Max’s Musical Dynamics Investigation

Learning objective: To understand and describe how dynamics (volume) change the mood and character of a piece of music.

Max the monkey is listening to different pieces of music and needs your help to describe the sounds! Listen to three different musical tracks. For each track, identify the volume, explain how it makes you feel, and suggest why the composer might have chosen that volume for that part of the song.

Word bank: Pianissimo (very quiet) · Piano (quiet) · Mezzo-piano (moderately quiet) · Mezzo-forte (moderately loud) · Forte (loud) · Fortissimo (very loud) · Crescendo (getting louder) · Diminuendo (getting quieter)

1. Track 1 Analysis: Describe the volume using the correct musical term from the word bank and explain the mood it creates. (2 marks)

2. Track 2 Analysis: Does the volume stay the same or does it change? Describe the use of crescendo or diminuendo if you hear one. (2 marks)

3. Track 3 Analysis: If you were the composer, would you make this piece louder or quieter at the end? Explain your choice. (3 marks)

4. Application: Choose a piece of music you know. Describe how the dynamics change throughout the song and how that helps tell a story. (3 marks)

5. Challenge: Why do you think a composer might use 'fortissimo' (very loud) right after a 'pianissimo' (very quiet) section? (2 marks)

Extension challenge: Compose your own 4-bar rhythm. Mark your dynamics above each bar (e.g., p, mf, f) and perform it for a partner to see if they can hear the changes!