

## Teachers Resource Kit

# RAVEL

## Piano Concerto for the Left Hand



**Learning & Engagement**  
Stages 5 & 6

*Piano Concerto in D for the Left Hand* by Maurice Ravel  
Stage 5 & 6 Teaching Resource

Sydney Symphony Orchestra

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**“Your life can be changed and enriched through all sorts of music; music from now, music from the past, music from the very distant past and music from as recently as yesterday.**

**Through intensive listening students become involved in one of the highest orders of thinking.**

**As a teacher, by bringing students to a concert and studying music in the classroom, you are providing your students with a special pathway to musical knowledge through direct experience of and contact with live music.”**

Richard Gill AO  
(1941 – 2018)

*Conductor, notable educator and advocate. Richard was the founding Artistic Director of Education at Sydney Symphony. He has inspired generations of musicians through his work and continues to inspire new generations through his legacy.*

# Syllabus link

## NSW Curriculum

*Piano Concerto in D* for the Left Hand by Maurice Ravel covers a range of topics from the NSW syllabuses:

### Years 7-10 Elective

Art Music of the 20th and 21st centuries

Music for Large Ensembles

### Music 1 Preliminary and HSC

Music of the 20th and 21st centuries

Music for Large Ensembles

### Music 2 Preliminary

Additional Topic: Music 1900 - 1945

### Music 2 HSC

Additional Topic: Music 1900 - 1945

## Syllabus Outcomes

The activities included in this kit cover a range of outcomes across the NSW Music Syllabus stages, as mapped below:

### Stage 4 and Stage 5 Elective Music

Activities	Syllabus Outcomes	Ideas for assessment
Activity 1: Aural and Musicology	4.7, 4.8 5.7, 5.8	Short written responses
Activity 2: Aural and Musicology	4.7, 4.8, 4.9 5.7, 5.8, 5.9	Notation and graphic responses Short written responses
Activity 3: Listening and Composition	4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 5.4., 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9	Short written responses
Activity 4: Musicology	4.7, 4.8 5.7, 5.8	Discussion Oral report
Activity 5: Composition and Performance	4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6	Composition Portfolio Performance

### Stage 6 Music 1

Activities	Syllabus Outcomes	Ideas for assessment
Activity 1: Aural and Musicology	P2, P4, P6 H2, H4, H6	Short written response Extended written responses
Activity 2: Aural and Musicology	P2, P4 H2, H4	Short notated and written responses
Activity 3: Listening and Composition	P3, P4, P6 H3, H4, H6	Short written response
Activity 4: Musicology	P2, P6 H2, H6	Discussion Oral or written report Viva voce
Activity 5: Composition and Performance	P1, P3, P7, P9 H1, H3, H7, H9	Composition Portfolio Performance Evaluation

## Stage 6 Music 2

Activities	Syllabus Outcomes	Ideas for assessment
Activity 1: Aural and Musicology	P2, P7, P8 H2, H7, H8	Short written response Extended written responses
Activity 2: Aural and Musicology	P2, P5 H2, H5	Short notated and written responses
Activity 3: Listening and Composition	P3, P5, P6 H3, H5, H6	Short written response
Activity 4: Musicology	P1, P3, P4, P6, P8 H1, H3, H4, H6, H8	Discussion Extended written response
Activity 5: Composition and Performance	P1, P3, P7, P9 H1, H3, H7, H9	Composition Portfolio Performance Evaluation

## Work: *Piano Concerto in D for Left Hand* by Maurice Ravel

### Composer background

#### **Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)**

Maurice Ravel is one of France's great composers and an important master of early 20th century music. Often named with Debussy as an impressionist, Ravel was essentially a classicist in the French tradition of clarity, polish and disciplined craftsmanship. He was for the most part content to work within the established formal and harmonic conventions of his day, yet he forged for himself a language of his own, incorporating a variety of influences, including Jazz. His melodies are almost always modal and his harmonies derive their often somewhat acid flavour from his fondness for "added" notes and unresolved *appoggiaturas* or notes extraneous to the chord that are allowed to remain harmonically unresolved. He had superb skill as an orchestrator of his own piano music, and that of others, such as his famous transcription of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, all of which display his capacity to rethink the same music idiomatically in different media.

