

Danse de Myrtha

Teacher Resources

Activities in this pack:



Information



Activity 3 Perform



Activity 1 **Listen**



Activity 4 **Learn**



Activity 2 **Listen**



Introduction

Title of Work: Danse de Myrtha from Giselle

Composer: Adolph Adam (1803-1856)

Genre: Ballet music; program music

Focus Concepts

- Regular and changing pulse (tempo)
- Understanding and recognising Structure
- Reading notation of crotchet and crotchet rests in triple time.

Introduction

The story of Giselle is a romantic tale of innocent love and betrayal; of a philandering Duke and a trusting peasant maid, Giselle. When she is betrayed by the Duke before marrying him, she dies of a broken heart. In this part of the story Giselle has been buried deep in the forest and has now become a 'wili'. The wilis are ghostly apparitions of folklore, girls who have died betrayed by their faithless lovers on the eve of their weddings.





What can you hear?

a) This piece has 3 beats in a bar. Teach the children a 3-beat body pattern e.g. Slap knees, tap chest, tap shoulders.

b) Ask the children to do this beat while they listen to the first 30 seconds of music. What do they notice about the speed of the beat? (It slows down after 3 repeats)

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c) Ask the class to describe what else happens when the beat slows down (an echo is played by the flute with the triangle).

d) This music is from a ballet. Ask the class how many characters they think might be in the dance for the first 30 seconds and what in the music suggests this.

e) Play from the start asking the class to keep the 3-beat body pattern but to freeze when the music stops/slows down. Tell the students that this is called a pause in music.

f) Sometimes there is no stop but there are other changes. Identify these (speed of the beat gets faster).





Identifying and showing change

The plan of the first half of this piece is:

1. Slow quiet music with some pauses that interrupt the pulse.
 2. A faster section with a regular beat played more loudly.
 3. Music returns to slower opening idea but with different instruments.
 4. A short harp solo introduces a fast waltz feel.
- After this section at 2'37" there is a long pause.
Stop here.

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- a) Ask the class to listen to the 4 sections and raise their hand when they hear something change in the music.
- b) On the board write Part 1, Part 2, Part 3 and Part 4. Listen again to the excerpt and ask the class to show which part they are hearing by holding up fingers. Teacher to confirm by pointing to each part as it happens.
- c) In pairs ask the class to make up 3 different three beat patterns which reflect the mood of the music





Cross-Curricular ideas

1.This story involves a myth about a Wilis (a young woman jilted at the altar, or dying of a broken heart that becomes a vengeful spirit. Giselle is a story about innocence and betrayal. A young peasant girl, Giselle, is in love with a Duke who hides his title and his engagement to another. When Giselle discovers he has deceived her, she is driven to madness, and dies of a broken heart. Late at night, the Wilis gather by her grave, ready to welcome her into their fold as the vengeful spirits of betrayed brides, who force men to dance to their death.

What other myths can the class find about the spirits of people dying from someone's bad actions in some cultures around the world?

2.One myth is the will-o-the-wisp.

a)What is a will-o-the-wisp? What does it look like in folk lore?

b)The effect is caused by a natural scientific phenomenon – what is it?

c)Why do you think people prefer to invent stories of ghosts rather than look for a scientific explanation?

3.Class ethics discussion

Breaking your word is something people can be accused of doing.

a)What is breaking your word? What do people mean when they say “I give you my word”?

b)Why is it important to keep your word?

c)Is breaking your word the same as lying?

d)What circumstances may make keeping your word be difficult?

e)What happens if you break your word?

f)What happened in Giselle when the Duke broke his word?

g)There is not a legal penalty – but is there a moral or a conscience penalty?

