Exploring music in context

IB DP Music Exploring music in context full package

Exploring music in context

- use the four areas of inquiry as lenses on any piece of music;
- place a musical encounter in a personal, local or global context;
- work through one encounter as **researcher**, **creator** and **performer**;

Exploring music in context (2)

- support every claim about music with an audible or notated event;
- plan the written work and practical exercises of the **exploration portfolio**.

The four areas of inquiry

- The course does not set a list of works.
- Instead, it gives four **areas of inquiry** : lenses that show what music is doing in people's lives.
- Any piece can be looked at through more than one.
- **Worked example: one piece, two lenses.** John Williams's music for the film *Jaws* (1975) is built on two notes a semitone apart, E and F, played low by the strings.

The three contexts

- **personal** : music already part of your own life, such as the songs on your phone or the instrument you learned as a child;
- **local** : music of the culture and community around you, which you may know about but have not studied, such as a regional opera, temple music or a city's street performers;
- **global** : music from a culture new to you.

The three contexts (2)

- **researcher** : you listen, read the score if there is one, analyse the musical elements, and find out about the context;
- **creator** : you take an idea from the music, such as a rhythm, a scale or a texture, into your own short composition or improvisation;
- **performer** : you play or sing the music, or your adaptation of it, and make choices about how it should sound.

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The exploration portfolio

- **written work** (up to 2,400 words) showing your engagement with, and understanding of, diverse musical material from the areas of inquiry and contexts;
- **practical exercises**: a **creating** exercise and a **performed adaptation** of music, both growing out of the music you wrote about.

Sources for this lesson

- International Baccalaureate, *Music guide* (first assessment 2022).
- State Council of the PRC, first national list of intangible cultural heritage (2006), entry for **Chuanjiang haozi**.
- Sumarsam, ***Gamelan**: Cultural Interaction and Musical Development in Central Java* (1995).
- J. Williams, *Jaws* original score (1975); Cher, "Believe" (1998).

Common errors

- Treating the areas of inquiry as genres to tick off. Each is a lens, and you must argue why it fits.
- Making claims about mood or meaning without naming a **musical element** first.
- Staying in your personal context. Breadth means reaching local and global music.

Common errors (2)

- Writing a history essay. Context matters only when it explains what you hear.
- Making practical exercises that have nothing to do with the written work. Both should come from the same encounters.

Key terms

- **Area of inquiry**: one of four lenses on what music does: expression, listening and performance, dramatic impact and movement, technology.
- **Context**: where an encounter sits for you: personal, local or global.
- **Musical roles**: **researcher**, **creator** and **performer**.

Key terms (2)

- **Texture**: how the layers of sound fit together, such as call and response or melody with accompaniment.
- **Timbre**: the tone colour of a voice or instrument.
- **Ostinato**: a short pattern repeated many times.
- **Exploration portfolio**: written work plus creating and performing exercises, assessed externally.

Check yourself

- 1.
- Name the four areas of inquiry. 2.
- A student from Shanghai plays the guzheng and studies Cuban son.
- Which context is each? 3.