### Work Background

#### ***Piano Concerto in D for Left Hand* (1929-1930)**

The *Piano Concerto for the Left Hand in D major* was composed by Maurice Ravel between 1929 and 1930, concurrently with his *Piano Concerto in G major*. It was commissioned by the Austrian pianist Paul Wittgenstein, who lost his right arm during World War I. The Concerto had its premiere on 5 January 1932, with Wittgenstein as soloist performing with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra.

For Ravel, it was important that the concerto not have the slightest hint of being a stunt. "In a work of this kind, it is essential to give the impression of a texture no thinner than that of a part written for both hands. For the same reason, I resorted to a style that is much nearer to that of the more solemn kind of traditional concerto."

The music combines the many influences evident in Ravel's musical language: Spanish music, Gamelan music, Jazz and modes. Ravel did not abolish tonality but employed an ambiguous approach the major-minor scale system, preferring modes such as the *Phrygian* and *Dorian*.



## Instrumentation of work

Woodwind	Brass	Percussion	Strings
3 Flutes (Piccolo)	4 Horns in D	Triangle	Violin I
2 Oboes	3 Trumpets	Tambourine	Violin II
Cor Anglais	3 Trombones	Snare Drum	Viola
Clarinet in E flat, Clarinets in A and B flat	Tuba	Bass Drum	Cello
Bass Clarinet		Woodblock	Double Bass
2 Bassoons		Tam Tam	2 Harps
Contrabassoon		Timpani	

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# Listening guide



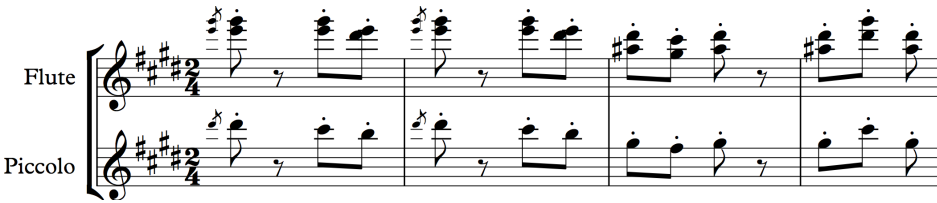

## Overview

The timings refer to the following recording included in the [Spotify playlist](#).

*Ravel: Piano Concerto for the Left Hand in D Major, M. 82. Krystian Zimerman, soloist, with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Pierre Boulez.*

Ravel is quoted in one source as saying that the concerto is in only one movement and in another as saying the piece is divided into two movements linked together. One commentator has even suggested that the work is in Sonata Form. Ravel described the central *scherzo* as “an episode in the nature of an improvisation... introducing a kind of jazz music actually constructed on the themes of the first section”. Although different from the usual fast–slow–fast form, the three part structure of the music, slow–fast–slow, is evident and the music possesses an overall coherence with frequent internal reference to the thematic material.

Bar	Audio Excerpts	Features
1	0:00	The concerto begins with the double bass softly arpeggiating an ambiguous harmony (E-A-D-G), which are the four open strings of the double bass.
5	0:20	Theme A is introduced by the contrabassoon. 
8	0:44	Theme B is introduced by the horns. This is sometimes referred to as the jazz theme, because of its use of the flattened third.  Theme B is quickly reduced to a three-note motif, which is heard simultaneously with Theme A. The gradual addition of instruments, rising pitch of Theme A and increasing dynamics leads to a climax that heralds the grand entrance of the piano.
33	2:20	The soloist's first cadenza commences with a powerful flourish before presenting a freshly harmonised version of Theme A. 
59 - 82	5:00	The tutti orchestra repeats Theme A.

