose title may be translated as 'premonitions' or perhaps as 'forebodings' as the angular and confronting music seems full of anxiety.

Schoenberg: *Piano Concerto Op. 42 (1942)*

Access the audio recording for *Piano Concerto Op. 42* by [clicking this link](#).

Schoenberg's only Piano Concerto was composed in 1942, by which time he had established himself in California. It represents the style of Schoenberg's third period of creative output and uses the 12 tone technique. All four of the concerto's movements are based on the same row, although there are times when Schoenberg does not employ serial technique in the strictest possible way.



We are to hear an excerpt from opening of the third movement. This music is a perfect illustration of the fact that twelve note music is not always harsh and jagged. Certainly, there are dissonant harmonies in this adagio movement, but there is often a lyricism and even a romantic lushness about some of the writing early in this movement. As the music progresses to a virtuosic solo piano passage, however, the jaggedness emerges at times.

Schoenberg: *Pelléas und Melisande Op. 5* (Stein reduction)

Access the audio recording for *Pelléas und Melisande Op. 5* by [clicking this link](#).

Pelléas et Melisande is a play written in French in 1893 by Maurice Maeterlinck. It was a groundbreaking work of theatre in the symbolist style. It is rarely performed today, although Debussy's operatic setting of it is that part of the repertoire. Schoenberg wrote his tone poem in 1902 and is in the late Romantic style. Furthermore, it uses the leitmotif technique to create narrative and expression in instrumental music that was so much characteristic of the late Romantic composers. The story is a tragic one and we are to hear the finale which takes place after the death of Melisande and is chiefly concerned with her lover's despair and grief. The musical style is reminiscent of composers like Wagner and Strauss with a large orchestra and complex blends of tone colour, as well as harmonic progressions which are clearly tonal although highly chromatic. Despite the strongly contrasting musical techniques of the three creative periods in Schoenberg's career, the desire for emotional expression is a common theme in his music and is clearly evident in this tone poem.

Gershwin: *Embraceable You*

Access the audio recording of *Embraceable You* by [clicking this link](#).

Our concert finishes with an arrangement by Roman Benedict of Gershwin's song *Embraceable You*. This song comes from the 1930 musical *Girl Crazy* and has lyrics by Gershwin's brother Ira. Ira and George Gershwin left a great legacy of song and were major contributors to the Great American Songbook. *Embraceable You* was a particular favourite in the Gershwin family and they would all enjoy singing it at family gatherings.

Additional Media Resources

Below is a curated selection of additional third-party media resources teachers might choose to use in supporting their students to engage in concert preparation.

On *Porgy and Bess*

- [Porgy and Bess: A Symposium](#)
- [About Music: Porgy and Bess and racism](#)

On composing with twelve note rows

- [Writing a row](#)
- [Twelve-Tone Technique: Composition](#)

Interview with the creators of *When George Met Arnold*

When George Gershwin moved from New York to a new house in Hollywood in 1936, he discovered that the legendary Viennese composer Arnold Schoenberg lived around the corner.

These two geniuses of the 20th century struck up an unlikely friendship, playing tennis together every week, discussing music, art, love and the political situation in Europe.

When George Met Arnold is a unique event which combines a newly created film with live performance of selected works by both composers to tell the story of this remarkable relationship. The Sydney Symphony is joined by co-creators pianist Simon Tedeschi and conductor Roger Benedict.

ARTISTS

ROGER BENEDICT conductor

SIMON TEDESCHI piano

Delve into the thoughts of the artists and creative producers by watching the video linked below or scanning the QR code provided. Gain insight into the motivations and methodologies behind the creation of this program as they explore the impact that both Gershwin and Schoenberg have had on the art form and the intricacies involved in producing a concert experience like *When George Met Arnold*.

