



The Power of Music

Student Handout 1

Music is more than just a sequence of sounds linked together in pleasing arrangements. Music is something that reaches inside of us and draws us out in many ways. To accomplish this, composers and musicians have drawn from their own experiences and from the culture around them. There are also technical factors: the instruments and recording equipment available affected the music produced. This lesson explores music from Canada’s past and will give you the chance to analyze different songs from the early twentieth century using sound recordings from Library and Archives Canada’s (LAC) *Virtual Gramophone* website.

Part 1: Analyzing and Comparing Songs

Complete this analysis chart below:

The Lyrics (Language)

Questions	Class Responses
What did you like about the song’s lyrics? What were your favourite parts? Why? (Critical thinking)	
Are the song’s lyrics like any others you’ve heard? How are they similar or different? (Connections)	
Is there anything in the song with which you can identify in your own life? (Personalization)	
Do you find any of the words, terms or	



expressions interesting? Confusing? Unusual? (Style)	
Did the songwriter include images that you consider to be particularly striking? Funny? Worrisome? Dated? Embarrassing? (Evaluation)	
What senses are explored by the songwriter? Sight? Smell? Hearing? Taste? Touch? (Style)	
Why do you think the songwriter wrote this song? (Inference)	
What is this song about? What does it have to say about this particular subject or issue? (Theme)	



The Elements (Music)

Elements of Music	Comments for Song
<p>Rhythm: Rhythm is the repeated movement of sounds through time. In songs, the words usually match the rhythm. Everything we sing or say has a rhythm that can be varied by changing the beat, accent and tempo.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beat is the regular pulse (the ticking of a clock, the sound of a car's windshield wipers). • Accent is where the strongest emphasis is placed as in <i>one, two, three, one, two, three</i>. • Tempo is the speed: how fast or slow the music is. Think of walking or running. <p><i>Can you identify the beat through clapping? Can you locate the accent? What effect is created if you change the tempo?</i></p>	
<p>Melody: Melody is the tune. It is a series of musical notes that fall into a recognizable pattern. When you add words to a melody, it becomes a song.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitch determines the height of a note in relation to the others around it, which may be higher or lower. <p><i>What words would you use to describe the melody of this song?</i></p>	
<p>Timbre: Timbre determines the unique qualities of sound. It is what makes one instrument or voice sound different from another.</p> <p><i>What instruments do you recognize in this song? Why do you think these instruments were selected?</i></p>	
<p>Dynamics: Dynamics is the volume or relative loudness or softness of the sound. Dynamics give</p>	



<p>emotional intensity. <i>Let's look up the terms: pianissimo, piano, mezzo piano, mezzo forte, forte, fortissimo. Which of these terms would you assign to the song?</i></p>	
<p>Texture: Texture is the layering of instruments and/or voices to create a light or fuller sound. Melodies, rhythms, and timbres can be combined to create different textures. Music made by an orchestra is an example of a full texture. <i>What words come to mind regarding this song's texture (how melody, rhythm, timbre are combined)?</i></p>	
<p>Harmony: Harmony is the blending of tones or sounds (chords). When two or more pitches are blended simultaneously, harmony is made. <i>Is harmony used in this song? When is it used? Why do you think the artist's chose this part of the song to include harmony? What effect does it have?</i></p>	
<p>Genres/Styles: Includes gospel, jazz, rock, country, marches, lullabies, opera, pop, folk, etc. <i>What are the characteristics of each of the above genres? Can you give an example for each of the genres? To which genre does this song belong?</i></p>	
<p>Ostinato: Ostinato is a recurring theme with melodic variations. <i>Can you identify and reproduce (sing, clap, hum) an ostinato in this song?</i></p>	



Complete a chart of similarities and differences between the two songs. For each similarity or difference, try to think of reasons these elements have remained the same or changed.

Similarities	Differences