

Composer Spotlight: A Musical Investigation

Learning objective: To research the life and works of a significant composer, identifying the mood and style of their music.

Choose a famous composer to research. Use books or library resources to complete this profile. Look closely at the instrumentation and the emotions evoked by their most famous pieces. When finished, reflect on how their life experiences might have influenced the melodies they created.

Word bank: composition · symphony · orchestra · dynamics · tempo · melody · instrumentation · creative · classical · rhythm

1. Name of the composer and their era: State the composer's full name and the approximate years they were composing. (2 marks)

2. Musical Style: Describe the 'feel' of their music. Is it fast, slow, loud, quiet, or perhaps a mix of both? Use musical vocabulary. (4 marks)

3. Major Works: Identify two famous pieces written by this composer. Why do you think these pieces became so well-known? (3 marks)

4. Explain why: Choose one piece by your composer. Explain why you think the composer chose specific instruments to tell the story of the music. (4 marks)

5. Compare and contrast: How is this composer's style different from a different composer you have listened to in class? Justify your answer using examples. (4 marks)

6. What might happen if: Imagine your composer was born in the modern day. How might their music change if they had access to modern computer software and electronic instruments instead of a full orchestra? (5 marks)

Extension challenge: Compose a short rhythm pattern of four bars that you think represents the personality of your chosen composer. Explain your rhythmic choices to a partner.