The Greatest Composers

Subject Area/Grade Level:
9-12 Grade Band

Investigative Question:
Who is the greatest Composer?

PA Academic Standards and/or Common Core Standards:

National Standards for Music Education:

- Music 9-12, Standard 6: Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
- Music 9-12, Standard 7: Evaluating music and music performances
- Music 9-12, Standard 8: Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts
- Music 9-12, Standard 9: Understanding music in relation to history and culture

PA Academic Standards:

- 1.4.12.B Write complex informational pieces (e.g. research papers, literary analytical essays, evaluations)
- 1.4.12.C Write persuasive pieces.
- 1.5.12.A Write with a clear focus, identifying topic, task, and audience.
- 1.5.12.B Develop content appropriate for the topic.
- 1.5.12.C Write with controlled and/or subtle organization.
- 1.5.12.D Write with an understanding of style using a variety of sentence structures and descriptive word choices.
- 1.5.12.E Revise writing to improve style, word choice, sentence variety, and subtlety of meaning after rethinking how questions of purpose, audience, and genre have addressed.
- 1.5.12.F Use grade appropriate conventions of language when writing and editing.
- 1.6.12.A Listen critically and respond to others in small and large group situations.
- 1.6.12.B Demonstrate awareness of audience using appropriate volume and clarity in formal presentations.
- 1.8.12.A Formulate a clear research question and design a methodology for gathering and evaluating information on the chosen topic.

- 1.8.12.B Conduct inquiry and research on self-selected or assigned topics, issues, or problems using a wide variety of appropriate media sources and strategies.
- 1.8.12.C Analyze, synthesize, and integrate data, creating a reasoned product that supports and appropriately illustrates inference and conclusions drawn from research.
- 1.9.12.A Use media and technology resources for research, information, analysis, problem solving, and decision making in content learning. Identify complexities and inconsistencies in the information and the different perspectives found in each medium.
- 1.9.12.B Evaluate information found in selected sources on the basis of accuracy, validity, appropriateness, importance, and social and cultural context.
- 8.1.12.C Analyze, synthesize, and integrate historical data, creating a product that supports and appropriately illustrates inferences and conclusions drawn from research.
- 8.3.12.A Evaluate the role groups and individuals from the U.S. played in the social, political, cultural, and economic development of the world.
Learning Objectives:

- To be able to research about and defend a particular composer (from the compiled list), and give reasons why he/she is, in the student’s opinion, the greatest composer.
- To compare and contrast their composer to two other composers.
- To compare and contrast the musical style (genre) to the cultural events occurring and other artistic works being created during the same time period in which the music was written.
- To discover composers and music with which the student is only peripherally familiar and become an expert on one specific individual.
- To create a wiki page project that shows use of primary and secondary resources that are properly documented and fully functional through the web page.
- To enter into intensive cooperative research with their classmates and use higher level thinking skills to analyze primary documents.
- To think “out of the box” about people, ideas, events, and time periods that are unfamiliar to them, and to be able to relate those things to their own lives.
- To gain a respect for styles of music and art that may be unfamiliar to them and to embrace these genres as something they can begin to appreciate.

Duration:
6 Weeks of work through research and wiki.
Final project will be uploaded to the wiki and also presented to the class.

Materials & Citation of Resources:

Appalachian spring [first rough sketches]
Collection: Aaron Copland Collection; Music Division, Library of Congress
Used by permission of the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Inc., copyright owner. For musical works contact the Business Affairs Department, Boosey & Hawkes, Inc., 35 East 21st Street, New York, NY, 10010, fax (212) 358-5305. For all other Copland materials, contact the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Inc., c/o Brown Raysman LLP, 900 Third Avenue, New York, NY, 10022, tel (212) 895-2367, fax (212) 895-2900.
Digital ID: copland sket0024

George Gershwin, seated at piano, facing right 1938
Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division
Washington, D.C. 20540 USA
http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/98519431/

Portrait of Samuel Barber
1944 Dec. 11.
Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division
Washington, D.C. 20540 USA
http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004662567/

Stephen C. Foster
c1938.
Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division
Washington, D.C. 20540 USA
http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2003678869/

El Capitan: Selections [sheet music]
Sousa, John Philip, 1854-1932
John Church Co.
Cincinnati
1896
Music Division, Library of Congress
http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.natlib.sousa.200028521/default.html
Ludwig van Beethoven, [no date recorded on caption card]
Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division
Washington, D.C. 20540 USA
http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004671942/

