



MUSIC IN OUR SCHOOLS MONTH® 

Music In Our Schools Month® General Music: 4th Grade

“The Carnival of Venice”

Library of Congress Link: <https://www.loc.gov/item/00579653/>

Recording: Composed by Sir Julius Benedict.

Performer: Charles P. Lowe, xylophone.

Recorded in New York, New York, date unknown.

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(NAfME)*

Overview: Students will discuss the definition of *theme and variation*, compare and contrast the Library of Congress recording with that of another more modern recording, and work toward composing their own theme and variation by initially learning the basic melody on classroom instruments.

Prerequisite Skills

For students to be successful in this unit they will need knowledge of and experiences with the following:

- Playing classroom instruments with appropriate technique.
- Managing own practice time.
- Playing with a steady beat.
- Identify and perform grade-level rhythms and pitches.
- Play their part in an ensemble
- Singing with an appropriate range and tone.

Instructional Goals/Objectives

Launching Point 1: Learn about theme and variations

Launching Point 2: Compare and contrast to other recordings of same piece.

Launching Point 3: Compose your own theme and variations

National Core Arts Standards (2014)

Launching Point 1: Theme and Variations

CREATING

Anchor Standard MU:Cr1.1.4b. Generate musical ideas (such as rhythms, melodies, and simple accompaniment patterns) within related tonalities (such as major and minor) and meters.

Essential Question: How do musicians generate creative ideas?

Enduring Understanding: The creative ideas, concepts, and feelings that influence musicians' work emerge from a variety of sources.

Launching Point 2: Compare and Contrast to other recordings of same piece. This can be done at home for distance learning, provided the teacher sets up initial recordings for students to start researching on their own.

RESPONDING

Anchor Standard MU:Re8.1.4a : Demonstrate and explain how the expressive qualities (such as dynamics, tempo, and timbre) are used in performers' and personal interpretations to reflect expressive intent.

Essential Question: How do we discern the musical creators' and performers' expressive intent?

Enduring Understanding: Through their use of elements and structures of music, creators and performers provide clues to their expressive intent.

Launching Point 3: Compose your own theme and variations. This Launching Point can also be done "at home" for distance learning. The teacher can set up compositional tools within an online environment.

CONNECTING

Anchor Standard MU:Cr2.1.4a – Demonstrate selected and organized musical ideas for an improvisation, arrangement, or composition to express intent, and explain connection to purpose and context.

Essential Question: How do musicians make meaningful connections to creating, performing, and responding?

Enduring Understanding: Musicians connect their personal interests, experiences, ideas, and knowledge to creating, performing, and responding.

Assessments

Assessment should be embedded throughout each launching point at the teacher's discretion, and ideas are included for each launching point. Here are some further ideas using the NAFME Model Cornerstone Assessments: <https://nafme.org/my-classroom/standards/mcas/> Other ideas could revolve around student performances, small group work, and using graphic organizers to facilitate the compare/contrast of theme and variation.

Materials and Library of Congress Resource Links for the Unit

- The Library of Congress recording: <https://www.loc.gov/item/00579653/>
- Link to the classroom instrument, basic melody: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1JyKY2IwGDIBIlytBSAMy7-NIR91JhhO8>
- Another performance of the piece, by the United States Navy Band: http://www.viewpure.com/Ia6c6uIlb_Q?start=0&end=0
- Another performance of the piece, for soprano, flute, and piano: <http://www.viewpure.com/HIwXzYR8fks?start=0&end=0>

Teacher Talk—To the Teacher (Historical and Cultural Information), plus Extension Ideas for All Launching Points

Please refer to Informance/Performance booklet on the NAFME website. [Music in Our Schools Month](#)

Just a few of the things teachers can teach to vary a theme include:

- **Orchestration-** which instruments play the individual melodies and when
- **Pitch and/or Melody–** how high or low a note sounds, or melodic direction.
- **Rhythm –** the pattern of regular or irregular pulses caused in music by the occurrence of strong and weak beats. (In everyday language this is the “groove”).
- **Duration and/or Articulations –** the length of a musical note, or how it is articulated (shorter, longer, in groups, etc.)
- **Structure –** the way in which an overall piece of music is arranged into similar and contrasting sections.
- **Dynamics –** how loud/quiet the music is (either the overall sound or of individual notes/instruments within it)
- **Pulse and/or Meter –** the beat of the music, or the time signature
- **Texture –** the way in which melody, rhythm and harmony are combined in a piece of music. What each part/instrument is doing at any given point.
- **Tempo –** the speed of the pulse
- **Timbre –** the tone of a musical note, individual instruments (also: orchestration)
- **Tonality –** the key in which a piece is written (can change as piece progresses)
- **Harmony –** the relationship between 2 or more simultaneously sounding notes

Launching Point 1

Objective: Students will learn about theme and variations.