Bar	Audio Excerpts	Features
83 -120	6:12	The key changes to A major. The piano plays an improvisatory-like passage before several solo winds, beginning with the cor anglais at bar 97, join the piano to comment on and extend Theme A, traversing various keys along the way.
121	8:25	Led by the brass, the tempo changes abruptly to a scherzo-like Allegro in 6/8, beginning in E major. Note the use of parallel triads in the trumpet harmonies. 
152	8:51	The piano introduces Theme C. 
246	10:12	The flutes and piccolo play a major version of Theme B. 
278	10:38	The bassoon introduces another, augmented version of Theme B. This is taken over by muted trombone (bar 315), reeds (bar 336), violins and woodwind (bar 357), while the piano responds with variations of Theme C. 
395	12:19	The solo bassoon presents material from Theme C before the piano reintroduces the scherzo motif, which is passed between orchestra and soloist.
417	12:37	The flutes and piccolo repeat their version of Theme B from bars 246 to 269.
460	13:11	A variation of the opening passage from bars 23 to 32, leads to the second piano cadenza.
475	14:18	The final cadenza begins with a lyrical exploration of Theme B, before returning to Theme A at bar 500.
523	17:55	A brief coda concludes the work.

## Additional Media Resources

Below is a curated selection of additional third-party media resources teachers might choose to use in supporting their students to engage in concert preparation.

[Introductory Video \(3mins\)](#)

[Ravel's Creative Harmonies Video](#)

[How to sound like Maurice Ravel Video](#)

[How Ravel writes for Orchestra](#)

## Audio Excerpts

Access the Spotify playlist by visiting the following link:

[Piano Concerto for the Left Hand in D Major](#)

Excerpt No.	Bar No.	Time	Activity	Page
1	491 - 530	15:40 - 18:16	Activity 1 task 1	13
2	277 - 303	10:38 - 11:04	Activity 2 task 1	14
3	277 - 394	10:38 - 12:18	Activity 2 task 2	14
4	32 - 36	2:20 - 3:07	Activity 3 task 1	16
5	36 - 45	3:09 - 3:51	Activity 3 task 1	16
6	46 - 58	3:51 - 4:58	Activity 3 task 1	16
7	58 - 82	4:49 - 6:21	Activity 3 task 1	16
8	33 - 58	2:20 - 5:00	Activity 4 task 1	18
9	83 - 95	6:22 - 7:08	Activity 4 task 1	18
10	315 - 335	11:10 - 11:28	Activity 4 task 1	18

## Score Excerpts

Score excerpts are from Public Domain, IMSLP: [Piano Concerto in D for Left Hand](#)

Excerpt	Section	Bars	Activity	Page
1	Ravel: <i>Piano Concerto for the Left Hand in D Major</i> closing cadenza	491 - 530	Activity 1 task 1	13
2	Ravel: <i>Piano Concerto for the Left Hand in D Major</i> closing cadenza	302 - 314	Activity 2 task 3	15

# Learning Activities

## Activity 1: Listening and Musicology

At the end of this activity, you will understand the technical achievements required of both composer and performer of this concerto.

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### Task 1

Begin by listening to part of the closing cadenza of the concerto, bars 491 - 530 **Audio Excerpt 1** (15:40 - 18:16).

How many layers can you hear in the piano part?

Use the word bank below to help you describe the layers.

melody		arpeggio		countermelody
	accompaniment		motif	
bass		harmony		sustained
	contrast		scale	
rippling		flowing		dynamics
	duration		call and response	
sustained		ascending		descending
	step		leap	
even		uneven		syncopated
	transparent		complex	

### Task 2

Now watch a video performance of this same passage. There are numerous to choose from. This is a suggested performance. Begin watching from the start of the cadenza (bar 475) (video cue 15:00)

[Hélène Tysman, piano Orchestra of the University of Music FRANZ LISZT Weimar Conductor: Prof. Nicolás Pasquet](#)

Write your own report outlining the technical skill required to perform this passage and your own response to the music and the performance.

### Task 3

Study the score of the opening of this cadenza (bars 475 - 501) and answer the following questions.

1. What is the pitch range of the selected passage?
2. How does the composer treat the melodic material?
3. How does the composer build interest throughout the cadenza?

## Activity 2: Aural Skills and Musicology


At the end of this activity you will be able to describe the composer's use of pitch. You will also be able to describe some of the techniques used by the composer to balance the competing forces of soloist and orchestra.

