

Symphony No 10, Mvt 2 by Dmitri Shostakovich

PRIMARY CLASSROOM LESSON PLAN

For:

- Key Stage 2 in England and Wales
- Second Level, P5-P7 in Scotland
- Key Stage 1/Key Stage 2 in Northern Ireland

Written by Rachel Leach

Background

The composer: Dmitri Shostakovich (1906 - 1975)

- Russian composer.
- Wrote a lot of his music during Stalin's leadership of Russia and had to fit with Stalin's strict rules or face punishment
- Found clever ways around these rules like placing hidden messages and codes within the notes
- Wrote 15 symphonies and 15 string quartets. These compositions span his lifetime and often describe events in his life

The music: Symphony No 10, Mvt 2: Scherzo

- Written in 1953, the same year as Stalin died
- A scherzo is usually a happy, witty piece but this one is angry and scary
- Is said to be a musical portrait of Stalin

Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- listen and reflect on a piece of orchestral music
- invent their own musical motifs and structure them into a piece
- perform as an ensemble
- learn musical language appropriate to the task

Curriculum checklist

- play and perform in ensemble contexts, using voices and playing musical instruments
- improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the interrelated dimensions of music
- listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory

Glossary of music terms used

Movement	a large section
Ostinato	a repeating pattern
Pitched percussion	percussion instruments that can play different pitches – xylophones, glockenspiels, chime bars etc
Pulse	the steady 'beat' under much music made up of notes of the same length (like a ticking clock)
Symphony	A large piece for orchestra often with four movements, the first of which is often a sonata
Tempo	another word for speed
Unpitched percussion	percussion instruments that can only make a limited number of sounds – drums, shakers woodblocks, tambourine etc

Resources required

- A4 paper and art materials
- Classroom percussion instruments and any other instruments that your children might be learning

This scheme of work is plotted out over six lessons. Feel free to adapt it to suit your children and the resources you have available.

The six lessons at a glance

Lesson 1:

Activities: Listen and describe a piece of music
Watch the orchestral performance and discuss
Create artwork inspired by the music

Curriculum link: Listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory
Appreciate and understand a wide range of high-quality live and recorded music drawn from different traditions and from great composers and musicians

Lesson 2:

Activities: Use Shostakovich's musical motifs to create a new piece

Curriculum link: Listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory
Improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the interrelated dimensions of music
Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression

Lesson 3:

Activities: Follow a conductor

Curriculum link: Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression

Lesson 4:

Activities: Choose notes using a code
Use technical terminology

Curriculum link: Improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the interrelated dimensions of music
Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression

Lesson 5:

Activities: Create ostinatos and structure them into a piece

Curriculum link: Listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory
Improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the interrelated dimensions of music
Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using their voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression

Lesson 6:

Activities: Structure sections of music to create a finished piece
Perform in front of an audience

Curriculum link: Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using their voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression
Improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the interrelated dimensions of music

LESSON 1

Watching and listening

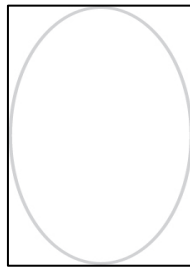
1. Prepare your class

Explain to your class that you are going to begin a 6-week music project focusing on a fantastic piece of music by a composer called Shostakovich and watch the introductory film with Lemn Sissay.

2. **Have a class discussion** about what you have just seen. Ask your children to imagine what it must have been like for Shostakovich to live in fear and have to follow a strict set of rules. Ask them to think about the thing they love doing the most and then imagine that something is stopping them from doing it. How would that feel? Would they be able to find ways around the situation as Shostakovich did?

3. Listening task

Give out paper and pens and ask your children to draw one large oval (face) shape in the middle of their page, like this –



Explain that you are going to watch and listen to the full orchestral performance of Shostakovich's piece. Remind your class that some people think it is a musical description of Joseph Stalin – the scary leader of Russia who made all the rules.

Your children's task is to listen to the music carefully and draw Stalin's facial expression in the oval. They should ask themselves questions such as 'Is the music (and therefore Stalin) happy? sad? angry?' etc.

4. **Play the recording one more time** and this time ask your children to imagine that Stalin has made rules preventing them doing their favourite thing. Encourage them to write these rules around his 'face'. For example, if they are thinking about sport the rules might be things like: 'No football on a Saturday', 'No girl players' etc.
5. **End this lesson** by taking a look at their efforts and show some to the whole class. Ask your class to pick out similarities and differences between their faces and rules and discuss these.

LESSON 2

Four Angry Patterns

1. **Warm up.** Begin with your class sitting in a large circle. Remind them about Shostakovich's music and explain that they are going to start recreating it on instruments. Send a clap around the circle. Try to get it around as fast as possible. Then try the opposite; can you children pass the clap so that it is steady and even?

