



CLASSICAL REVOLUTIONS, PT. 4: FROM MODERNISM TO CONTEMPORARY

Meets National Core Arts Standards 7-9, 11

OBJECTIVES

- Perceive and analyze artistic work (*Re7*)
- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work (*Re8*)
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work (*Re9*)
- Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding (*Cn11*)

MATERIALS

- *Music Alive!* magazines (May 2018)
- *Music Alive!* Classroom Worksheet #4: Compare & Contrast (download at musicalive.com)
- Computer or mobile device with Internet access

START

Ask your students to read "Classical Revolutions, Pt. 4: From Modernism to Contemporary" on pages 6-9. Then, go over the following highlighted words. [**This reinforces comprehension and vocabulary.**]

TONALITY—the character of a piece of music as determined by the key in which it is played

AVANT-GARDE—new and unusual or experimental ideas, especially in the arts

CODIFIED—arranged laws or rules into a systematic code

TURMOIL—a state of great disturbance, confusion, or uncertainty

HOTBED—an environment promoting the growth of something

DEVELOP

1. Play Oliver Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time, I. Crystal Liturgy* (Hear the Music track 2 on musicalive.com).

ASK

What instrument do you hear in the very beginning? (Clarinet.)

Does the piece seem to have a key? (No.)

Would you describe the music as consonant or dissonant? (Dissonant.)

What other instruments do you hear? (Piano, violins.)

What makes the ensemble a quartet? (It's made up of four instrumentalists.)

Does a theme develop as the piece progresses? (Not really.)

Which instrument do you think is the lead? (Clarinet.)

Why is that? (It was the first instrumental voice in the piece, and the other instrumental parts seem to be responding to its part.)

What is the piano doing? (Playing chords in response to the other instruments.)

How does this piece mark a departure from the norm in classical music? (It's very atonal and disorganized.)

Do you like it? Why or why not? (Subjective.)

2. Play John Cage's *Sonatas and Interludes for Prepared Piano: VI. Sonata No. 5* (Hear the Music track 3 on musicalive.com).

ASK

Based on your reading, how is the piano being used? (Objects are placed between the strings so that the piano hammers create percussive noises when they strike them.)

Can you recognize an acoustic piano sound at any point in the piece? (Yes.)

Is the piece more melodic or rhythmic? (Rhythmic.)

How many different percussive sounds are there? (Several.)

Is the piece fast-paced or slow-moving? (More fast-paced.)

How is the piece's repeated rhythm created? (A specific pattern is being played on the keys repeatedly.)

How does Cage's composition challenge the norm? (It uses one of the most common instruments in an unexpected and transformative yet still musical way.)

Do you like this piece? Why or why not? (Subjective.)

3. Play the Kronos Quartet's performance of Philip Glass's *String Quartet No. 5: II*. (Hear the Music track 4 on musicalive.com).

ASK

How is this piece different from the first two pieces? (It's much more consonant, or in other words, it has tonality.)

What is a constant, repeated part throughout the piece? (The cello part, which repeats the same two-note phrase throughout the majority of the piece.)

How can this part be interpreted? (Subjective. It gives the song a pulse, like a heartbeat, and also creates tension.)

Can you tell the interval between the two notes? (A major third.)

Glass was known for exploring phase relationships in his music, or in other words, how two repeated phrases sound when they're gradually moved out of sync. How does this piece reflect that concept? (Subjective. The cello creates the first repeated phrase, and the additional string parts create an increasing contrast.)

What happens at the very end of the piece? (It slows down, and there are more rests, a contrast to the rest of the piece, which is busier and fast-paced.)

Do you like it? Why or why not? (Subjective.)

CLOSE

Pass out to students copies of the Compare & Contrast worksheet. Have them fill them out based off of the first and third listening selections. Afterwards, lead the students in a discussion in which they share their answers and talk about what makes the two pieces of music so different.

ASSESS

Did the students read the article?

Did they discuss the three listening selections?

Did they fill out the Compare & Contrast worksheets?