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### Task 1

Listen to bars 277 - 303 **Audio Excerpt 2** (10:38 - 11:04)

1. Using the starting note below as a guide, work out the melody on an instrument of your choice.
2. Notate the bassoon part in the treble clef. The rhythm has been given to assist you.
3. Describe the accompaniment to this melody.



## Task 2

Now listen to bars 277 - 394 **Audio Excerpt 3** (10:38 - 12:18)

1. Describe how the composer has developed the bassoon melody from bars 277 - 303 in this longer excerpt.
2. Discuss the composer's use of unity and variety in this excerpt.
3. Explain how the composer achieves a sense of climax in this excerpt.

## Task 3

Now study the **Score Excerpt 2** (Bars 302 – 314) and answer the following questions.

1. Identify the scale used in the piano melody.
2. Discuss the relationship between this scale and the harmony used in this passage.
3. Describe the composer's use of duration in this passage.
4. What is meant by the terms *sul Do*, *sul Ré*, *sul Sol*?
5. Explain the directions in bar 304 of the harp part.
6. There are two types of harmonics used in the string parts of this passage. Explain the difference between them.
7. Describe the relationship between the first viola and first cello part in this passage.
8. Identify the clef used in the bassoon and trombone parts.
9. Why are there two different clefs used in the cello part?
10. How does the composer ensure that the piano melody is heard?



## Activity 3: Listening and Composition

At the end of this activity, you will be able to describe how Ravel uses the concepts of music to create an individual musical identity.

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### Task 1

Focus Question: How does the composer use pitch in this excerpt?

Listen to the opening of the piano cadenza (bars 32 - 36) **Audio Excerpt 4** (2:20 - 3:07)

1. Describe the sound of these opening bars
2. Discuss which elements of the music contribute to this sound
3. Identify the harmony of these bars

Listen to bars 36 - 45 of the cadenza **Audio Excerpt 5** (3:09 - 3:51)

4. Identify the scale used in the melody (Theme A)
5. Describe the harmonies used in bars 36 - 45

Listen to bars 46 – 58 **Audio Excerpt 6** (3:51 - 4:58)

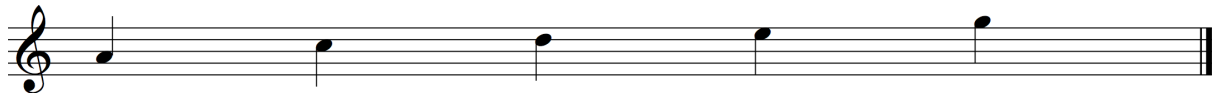
6. Identify the chords in bars 46, 50 and 54 (Study both staves in each bar)

Listen to bars 58 - 82 **Audio Excerpt 7** (4:49 - 6:21)

7. How is the melodic material of Theme A treated in this section?

## Task 2

Ravel uses an Indonesian *slendro* scale in the melody of bars 32 - 36. Compose your own eight-bar melody using the version of the *slendro* scale given below.



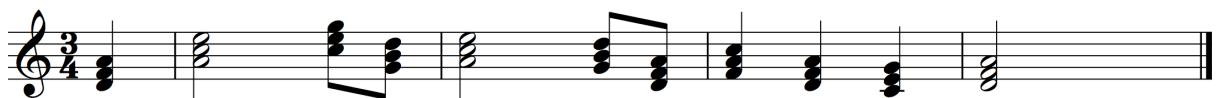
Double the melody an octave lower and write a harmony part which consists of the note a perfect 4<sup>th</sup> below the melody note.



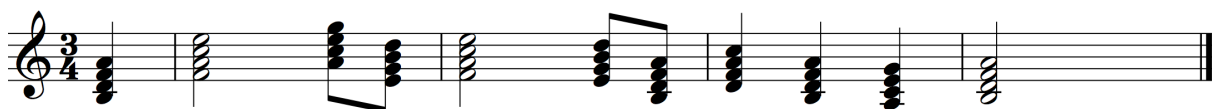
Add an A pedal note and perform your composition in four parts.

