HORN CONCERTO NO. 4 (MOZART)

Create a mini concerto

Creative response lesson plan designed by Andrew Smith

Introduction
Unlike any of the other Ten Pieces, this composition written by Mozart is a concerto. A concerto is a piece of music in which one instrument, in this case the horn, has a solo part. The soloist usually stands in front of the orchestra and generally plays the melody whilst being accompanied by the orchestra. A common feature of a concerto is the cadenza, a short, unaccompanied passage that gives the soloist the opportunity to show-off how skilled they are at playing their instrument.

Compose a tune
First of all we need a catchy tune that can be played or sung by everybody. Pupils can compose their melody using tuned classroom percussion such as xylophones or glockenspiels:

Put pupils in pairs, sharing one xylophone between two and establish who Player 1 is and who Player 2 is. Ask pupils to think of some questions that Player 1 can ask and Player 2 can answer. Questions can be general - “what are you having for tea tonight?”) - or preferably related to the title of your piece or topic of curriculum – “where did the Vikings come from?” Once pupils have agreed on their questions and answers, set a pulse and in their pairs ask the children to practice speaking and/or clapping their questions and answers to each other. The challenge is for the answer to follow on nicely from the question, like in natural conversation:

![Question and Answer Example]

Pupils now need to apply pitch to their rhythms. One idea is to try composing a melody that follows the intonation of the voice when speaking the question or answer. This will give the melody a nice shape without any big leaps between notes. Another idea is to decide on a home note, which starts the question and finishes the answer. You can go wherever you want in between, but don’t go too far away from home! Here are a couple of examples:

![Melody Examples]

Give pupils the opportunity to practice their question and answer melodies.
Create an ostinato accompaniment

An ostinato is a repeated pattern of notes. In his horn concerto, Mozart composed an ostinato similar to the one below, in that there is one lower pitched part playing on the first beat followed by other higher pitched parts playing five quavers.

![Ostinato example](image)

Ask pupils in their pairs to create an ostinato (a simple repeated pattern either on one note or, for the more adventurous, using a few notes) to accompany their question and answer phrase. Once each pair has perfected their ostinato, they can split the parts: one child playing their earlier question and answer melody, the other child playing the ostinato.

Cadenza

A *cadenza* is an improvised passage that is free in rhythmic style and gives an opportunity for the soloist to really show off how skilled they are. Improvisation has been a feature of Western music in many different genres for hundreds of years, for example in jazz music or when singers embellish notes in pop songs. For a cadenza in classical music, the rest of the orchestra stops and leaves the soloist to it. However, in jazz music, the band would accompany quietly. Encourage pupils in their pairs to take it in turns to improvise a few notes, sandwiched in between their question and answer phrases.

Perform

Encourage pupils to perform their completed mini concerti to the rest of the class. Each group could end up with a performance with a form approximate to this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>player 1</th>
<th>question</th>
<th>answer</th>
<th>cadenza</th>
<th>question</th>
<th>answer</th>
<th>question</th>
<th>answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>player 2</td>
<td>ostinato</td>
<td>ostinato</td>
<td>ostinato</td>
<td>ostinato</td>
<td>cadenza</td>
<td>ostinato</td>
<td>ostinato</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cadenza</td>
<td>an virtuoso passage (usually unaccompanied) near the end of a concerto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tutti</td>
<td>everybody plays together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ostinato</td>
<td>a short phrase repeated continuously</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>