



The Interdisciplinary Context

OVERVIEW

Exploring the context of a piece of music beyond its musical elements makes the work more relevant to students. Understanding the interdisciplinary facets can capture students' imaginations, generate new perspectives about the music, and lead to performances that more clearly express the composer's musical thoughts and intentions. The [Facets Model](#), the essential framework for BandQuest® curricula, encourages learning the context of music and its non-musical connections in addition to the technical skills needed to play the work.

Two essential from the Facets Model that relate to the context of the music are:

- “What is its subject?”
- “What is being expressed?”

The subject of *Deep Dish* is a long, extended metaphor in honor of the city, connecting the creation of a musical work to the creation of a traditional Chicago –style deep dish pizza. Composer James Stephenson was born and raised in Chicago. He returned as an adult to live and raise his family in the place that felt most like “home.” McCracken is a Chicago area Middle School. *Deep Dish* was written for them. The composer vigorously embraces the many humorous possibilities of word-play and sound that this topic suggests. Visually and aurally *Deep Dish* is a funny piece of music.

Mini-lesson plans include resources and learning activities that help to answer the questions and engage students in deeper understanding about the music's context. Directors are urged to include some lesson activities in class while learning the piece; others can be extensions, homework assignments, or individual projects.

THE LESSON PLANS

#1 Humor in Music

#2 Investigating the Language of Music: the traditional Italian and Stephenson's wordplay

Directors can intersperse segments of these lessons within their plans for teaching the piece and its musical challenges. This will enable students to understand the music in a holistic way. Integrating the contextual facets of the work will support them in responding to, understanding, and interpreting *Deep Dish*.