## Task 3

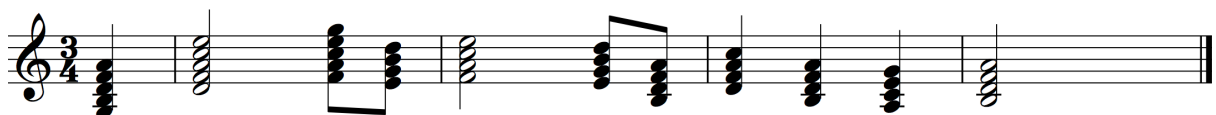
Using the same melody, now harmonise each note of the melody by creating a three-note chord with the melody note as the highest note in the triad, using only the white notes i.e. thirds of a C major scale that do not require accidentals.



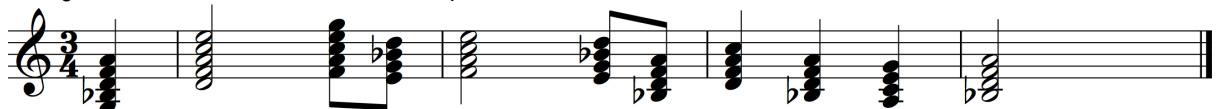
Now harmonise each note of the melody by creating a four-note chord, with the melody note as the highest note



Then a five-note chord for that melody note from only the white notes. What happens to the sense of tonality?



Is there any of the harmonising chords that you would change, using an accidental? What happens if you add change the B naturals to B flats, for example?



## Activity 4: Musicology

At the end of this activity, you will be able to reflect upon the musical, historical and personal influences that contributed to the composing of this concerto and other piano works for left hand.

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Select one or more of the following tasks.

### Task 1

Composers forge their musical identities out of variety of influences. Use the Jigsaw strategy to research Ravel and the influence of Spanish music; Javanese Gamelan music; Jazz; Modes; Polytonality and Polyrhythms on his musical style. Combine the expert knowledge of each group member to create a summary of Ravel's composing style.

Use your combined knowledge to identify the different influences and elements of Ravel's composition evident in these passages.

- a) Bars 33 - 58 **Audio Excerpt 8** (2:20 - 5:00)
- b) Bars 83 - 95 **Audio Excerpt 9** (6:22 - 7:08)
- c) Bars 315 - 335 **Audio Excerpt 10** (11:10 - 11:28)

### Task 2

Research Paul Wittgenstein and the story of this concerto.

- What do you think you would have done if you were in Paul Wittgenstein's situation?
- Why do you think Ravel chose to write his Concerto for Left Hand?
- How did Ravel go about finding a solution to the problem of writing a piano work for only one hand?
- How do you feel about this work as a response to war and disability?

### Task 3

Paul Wittgenstein is not the only pianist to commission piano works for the Left Hand only. Conduct a keyword search for list of works for "piano left-hand". There are separate lists for piano solo and for piano and orchestra.

Investigate the motivations of performers and composers in undertaking such works.

### Optional Extension task

Watch all or part of the M\*A\*S\*H episode, "Morale Victory". Discuss how the writers summarise Paul Wittgenstein's experience, using the character in the story, and the lessons that they draw from it.

[M\\*A\\*S\\*H Season 8 Ep. 19 "Morale Victory"](#).

## Activity 5: Performance

At the end of this activity you will be able to perform a passage from the concerto, originally played by the solo piano, and explore the composer's use of pitch and duration. The parts are flexible and may provide an opportunity to explore your arranging skills, by selecting the performing media for each part.

### Task 1

## Piano Concerto for L.H. Theme C

Ravel

**Allegro**

Flute

Clarinet/Sax in Bb

Clarinet in Bb

Alto Saxophone

Bassoon

Piano

**Allegro**

5

Fl.

Cl./Sax

Cl.

Alto Sax.

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 5 through 9. The Flute part (treble clef) features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The Clarinet/Saxophone part (treble clef) plays a similar melodic line. The Clarinet part (treble clef) provides harmonic support with chords and eighth notes. The Alto Saxophone part (treble clef) also plays chords and eighth notes. The Bassoon part (bass clef) plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The Bass Clarinet part (bass clef) plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The Piano part (grand staff) provides harmonic support with chords and eighth notes.