Interviewed by Jim Coyle and Sonia de Freitas

[Interview with Roger Benedict and Simon Tedeschi about *When George Met Arnold*](#)



SCAN ME

Learning Activities

Activity 1: Performance and Composition: *Shall We Dance*

At the end of this activity, you will have improvised music based on a key characteristic.

In the concert, Simon Tedeschi improvises music based on Gershwin song called Shall We Dance. The chorus of this song starts with the 7th degree of the scale over a tonic chord, effectively creating a chord of the major 7th. A striking characteristic like this is very helpful for an improviser, as it gives them a general musical idea on which to base their improvisations.

The start of a chorus over song in this style is known as the **head**. Below are notated the heads of three famous Gershwin songs, with some suggestions of the characteristics on which you may improvise. You may improvise on your own. Another effective and rewarding way to improvise is with a partner, one of you on a chord instrument and one of you on melodic instrument. If you have the capacity, after your improvisation you could swap harmonic and melodic roles. Remember to record your improvisations and to write a reflection in your composition process diary.

Task 1 – *Summertime*

Am⁶ E⁷/B Am⁶ E⁷/B Am⁶ E⁷/B Am⁶

The notable feature here is the chord progression. The chords are based on the minor sixth chord (popular in jazz) and move in parallel. Try moving them up more so C and then D are the bass notes. It may help to notate these before you improvise on the progression you have created.

Task 2 – *Embraceable You*

G⁶ C^{#o} Am⁷ D⁷

The step-wise ascending three note motif is an excellent starting point for the improviser, particularly on an unaccompanied melodic instrument. Also of interest is the fact that the opening tonic chord add the sixth (which is the first note of the melody). This is a useful feature if you are improvising on a harmony instrument.

Task 3 – I Got Rhythm

B \flat B \flat ⁶/D Cm⁷ F⁷ B \flat ⁶ E[°] Cm⁷ F⁷

B \flat B \flat ⁶/D Cm⁷ E \flat m⁶ B \flat /F F⁷ B \flat

This melody is (apart from one note) pentatonic. Therefore, an improvisation based on the pentatonic scale would work well. You could even do this using only the black notes on a keyboard. To help in this case, here is the head of the song again in G \flat major.

G \flat G \flat ⁶/B \flat A \flat m⁷ D \flat ⁷ G \flat ⁶ C[°] A \flat m⁷ D \flat ⁷

G \flat G \flat ⁶/B \flat A \flat m⁷ C \flat m⁶ G \flat /D \flat D \flat ⁷ G \flat

Activity 2: Performance and Aural Skills: *Nottorno*

At the end of this activity you will be able to perform a class arrangement of part of Schoenberg's *Nottorno*. You will also be able to identify key structural and expressive features of this piece.

Task 1

Perform this class arrangement of part of *Nottorno*. To access the score and parts [click this link](#).

Nottorno

Arnold Schoenberg

Adagio

The image displays a musical score for the piece 'Nottorno' by Arnold Schoenberg. The score is arranged for a class performance and includes the following parts: Melody, Harmony 1, Harmony 1 in B \flat , Harmony 2, Harmony 2 in B \flat , Harmony 2 in E \flat , Bass, and Piano. The tempo is marked 'Adagio' and the key signature is three flats (B \flat , E \flat , A \flat). The time signature is 2/4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains the Melody, Harmony 1, Harmony 1 in B \flat , Harmony 2, Harmony 2 in B \flat , Harmony 2 in E \flat , and Bass parts. The second system contains the Piano part. Dynamics include *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *f* (forte). The score features various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Task 2

Listen to the entire piece, *Notturmo for Harp and Strings* by Schoenberg. Access a recording with manuscript score by [clicking this link](#). Refer to the score accessible by [clicking this link](#).

1. 'Notturmo' means nocturne or night music. How does Schoenberg use the elements of music to reflect this idea?
2. With reference to pitch and performing media, account for the structure of this piece.

Activity 3: Composition, Performance and Musicology: *Catfish Row*

At the end of this activity, you will be able to play your own arrangement of a Gershwin song and you will be able to express informed and thoughtful opinions on Gershwin and race.