The first known photograph of Bernstein as a conductor. As a
camp counselor he is conducting the Camp Onota Rhythm
Band, 1937. (Music Division)
© Made available on-line with permission from The Berkshire
Eagle.
http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/lbphotos.42a026

Johann Sebastian Bach, 1685-1750 [no date recorded on
caption card]
Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division
Washington, D.C. 20540 USA
http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004671945/

Johannes Brahms [no date recorded on caption card]
Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division
Washington, D.C. 20540 USA
http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002725284/

Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky, bust, facing right [no date recorded on
caption card]
Library of Congress Music Division Washington, D.C. 20540
USA
http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2007682196/

Rachmaninoff, Serge, portrait photograph
1918 Dec. 10.
Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division
Washington, D.C. 20540 USA
http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/agc1996007540/PP/

Igor Stravinsky
[ca. 1937]
Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division
Washington, D.C. 20540 USA
http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/hec2009010396/

Strauss [no date recorded on caption card]
Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division
Washington, D.C. 20540 USA
http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ggb2006008940/

Mozart singing his requiem
c1910 Dec 31.
Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division
Washington, D.C. 20540 USA
http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004671842/

The palace, exterior, Versailles, France
between ca. 1890 and ca. 1900
Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division
Washington, D.C. 20540 USA
http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2001698730/
Inquiry-Based Instruction:

I will use the Inquire-Based Instruction Model above:

**Ask:** What composers do you know about? Who are the greatest ones? How do you determine that? What characteristics make a composer great? What do you know about the composers' music?

**Investigate:** We will begin by examining several primary resource documents including original handwritten scores, photographs and prints of composers, and listening to recordings of their music. The students will work in groups to compile a list based on what we’ve initially discussed of the “Greatest Composers.” From there, they will each decide who they believe to be THE GREATEST, and begin researching for all of the components of the research presentation. They will also have to choose 2 other composers to compare and contrast with their composer.

**Create:** My students will create a research project that can be uploaded to our wiki page that has “clickable” links to photographs, prints, audio and/or video, and any other sources they feel are applicable to their project. It will need to be creatively presented, have multimedia components, and be a “working” online document. At the conclusion of the project, they will get to present their Wiki Page presentation to the rest of the group and give us a short overview of what they learned through the research process. They must tell us in all of it, why their composer, in their eyes, is the GREATEST COMPOSER!

**Discuss:** Our discussion, because they are in high school and are doing a “defense of ideas” project, will take the form of a debate. They’ll be paired up, preferably with someone who chose a composer that they had contrasted and compared to, to debate different elements of their composer. After the debates, the whole class will discuss and reflect on what we learned about all of the composers, and we’ll take a vote on who, throughout all of our research, is the GREATEST COMPOSER of all time.

**Reflect:** Can the greatest composer of all time actually be determined? Why or why not? After hearing the debates, holding the election, and hearing your classmate’s presentations, do you still believe that your composer is the greatest? What other information do we want to know based on everything that we learned? Enter into the discussion board on the class wiki and write a 3-4 paragraph reflection and answer those questions. Respond to at least two of your classmate’s reflections.
Description of Procedures:

1. This first part will comprise the “Ask” portion of the procedures. I’ll ask the students what composers they’re familiar with. We’ll gather answers together to create a working list of composers. Then we may add in other composers which they: a. may not have thought of, b. may not be as familiar with, or c. didn’t know were composers. From there, we’ll define what makes a composer “great” and from that definition, we’ll pick the greatest composers on the list. That list may be 10-20 names in length. We’ll talk about how we determined that list and make any edits based on our original definition and any other criteria we think may be necessary to determine “greatness.” We’ll then talk about the composers’ music to find out what the students know about each composer’s works. We’ll devise a list of music for each “great” composer.

2. This second part will comprise the “Investigate” portion of the procedures. I’ll start by putting up pictures of all of the “great” composers from the list that we built. I anticipate that the list will include, but not be limited to: Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky, Rachmaninoff, Copland, Bernstein, Gershwin, and Sousa. We will analyze the pictures comparing whether they are photographs, drawings, paintings, prints, etc. Using the Primary Source Analysis Tool as a guide, the class will work together to analyze each item with a different student taking the role of “Head Analyst” on each item. After we do the analysis, we’ll discuss each picture and time period. We’ll listen to samples of each composer’s music and compare and contrast the different musical styles as well. I will also have examples of the art and architecture of the various time periods so that the students can see that the same characteristics that we examined in the music and clothing was also occurring in the art and architecture. For example, during the Baroque Time period (1600-1750), there was an air of decadence. Times were good, especially in Western Europe. The music was very ornate and decorative, if you look at the art and architecture of the same time period, it was also
excessively decorative. One of the key comparisons will be between the Bach fugues and the architecture of the Palace of Versailles. It was built during that same time period, and clearly demonstrates the same concepts. This active compare/contrast example will give the students a very clear idea of what I expect the compare and contrast portion of their research papers to demonstrate. At this point, each student will choose a composer that they would like to find our more about, and two other composers with which to compare and contrast. The other two composers can be from any time period.

