



Lesson Plan – Venus

Learning objectives

Pupils will –

- Respond to music through movement and drawing
- Identify ascending and descending melodies

Key vocabulary

Melody: a musical sentence, a tune

Ascending: moving upwards in pitch from low to high

Descending: moving downwards in pitch from high to low

Graphic score: A visual representation of music

Resources

- Venus performance
- Venus resource
- Paper and art materials
- Optional: Instruments (classroom percussion, pitched and/or unpitched)

Lesson outline

1. Introduction

Discuss how music can describe feelings

2. Task 1: Melody shapes

Listen to short extracts from Venus and draw the shape of the melodies in the air

3. Task 2: Create abstract art

Listen to the full piece and draw the flowing lines inspired by the music to create a piece of abstract art

4. Conclusion

Share artwork and discuss similarities and differences

Assessment

Can pupils identify ascending and descending melodies?

Extension

Use the new artworks as graphic scores and create music from them
See below.

Task 1: Melody shapes

1. Listen to the horn melody at the very start of Venus and ask your class draw its shape in the air with their finger. Written down, it looks like this:



2. Discuss its shape. Did your children notice that it moves slowly upwards in pitch - it ascends. Did they spot that it happens twice?
3. Listen to the flutes. They overlap with the horn melody. Can you children draw the shape of this melody in the air? Their melody looks like this:



4. Again, discuss your findings. The flutes move downwards slowly - they descend.
5. Keep listening to the beginning of Venus and encourage your class to keep drawing the melody shapes in the air. You might want to try this with everyone closing their eyes.

Task 2: Create abstract art

1. Give out paper and art materials. Listen to Venus again. Ask your class to draw the melody shapes they hear. If the pitches move upwards they should draw a shape that moves upwards too.
2. There are no wrong answers and whatever each child draws is correct. At the end of the exercise you will have made lots of pieces of abstract art
3. Share the artwork and discuss similarities and differences.
4. Ask your class how the music made them feel? Venus is the Bringer of Peace, do they feel peaceful and calm now?

Extension activity: Graphic scores

1. A graphic score is a visual representation of music. Orchestral musicians read a complex system of lines and dots but scores don't have to look like that. Your abstract pictures can be graphic scores.
2. Split into small working groups. Ask each group to choose one of their abstract pieces to use as a graphic score. Perhaps tell your children that often the more simple pictures make the best scores.
3. Give each group a selection of instruments – whatever you have available – and ask them to make one sound for each shape on their page.
4. When this achieved challenge them to make a piece using these sounds that reflects overall picture on the page. They may like to decide first where on the picture the sounds start – are they reading from left to right for example? Or top to bottom? They might prefer to appoint a conductor - this person will point to shapes on the page, the others in the group will play them.
5. When each group has a finished piece that is the same every time, hear the pieces one by one and discuss how they relate to their scores.
6. You might want to show your children the musical examples above. Perhaps they will spot that when the music ascends, the notes move up the page too and vice versa.