Lesson: Spicy Music Composition Project

OVERVIEW

Students compose a melody that reflects a selected adjective.

LEARNING GOAL

Students will:

1. Explore how musical sounds can represent the characteristics of descriptive words.

2. Compose an original melody.

3. Explain a rationale for aesthetic choices made in composing the melody.

RESOURCES & MATERIALS

1. Assignment Handout.

2. Planning sheet.

3. Manuscript paper or access to a computer notation program.

PROCESS

Students will:

1. Complete a planning sheet to prepare to compose an original melody.

2. Compose an original melody for their instruments that embody the characteristics of a selected adjective.

3. Notate the original melody using staff paper or computer notation software.

4. Perform or record the melody.

5. Share the original melody with classmates in small groups for reactions and feedback.

6. Submit the planning sheet and original melody for evaluation.

Spicy Music Rubric

CATEGORY	10	7	5	R - Redo
Music Score	Music Score is very neat and all required elements are included: title, composer name, instrument, clef, time signature, and key signature.	Music score is neat. Two or fewer of the required elements are missing from the musical score.	Music score is legible. Three to four of the required elements are mising from the musical score.	Music Score is illegible and many of the required musical score elements are missing.
Music Notation	All notes are written neatly using proper barline placement.	Most notes are written clearly using the proper barline placement.	Notes are written clearly, but barline placement is often incorrect.	Notes are written in a sloppy and illegible manner. Barline placement is not correct. Needs to be resubmitted.
Meter and Rhythm	All measures have the correct # of beats and a variety of rhythms are used. Including the use of both notes and rests. Beats are clear.	85% of measures have the correct # of beats and a variety of rhythms are used. Including the use of both notes and limited rests. Beats are mostly clear.	50% of the measures have the correct # of beats. Rhythms are very basic and do not expand beyond quarter notes or eighth notes, and few rests are used or none at all.	Under half of the measures have the correct # of beats. Composition needs to be edited and resubmitted.
Expressive Markings	Includes all of the following: tempo, volume, style, and articulation markings.	Includes some of the following: tempo, volume, style, and articulation markings.	Includes few expressive markings.	Includes no expressive markings.
Targeted Concept(s): Written Rationale	The written rationale on the planning worksheet clearly describes the composers intentions to represent the selected adjective using appropriate musical and affective terminology.	The written rationale on the planning worksheet somewhat describes the composers intentions to represent the selected adjective, although some of the rationale is vague.	The rationale for the melody is not specific enough to determine whether the composer's intentions are realized in the original melody.	No rationale was completed on the planning worksheet or the composer did not demonstrate an understanding of the requirements of the project.
Assignment Criteria	Includes or exceeds correct minimum number of measures. Written rationale is detailed and clear. All times on the planning worksheet are completed.	Addresses most of the criteria for this project.	Addresses at least 50% of the criteria for this project, although melody is too short or items on the plain worksheet are not completed.	Piece demonstrate a lack of awareness of criteria.
Musical Effect	Created a well-constructed melody that reflects the selected adjective in musical and obvious ways even before considering the rationale.	Created a constructed melody that makes sense after the written rationale is considered.	Created a melody that does not have much of a relationship to the selected adjective.	There is no evidence in how the melody was constructed that demonstrates that the composer understood the project.

SPICY MUSIC COMPOSITION PROJECT

Spicy. Tangy. Sweet. Hot. Salty. These are all adjectives that you might use to describe the taste of a pizza, depending on the ingredients that were used to make it. But how might you represent those tastes as music rather than words? An adjective is a word that modifies a noun. In other words, it is a word that describes an object (e.g. an <u>excited</u> dog, a <u>hot</u> pepper, a <u>rainy</u> day.) If you were to describe some sort of food, you would use all sorts of adjectives to describe the flavor, the shape, the temperature, or some other distinctive characteristic.

Composer James Stephenson used the process for making Chicago deep dish pizza and the flavor of the ingredients as the inspiration for his band piece *Deep Dish*. As you rehearse *Deep Dish*, consider how the music in each section represents each step in the pizza making process. Think about the characteristics of a deep dish pizza (spicy, thick, cheesy, etc.) and how they affected how the composer created the piece.

ASSIGNMENT:

For this project, you will select an adjective, consider and describe how it might be represented musically, and then compose an original melody. Would a melody representing the adjective be:

- Loud or soft?

- Fast or slow?

- Consonant or dissonant?

- Staccato or legato?

- Chromatic, major, minor, or non-tonal?

Here are the steps you will follow:

1. Pick an adjective and complete the planning sheet to make and describe your creative choices. Also select three adjectives that will have nothing to do with your melody.

2. Using staff paper or computer music notation program, compose a melody at least <u>8 measures</u> <u>long for your instrument</u> using your planning sheet as your guide. Be sure to include a clef, key signature, time signature, and expression markings (tempo, dynamics, style, etc.)

3. Perform or record your melody and share it with other students.

4. Share both the adjective that is the inspiration for your melody and the unrelated adjectives with a small group of other students. Ask the other students which adjective they think was the inspiration for your melody and why. Confirm whether they picked the correct adjective. If they didn't, share the correct adjective and the reasons why you thought the music matched the word.

ADJECTIVE MELODY PLANNING SHEET

Name: _____

My selected adjective is: _____

Three adjectives that are not related to my original melody:

1.

2.

3.

In 2 or 3 sentences, describe how the adjective will be musically represented in your melody: