Ludwig von Beethoven

Composition Title: Symphony No. 5, First Movement *Allegro con brio* (C minor)

Historical Context:
Ludwig von Beethoven was in his thirties when he began composing his fifth symphony. At this time, he was beginning to struggle with his impending deafness. This could be a factor in his reportedly calling this opening motive, “Fate knocking at the door”. It has since become known as the “fate” motive. He premiered this symphony, along with his sixth, and some of his other compositions, at a four hour long concert in Vienna on December 22, 1808. He dedicated the symphony to two of his patrons, Prince Lobkowitz and Count Andreas Rasumovsky. Due to having very little practice beforehand, however, the performers did not play very well – he reportedly had to stop, and restart, one of his pieces over again. Beethoven’s fifth has since gone on to become one his most popular symphonies, and contains the most famous motive in Western Classical music!

NYS Standards Addressed:
Standard 1: Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts
Standard 2: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art
Standard 4: Understanding Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of the Arts

Performance Indicators:
- Identify the main motive (motif) /theme of the symphony
- Demonstrate recognizing theme 1, the motif, and theme 2, through movement or performance

Objectives:
- Students will recognize and identify the main motive used in the first movement of Symphony Number 5
- Students will demonstrate pitch, dynamic, and tempo variations of this motive
- Students will show recognition of the two main themes through movement and response

Procedure:
- Show students the motive for Symphony number 5 on the board: (ex.)

• Explain that a motive/motif is a short rhythmic or melodic fragment that can be used to create a theme in music. It’s basically the subject, or main idea, in this first movement of Symphony no. 5.
• Play the first theme of the Exposition, First Movement, of Symphony No. 5. Have students count out how many times they hear the motive in this section. (Repeat to check answers – approx. 46).
• Play the theme again, and have students listen for how Beethoven changes the motive, to make it interesting and dramatic.
• Other music elements such as dynamics, tone color, and tempo, modify the motive, much like adjectives, verbs, and adverbs modify the subject of a story.
• Play the theme again, and have students close their eyes as they listen and see what images come to mind with what they hear – how do they visualize the dynamics, tone color and rhythm? Is it in shapes? Colors? Is it in a story? They can write these down if you wish as they listen.
• Play the second theme to the end of the Exposition – how is this different from the first theme? Highlight the re-emergence of the first motive towards the end – how is it changed, or transformed, by theme 2? (Major Key)
Combine students in groups of 4, and have them create their representation of the 2 main themes of the exposition. They can use shapes to demonstrate this, or they can dramatize the main themes. Their “creation” must reflect the adjectives, tone colors, and tempo of the main themes.

Play the exposition through enough times for students to compose their movement pieces. Allow for use of scarves, if you have them.

Students will then perform their Exposition creations and share their ideas – you can have 2 groups perform at a time – have other groups watching evaluate using criteria given.

This plan is written for just the Exposition of the First Movement. The RPO will be playing the entire first movement, however. So, if you’d like to continue, you may:

- Play the development section for the class. Highlight how Beethoven modifies and changes the motive by whittling it down to 2 notes repeated, then one note repeated. The motive tries to break through, but the pianissimo single note continues. The motive returns and takes hold, this time to lead into the Recapitulation.
- Play the Recapitulation/Coda, and ask students for their responses re: use of Oboe, Beethoven’s ending of the movement. You may use the basic listening map included in this lesson, or create one of your own

Indicators of Success:
- Students will demonstrate themes 1 and 2 in their performance pieces
- Students will demonstrate musical elements outlined in the criteria through kinesthetic response

Materials: Visual of the motive, scarves, listening map

Vocabulary: Motif/motive, rhythm, melody, theme, dynamics – piano, forte, crescendo, tempo - accelerando, timbre/tone color

Follow-up:
- Listen to examples of motives used in other symphonic pieces or contemporary films. You may also point out that some may represent certain characters, or are hero themes vs. villain themes. Some examples are:
  1. The five note “alien message” motif used in the movie Close Encounters of the Third Kind, or the two note motive from the movie, Jaws.
  3. The rhythmic motive in Holts’ Mars, or the motive that opens Uranus from The Planets.
  4. Jazz motives – In the Mood, String of Pearls
  5. Tchaikovsky’s Waltz of the Snowflakes, or Coffee (Arabian Dance), from The Nutcracker

- Have students compose a 2 motive composition, using barred instruments in a pentatonic scale, and/or non-pitched instruments.
- Use a fixed number of times for the motive of either A or B to be played (4 or 8 measures). You may use call and response with the motive between wooden and metal barred instruments, or barred instruments and non-pitched percussion, creating dynamic and tempo changes just as Beethoven did in Symphony #5.
- Once you have decided upon your two motives, finish the composition in ABA form – the first motive in A section, second Motive in B. Add a Coda if you wish.

Extensions:
• Have students create a video film project – either a silent film, that follows the themes of the Exposition, or a full scale ABA form project, using originally composed motives for the A and B sections as explained in the follow up, but adding an original plotline written by the students. Once the first draft of the storyboard and the motives are composed, divide students into the following groups: camera crew, musicians, and actors. Musicians play off-screen, while the videographers’ film the actors’ story.
• Have students compose lyrics that will go either with Beethoven’s Fifth symphony rhythmic motive, or with their own originally composed motives. Create a song in ABA form, using these motives and lyrics. Record their compositions using audacity recording software.
Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony Listening Map

**Exposition:**

Theme 1 - “Fate” motive in minor

French horns lead us to…

Theme 2 -

Starts quietly…...builds to climax…….here comes the four note motive, but it ends in a happy, major key!

**Development:**

Theme 1

The theme is quietly passed between instruments:

Played by Brass

Building to the four note motive fortissimo!

Then 3 notes return…

To 2 notes passed between instruments

Then only one very quietly… fate theme tries to come in! but…

No, back to …… one more try, then….

Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony Listening Map P. 2
Recapitulation:

Fate theme returns! Oboe comes in, gets a solo moment…

Then,

Back to four note motive!

The second theme, builds to… and then, but wait!

The Coda

How will it end? Fate motive in minor? Fate motive in major?

Circle the one that wins!
**Ludwig von Beethoven**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Born:</th>
<th>December 17, 1770 at Bonn</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Died:</td>
<td>March 26, 1827 in Vienna</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Studied with his Father</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marriage:</td>
<td>Never married.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Composer, teacher, pianist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compositions:</td>
<td>Symphonies 1-9, Piano concerti, Opera – <em>Fidelio</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Music for the piano</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noted for:</td>
<td>Symphony #5 and #9, piano concertos,</td>
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| The music you will hear at the concert | Symphony #5 – ending  
|                       | Symphony #9 - ending                               |

![Ludwig von Beethoven](image)