



Lesson: Odysseus Composition Project 1

OVERVIEW

Students use characters or events from a story to compose an original melody.

LEARNING GOAL

Students will:

1. Consider how musical sounds may embody the characteristics of events or characters.
2. Use a character or event of a story to inspire an original melody.
3. Create a musical score that includes all the traditional conventions (time signature, expression markings, etc.)

RESOURCES & MATERIALS

1. Assignment Handout and worksheet.
2. A familiar story or one of their own creation.
3. Manuscript paper or access to a computer notation program.

PROCESS

Students will:

1. Read the program notes provided by composer Dana Wilson, then listen to a recording of the piece and compare the information in the program notes with the musical references he cites.
2. Choose or create a story to use for inspiration to create two original melodies for their instrument. Include a title for the melodies based on the story.
3. Pick two at least two characters or events from the story. List adjectives that describe the characters or events (e.g. proud, brave, noble, scary, joyous, etc.) and then list some elements of music that may reflect the adjectives (e.g. minor, slow, dissonant, etc.)
4. Use traditional musical notation to create at least two melodies of at least four measures each that take into consideration both the sets of adjectives using either staff paper or computer music notation.
5. Rehearse and perform or record the melodies.

Odysseus Composition Project I Rubric

CATEGORY	3	2	1	R - Redo
Project Preparation & Organization	Story and characters or events are clearly described. There is a logical relationship between the characters or events with the adjectives listed.	Story and characters or events are described somewhat. There is a logical relationship between the characters or events with some of the adjectives listed.	Aspects of the story or characters or events are a little unclear OR the relationship between the characters or events and adjectives are questionable.	No evidence of an understanding of the purpose or criteria for the project.
Relationship Between Adjectives and Musical Elements	The relationship between all of the adjectives describing the characters or events and all of the musical elements selected to represent the adjectives are logical and well thought out.	The relationship between some of the adjectives describing the characters or events and some of the musical elements selected to represent the adjectives are logical and well thought out.	Although a sincere attempt was made, the relationship between the adjectives describing the characters or events and the musical elements selected to represent the adjectives seem questionable.	No evidence of an understanding of the purpose or criteria for the project.
Music Notation	The melodies include key signature, time signature, appropriate clefs, correct number of beats, expressive markings, and all critical musical information.	The melodies mostly include key signature, time signature, appropriate clefs, correct number of beats, expressive markings, and all critical musical information, but with three or less errors.	The melodies mostly include key signature, time signature, appropriate clefs, correct number of beats, expressive markings, and all critical musical information, but with four or more errors.	There are numerous notation errors.
Musical Effect	The melodies are balanced and unified. They seem to reflect the intended characters or events described by the list of adjectives.	The melodies are mostly balanced and unified. They seem to in some ways reflect the intended characters or events described by the list of adjectives.	The melodies seem incomplete or more concerned with the mechanics of musical notation than musically reflecting the characters or events of the story.	No evidence of an understanding of the purpose or criteria for the project.
Assignment Criteria	All components of the assignment - planning sheet, two melodies of at least four measures each, recording or live performance - are completed.	All but one component of the assignment are completed.	Two components of the assignment are not completed.	Assignment not completed.

ASSIGNMENT

ODYSSEUS COMPOSITION PROJECT I

Composer Dana Wilson used one part of *The Odyssey* by Homer as the inspiration for his band piece *Odysseus and the Sirens*. In his program notes, he describes how the music reflects the events and the characters of the story. *Odysseus and the Sirens* is one of many pieces that relate a story or represent events or living beings in music.

For this project, you will either choose a story (Aesop’s fables, fairy tales, movie scenes or TV, etc.) or make up one of your own to be the inspiration for original melodies. Using the story as an inspiration, you will create at least two melodies that reflect the characteristics of the events or characters. Here are the steps:

- 1. Read the program notes provided by composer Dana Wilson, then listen to a recording of the piece and compare the information in the program notes with the musical references he cites.
- 2. Choose or create a story to use for inspiration to create an original melody for their instrument. Include a title for your melodies based on the story.
- 3. Pick at least two characters or events from the story. List adjectives that describe the characters or events (e.g. proud, brave, noble, scary, joyous, etc.) and then list some elements of music that may reflect the adjectives (e.g. minor, slow, dissonant, etc.). Use this worksheet to organize your work. An example of how to complete the worksheet is provided below.
- 4. Use traditional musical notation to create at least two melodies of at least four measures each for your instrument that take into consideration both the sets of adjectives. You can use either staff paper or computer music notation. Be sure to include all the necessary musical information in your composition: time signature, key signature, tempo markings, dynamics, articulation markings, barlines, etc.
- 5. Rehearse and perform or record your melodies.

Title of story: Jack and the Beanstalk		
Character or event	Adjectives describing character or event	Musical elements representing adjectives
The Giant	Huge, Heavy, Slow-Moving, Fierce, Bellowing, Scary, Strong	Slow (pesante), Forte, Accented, Dissonant, Deep/Low



Name: _____

Title of story:		
Character or event	Adjectives describing character or event	Musical elements representing adjectives

