

'Ride of the Valkyries' from 'Die Walküre' by Richard Wagner

Activity ideas for young people with specific learning difficulties

The Ride of the Valkyries comes from Die Walküre which is the second in a series of four operas by Richard Wagner. The story of Die Walküre is based on Norse mythology. In Norse mythology, a valkyrie is one in a group of female figures who decide which soldiers die in battle and which live. Die Walküre's best-known excerpt is the "Ride of the Valkyrie".

Each Module is designed to cover several lessons where pupils always listen to the tracks and build on prior learning; recapping previous techniques and objectives.

Module 1 Music- Rhythm and themes

Outcome – Pupils are able to play a two beat recurring rhythm

Outcome – Pupils are able to respond to dynamics (volume)

Outcome – Pupils are able to play a mixed rhythm of quick and long beats

1. Pupils listen to the Valkyries Building Block 1 and play along to the two beat theme that runs throughout. They can play this by clapping or by playing an instrument. If using pitched instruments play a 'B' for the two beat rhythm. The pitch can be varied by using pitched instruments – two beats high B, two beats low B etc.
2. Pupils play quietly to begin with, then louder and finish the piece playing quietly.
3. When this is secure, Can pupils play the two beat theme while listening to the Valkyries Full Theme?
4. Pupils listen to the rhythm that starts after the beginning of the Valkyries Full Theme and consists of one long note, three short notes and two long notes. This rhythm is repeated throughout on different pitches. Can the group clap / tap this rhythm? Split the group in half. One half plays the one long note and three short notes either clapped or on instruments and the other group plays the two long notes in time. Once this is secure, all pupils play the whole rhythm. Vary dynamics as above.

Module 2 Art- Responding to different artistic styles

Outcome – Pupils are able to track a written line with mark making tools

Outcome – Pupils are able to make marks in time to a rhythm

1. Talk about the theme of Valkyries riding back from battle. What would they ride (perhaps chariots). Produce some roller print art indicating travel. Can pupils follow a line while travelling across the page whilst listening to the Full Theme?
2. Listen to the two beat repeated rhythm (Valkyries Building Block 1). Can pupils make marks in time to the music following a steady beat? Can they paint (colour in) a chariot adding two strokes to the recurring beat?

Module 3 Language- Using music to name and describe

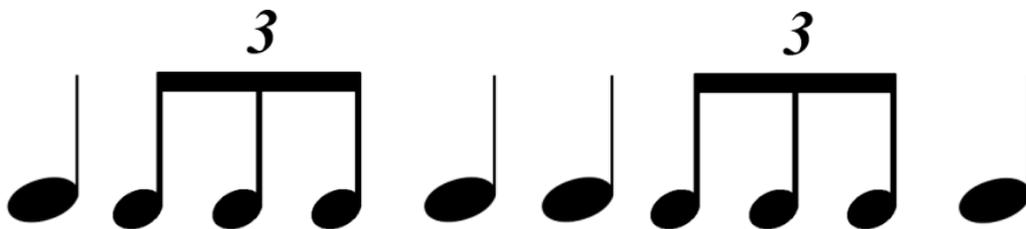
Outcome – Pupils are able to compose text to the two beat rhythm

Outcome – Pupils are able to compose an answer to a melodic call with a rhythmic, melodic, text response

1. In time to the two beat motif in Valkyries Building Block 1, think of language that could be used instead of two beats. Split the group into two. The first group say the item to the two beat rhythm and this is copied by group 2. Use this as a call and response – e.g. ap-ple, (ap-ple), che-rry (che-rry). When this is established use this two beat vocal idea to accompany The Valkyries Full theme.
2. In response to the melodic theme - slow, quick, quick, quick, slow, slow, quick, quick, quick, slow rhythm in the Full Theme pupils will use language to compose. The teacher will say:

“So, what would you like for din - ner to - night?”

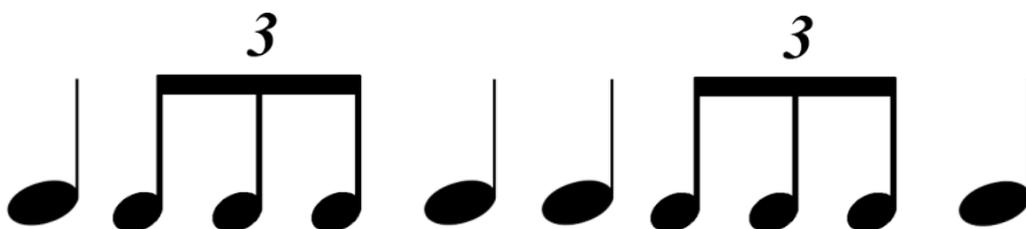
Slow, quick, quick, quick, slow, slow, quick, quick, quick, slow



(in time to main theme) – children to name food in the same rhythm e.g.

“Some cur - ry, po - tat - o, ap - ple and cheese”

Slow, quick, quick, quick, slow, slow, quick, quick, quick, slow



Pupils can experiment with different language ideas.

Module 4 Maths- Counting and grouping beats

Outcome – Pupils are able to march in time to building block 1

Outcome – Pupils are able to anticipate the two beat motif and play in time

Outcome - Pupils are able to play a recurring motif counting slow and quick beats

1. Listen to the Building Block 1 (two beat idea). Talk about the way the whole piece is quite percussive but follows a regular beat. Can pupils march in time to the piece? Can another pupil conduct this by drawing a square in the air in time to the music?
2. Pupils use non pitched instruments or body sounds to accompany the “slow, quick, quick, quick, slow, slow, quick, quick, quick, slow” rhythm. Can pupils play quick / slow when required? Can pupils keep closely to the sound track? Can a pupil take it in turns to conduct by drawing a square in the air?

Module 5 Physical Development- Moving and responding to stimuli

Outcome – Pupils are able to move in response to the melodic theme

Outcome – Pupils are able to move in response to music

Pupils listen to the Full Theme. Can they march in time? Small steps at the start, big steps in the middle, small steps at the end.

Following the “slow, quick, quick, quick, slow, slow, quick, quick, quick, slow” rhythm can pupils move around the room on the quick notes and pose / freeze on the slow beats? Talk about the types of pose and keeping still. Talk about the types of movement. What are the arms and legs doing? Is the body upright or down low?

Extended Listening

Ravel’s *Bolero* – notice the recurring rhythm under the main melody that runs throughout. Try to follow by either clapping playing on instruments or vocalising.