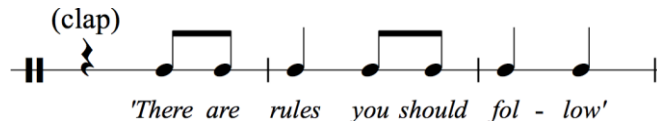
Finally clap a slow pulse and encourage your children to join in one by one until everyone is clapping together. See if you can all stop together on your signal.

2. **Explain** that this is one of Shostakovich's musical ideas. There's an obvious pulse throughout his piece, sometimes it is fast, sometimes slow. At the start it is slow and scary if it were written down it would look like this:



3. **Choose volunteers** to try out the pulse on various instruments. If you have pitched instruments, direct your players towards A.

4. **Teach this pattern:**



Begin by saying the words over and over, and then clap them. Finally ask a child to try playing the rhythm on an unpitched instrument.

The 'clap' at the beginning is there to help with the rhythm. Once it is understood remove the clap and replace with a gap (or a silent nod)

5. **Demonstrate** this idea on pitches. Shostakovich uses just three: A, B and C.



Your children can learn this version, or create their own

Feel free to adapt these pitches and patterns to fit the instruments you have available and the level of your learners

6. Move onto pattern 3:

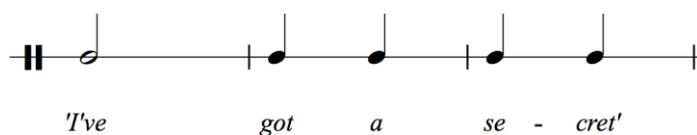


Here's Shostakovich's pitched version:

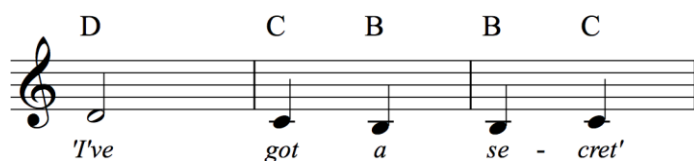


Again, your children may like to invent their own version using just four pitches, C, D, E, F.

7. Move onto pattern 4:



Here's Shostakovich's pitched version:



If this is overwhelming, just use three patterns

8. Split into three groups. Each group must practice just one pattern. Here are some rules:

1. Groups can use a mixture of instruments
2. All the patterns are loud but 'I've got a secret' is the loudest
3. The pulse will be continuous. The pulse players must try not to speed up and practice starting and stopping together
4. The other three patterns will be performed just once each time they are signalled (i.e. they won't loop around). These players should practice playing exactly together.

9. **When this is achieved**, bring the groups back together and hear each team separately. Ask the rest of the children to comment on how closely they have followed the rules.

10. **Finish this lesson** by writing down carefully what you've done and who played which instrument and which pattern.

LESSON 3

Angry music

1. **Warm up.** Begin in a circle and recap all of the rhythms you covered last lesson (make sure children from the same groups are sitting together). Challenge each team to clap their rhythms but also say their words loudly and angrily.
2. **Continue this activity** but ask the pulse group to get out the instruments they used last week and perform the pulse continuously as you bring the other groups in and out. The other three groups must clap/shout their pattern just once when signalled. Try to keep the structure as unpredictable as possible – this will keep everyone’s focus but also will sound more like Shostakovich.
3. **Keep going with this activity**, choose several children to have a go at conducting but keep the rules the same.
4. **When this is fully understood by everyone**, ask the other three groups to get their instruments out and give them a few minutes to remember their patterns. Choose a conductor (or several) and practise the activity again. Words and clapping are no longer allowed, just instruments.
5. **Keep trying out conductors** until you find a really good one who doesn’t mind giving up their instrument. Challenge this conductor to gradually make the entries of the patterns come closer together so that the piece gradually gets more exciting.
6. **Ask your children to decide** on one pattern that everyone ends up on and ask them to practise that pattern together, looping round and around. Put in place a signal from the conductor to show when to join in with this pattern and when to stop.
7. **Finally**, practise your piece one last time and write down carefully what you have done.

You don't need to write down the structure of the music because that is decided by the conductor and can change each time. Do write down who the conductor is and their signals for the ending pattern

LESSON 4

Secrets and Codes

- Warm up.** Begin in a circle with a quick recap of your piece from last week. You can do this without instruments, just clapping and speaking the words but do encourage your conductor to do their job!
- Explain** that Shostakovich put secret messages and codes into his music as a clever way of avoiding Stalin's rules. Later on in his 10th Symphony (the 3rd movement) there is a little tune which is made from the letters of his name and another tune made up from the name of his secret girlfriend.

