

LESSON 5, ACT 5: TRAGEDY

Key stage 2 National Curriculum Objectives featured:

Pupils will:

- play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using their voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression
- improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the inter-related dimensions of music
- listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory
- use and understand staff and other musical notations
- appreciate and understand a wide range of high-quality live and recorded music drawn from different traditions and from great composers and musicians

The final act of Romeo and Juliet is extremely sad – a lot of people have died! There is a long tradition of composers writing funeral marches and one of the best comes from Dvorak at the beginning of his piece 'The Wild Dove' which describes a bride grieving for her husband.

You can listen to Dvorak's piece for inspiration here, listen between 0'25 and 3'50 –

[Dvorak Wild Dove](#)

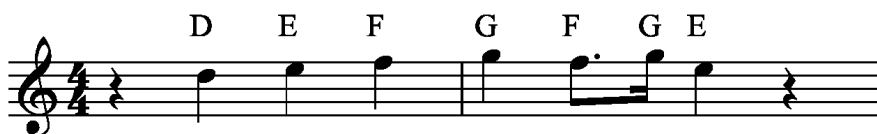
Here's how to make a funeral march on instruments in class using three musical ideas borrowed from Dvorak:

1. Slow, sad footsteps



Begin by clapping this rhythm. Then try it on unpitched percussion such as drums or woodblocks. Use the words to help keep the rhythm uneven.

2. The sad tune



This tune is very simple and can repeat round and around. Teach it to your class. It will easily fit onto pitched percussion or the children's own instruments. If you'd rather invent your own tune follow these rules –

The tune must

- move slowly
- move only to neighbouring notes
- be very repetitive

3. Sobbing

People cry at funerals so you need a sobbing motif. This needs to come between phrases of the tune or on its own as a solo. It's a chance for your children to invent something new. Perhaps something like this:



1. Split your class into small groups and encourage them to work with these ingredients to invent their own funeral march. Remind them that as it is a march for a funeral it must be played slowly and softly.
2. When this is achieved, hear each group and have a go at putting the pieces together to make one big funeral march. Encourage your musicians to structure their ideas so that the music gets louder, thicker and sadder as it goes along.

Taking it further

Have a go at staging Romeo and Juliet's funeral. You'll need to cast two children as Romeo and Juliet and then create a procession of mourners around them. Can you include live musicians and your new funeral march somewhere in the scene too?

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