Presenting music

IB DP Music Presenting music full package

Presenting music

- explain what "finished" means for a **composition**, an improvisation and a performance;
- make creative choices that a listener can hear;
- make interpretive decisions as a performer and justify them;

Presenting music (2)

- choose between **solo** and **ensemble** performance for good musical reasons;
- write programme notes that guide the listener's ear.

Presenting as a creator

- **diverse sources**: the material comes from different music you have studied across the areas of inquiry;
- **audible choices**: a listener can hear your decisions without being told, such as a change of texture, a key change or a return of the opening idea;
- **controlled improvisation**: an improvised piece is presented as a practised skill, with its framework and limits named, not as a lucky take.

Presenting as a creator (2)

- **Source 1 (sociocultural expression)**: a call motif taken from a Yangtze boatmen's work song she studied, four notes answered by a heavy chord on the strong beat.
- **Source 2 (listening and performance)**: from Chopin, the idea of decorating a melody more each time it returns.
- **Structure** : the call is heard four times; each answer arrives a little sooner, so the music grows more urgent.

Presenting as a creator (3)

- **Texture**: the work song builds from one voice to many; "Signal" does the reverse, thinning from full chords to one voice at the close.
- **Improvisation**: in the final return, one answer phrase is improvised within a fixed rhythm and set of notes, practised in many versions before recording.

Presenting as a performer

- she places each answer slightly **late**, so the call sounds insistent and the answer reluctant;
- she makes a **diminuendo** through the last return, so the final single note seems to arrive alone;
- she uses **less pedal** in the last eight bars, so the thinning texture is not blurred.

Programme notes

- **What should I listen for?** ("Listen for the call, heard four times, each answer arriving closer.")
- **Where did the music come from?** ("The motif comes from a Yangtze boatmen's song, where a leader's call was answered by the team as they pulled.")
- **What did the performer choose?** ("I hold each answer back a little, so the call sounds more urgent.")

Sources for this lesson

- International Baccalaureate, *Music guide* (first assessment 2022).
- K. Jarrett, *The Köln Concert* (ECM, 1975), and accounts of the concert in I. Carr, *Keith Jarrett: The Man and His Music* (1991).
- G. Gould, J. S. Bach: *The Goldberg Variations* (Columbia, 1955 and 1981).
- L. Bernstein, *Young People's Concerts* (CBS, 1958–1972).

Common errors

- Submitting a piece that is not finished: no clear ending, a rough recording, or ideas left undeveloped.
- Choosing the hardest repertoire instead of the piece you perform best.
- Presenting a performance with no interpretive decisions: every choice should be deliberate and consistent.

Common errors (2)

- Writing programme notes as a biography of the composer or a list of chords.
- Exceeding the time and word limits.
- Drawing all the music from one style, when the component asks for diverse material.

Key terms

- **Composition / improvisation**: music written and fixed in advance / music created in the moment within a framework.
- **Interpretation**: a performer's decisions about tempo, dynamics, articulation and balance.
- **Solo / ensemble**: performing alone / with other musicians.

Key terms (2)

- **Structure**: how a piece is organised over time, such as repetition, contrast and return.
- **Programme notes**: writing that guides the listener's ear through a performance.

Check yourself

- 1.
- What three parts make up the presenting music component? 2.
- Why could Keith Jarrett's Cologne concert be called a controlled improvisation, not a lucky take? 3.
- Gould's two Goldberg recordings use the same notes.