Essential Question: How do musicians generate creative ideas?

Specific Performance Standard

MU:Cr1.1.4b. Generate musical ideas (such as rhythms, melodies, and simple accompaniment patterns) within related tonalities (such as major and minor) and meters.

Launching Point 1:

(Also for Launching Points 2 and 3)

I can ...

- Play with appropriate technique
- Manage my practice time
- Play with a steady beat
- Identify and perform grade-level rhythms and pitches
- Play my part in an ensemble

Procedure

1. Have students listen to the Library of Congress recording and discuss musical elements they hear (e.g., instrumentation, timbre, tempo).
2. Help students to understand the concept of theme and variations by demonstrating various ways to hear/perform something as simple as “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” done several different ways. Teachers can do this basic demonstration using any instrument/voice combination they are comfortable using with students.
3. Facilitate discussion of ways a musician can create variations of a theme.

Assessment

- Teach the students a movement to the initial theme of “Carnival of Venice.” Have the student work alone or with others to create movement pieces on each variation. Have the students discuss how their movement piece varied the original movement.
- Have the students create a graphic representation of the theme and variations. As an example, show the student Andy Warhol’s “Campbell Soup Cans.”

Launching Point 2 (Can be accomplished in a distance-learning environment)

Objective: Students will compare and contrast the LOC piece with those of other more modern versions of the song.

Essential Question: How do we discern the musical creators' and performers' expressive intent?

Specific Performance Standard

MU:Re8.1.4a. Demonstrate and explain how the expressive qualities (such as dynamics, tempo, and timbre) are used in performers' and personal interpretations to reflect expressive intent.

Launching Point 2

[Teacher choice] I can ...

Use music vocabulary to describe what I hear

Use music vocabulary to explain what I like or don't like, or notice.

Demonstrate appropriate audience etiquette

Identify instruments, their families, and their ensembles

I Can ...

Play with appropriate technique

Manage my practice time

Play with a steady beat

Identify and perform grade-level rhythms and pitches

Play my part in an ensemble

Procedure

1. Using some of the online resources suggested, have students identify what may be differences and/or similarities. Teacher provides students with sentence frames to assist in their thinking and listening skills.
2. Have students question the music that they listen to with open-ended questions, e.g., "Why did the musician/composer decide to ...?" "What was the purpose of the musician/composer doing ... ?" etc.
3. Have students write down their observations, journal, note-taking, or other forms of idea-gathering. This will assist their "idea bank" for Launching Point 3.

Assessment

- Have the students use a Venn Diagram or other graphic organizer to compare and contrast.

Launching Point 3 (Can be accomplished in a distance-learning environment)

Objective: Using their knowledge of theme and variation, and understanding the differences in various performers' takes on the same piece, students will compose their own (theme and) variation after learning a basic melody on a classroom (or at-home) instrument.

Essential Question: How do musicians make meaningful connections to creating, performing, and responding?

Specific Performance Standard

MU:Cr2.1.4a – Demonstrate selected and organized musical ideas for an improvisation, arrangement, or composition to express intent, and explain connection to purpose and context.

Launching Point 3

[Teacher choice] I can ...

- Choose my own musical elements.
- Correctly notate my musical ideas (nontraditional notation is acceptable).
- Evaluate and revise my composition.
- Present and/or share my composition.

I can ...

- Play with appropriate technique.
- Manage my practice time
- Play with a steady beat
- Identify and perform grade-level rhythms and pitches
- Play my part in an ensemble (if in the classroom)

Procedure

1. Have students practice playing the basic melody of “Carnival of Venice” (provided in resources) on any instrument that would be appropriate for them.
2. Students take some time to make choices about where they may alter (vary) the melody. The teacher can assist in this process by using one or more ideas from the Teacher Talk section, above. Students can even add a section of singing and write lyrics if they want!
3. Students should be able to share their ideas with others. Teacher could set up an online environment in which to accomplish this.

Assessment

- Have the students create a rubric to evaluate theme and variations.
- Have students provide feedback on how to improve other student's theme and variations.

Carnival of Venice

Sir Julius Benedict

For Elementary classroom instruments

Arr. by Val Locke

G A G F E F D D E F G A G

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E G C G G F E F D D E F G A G C