Task 1

A lead sheet contains essential information for the performance of a song, namely melody, chords and lyrics. Many musicians can perform straight from a lead sheet. Others, sometimes including those who play transposing instruments, may require more information.

On the next page is the lead sheet for *I Got Plenty o' Nuttin'* from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. You can also access the lead sheet by [clicking this link](#).

In a group, create an arrangement of this song (you may notate this, or sketch parts of this or all work just from the lead sheet). Rehearse and perform your arrangement.

I Got Plenty O' Nuttin'

George Gershwin

Ira Gershwin

G⁶ C⁶ G^{maj7} D⁷ G⁶ C⁶ G⁶ B⁷

I got plen-ty o' nut-tin' and nut-tin's plen-ty for me. Oh,
I got plen-ty o' nut-tin' and nut-tin's plen-ty for me. Oh,

5 E⁶ A^{maj7} E⁶ A^{maj7} E⁶ A^{maj7} D^{b,maj7} A^{m7} D⁷

got no car, got no mule, got no mi - se - ry. The
got the sun, got the moon, got the deep blue sea. The

10 G⁶ C⁶ G^{maj7} D⁷ G⁶ C⁶ G⁶ B⁷

folks with plen-ty o' plen-ty, they got-ta lock on the door. Oh,
folks with plen-ty o' plen-ty, they got to pray all the day. Oh,

14 E⁶ A^{maj7} E⁶ A^{maj7} E⁶ A^{maj7}

'fraid some - bo - dy going to rob 'em while there's out - a ma - king
seems with plen - ty, you got to wor - ry, to keep the de - vil

17 D^{b,maj7} A^{m7} D⁷ G⁶ C⁶ G⁶

more, what for?
away.

Task 2

After the first performance of *Porgy and Bess*, the eminent African American musician Duke Ellington was reported to have said, "The times are here to debunk Gershwin's lampblack Negroisms."

Questions around race have always plagued *Porgy and Bess* and opinions on this vary.

Research the question: "Is *Porgy and Bess* a racially problematic work?". Do this thoughtfully and form your own opinion.

Present your findings as:

- A viva voce
- A panel discussion with your classmates
- A vlog entry
- A podcast
- A musicology essay
- In some other engaging format

Activity 4: Musicology and Composition: Schoenberg Piano Concerto

At the end of this activity, you will be able to create twelve-note rows and compose using them.

Task 1

Schoenberg's Piano Concerto is based on this tone row:



In it, all twelve notes of the chromatic scale appear once. In serial, or twelve note, compositions, the notes in the row appear in order first. After this the composer may subject the row to various modifications such as transposition, fragmentation, retrograde and inversion.

Listen to the opening of the [Schoenberg's Piano Concerto](#) and read the score. Notice how the row is played at the very outset in the right hand (although Schoenberg breaks his own rule and repeats Ab/G# before moving on to C#).

Investigate the twelve-note system, how it works, and what Schoenberg believed the benefits were for composers.

Task 2

You are going to start a composition based on a twelve-note row of your own devising. You may choose any combination of pitched instruments. Try to use development techniques such as transposition, fragmentation, retrograde and inversion. As with all composition activities, sketching and planning are ESSENTIAL before you spend substantial time on notation software.

Some twelve-note rows are devised by composers for particular effects because of the predominance of certain intervals. For example, Alban Berg's Violin Concerto uses a row entirely made of ascending thirds to give the work an optimistic and somewhat consonant feel.



On the other hand, Anton Webern's Variations for Piano uses a row with a predominance of augmented fourths and minor seconds, emphasising dissonance as much as possible.



Your task is to create a twelve-tone row which emphasises a pitch-based characteristic and to create a piece of music based on it.

Activity 5: Aural: Gershwin Piano Concerto


At the end of this activity you will be able to identify key feature of an excerpt from this piece by listening and reading the score.

