



Topic 6: Expressionism

Summer Term, Week 1, Lesson 1 – Introduction to Expressionism

Name:

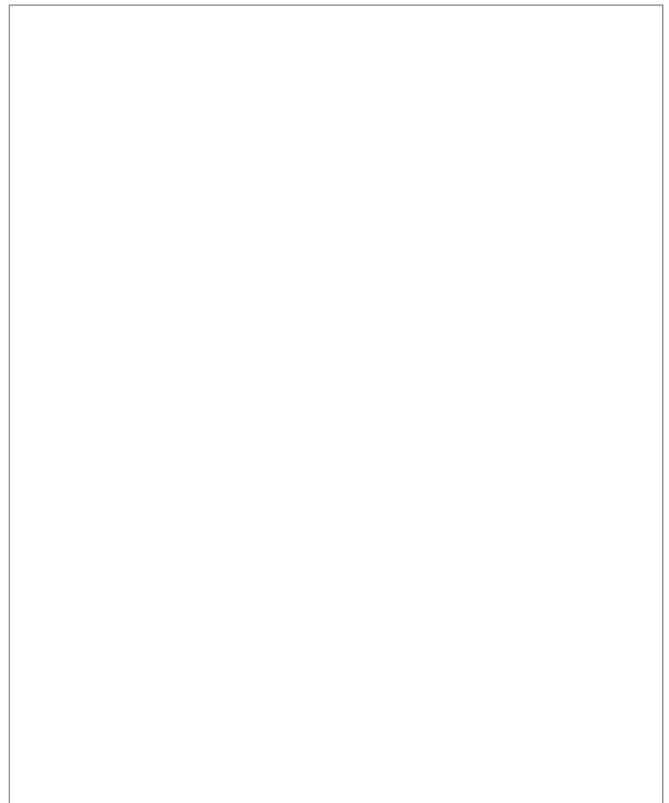
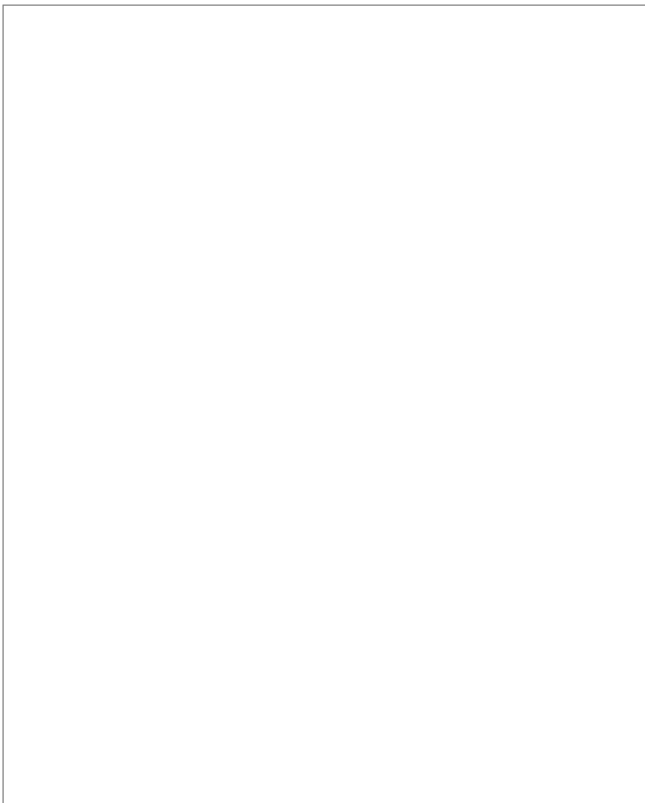
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TASK 1: What is Expressionism?

“Expressionism is the tendency of an artist to distort reality for an emotional effect”

Discuss with your teacher and note in your books this general definition. Expressionism was a movement in the early 20th century that occurred throughout the arts – not just music – and, indeed, is most often associated with the *visual* arts. Look at the pictures below, both by the Norwegian artist, Edvard Munch. What emotional effect do you think the artist was trying to create in these pictures? How does he “distort reality” in order to create this effect?



Emotions	Distortions

Emotions	Distortions



TASK 2: Expressionism in music

How do you think the idea of 'distorting reality for an emotional effect' could be applied in music?
Discuss some ideas in class.

Either individually or in groups, choose one of the following emotions and work out a short piece of music that clearly expresses this emotion. Remember – the expressionist composer did not stay confined by the usual rules of musical composition – in the pursuit of expressive emotion, anything goes!

PEACE DESPAIR JOY LOVE

After 15 minutes, perform your piece to the rest of the class. As you listen to the other pieces, can you identify which emotion they are aiming to represent? How did they seek to evoke this emotion in the music?

Group	Emotion expressed	Musical devices	Other notes
A			
B			
C			
D			

TASK 3: Arnold Schoenberg

One of the founding fathers of expressionist music was Arnold Schoenberg. Listen to the first movement of his *Five Orchestral Pieces* <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPh9YOG776E>>. It is called *Vorgefühle*, which means 'premonitions'. How does the music reflect this title? Think particularly about his use of **instrumentation**, **tessitura**, **dynamics** and **texture** (but first make sure you know what these words mean!). Discuss your ideas with your teacher and the rest of the class, then make a new sub-heading in your books - "Features of Expressionist music" and neatly note down the features of Schoenberg's composition.

NOTES



TASK 4: Webern & Berg

Schoenberg's students, Anton Webern (1883 – 1945) and Alban Berg (1885 – 1935) took up the same style of composition as their teacher, and together they became known as the 'Second Viennese School'.

Listen to this extract from Webern's *Fünf Sätze, Op. 5* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKZt6nPrKJQ>

What sort of ensemble (musical group) is this piece written for?

The piece makes use of pizzicato:

TRUE

FALSE

Which of these terms best describes the tonality of this piece?

MINOR

MAJOR

MODAL

ATONAL

Expressionism aims to paint a strong emotional picture. What emotion do you think Webern is trying to evoke in this piece?

Webern was sometimes called the “mad scientist of music”. What compositional devices does he use in this piece to evoke the emotion you suggested above?

Now listen to this extract of a piece by Berg. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rThdkUL9wkw#t=5m06s>

From what type of work do you think this extract is taken (e.g., piano sonata, string quartet, etc.)?

How does the mood of this extract differ from that of the first extract? How is this achieved through the music?

Name two other similarities between the two pieces.

If there is time at the end of the lesson, watch this <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XsIMq0Xm6fI>