

A story learns to sing

Claudio Monteverdi · L'Orfeo

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Opera brings a story to life through voices, instruments, and acting. Monteverdi wrote L'Orfeo for an audience at the Duke of Mantua's court.¹

1. Name the composer and work. What kind of audience first heard it?

2. Observe a sung passage. Describe one vocal or acting choice and one instrumental sound.

3. Explain why "the first opera" is not an accurate label for L'Orfeo. Use the reading.

4. Imagine music for a character entering a mysterious room. Describe two sound choices and explain why.

READING & LISTENING CREDITS

1. Opera North · A Brief History of Opera
<https://www.operanorth.co.uk/explore-opera/a-brief-history-of-opera/>

2. Claudio Monteverdi, L'Orfeo · Teatro La Fenice · John Eliot Gardiner, Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2snjRPI6yY>

A violin paints spring

Antonio Vivaldi · The Four Seasons

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Vivaldi's four violin concertos were published in 1725. Each one represents a season, with poems and score markings that connect sounds to scenes.¹

1. What event does 1725 mark: composition, publication, or a modern recording?

2. Draw or describe two different nature sounds you hear suggested in "Spring."

3. Choose one change in pitch, loudness, speed, or texture. How does it help suggest your scene?

4. Plan a short piece about weather. Give it three sections and describe a sound for each.

READING & LISTENING CREDITS

1. Boston Baroque • Martin Pearlman's program notes
<https://baroque.boston/vivaldi-four-seasons>

2. Vivaldi Four Seasons: Spring (La Primavera) • Voices of Music • Alana Youssefian, baroque violin
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3LiztfE1X7E>

Music becomes a conversation

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart · The Magic Flute

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

The Magic Flute first appeared in Vienna on September 30, 1791. Mozart's German-language work includes comic scenes as well as serious ones.¹

1. Define premiere. Which composer and work belong to this 1791 stop?

2. Track the duet with three labeled moments: singer A, singer B, and together.

3. Describe how repetition or vocal contrast helps make the scene playful.

4. Compare this duet with L'Orfeo. Give one similarity and one difference you can support.

READING & LISTENING CREDITS

1. Royal Ballet and Opera Collections • Die Zauberflöte
<https://www.rohcollections.org.uk/work.aspx?work=593>

2. The Magic Flute: "Pa-, pa-, pa-, Papageno" duet • Royal Ballet and Opera • Christina Gansch and Roderick Williams
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9QOZDZB-AnM>

An orchestra finds its voice

Ludwig van Beethoven · Symphony No. 1

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Beethoven's First Symphony premiered in Vienna on April 2, 1800. It uses four movements and gives important roles to winds as well as strings.¹

1. When did this symphony premiere? Explain how that differs from its composition dates.

2. Identify two instrumental sounds. Describe how you distinguished them.

3. Describe one contrast in loudness, speed, texture, or instrumental color.

4. Explain one way an orchestra can suggest a conversation without using words.

READING & LISTENING CREDITS

1. Eastman School of Music • Beethoven Symphony Basics
<https://www.esm.rochester.edu/beethoven/symphony-no-1/>

2. Beethoven: Symphony No. 1 • hr-Sinfonieorchester / Frankfurt Radio Symphony • Andrés Orozco-Estrada
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A6h4Gi2_LA4

A theme becomes a clue

Richard Wagner · Die Walküre

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Wagner's Die Walküre premiered in Munich in 1870. In his Ring cycle, recurring musical themes connect with characters, events, emotions, and objects.¹

1. Explain leitmotif in your own words.

2. Describe the energy of the "Ride." Name a sound or rhythm that supports your description.

3. Why might a repeated musical idea help an audience follow a long story?

4. Invent a musical clue for a character. Explain how you would change it if the character became worried.

READING & LISTENING CREDITS

1. Metropolitan Opera • Die Walküre program (PDF)

<https://www.metopera.org/globalassets/user-information/nightly-opera-streams/week-16/playbills/die-walkure.pdf>

2. Opera North • A Brief History of Opera

<https://www.operanorth.co.uk/explore-opera/a-brief-history-of-opera/>

3. Wagner: The Ride of the Valkyries • Berliner Philharmoniker • Hans Knappertsbusch • Universal Music Group

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1r-ftUuwsHk>

The beat gets a surprise

Scott Joplin · Maple Leaf Rag

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Scott Joplin's Maple Leaf Rag was published in 1899 by John Stark. This highly syncopated piano piece spread through sheet music as well as later recordings.¹