Listen to an excerpt from the third movement of [Gershwin's Piano Concerto](#)

(26'29"-27'-22") and follow the score excerpt (page 121 – 126) by [clicking this link](#). The score excerpt is also provided as an Appendix to this resource.

Task 1

Explain the following notations:

<i>cresc. poco a poco</i> (piano, bar 61)	
 <p>(piano, bar 72)</p>	
<i>leggiero</i> (piano, bar 91)	
Pizz. (strings, bar 103)	
<i>marcato</i> (piano, bar 107)	

Task 2

Account for the composer's use of texture on pages 123 and 124:

Task 3

Identify all the instruments playing and resting of the first beat of figure 5.

Task 4

Analyse the chords played by the strings in bars 113, 114, 115 and 116.

113	
114	
115	
116	

Suggested Answers and Teaching Notes

Activity 1

Teaching Notes

Improvisation is a very useful skill for a musician to develop. It combines both performance and composition skills and can lead to all sorts of very positive outcomes. Some students, however, struggle to get started as improvisors and are nervous about doing it. The key here for the teacher is patience and gentle encouragement. Try to get your students to stay with this activity – it can prove very worthwhile.

Activity 2

Teaching Notes

- When rehearsing the class arrangement, take account of the very slow tempo. It may be better for your student to feel quavers as beat rather than crotchets.
- 4 flats! NB
- The aural questions may be tackled with or without the score, but using the score is recommended, even for Music 1 students (remember Music 1 is a notation optional course, not a non-notation course). Even students who rarely read scores will be able to glean some useful information, particularly on the structure question.
- These question may be tackled collectively by the class, or collaboratively in small groups or pairs, or individually in class or even in a timed exam-style activity (the questions are similar in style and score to Music 1 exam questions)

1. 'Nottorno' means nocturne or night music. How does Schoenberg use the elements of music to reflect this idea?

Answers may include:

Predominantly quiet dynamics

Consonant harmonies for a peaceful effect

Largely homophonic texture which is less challenging for this listener

Conventional playing techniques

Regular rhythm and pulse, but not an insistent beat, which has a lulling effect.

2. With reference to pitch and performing media, account for the structure of this piece.

Answers may include:

The A music is introduced quietly by the lower strings

Then A is repeated but an octave higher and with a thicker texture
Then a short bridge or transition
Then a variation of A is played with the solo violin adding much more elaborate figurations in a very high register
Then a new bridge or transition, some of which is the solo violin unaccompanied in high register
Then the A music is played one last time by the lower strings in a slower tempo, otherwise the same as the first iteration of the A music
Finally, a short coda, involving a cadence from iv6 – I (Dbm6-Ab).

Activity 3

Teaching Notes

- Task 1 has certain similarities to Informal Learning in the music classroom. In particular, students will have very different ways of engaging with music presented as a lead sheet and working in a small group. It is important that they are given the time and space to work in their own way and their own pace to find a solution to this. This is very much a student-centred activity that requires a light touch from the teacher. If you feel a need to get involved as teacher, consider doing so with an instrument in your hand as part of the ensemble.
- Task 2 is extremely easy to accomplish poorly by using Wikipedia and/or ChatGPT. That misses the point entirely. The object here is critical thinking; there are no right and wrong answers to this question, the students need to engage thoughtfully with the issues and come to their own conclusions (or not). These skills become more important as student progress through high school and into university. Again, this is a student-centred activity and one that requires a relatively small amount of engagement from you as teacher.

Activity 4


Teaching Notes

- The opening of the Piano Concerto shows the original row very clearly. It is more hidden elsewhere in the piece.
- The point about serial composition being capable of a great variety of sound-worlds is an important one, and Berg and Webern are two composers who used this technique whose music differs very greatly.
- Sometime, students are very reluctant to compose using this technique; occasionally they embrace it very enthusiastically. Try to build in some differentiation to this activity; extend the keen and capable by using more development techniques and different rhythms and tone colours. You could even introduce integral serialism for very advanced students. The basis standard is the creation and notation of a twelve-note row and its deployment in a new musical composition.
- Students MUST work out their row (and possibly some permutations) before they go onto notation software. Starting a composition on a computer is not encouraged in this instance.

