Rockefeller Quartet Presents

Listen Up!

What word best describes your mood today?
Listen Up! Student Journal

**A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte** by Georges Seurat (1859–1891), 1884

**Tornado Over Kansas** by John Steuart Curry (1897-1946), 1929

**Compare and contrast emotions you see in the two paintings above.**

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**Listening for the Mood of the Music**

Important tools that composers use to establish the mood of a composition include **mode**, **rhythm**, and **dynamics**. The Rockefeller Quartet will demonstrate how this is done in the selections performed.

**MODE**: Two modes often used by composers are **major** (happy, joyful) and **minor** (sad, haunting). Circle the mode you think each person below is listening to.

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Major  Minor  Major  Minor  Major  Minor  Major  Minor
RHYTHM: If you listen for it, you can find rhythm just about anywhere: in a basketball being dribbled, raindrops falling, or hands clapping. Rhythm is what makes music move and flow.

Rhythm is made up of sounds and silences. These sounds and silences are put together to form patterns of sound, which are repeated to create rhythm. A rhythm has a steady beat, but it may also have many different kinds of beats. Some beats may be stronger or longer or shorter or softer than others. In a single piece of music, a composer can use many different rhythms.

Describe the rhythms you see in the two images above.

DYNAMICS: Traditionally, dynamic markings are based on Italian words, although there is nothing wrong with simply writing things like "quietly" or "louder" in the music. Forte means loud and piano means soft. Other degrees of loudness or softness are indicated by:

- mp, standing for mezzo-piano, which means "moderately soft"
- mf, standing for mezzo-forte, which means "moderately loud"

Beyond f and p, there are also:

- pp, which stands for pianissimo and means "very soft"
- ff, which stands for fortissimo and means "very loud"

Circle the dynamic marking you think best fits the music being made in each case below.
Featured Composers/Compositions

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** was born in Salzburg, Austria, on January 27, 1756. He began studying the harpsichord early, taught by his father, Leopold. At the age of six, Mozart’s father began to tour him about to the various music centers of Europe as a child prodigy performer. Mozart wrote over 626 pieces of music in his short life of 35 years. Many included multiple movements, such as his 41 symphonies and 23 string quartets. He is known as one of the greatest composers of all time. Excerpts from Mozart’s *String Quartet in G Major (K.156)*, 1st mvt. (Presto) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bGz6UoQ36mM and *String Quartet No. 22 in B-flat major (K 589)*, 1st mvt. (Allegro) will be featured on this program. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0NTmuzQsMGs

**Ludwig van Beethoven** was born in Bonn, Germany in 1770. By the age of 8, he was learning to play the organ and viola in addition to his piano studies. Beethoven lived in Vienna from 1792 to his death in 1827. Ludwig van Beethoven’s most popular pieces are his Fifth Symphony, *Für Elise* for piano solo, and his Ninth Symphony, which includes the melody *Ode to Joy*. He is remembered as an important composer in the transitional period between the Classical Era and Romantic Era in music and continues to be one of the most famous and influential composers of all time. Selections from his String Quartet No. 16, Opus 135 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MVOQu481uZQ and String Quartet No. 13 Opus 130, 1st movement https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i29LA1fy5r4 will be performed on this program.

**Dmitri Shostakovich** was born in 1906 in St. Petersburg, Russia and studied music at the Conservatory there. With the premiere of his graduation piece, the First Symphony, in 1926, Shostakovich’s career was launched. He quickly established himself at the forefront of young Soviet composers. In his last years, he turned increasingly from large-scale "public" works to music of smaller ones, concentrating on the genre of string quartet and vocal music until he died in 1975. Shostakovich is considered to be one of the greatest twentieth-century classical composers. A large body of his large and varied musical output is performed regularly. Excerpts from his String Quartet #8, 1st mvt., Largo and 2nd movement, Allegro Molto https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41HIXtBEIH4 will be included on this program.

**Vocabulary**

- *composer* – a person who writes music
- *Classical Era* – from about 1750-1820 when art and music making focused on form and balance
- *composition* – written music
- *dynamics (in music)* – how loud or soft the music is
- *harmony* – a musical term for notes that serve as background for the melody
- *melody* – a long passage of music forming a theme that you can recognize as in a song
- *mode* – refers to the scale used for a piece of music
- *premiere* – first performance
- *rhythm* – movement in music bases upon the length and speed of the notes being played
- *Romantic Era* – from approximately 1820-1910 when art and music making reflected strong emotions and feelings
- *texture (in music)* – the way the melody, rhythm and harmony combine in a composition

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