Unit 4: Baroque music

Outline
This unit will help students to develop an understanding of the baroque style through listening to a range of representative repertoire.

Syllabus reference	Suggested teaching activities	Learning resources
Rudiments Melody and Rhythm Ensembles and instruments/voices Vocal effects Structure Genre	**Purcell: *Ah, Belinda* from *Dido and Aeneas*** Play a recording of *Ah, Belinda* from *Dido and Aeneas*. As a **basic** listening activity, students could be asked to identify some different features of the music: e.g. scale/key (minor), type of voice (soprano), accompaniment (harpsichord and cello), number of beats per bar/measure (3) etc. *Ah, Belinda* is structured over a ground bass. Explain the concept of ground bass, and then play the recording again. As a **basic** listening activity, students could be asked to identify how many times the ground bass is heard; a more **challenging** activity could focus on the different phrase lengths in the vocal part and the extent to which they do or do not coincide with the ground bass repetitions. This piece provides a good example of melisma (on the word 'languish') and the use of bass continuo. Students should be taught about the characteristic features of opera.	Recording: Purcell: *Ah, Belinda* from *Dido and Aeneas* Score: http://erato.uvt.nl/files/imglnks/usimg/1/17/IMSLP36466-PMLP05472-Purcell-Z626vsNov.pdf (pages 5–7)
	Link to composing: students could compose (or be given) a short ground bass and then create some melodic phrases to be performed against the repeating bass line. Composing a ground bass will help to internalise its characteristics.	
	Comparing different styles: Puccini: *Nessun Dorma*	
Rudiments Melody and Rhythm Harmony Ensembles and instruments	**Vivaldi: *Autumn* from *The Four Seasons*** Play a recording of the final movement of *Autumn* from *The Four Seasons.* As a **basic** listening activity, students could be asked to identify some different features of the music: e.g. scale/key (major), solo instrument (violin), accompaniment (strings and harpsichord), number of beats per bar/measure (3) etc. This piece provides good examples of double-stopping and repetition. Explain to students that this movement is an example of ritornello structure (similar to rondo, but the theme is often modified and can return in keys other	Recording: Vivaldi: *Autumn* from *The Four Seasons*

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Instrumental effects Structure Compositional devices Genre	than the tonic) and teach them to recognise the return of the ritornello theme. As a more **challenging** listening activity, students could be taught to recognise the modulation to the dominant key in the middle section of the movement. They could also be asked to compare the similarities and differences between the different episodes and/or the ritornello theme. Vivaldi's music is based on a poem about the four seasons. As a **group activity**, students could explore how Vivaldi portrays the different aspects of the poem in his music. They could use the score to help them – Vivaldi indicates which aspect of the poem he is 'setting' at different sections in the movement. Students should be taught about the characteristic features of a baroque concerto.	Score: http://216.129.110.22/files/imglnks/usimg/4/42/IMSLP11099-AutumnScore_Vivaldi.pdf (pages 13–23) Poem: http://inkpot.com/classical/vi4sonnets.html
	Comparing different styles: Bruch: Violin Concerto	
Rudiments Melody and Rhythm Harmony Ensembles and instruments/voices Vocal effects Texture Genre	**Handel: *Messiah*** Play a recording of the recitative *Behold, a virgin shall conceive*. Teach your students to recognise the characteristics of recitative. Next, play a recording of the aria *O Thou that tellest good tidings to Zion* – initially just the alto solo, stopping the recording before the chorus entry. As a **basic** listening activity, students could be asked to identify some different features of the music: e.g. scale/key (major), solo voice (alto), accompaniment (strings and harpsichord/organ – this will depend on the recording chosen), number of beats per bar/measure (depending on the recording, some students may hear this as three fast beats, or two slower beats – this can lead into a useful discussion on compound time) etc. Note that there is an extended example of melisma after rehearsal letter F. More **challenging** listening activities could use the score to help identify the key, cadences and modulations. Now play the chorus section which follows the solo. Listening activities could focus on the texture, which is initially polyphonic before becoming homophonic. Students should be taught about the characteristic features of an oratorio.	Recording: Handel: *Messiah* Score: http://216.129.110.22/files/imglnks/usimg/4/47/IMSLP11182-Handel_Messiah_No.8_Behold_No.9_O_Thou_That_Tellest.pdf
	Comparing different styles: Mendelssohn: *Elijah*	
	Formative assessment To check students' understanding of this unit, they could be asked (individually or in groups) to give a presentation on the characteristics of baroque music. The presentation should include a variety of music examples chosen from beyond those studied in the class lessons.	

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	Revision and self-study The *Classics for Kids* website contains further listening examples and a narrated description of the characteristics of the baroque style.	www.classicsforkids.com/shows/genre_baroque.asp