Activity 5

Task 1

Explain the following notations:

cresc. poco a poco (piano, bar 61)	Gradually get louder
 <p>(piano, bar 72)</p>	Alternate left and right hands to play semiquavers
leggiero (piano, bar 91)	lightly
Pizz. (strings, bar 103)	Pluck the strings
marcato (piano, bar 107)	Play forcefully

Task 2

Account for the composer's use of texture on pages 123 and 124:

Answers may include:

- Legato melody in oboe and clarinets
- Semiquaver figuration played by piano
- Strings and bassoon 1 have held chords, providing a lush background
- Staccato and rhythmic bass part played by bassoon 2 and double bass
- Cor anglais and bass clarinet have a driving, quaver accompaniment rhythm

This is a thick and somewhat complex texture, but still clearly hierarchical in terms of melody and accompaniment.

Task 3

Identify all the instruments playing and resting of the first beat of figure 5.

Playing	Resting
1 st flute, 1 st oboe, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, piano, all strings.	2 nd flute, 2 nd oboe, cor anglais, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons [percussion]

Task 4

Analyse the chords played by the strings in bars 113, 114, 115 and 116.

113	Bb Major (root position)
114	Db Major (root position)
115	Bb Major (root position)
116	Db Major (root position)

59

Solo

f *decresc.*

p *cresc. poco a poco*

64

Solo

65

Solo

f

f

f *mf*

72

F. Hn in F 1.2

F. Hn in F 3.4

B. Tbn

Tba

4 open

f

3. open

f

B. Tbn

mf

(4)

Solo

f

marcato

Vc.

D. B.

arco

f

arco

mf

(4)

79

F. Hn in F 1.2

F. Hn in F 3

B. Tbn
Tba

Solo

Vc.

D. B.



87

Ob. 1.2

Cl. in Bb 1.2

F. Hn in F 1.2

F. Hn in F 3.4

Tba

Solo

Vc.

D. B.

91

Ob. 1.2 *pp*

C. A. *pp*

Cl. in B \flat 1.2 1. *pp*

B. Cl. *pp*

Bsn 1.2 *pp*

Solo *p leggiero*

Vln I arco *pp*

Vln II *pp*

Vla arco *pp*

Vc. *pp*

D. B. *pp*

This musical score page, numbered 124, covers measures 97 through 102. The instrumentation includes:

- Ob. 1.2:** Oboe 1 and 2, playing a melodic line with triplets and slurs.
- C. A.:** Clarinet in A, playing a steady eighth-note accompaniment.
- Cl. in Bb 1.2:** Clarinet in B-flat 1 and 2, playing a melodic line with triplets and slurs.
- B. Cl.:** Bass Clarinet, playing a steady eighth-note accompaniment.
- Bsn 1.2:** Bassoon 1 and 2, playing a melodic line with slurs.
- Solo:** Solo piano part, featuring a complex texture with chords and arpeggios.
- Vln I:** Violin I, playing a melodic line with slurs.
- Vln II:** Violin II, playing a melodic line with slurs.
- Vla:** Viola, playing a melodic line with slurs.
- Vc.:** Violoncello, playing a melodic line with slurs.
- D. B.:** Double Bass, playing a melodic line with slurs.

The score is written in a key signature of three flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor) and a common time signature. The woodwind parts feature several triplet markings and slurs. The string parts provide a harmonic foundation with various rhythmic patterns and melodic lines.

109

Fl. 1.2

Ob. 1.2

Cl. in Bb 1.2

Solo

Vc.

113

Solo

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

D. B.

pizz.

mp

2

117

Solo

mf