If you want to explore this further, listen to Shostakovich 10th symphony, movement 3. The main tune at the beginning is based on Shostakovich's name. His girlfriend Elmira's name is played by the horns about 3'30 in

- Show the diagram below to your children** and explain that the top line is all of the white notes on their xylophones, the lines underneath are full alphabet.

<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>g</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>G</i>
<i>H</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>J</i>	<i>K</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>
<i>O</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Q</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>U</i>
<i>V</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>Z</i>		

Using this diagram, your children can transform any word into musical notes

So 'SCHOOL' becomes e, c, a, a, a, e
If you get a lot of repeated notes like this, challenge your children to figure out a code to avoid this. For example they could write the alphabet again and again underneath, each time starting in a new place

- Challenge** your class, working in small groups, to make their names into musical notes. Give each team paper, pens and a pitched instrument so that they can 'hear' their names too.
- Listen to some of these** and discuss them.

6. Now, it's time to put a hidden message into your class piece. **As a full class decide** which word you would like to encode. Your art from lesson 1 might provide the answer – maybe there was one common theme running through the pictures? Or perhaps you could simply use the name of your school or class.

Ideally, you need a short word for this (5 or 6 letters max) so that you can remember the corresponding notes easily

7. **Finish this lesson** by writing down the resulting notes on the board and hearing them played. For fun, ask each group to come up with a new way to play them – they can use any order, any speed and any rhythm. (This is a useful way of getting your children used to the notes ready for the next lesson)

LESSON 5

Rule-breaking march

1. **Warm up.** Sitting in a circle again, clap your pulse and encourage everyone to join in and stop together on your signal. Try to do this at the speed (tempo) you've been using so far in this project.

2. **Now,** clap the pulse at double speed. So it goes from this –



...to this –



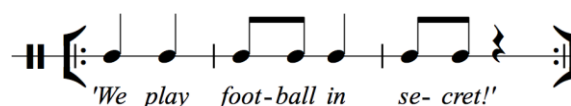
3. **Point out** that Shostakovich does exactly this in his piece and as the pulse doubles the music starts to sound like a march (the pulse becomes marching footsteps). **It happens at 3'36 in the full orchestral performance.** This section is very quiet so perhaps it is Shostakovich whispering his secrets or talking about breaking Stalin's rules.
4. **Explain** that you are going to make some **repeating rhythmic patterns** to go on top of this pulse. The 'posh' word for repeating rhythmic pattern is **ostinato**.

The best way to create **ostinatos** with children is to use words. Again, you can use the artwork your children created in lesson 1 to help. Here's a simple method -

- Choose one of the pictures from lesson 1 and write one of the rules from it on the board. (Or ask the question 'what's your secret?'). Create a short sentence that breaks the rule.

So, if the rule was 'no football' your sentence might be 'we play football in secret!'

- Play your pulse on a drum or woodblock or ask a confident child to do so
- Encourage your children to think the sentence on the board to the pulse
- Choose someone to say the sentence out loud, fitting it to the pulse and repeating it round and around.
- Demonstrate how you can move from saying the words to clapping every syllable like this –



- Move this pattern onto pitches using only the pitches you decided on last lesson - your secret code pitches. Using the example above you would have –



5. **Split back into your smaller groups** and ask each group to make a short 'march'-like piece using the faster pulse (double speed) and at least one ostinato using the method above and using just your coded pitches.
6. **Bring the class back together** and hear each team separately. Challenge your children to join their pieces together to make one big 'rule-breaking march'. Remind them that Shostakovich's version is quiet, can theirs be quiet too?
7. **Finish this lesson** with a performance of your new march and make sure you have written it down carefully

LESSON 6

Performance time!

1. **Warm up.** Begin the lesson with a quick focusing warm-up like pass the clap and then talk through everything you have made so far, making a list on the board.

It should look something like this –

- The conducted angry piece using Shostakovich's patterns (lesson 2 & 3)
- The quiet rule-breaking march (lesson 5)

2. **Get the instruments out** and begin by asking each group to remember their individual sections before working as a full group to put both of the above sections back together again. Work slowly and carefully and make sure that everyone understands what they are doing in each section.
3. **Structure.** Ask your class to come up with an order for these sections and perhaps try out several until you have decided on the best one.
4. **Practise your full piece** until it is nearly perfect and then arrange your new 'orchestra' in a large semi-circle so that they can be seen by an audience.
5. **End this lesson** with a performance of your finished piece to an invited audience. You could display your 'Stalin' pictures on the wall behind your new orchestra.

TAKING IT FURTHER

Cross-curricular activities

- **LISTENING/LITERACY:** As mentioned above, the 3rd movement of Shostakovich's symphony features coded music for Shostakovich's name and his girlfriend Elmira's name. Write a letter or short message from Shostakovich to Elmira (or vice versa) and encode it using a grid like the one featured in lesson 4.

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