3. This third part will comprise the “Create” portion of the procedures. Students will begin an investigative study of a particular composer. My goal is for them to get to know this one composer intimately. Complete research should give me a window into the composer’s world. They will learn about his or her life, music, high points, low points, family, schooling, and what their goals, dreams and ambitions were. Their final project which should include the research paper with primary and secondary resources used, photographs, prints, perhaps original scores, and music, will be uploaded onto our class wiki page

http://bachorskisbandroom.wikispaces.com/ with clickable links to everything. The students will then present their final projects to the class. They can present from the wiki, or do a power point presentation for more clarity. Students who decide to do the power point will be awarded extra credit. The goal of their presentation is to give us their opinion, based on their research of why their composer is the greatest one.

4. This fourth part will comprise the “Discuss” portion of the procedures. After all of the students have presented their projects and given their opinions, it is now time to debate the issue. Who is the greatest composer of all time? Students will be paired and will use the research they did during the compare and contrast portion of the project to defend their position that their composer is the greatest. Student’s grades for the debate will be based on a rubric assessment given to the rest of the class to score the effectiveness of each student’s debate.
This is a rubric I will create on Oral Presentation and Debate Criteria. Students will have strict guidelines for scoring, and any scores that seem out of line to any extreme, will be thrown out. Additionally, I will use the same rubric to score each student. They will have time to create an argument, take notes on their opponent’s argument, and then rebut the argument on the second day of debate. After all of the debates are complete and students have had ample time to hear and learn about all of the different composers, their music, and their life and times, we will hold a class election. I will compile all of the rubric scores (mine included) for each student. Based on the effectiveness of the student’s argument as evidenced by the total points they achieved their debate, the top ½ of the composers will be on the “Primaries” Ballot. All students will vote in a secret election for the composer on the list that they believe is the greatest. After the votes are tallied, the top two results will enter into the “General” Election. The students will vote, again by secret ballot, and the “Greatest Composer” will be named for this school year. His picture will remain as a centerpiece in the classroom for the remainder of the 9 week period (effectively, 3 weeks).

5. Finally, this fifth part will comprise the “Reflect” portion of the procedures. At this point, the students will have a little time to think about this massive journey we just traveled together. They will have the opportunity to go onto the wiki Discussion Board and write a 3-4 paragraph reflection that gives me their feelings on the process by thinking about these questions. Can the greatest composer of all time actually be determined? Why or why not? After hearing the debates, holding the election, and hearing your classmates’ presentations, do you still believe that your composer is the greatest? Were you surprised about anything you learned about your composer along the way? What other information do we want to know based on everything that we learned?

6. Although “Evaluation” isn’t on the particular model of Inquiry Based Instruction that I chose, I do want to share that throughout this entire process my students will be being evaluated. In
my classroom, there are 10 participation/discussion points for each class. Over the course of a 9 week period, that is 450 points just for participating in class and being a contributor during discussions. This project enables them to come in with more and more questions and create lively classroom conversations. I will also utilize my classroom blog

http://bachtorockandbeyond.blogspot.com/ and the wiki page to keep students on track with their progress, answer any questions they have during their research, and to keep the parents apprised of what their working on. I should also add that I have a very strict plagiarism policy. Knowing that students use mostly online resources now, I do check any suspicious work against http://www.plagiarismchecker.com/. I have used this tool many times in the past, and the students have learned very quickly that they need to find ways to write using their own ideas. Additionally, I make sure that the sources that they cite in their document are viable sources. The last thing that I should discuss is that I do talk to the students about the difference between “search” and “research.” Not all websites are credible. I make it a point before any major project to talk about the differences between .com, .org, .biz, and .gov. Most of their resources should come from .org’s and .gov’s. I explain to them that anyone can put anything out on the internet true, false, or otherwise. In a classroom demonstration, I show them the difference between a credible website, and one that is not. This simple act helps the students make better choices when looking for resources for their projects.
**Assessment Rubric:**

