

Year 8 Music Knowledge Booklet

Spring Term Minimalism

Name:

Class:



Year 8 Music

Minimalism

This term, we are going to use the skills and knowledge of rhythm and pitch developed previously to explore composing our own melodies. Minimalism is a style of music from the 1960s which used very simple musical ideas to form large pieces of music. We will look at several techniques they used to help you come up with your own piece by the end of the topic.

Big Questions

1. What is Minimalism?
2. How do you perform a piece of Minimalist music?
3. Can you spot the features of Minimalism?
4. What is musical texture?
5. How do you incorporate changes of texture into a group performance?
6. What is note addition?
7. How do you incorporate additive patterns into a group performance?
8. How much do I know about Minimalism?
9. What does my group need to do to improve our performance?
10. What can I remember about Minimalism?
11. How well can we perform 'Series 6'?

Background Information

Music from the 20th Century

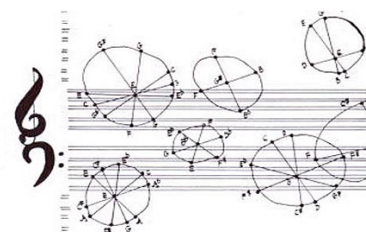
Throughout the 20th Century, composers sought to push music in new and interesting directions. At the beginning of the century, Schoenberg pushed the boundaries by abandoning lots of the rules of writing 'in a key', developing the style we now know as expressionism.



Expressionism led into serialism, which is a very tightly controlled way of writing music, using quite a mathematical approach to selecting pitches and other aspects of the music.



Some composers felt restricted by serialism so decided to go in the opposite direction and give lots of control to the performers, using symbols or instructions instead of music and using instruments in unconventional ways, like bowing a cymbal, plucking piano strings or putting them in water. This was known as experimental music.



Minimalism

La Monte Young and Terry Riley started out as experimental composers in the 1960s. La Monte Young took the ideas of drones and repetition to extremes and used these as the basis for his compositions. As this music didn't contain very many musical ideas and used minimal resources, the style became known as **Minimalism**. Terry Riley experimented with looping tape recordings to create his pieces. His most famous piece *In C* used lots of repeated fragments based around the note C. Steve Reich worked with Terry Riley and also used tape loops to experiment. By playing two copies of the same recording at slightly different speeds, he came up with the concept of **phasing**.

Features of Minimalism

- ⇒ Loops—repeated musical ideas made of cells
- ⇒ Drones—a long, continuous or repeated note
- ⇒ Layering—adding new musical parts forming a complex texture
- ⇒ Note addition—gradually adding notes to the simple, repeated pattern
- ⇒ Note subtraction—gradually taking away notes from a more complicated pattern

Knowledge Organiser - Minimalism

KEYWORDS

Minimalism A modern styles of music starting in the 1960s

Hypnotic The feeling this style can give

Motif/Cell A short musical idea

Ostinato A repeated pattern

Texture Element of Music that describes the number of parts or layers in a piece

Phasing Two performers playing the same part, one slightly faster and getting out of time

Looping Repeating something on a loop

Note addition Gradually adding notes or rests to a repeating cell/motif

Note subtraction Gradually taking away notes or rests from a repeating cell/motif

Treble Clef Notes

E F G A B C D E F

Line Notes

E G B D F

Space Notes

F A C E

Bass Clef Notes

G A B C D E F G A

Line Notes:

G B D F A

Space Notes:

A C E G

Note Addition

Note Subtraction

Rhythms into Syllables

Tea Coffee Lemonade Coca-Cola Pineapple

Semibreve **Minim** **Crotchet** **Quaver** **Semiquaver**

4 beats 2 beats 1 beat 1/2 beat 1/4 beat

Rhythm Symbols and Values

Homework Tasks

1) Minimalism Display Poster

Create a poster on information booklet on minimalism, including what led to it's creation, what other art forms it relates to and what musical features are involved in the style.

Due Date: _____

2) Composer Research

Complete a fact file on the background, style and repertoire of a minimalist composer.

Due Date: _____

3) Minimalist Techniques

Research the following minimalist techniques and write the definitions here:

- ⇒ Looping
- ⇒ Note addition
- ⇒ Note subtraction
- ⇒ Augmentation
- ⇒ Diminution
- ⇒ Metamorphosis

Due Date: _____

Sample Assessment (Written)

Minimalism Written & Listening Test

Questions based around key terms

Section A – Key Terms

1. Term to describe melody & accompaniment

Questions based on minimalism facts

Section B – Minimalism

1. Name a minimalist composer.

Listening questions based on the elements of music, like instrumentation, tempo, dynamics and time signature.

Section C – Listening

Wheelbarrow Walk by Michael Nyman

1. Name the first instrument that you hear.

Sample Assessment (Practical)

Minimalist Composition Task

You will need to show in your piece that you understand:

- ⇒ Looping / Ostinati
- ⇒ Note addition / Additive patterns
- ⇒ Texture / Textural change
- ⇒ How to structure a piece of music, with an organised start and finish

Composition Task - Notes

Minimalist Composition Task

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Further Your Understanding

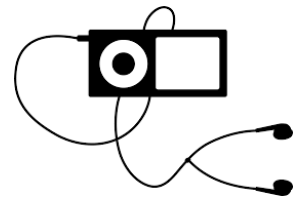
WIDER LISTENING

'Electric Counterpoint' - Steve Reich

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQN5EflyFuk>

'Top 10 Minimalist pieces for relaxation'

<https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/best-pieces-minimalist-music/>



WIDER WATCHING

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z99x6sg/revision/3>

- Features of minimalist music—BBC Bitesize

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55PILa-QKTY>

- What is Minimalism in Music?

<https://artincontext.org/minimalist-art/>

- An exploration of Minimalist Art



WIDER READING