1. Who composed Maple Leaf Rag, and what happened in 1899?

2. Tap the pulse while listening. Describe where the melody feels different from your tapping.

3. Explain syncopation using your own example or a simple rhythm drawing.

4. Compare sheet music with a recording. What does each let a listener or performer do?

READING & LISTENING CREDITS

1. Library of Congress • Scott Joplin and the Magical Maple Leaf Rag
<https://blogs.loc.gov/loc/2024/11/scott-joplin-the-magical-maple-leaf-rag/>

2. Scott Joplin: Maple Leaf Rag • Dario Ronchi • pianist and uploader
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bCxLAr_bwpA

Rhythm breaks expectations

Igor Stravinsky · The Rite of Spring

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

The Rite of Spring premiered as a ballet in Paris on May 29, 1913. Its changing rhythms, strong accents, and clashing sounds challenged familiar expectations.¹

1. What happened on May 29, 1913? Is the linked video from that event?

2. Draw the strong and weak accents you hear in a short passage.

3. Name one reason two listeners might respond differently to unfamiliar music.

4. Rewrite this claim carefully: "Everyone rioted because the music was bad."

READING & LISTENING CREDITS

1. Museum of Music History • First performances in 1913
<https://momh.org.uk/exhibitions/two-important-first-performances-in-1913/>

2. Classical Music • The Rite of Spring guide
<https://www.classical-music.com/features/works/stravinsky-rite-of-spring>

3. Stravinsky: The Rite of Spring • London Symphony Orchestra • Sir Simon Rattle
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkwqPJZe8ms>

Musical worlds meet

George Gershwin · Rhapsody in Blue

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Rhapsody in Blue premiered in New York on February 12, 1924, with Gershwin at the piano. Ferde Grofé orchestrated the accompaniment for Paul Whiteman's ensemble.¹

1. Name the composer and the orchestrator credited for the 1924 performance.

2. Describe one solo sound and one ensemble sound. How are they different?

3. Explain why "first commercial jazz record" is not the same as "invention of jazz."

4. Choose two earlier stops. Explain how their ways of sharing music differ from recorded performances.

READING & LISTENING CREDITS

1. Library of Congress • Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue
<https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200156779>

2. Library of Congress • The Painful Birth of Blues and Jazz
<https://blogs.loc.gov/folklife/2017/02/birth-of-blues-and-jazz/>

3. Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue (Live) • Leonard Bernstein and Los Angeles Philharmonic • recording supplied by Universal Music Group
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvVlyrU7AiE>

A record becomes a phenomenon

Bill Haley and His Comets · Rock Around the Clock

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Bill Haley and His Comets recorded Rock Around the Clock in 1954. After its use in the film Blackboard Jungle, it reached number one in July 1955.¹

1. Match 1954 and 1955 to recording and chart breakthrough.

2. Name two instruments you hear, and describe one feature of the rhythm.

3. Name an earlier musician who influenced rock performers. Why should that person be included?

4. Explain why “first,” “famous,” and “influential” are not interchangeable words.

READING & LISTENING CREDITS

1. Library of Congress • Rock Around the Clock essay (PDF)

<https://www.loc.gov/static/programs/national-recording-preservation-board/documents/RockAroundTheClock.pdf>

2. Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Library • Sister Rosetta Tharpe

https://library.rockhall.com/sister_rosetta_tharpe

3. Bill Haley and His Comets: Rock Around the Clock • The Ed Sullivan Show • performance of August 7, 1955

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWkuM2IPbZQ>

The stage enters the living room

The Beatles · The Ed Sullivan Show

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

The Beatles arrived in New York on February 7, 1964. Two days later they performed live on The Ed Sullivan Show, reaching viewers far beyond the studio.¹

1. Label February 7 and February 9, 1964, with the correct events.

2. Name three sound sources you hear in the performance.

3. Compare this audience with L'Orfeo's original audience. Give one similarity and one difference.

4. Choose three stops. Explain how musicians used sound or technology differently to reach listeners.

READING & LISTENING CREDITS

1. The Beatles • Ladies and Gentlemen, The Beatles!
<https://www.thebeatles.com/ladies-and-gentlemen-beatles>

2. Opera North • A Brief History of Opera
<https://www.operanorth.co.uk/explore-opera/a-brief-history-of-opera/>

3. I Want to Hold Your Hand (Live on The Ed Sullivan Show) • The Beatles • SOFA Entertainment / Universal
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jenWdyITzs>