**Music In History & Cultures : Great American Composers**

Teacher Name: **Ms. Bachorski**

Student Name: ____________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>4 - Above Standard</th>
<th>3 - Meets Standard</th>
<th>2 - Approaching Standard</th>
<th>1 - Below Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Composer</td>
<td>Student chose composer thoughtfully and insightfully based on prior knowledge and/or a desire to prove that the chosen composer is the Greatest American Composer.</td>
<td>Student chose composer based on prior knowledge and/or has a desire to learn more about that particular composer.</td>
<td>Student chose a composer, but wants to learn more.</td>
<td>Student chose a composer, but has little desire to investigate further.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Research is insightful, thorough, and ideas are fully developed. Information is presented clearly, creatively, and in a way that is interesting. Student point of view is evident throughout the work.</td>
<td>Research is thorough. Ideas are fully developed, and student point of view is present. Information is presented clearly.</td>
<td>Research is moderate, but not complete. Ideas are developed, but student’s point of view is missing. Information is clear.</td>
<td>Research is minimal. Ideas are incomplete and there is little student point of view. Information is presented haphazardly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>Spelling and grammar are correct. Writing style shows evidence of style, different sentence structures, and higher level thinking.</td>
<td>Spelling and grammar are correct. Writing is clear, concise, and complete.</td>
<td>Spelling and grammar are mostly correct. There are minimal errors. Writing is done in one primary style.</td>
<td>Spelling and grammar are frequently incorrect. Writing shows lack sentence structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense of Composer</td>
<td>There is clear and compelling evidence of why the student feels that his/her composer is the Greatest American Composer.</td>
<td>There is clear evidence of why the student feels that his/her composer is the Greatest American Composer.</td>
<td>There is some evidence of why the student feels that his/her composer is the Greatest American Composer.</td>
<td>There is little evidence of why the student feels that his/her composer is the Greatest American Composer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Primary Sources</td>
<td>Students included 8-10 primary sources including photos/prints, and audio/video files/links. They included at least 1 other type of primary source. They utilized loc.gov for at least 2 of these sources.</td>
<td>Students included 5-7 primary sources including photos/prints and audio/video files/links. They included at least 1 other type of primary source. They utilized loc.gov for 1 or more source.</td>
<td>Students included 3-5 primary sources including photos/prints and audio/video files links. No other primary sources are utilized. They utilized loc.gov for 1 source.</td>
<td>Students included only 1-2 primary sources. They utilized loc.gov for 1 source.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of Secondary Sources</td>
<td>Students used a variety of secondary sources. loc.gov was utilized for 2 or more sources.</td>
<td>Students used secondary sources. loc.gov was utilized for 2 or more sources.</td>
<td>Students used secondary sources. loc.gov was utilized for 1 source.</td>
<td>Students used secondary sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare &amp; Contrast Composers</td>
<td>The paper compares and contrasts Composers clearly. The paper points to specific examples to illustrate the comparison. The paper includes only the information relevant to the comparison.</td>
<td>The paper compares and contrasts Composers clearly, but the supporting information is general. The paper includes only the information relevant to the comparison.</td>
<td>The paper compares and contrasts Composers clearly, but the supporting information is incomplete. The paper may include information that is not relevant to the comparison.</td>
<td>The paper compares or contrasts Composers, but does not include both. There is no supporting information or support is incomplete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare &amp; Contrast Music to Cultural and Art</td>
<td>The paper compares and contrasts items clearly. The paper points to specific examples to illustrate the comparison. The paper includes only the information relevant to the comparison.</td>
<td>The paper compares and contrasts items clearly, but the supporting information is general. The paper includes only the information relevant to the comparison.</td>
<td>The paper compares and contrasts items clearly, but the supporting information is incomplete. The paper may include information that is not relevant to the comparison.</td>
<td>The paper compares or contrasts, but does not include both. There is no supporting information or support is incomplete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project is Properly Presented on Wiki</td>
<td>Entire research project is uploaded on the wiki. All components are present, and all links are working.</td>
<td>Entire research project is uploaded on the wiki. All components are present. Some links work.</td>
<td>Research project is uploaded on the wiki. Most components are present. Some links work.</td>
<td>Research project is uploaded on the wiki. Some components are present. Some links work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citation</td>
<td>All sources are properly cited. If copyrighted material appears credit is given fully to the creator.</td>
<td>All sources are cited. Credit is given on copyrighted material.</td>
<td>Most sources are cited. Credit is sporadic for copyrighted material.</td>
<td>No citations were given.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date Created: July 13, 2011

Sabrina J. Bachorski