

## **Variations**

Listen to examples of sets of variations and discuss. If the graphic score work has been based on 'Variations' by Andrew Lloyd Webber, then use that for a starting point. Trace the history of the Paganini A minor caprice through the different periods of history and listen to its treatment by different composers.

Play 'Twinkle, twinkle little star' in a selection of different ways for the children to aurally tell how the music has changed. Then get them to write and perform their own set of variations based on 'Twinkle, twinkle little star'.

### **Lesson 1**

Learning Intention: To understand the idea of a Theme and a set of variations based on that theme.

Collect in any outstanding work.

Introduction: Ask for a definition of 'Variation'.

1. Listen to the theme and a few short extracts from other variations from Andrew Lloyd Webber's 'Variations' Discuss how the variations differ (rhythmic change, pitch change, timbre change, Style change – heavy metal, jazz etc.)

2. Give out 'family tree' of 'Variations'. Look at base of tree to find 'Paganini – A minor Caprice'. Play extract of this and briefly discuss how the variations differ. Remind the pupils that this piece is for solo violin.

1. Follow tree up to Lloyd Webber, highlighting a few examples and explain that as the piece was so popular lots of people did their own 'cover versions' – perhaps play a little of the Rachmaninov variations.
2. Explain that children are going to write their own set of variations based on well known theme. Play 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star'. Get children to write numbers 1 to 10 in rough. Play 10 different variations and ask children to write down what they think has changed. (different tempo, different rhythm, different pitch, different structure – i.e. backwards. minor key, adding extra notes, different texture.)
3. Go through answers and draw attention to ideas which children could do themselves. Explain that they are to play the theme and then make up three variations. If they wish to work with a partner at least one of the variations must be different from the partner's.

Plenary: If time, either get children to work out notes of 'Twinkle' starting on a 'C' or get them to write down which ideas they are going to attempt next week.

### **Lesson 2**

Learning Intention: To begin to write own set of Variations

Introduction: Give back graphic scores and briefly discuss. File work in folders and keep good examples for display.

1. Reiterate goal – to compose own set of variations based on Mozart's 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star'. Pupils need to play original melody and three variations.
2. Using rough books to record information in, pupils need to work out melody for 'Twinkle' starting on a 'C'. Give class time to work on this.
3. Gather class back and ask for ideas for melody (C, C, G, G, A, A, G, F, F, E, E, D, D, C

G, G, F, F, E, E, D, G, G, F, F, E, E, D

C, C, G, G, A, A, G, F, F, E, E, D, D, C.)

Plenary: Ask for a few volunteers to play theme through. Comment on beater control, use of fingers on keyboard etc. Demonstrate good technique.

### **Lesson 3**

Learning Intention: To learn the theme for 'Twinkle, Twinkle' and to begin writing variations.

Introduction: Reiterate target and if necessary go over letter names for melody of theme. Reiterate good playing techniques.

1. Children should work on performance of main theme if they cannot yet play it before embarking on variations.
2. Start working on ideas for variations – choose something which is achievable i.e. More advanced pupils should be aiming for more complicated ideas such as backwards, more complicated rhythms, different accompaniments, minor key, - weaker pupils should aim for slower tempo or change of pitch.
3. Any good examples can be shared at the end of the lesson.

Plenary: Write out rhythm of 'Twinkle' in rough in 4/4. Write letter names above notes of rhythm.

### **Lesson 4**

Learning Intention: To complete composition of theme and three variations.

Introduction: Write out theme on manuscript paper.

1. Children need to be given time to finish their variations and work on a performance.
2. Hear some performances and mark with an NC level. Discuss good technique.

Plenary: Give out plain paper. Discuss what information needs to go on cover for variations work. Set homework of completing cover for next week.

### **Lesson 5**

Learning Intention: To accurately perform own set of variations.

1. Give pupils time to rehearse, before performances. Anyone already finished should continue writing out theme and variations on manuscript paper.
2. Hear performances and mark with an NC level. Discuss good technique.

Plenary: To file covers for 'Twinkle Variations' in folders. Write new title on the contents page.

## **Lesson 6**

Learning Intention: To complete written record of 'Twinkle Variations'

1. Any outstanding performances to be heard.
2. Written theme and variations to be completed. Any unfinished work to be completed for next week. Cover and manuscript to be handed in together.

Plenary: Discuss good instrumental techniques which have been demonstrated.