

Cross-Curricular Learning For The Instrumental Ensemble

Arlene Bennett

Contents

Introduction	3
Unit 1 - Periods In Music History	5
Unit 2 - William Tell Overture	13
Unit 3 - In The Hall Of The Mountain King	23
Unit 4 - The Music Of Russia	27
Unit 5 - Music Of The Civil War	41
Unit 6 - Aaron Copland	50
Unit 7 - Music And The Movies	54
Unit 8 - Beauty And The Beast	56
Unit 9 - Math And Music.....	59
About the Author	67

Project Manager & Editor: Mendy Varga

Cover Design: Elizabeth C. Johnston

Engraver: Ken Peek

Unit 1

Periods In Music History

These projects are rooted in student research, as well as creativity.

The following is some background information about each period in music history to help you get started on your project. Through experience, I have found that the pieces that are most playable by and suited for younger ensembles tend to come from the Renaissance, Baroque, and Classical Periods.

Renaissance Period (1450-1600)

The Renaissance was a period of rebirth where there was a renewed excitement for antiquity. It was an era of curiosity, exploration, and adventure. Education became very important in the Renaissance. One of the most important events of the time was the invention of the printing press. Prior to this, books were rare and were extremely expensive, and all hand written. The invention of the printing press allowed for learning to be spread more widely and quickly.

Important events of the Renaissance period:

- Gutenberg invented the printing press (1454)
- Columbus discovered America (1492)
- Martin Luther began the Protestant Reformation (1517)
- Magellan circumnavigated the globe (1519)
- William Shakespeare was the most famous writer of the Renaissance period
- Da Vinci and Michelangelo were artists during this period

Vocal music was considered more important than instrumental music during the Renaissance. Forms of vocal music included Motets, Masses and Madrigals. Though not considered as important as vocal music, instrumental music did gain some importance. Most instrumental music was composed for entertaining or dancing. Popular dance forms that emerged in the Renaissance included the Pavane, Bouree, and the Galliard.

Characteristics of Renaissance music:

The use of *text painting* in vocal music. Text painting was a musical reflection of the words being sung. Music was predominantly polyphonic, meaning two or more melodic lines were played or sung at the same time. All lines were of equal interest and importance.

- Music was mainly modal.
- Rhythms were unmetered, which added to a feeling of irregular phrasing.
- Dynamics were very subtle and were not marked in the music.
- Instruments of the time included lutes, recorders, trumpet, and the viols (bowed string instruments).

Famous composers included: Josquin Desprez, Michael Praetorius, Giovanni Palestrina, and Thomas Morley.

Baroque Period (1600-1750)

The Baroque period was an era of ornate designs and elaborate decorations. This was evident in all areas, including art, music and architecture. As in the Renaissance, there were many new discoveries and events. The building of the Palace of Versailles and the Taj Mahal were two examples of Baroque architecture and are prime examples of the elaborate and ornate styles of the Baroque period.

Important events of Baroque period:

- The first English Colony was settled in America (1607)
- Quebec was founded by Champlain (1608)
- Newton formulated principles of physics and math
- Cervante, Defoe, and Swift were famous authors
- Rembrandt and Rubens were two famous artists

Musicians and composers of the Baroque Period were employed by the courts (royalty) or the church. Musicians and composers employed by the courts composed music for weekly concerts, rehearsed and performed, as well as managed the music library and instruments.

Characteristics of Baroque music :

- A single musical piece projected a single mood or feeling.
- Polyphony was still popular. Melodies always seemed to be moving. Melodic lines weave through the music.
- Music moved away from being modal to the major/minor key system we know today.
- Rhythms were clear. The beat was strong and even. Beats were grouped to have a definite feeling of two or three. Rhythm was a continuous drive throughout the music, adding motion and energy.
- Forms used in the Baroque period included the Concerto Grosso, and the Solo Concerto. A Concerto Grosso is an orchestral piece written so that the melody alternates between a small group of instrumentalists and the full orchestra. A Solo Concerto is a piece in which a soloist is accompanied by the orchestra, and they take turns playing the melody.
- Cantatas, Oratorios, and Operas were popular forms of vocal music. Cantatas were written for chorus, soloists, and orchestra, and were mainly used within the church. Oratorios were often biblical based, told a story, but did not use acting, scenery or costumes as did an Opera.
- Dynamics were terraced, which are abrupt shifts from soft to loud. This was achieved by the adding or subtracting of instruments.
- Instruments of the time were strings, winds, and harpsichord. A harpsichord is a keyboard instrument used between 1500 and 1775. When a key was struck, the wire strings were plucked with a quill-like mechanism. Percussion was used very little. When percussion was used, the timpani was played.

Famous composers of the Baroque Period included: J.S. Bach, George Frederic Handel, and Antonio Vivaldi.