

Unit Lesson – Contextual Listening

Lesson #1

Objective: Students will aurally analyze a composition based on seven categories: medium, melody, harmony, meter, form, style, and composer.

Categories:

1. Medium – Students should list the instruments or voices that are being performed in the excerpt.
2. Melody – Students should describe the melody that is being performed in the excerpt.
3. Harmony – Students should describe the harmony that is being performed in the excerpt.
4. Meter – Students should describe the meter that is being performed in the excerpt.
5. Form – Students should describe the form that is being performed in the excerpt.
6. Style – Students should describe the style that is being performed in the excerpt.
7. Composer – Students should list the composer or possible composers of the excerpt that is being performed

Assessing Prior Knowledge: Students are not expected to have any prior knowledge to this exercise in the beginning stage. However, students may have some knowledge of the categories to the evaluation. Most students may know information concerning medium, meter, style, and composer.

Teacher Input:

Each student will use the given handout to complete this assignment. (Worksheet on page 4.)

Students will use each category to aurally analyze and describe what they hear from the excerpt. NO information will be given prior to the first listening.

Selected Excerpt: Use a musical excerpt that you are very familiar with and can correctly analyze and describe each category to your student. Below is a variety of selections that you could use to begin the process.

Possible Examples of Musical Excerpts:

1. Glenn Miller – “In the Mood”
2. Mozart – “Adagio Movement, Clarinet Concerto”
3. Ravel – “Bolero”
4. Pachelbel – “Canon in D”
5. Percy Grainger – “Molly on the Shore”
6. Wagner – “Elsa’s Procession to the Cathedral”
7. Maynard Ferguson – “Gospel John”
8. Norah Jones – “Don’t Know Why”
9. Dizzy Gillespie – “Manteca”
10. Stravinsky – Firebird Suite

The excerpt will be played one time for the students to answer the questions from the handout. After listening to the excerpt, have a round table discussion with the students to answer the questions from the handout. Expect non-musical vocabulary during this round table discussion. However, while the students are using non-musical vocabulary, as the instructor, try to give them the musical vocabulary needed to take the next step into analyzing the excerpt.

Examples of non-musical vocabulary:

Category “Melody” –

Student Analysis: “The melody is pretty.” This is a typical first day response for the students.

Teacher Input: “How is the melody pretty? Is it legato? Does it move step wise or have leaps?” Give the students the vocabulary to take the next step into correct analysis.

Now play the excerpt a second time and have the students begin to apply the musical vocabulary to correctly aurally analyze the chosen excerpt.

The list below describes a starting point to help focus the students on each category. Each category has a few questions that can help the students to focus from a broad spectrum to a more focused analysis. Describe this list prior to playing the excerpt the second time.

Categories:

1. Medium – This category will need to be explained to the students that they are to write down the instruments or voices that they hear during the excerpt. Example needs of this category are:
 - a. Recognize the timbre of the different instruments.
 - b. Help to recognize what the potential style and harmony may be.
 - c. Distinguish which instrument has melody versus harmony.
2. Melody – This category will be used to draw attention to the melody line of the excerpt. Example needs of this category are:
 - a. Is the melody step-wise or arpeggiated?
 - b. What are the first three or four scale degrees of the melodic line?
 - c. Is the melody embellished by non-chord tones at the beginning or end?
 - d. What are the last two scale degrees of the melodic line?
 - e. In the melody, is phrase 2 a repetition of phrase 1?
3. Harmony – This category will be used to draw attention to the harmony of the excerpt. Examples of this category are:
 - a. What is the harmonic progression of the last measure?
 - b. What is the final cadence of phrase 1?
 - c. Is the cadence half, authentic, plagal, or deceptive at the end of phrase 1?
 - d. Is the chordal harmony a pedal point, passing chord, syncopated, etc.?
4. Meter – This category will be used to list the meter of the selected excerpt. Examples of this category are:
 - a. Is the meter simple duple or simple triple?

- b. Is the meter compound duple or compound triple?
 - c. Is the meter asymmetrical?
- 5. Form – This category will be used to describe the form of the selected excerpt. Examples of this category are:
 - a. Is the selected excerpt binary form, rounded binary, or rondo?
 - b. What is the form of the selected excerpt:
 - 1. intro, a, a', b
 - 2. intro, a, b, b'
 - 3. intro, a, b, a
 - 4. a, b, a, b'
- 6. Style – This category will be used to describe the style of the selected excerpt. Examples of this category are:
 - a. Is this an example of jazz, orchestra, choir, etc.?
 - b. Is the excerpt an example of melody with chordal accompaniment?
 - c. What style best describes the excerpt?
- 7. Composer – This category will be used to list the possible composers of the selected excerpt.
 - a. Who is the composer of the excerpt?
 - b. Who are the potential composers of the excerpt?
 - c. What is the genre of the selected excerpt?

The following acrostic can be used to remember the categories: Me-Me-Ha-Me-Fo-Sty-Co.

After the second playing, again use a round table discussion to describe each category, while only allowing musical vocabulary. This exercise should be used daily for two weeks, during this time, the students should begin to expand their musical vocabulary to demonstrate an understanding of each category.

Assessment:

- 1. Are the students able to use musical vocabulary to correctly analyze each category?
- 2. Are the students correctly analyzing the musical excerpt?

Next Lesson: Lesson #2

After a two week period of the categorical exercises, begin to pass out questions that relate to the categories. Start with three or four questions that are very specific about the categories. Before playing the excerpt, have the students read the questions and place the correct category beside the question. This will help them to rule out the non-essential needs of the performed excerpt. These excerpts should be done daily or a minimum of three times per week.

Contextual Listening Student Handout

Name: _____

Listen to the following excerpt and use an aural analysis to correctly describe the captions below.

<u>Medium:</u>
<u>Melody:</u>
<u>Harmony:</u>
<u>Meter:</u>
<u>Form:</u>
<u>Style:</u>
<u>Composer:</u>

After listening to excerpt:

Composer: _____

Excerpt Title: _____

Genre: _____