

Global Music Lesson Plans

Lesson 4: Royal Court Music – UK, Nigeria & Uganda (Age range 11-14)

Time required:

One 60 minute lesson.

Activity:

Comparing ceremonial Royal Court music from three different cultures and traditions.

Aims:

- To explore musical clichés and cyclical musical patterns.
- To compare and contrast the Royal Court music from different cultures.

Pupils will learn:

- How music can be used to increase dramatic effect, particularly as a symbol of power and status.
- That the music of diverse royal courts share similarities in function and musical characteristics.
- How the harmonic series and pentatonic scales can be used to create fanfare type melodies.
- To discriminate between linear and cyclic structures, and how to create cyclical music.

Web links you will need:

- Audio clip of '[Fanfare for a Dignified Occasion](#)' by Arthur Bliss.
- Two audio clips of music composed for different occasions e.g. [carnival](#), [worship](#) etc.
- Online audio clip of '[Rwakanembe](#)' from the royal court of Uganda (Select track 16. The CD image could also be displayed as it shows the Ugandan trumpets or amakondeere).
- Online video clip of music from the [Royal Court of the Sultan of Damagaram](#).

Other resources you will need:

'Making Comparisons Venn Diagram' Worksheet (below).

Useful Information

The Royal Court music of the Sultan of Damagaram is played by a particular group of musicians who specialise in the dynastic music of the chieftainship. They only play for the royal family or those in authority in the Hausa tribe in northwest Nigeria and southern Niger. The ensemble consists mainly of horns, trumpets, oboes and drums and is considered a symbol of power. The number of instruments reflects the importance of the chieftainship and there can be as many as one hundred instruments for very important occasions. The musicians accompany the sultan on his travels in order to raise his prestige in other villages and regions.

Ugandan Royal Court music is played on a number of traditional instruments including a family of wooden transverse trumpets called Amakondeere. These are made from materials like antelope horn and the roots of the paw paw tree. Amakondeere are often played in an ensemble, each instrument playing a single pitch, the interlocking resultant melody reminiscent of the 'hocket' of medieval Europe (e.g. Hoquetus David by Machault).

Fanfare trumpets are a convention of all great **British Royal Court occasions**. Ceremonial trumpets perform fanfares at these occasions often announcing the arrival of a member of the royal family. The instruments themselves are a symbol of power and opulence.

The music from royal courts in different countries across the world share common musical conventions which are explored and celebrated in this lesson.

Lesson plan	Lesson 4: Royal Court Music – UK, Nigeria & Uganda (Age range 11-14)
Starter	<p>Listen to 'Fanfare for a Dignified Occasion' by Arthur Bliss and compare it with three other excerpts of music for occasions, such as carnival or worship music. Ask pupils: what types of occasion they think each excerpt would be suitable for and why?</p> <p>Tell them that the Fanfare piece was written for a royal occasion. Ask the class what sort of royal occasions might suit this type of fanfare.</p> <p>Explain that, during the remainder of the lesson, pupils will compare this English royal fanfare with some from Uganda and Nigeria.</p>
Main	<p>Compare the 'Fanfare for a Dignified Occasion' with two other pieces of royal court music i.e. 'Rwakanembe' from the royal court of Uganda (track 16) and music from the Royal Court of the Sultan of Damagaram.</p> <p>Whilst listening to the performances, ask pupils to complete the 'Making Comparisons Venn Diagram' Worksheet provided (below). Discuss with the class what the similarities and differences are, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All three excerpts use trumpet-type instruments. Why might this be? (Answer = they represent status, power, opulence etc).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The structure of the English fanfare is different from the two African royal court pieces in that it is a linear melody, whilst the other two consist of cyclic ostinati which interlock. • That the English fanfare is based around the notes of the harmonic series (C, G, C, E, G) whilst the two African pieces are pentatonic (with the exception of the double reed melodies in the music from the Royal Court of the Sultan of Damagaram). • That music of diverse cultures share similarities <i>and</i> differences. <p>Play 'Rwakanembe' again, pointing out that, unlike the English fanfare trumpets, the Ugandan trumpets called 'amakondeere' each play a single pitch, and that the melodic pattern that emerges in the piece is the result of each instrument 'interlocking' with the others. Point out also that the amakondeere are tuned to the pentatonic scale.</p> <p>Divide the class into four parts and, using keyboards set to a trumpet or horn, perform the following cyclic fanfare:</p> <table data-bbox="331 1173 1005 1375"> <tr> <td>Count</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Part 1</td> <td>C</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>C</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>C</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Part 2</td> <td></td> <td>D</td> <td>D</td> <td></td> <td>D</td> <td>D</td> <td></td> <td>D</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Part 3</td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td></td> <td>E</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Part 4</td> <td>G</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>G</td> <td>G</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>G</td> </tr> </table> <p>Note: the Royal Court music of the Sultan of Damagaram uses the same technique of layered ostinati but, in addition to trumpets, it mixes unpitched percussion and double reed instruments into the cyclic texture.</p> <p>Working in small groups, ask pupils to compose a fanfare for a royal occasion. Their pieces should be either linear (i.e. an extended melody/duet) or cyclic (repeating ostinati) and should be based on either the harmonic series or pentatonic scale. Trumpets, drums and other instruments may be incorporated if appropriate.</p>	Count	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Part 1	C			C			C		Part 2		D	D		D	D		D	Part 3		E			E		E		Part 4	G			G	G			G
Count	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8																																						
Part 1	C			C			C																																							
Part 2		D	D		D	D		D																																						
Part 3		E			E		E																																							
Part 4	G			G	G			G																																						
Plenary	<p>To recognise and value the achievements of groups and individuals, listen to one or two selected composition(s). For each piece, ask pupils from the class to identify two strengths, along with an aspect that they would like to develop further. These comments are then written down as action points by the composing/performing group.</p>																																													

Making Comparisons Venn Diagram Worksheet

