

Unit 1: *The Romantic Era*

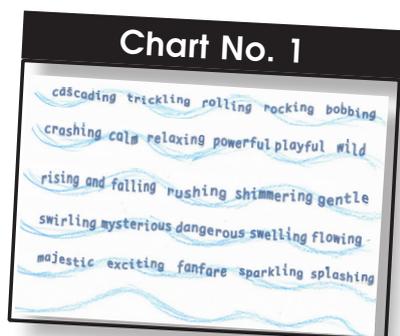
Lesson 1: Romantic Moods – Mendelssohn

Piece 1: *Fingal's Cave* (excerpt)

You Will Need

Teacher: Piece Poster (Chart 2)

Students: Writing Pencils/Pens and Paper, Coloured Pencils or Markers,
Copies of Chart 1, Individual piece posters (Chart 2)



Tuning In

Students listen to *Mendelssohn Introduction*.

PLAY

Any Questions?

After listening to the introduction, each student takes a turn at asking the class a question about what they heard.

It may concern the storyline, the characters, the locations, the sound effects, the dialogue or any other aspect of the track.

Students must know the answers to the questions they ask and no question can be repeated.

How many questions did the class come up with?

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Watch and Listen

Students watch the video, after which there will be a Q and A. Students may take notes as they watch and listen.



Romantic Moods



Q and A

The Subject

What is the video about?

The ocean.

The Form

How many sections does the music have?

It has 3 main sections: a beginning, a middle and an ending.

The Feeling

How would you describe the overall mood of each section?

The beginning is mysterious, suspenseful and dramatic; the middle is more soothing but playful; the ending is wild and exciting.

The Method

How does the composer create these moods?

In the beginning there are repeated short phrases followed by longer notes with sudden increases in volume (*crescendo*).

There is tension and release, like a wave building then breaking on the shore.

A fanfare-like figure announces the middle section.

In the 'foreground' different instruments take turns in call-and-response style while the 'background' is busy.

This creates the effect of boats bobbing on the current.

The final section is announced with phrases from the opening, which build and grow to a loud crashing climax followed by a quick, calming release.

The Orchestration

How does the composer use the orchestra to imitate the movement of the ocean?

The music is in contrasting 'layers': 'background' and 'foreground'.

Long notes create a calm undercurrent while on the surface the sounds ripple and run. Or - the undercurrent 'ripples' while the foreground rolls and rocks.

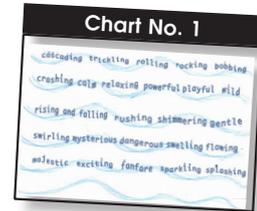
The full power of big crashing waves is suggested when the orchestra plays loudly and all together (*tutti*).

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Words and Music

Students will need copies of Chart 1 'Water Words' and coloured pencils or markers.



Many of the words we use to describe what we imagine when we listen to music have nothing to do with music at all!

We cannot see music so when we try to explain our response to it we often use words that describe things we can see or feel e.g. motion (crashing, rippling) and light (sparkling, shimmering), moods (calm, exciting, playful) and emotions (sad, happy, angry).

The words in Chart 1 describe the music and the images at different times during the video.

As you watch and listen again, each time you see a word that you think describes what you see or hear, circle it.



You may circle words as many times as you like.

Don't forget to listen for the music's different 'layers'.

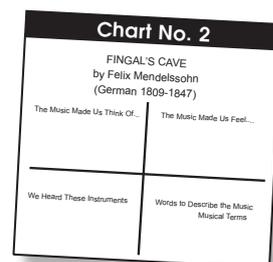
There is space on the sheet to add your own words - words that express what you hear in the music.

Reflection & Discussion

Students complete their piece posters and share their thoughts on the music.

PLAY

(At this point you may like to play the piece **Fingal's Cave** one more time for silent, reflective listening.)



See for Yourself

The video which accompanies this lesson's piece is the authors' visual interpretation of the music. Mendelssohn intended the music to represent something quite different; the spectacular and mysterious island of Staffa and its ocean caves.

This geological phenomenon remains a popular tourist destination and is portrayed extensively on the internet in pictures and videos.

Students might like to log on and see for themselves the inspiration for this timeless piece.

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About the Piece

Fingal's Cave (excerpt) (from The Hebrides Overture 1830).
Felix Mendelssohn (German 1809-1847 early romantic period).

Jakob Ludwig Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy was a musical prodigy who wrote symphonies, concerti, oratorios, piano music and chamber music. At the age of 20 he made a three week visit to Scotland, touring the lowlands, highlands and islands which resulted in major compositions: The Scottish Symphony and The Hebrides Overture (also known as *Fingal's Cave*). The latter was inspired by a journey to the Island of Staffa in the Inner Hebrides with its spectacular column-like rock formations.

Useful Words

Romantic, overture, section, phrases, layers, tension and release,
mood, fanfare, figure.

Tutti.

Crescendo.

