

## The Meaning Behind Your Concert Music - Composers and Inspiration

**WebQuest Description:** Welcome to an exciting opportunity to research the meaning behind your concert music! You will have the chance to delve deeper into the lives of the composer, as well as his/her intent as they were writing the songs we are currently playing in class.

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Curriculum:** Art / Music

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### Introduction

Have you ever wondered where your concert music comes from, or what it means? What a composer is like, or how they came up with the idea to write their piece the way they did? Do you have your own thoughts about what a concert piece is about? Here is your chance to preview this semester's concert music, learn about the composer, and find out what the composer's inspiration was when they wrote their piece. Music has the power to make the audience feel many different emotions. Sometimes, when the back story behind the composition is known, the performance can be even more effective. This Web Quest will allow you to explore these possibilities, as well as prepare us to present the information for our spring concert. Mrs. Shannon Poor Bears [spoorbea@kent.eduspoorbear@george-littlerock.org](mailto:spoorbea@kent.eduspoorbear@george-littlerock.org)

### Tasks

During this lesson, you will...  
 1. explore how knowing the composer's inspiration and intention when writing their piece affects the emotion of a performance.  
 2. research important information about the composer and the piece.  
 3. form your own opinions about your concert music.  
 4. demonstrate your understanding of your research through a two page report.  
 5. collaborate with classmates to present your findings to the audience at our concert.

### Process

**Assignment 1: Directions:** Choose two of your concert pieces from the list below. Follow the link to listen to a recording. You may use each movement of "Simple Gifts" as one piece (for example, you could choose movement three and another piece).  
 1. "Ammerland" by Jacob De Haan  
 2. "Simple Gifts - Four Shaker Songs" by Frank Ticheli  
 3. "A Klezmer Carnival" by Phillip Sparke  
 4. "Earthdance" by Michael Sweeney  
 As you listen, fill out a separate Listening Lab worksheet for each piece. The worksheet is attached below. Read the directions carefully.  
**Assignment 2: Directions:** Write a two page report on only ONE of the pieces and composers you researched. Your report should include: Important information about the composer (birth/death, education, family, hobbies, musical specialties, etc.). A brief summary of the musical happenings within the piece that you should expect to hear if you've never heard the piece before. What inspired the composer to write this piece. Your own personal opinions about the piece's meaning (whether it is similar to the composer's original intent, or something completely different).  
**Assignment 3: Directions:** Form a group with classmates to discuss the piece on which you wrote your paper. Decide what the most important points you each found in your research. Then, write a concise statement you could present to the audience at our concert that would effectively introduce the piece. When writing, keep in mind the "effect" you want to have on our audience musically. What words can help (or hinder) this effect? Choose what you'd like to say carefully!

### Evaluation

Student work will be evaluated according to the rubric below. The overall grade will be worth 32 points total. Read the rubric carefully to make sure all sections are accounted for in each assignment.

Category and Score	1	2	3	4	Score
Listening Lab Worksheet	Very little information provided. Unsatisfactory research, or limited information is copied word for word from sources.	2 items are included. Student started to research, but may have struggled finding sources. Information mostly written word for word.	3-4 items are included. Research is very good, some thoughts may be original.	5 thoughtful items included for each category. Research is exemplary, and items included are written in the students' own words.	

Category and Score	1	2	3	4	Score
Report	No report written.	Less than two pages in length, more than 2-3 grammatical errors. Includes very few key points needed.	Two pages in length, more than 2-3 grammatical errors. Includes most information needed, but missing some key points.	Two pages in length, double spaced, less than 2-3 grammatical errors. Includes information about the composer, musical happenings, inspiration for the piece, and the student's personal opinion about the inspiration.	
Group Work	Chooses to work mostly alone, little to no input given to the group.	Gives few ideas to the group. Mostly allows the rest of the team to complete the work for them.	Gives some ideas, but still may not have contributed as much as others.	Gives insightful input while working in a group setting. Works to be a valuable part of the team.	
Concert Program Statement	Unsatisfactory statement. Does not meet time requirements, little relevant information given.	Fair statement, less or more than 2-3 minutes, big gaps in information given.	Well written statement, but less or more than 2-3 minutes with some missing key points.	Concise, but informative information, about 2-3 minutes in length appropriate for presenting at the spring concert. Includes information about composer, piece, inspiration, and unique thoughts about the piece.	
				Total Score	

## Conclusion

Congratulations! You have successfully researched and analyzed how the intentions of a composer when creating a piece can affect an audience. As you reflect back on the processes...What did you learn from these exercises?How did your research affect your playing?How will this process affect how you approach new music in the future?As we prepare to present our concert to the community, it should be a much more meaningful experience for everyone!

## Teacher Page

**Standards**

**Credits**

**Other**