

Year 8 Music

Musical Migration 1 - Blues into Rock 'n' Roll



Students are learning how West African music migrated around the world through the appalling acts of the slave trade. Students will explore how spirituals evolved first into the Blues and then into Rock 'n' Roll, whilst forming the foundations for all popular music in the process. Students will explore performance tropes of these genres on keyboard, ukulele, cajon, and through their voices, before evidencing their understanding in a performance which models the evolution of these styles. This musical understanding is linked to wider discussion of black music in modern society and the reasons racial divisions and prejudice are still such powerful lightning rods for musicians today.

Previous topic:

Music Through Time 1 - Music for Events

Next topic:

Music of Today 1 - EDM and the 'Bristol Sound'

Core knowledge/skills/concepts

From Year 7 to Year 13 we constantly embed the core elements of music: Melody, Articulation, Dynamics, Tempo, Structure, Harmony, Instrumentation, Rhythm and Texture (MAD TSHIRT). This vocabulary, alongside a growing understanding of music notation, allows students to articulate opinions about music and how it was made. Giving them the language to talk about music and equipping them with skills to create it is at the centre of everything we do. Every lesson involves practical music making as either a performer or composer on a range of instruments and in diverse contexts. Students will practise these skills more deeply as their musical learning journey continues through school.

Performance

- The 12-bar blues chord progression
- Extension chords
- Walking bass lines
- Improvisation
- The Blues scale

Context

- West-African slave trade
- The evolution of blues music
- Black and white rock 'n' roll
- Contemporary musical engagement with race issues
- The concept of fusions, migration, and the merits of a modern cosmopolitan society

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Essential vocabulary

- MAD TSHIRT (Melody, Articulation, Dynamics, Tempo, Structure, Harmony, Instrumentation, Rhythm, Texture)
- Spirituals, blues, rock 'n' roll, jazz, musical theatre, swing, syncopation, triad, extension chord, 7ths, chord sequence, walking bass line, improvisation, blues scale, dotted rhythm, crotchet, quaver, minim, semibreve, fusion

Threshold concepts

This project builds upon the instrumental competencies gained in the Year 7 'Stepping Up' units and advances the use of voice, keyboard, ukulele and rhythm in a new and focussed context. Students will employ MAD TSHIRT language, notational devices encountered to date, and bolster these with new context-specific skills and knowledge.

Opportunities for reading

In music lessons students will read contextual information about the music they are creating from slides and handouts. They will gain increasing confidence with the technical vocabulary used to talk about music, including musical directions in English, Italian and German. Equally important is frequent exposure to musical notation in its myriad guises. This helps to unlock different types of comprehension, creates connections between sound and symbol, and offers access to the world of written music.

Musical notation

Stave notation in the treble clef (crotchets, quavers, minims, semibreves, dotted rhythms), rhythm Grids (percussion), chord diagrams (keyboard, ukulele and guitar), tablature, lyrics, 4/4 time signature.

How and when will the core learning be assessed?

Students will be assessed on their holistic development as a musician over time with projects designed to showcase ever-maturing musical understanding. Our assessments are linked to the National Curriculum's core pillars of Performing, Composing and Appraising in equal measure. These are formative in nature and are used to give students verbal feedback in the moment. Students track their progress against our core competencies and will reflect on their work in lessons, with recordings of classwork documented and revisited at regular intervals for self/peer review.

Links to other topics/subjects