10

Fl.

Cl./Sax

Cl.

Alto Sax.

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 10 through 14. The Flute part (treble clef) continues the melodic line. The Clarinet/Saxophone part (treble clef) continues the melodic line. The Clarinet part (treble clef) continues the harmonic support. The Alto Saxophone part (treble clef) continues the harmonic support. The Bassoon part (bass clef) continues the eighth-note accompaniment. The Bass Clarinet part (bass clef) continues the eighth-note accompaniment. The Piano part (grand staff) continues the harmonic support.

14

Fl.  
Cl./Sax  
Cl.  
Alto Sax.  
Bassoon  
Bass  
Pno.

gliss.

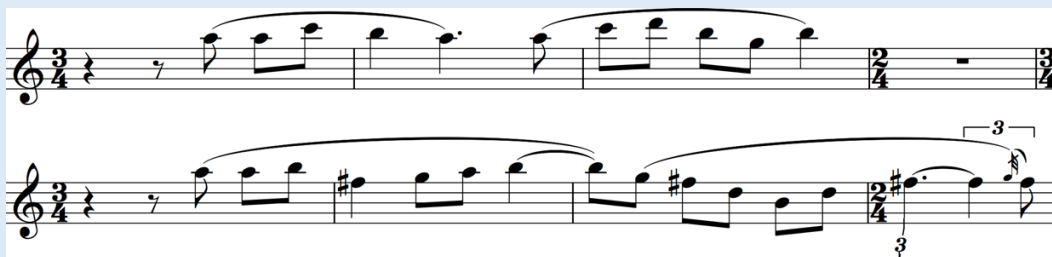
The musical score consists of seven staves. The top four staves are for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet/Saxophone (Cl./Sax), Clarinet (Cl.), and Alto Saxophone (Alto Sax.). The fifth staff is for Bassoon, the sixth for Bass, and the seventh for Piano (Pno.). The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The Flute and Clarinet/Saxophone parts include glissando markings. The Piano part features a steady accompaniment in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

# Suggested Answers and Teaching Notes

## Activity 1

### Teaching Notes

- The word bank contains terms which allow both inexperienced and advanced listeners to craft descriptions of the music.
- It may assist students to hear the melody line separately. Here is the opening melody from this excerpt.



- This is followed by a presentation of Theme A by the piano.
- Performing a melodic line and chordal accompaniment in one hand is now a standard manner for writing for the piano. It was introduced during the Romantic period in pieces such as Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words* and later expanded by composers such as Liszt and Chopin. The textural effect achieved by Ravel is in this tradition. His skill is in creating this effect with a single hand and using the left hand to encompass a wide range of notes.
- A0 is the lowest note on a standard piano. Middle C is C4. This is a range of three and half octaves.

### Task 1

There are at least two layers evident in the piano part. The sustained melody, which is heard above and later below the arpeggiated, hemi-demi-semiquaver accompaniment. As the music builds, bass notes are introduced that create a counter melody, in a syncopated manner – possibly in the form of a hocket – to the treble melody, suggesting a third layer. Lower bass notes later sound and sustain momentarily below the melodic and chordal layers, continuing the third layer or even suggesting a fourth layer. Theme A appears and is soon harmonised with short phrases of triadic harmony, creating a thicker texture. Finally a number of orchestral layers are added.

### Task 2

Whether students are pianists or not, it is anticipated that they will observe the technical skill required to perform this piece. The reliance on the thumb to play the majority of the melodic line and the requirement to play this digit at a different dynamic level from the other fingers is but one of the many technical challenges. The range of the melodic material takes the left hand above middle C and back to the lowest pitches on the piano. Students may also note that moving the left hand across the piano keyboard realigns the position or angle of the hand in relation to the keys.

### Task 3

1. The pitch range is A0 to E6. This is a range of five and a half octaves.
2. There are two melodic motifs in this passage. Both are repeated. The pitch gradually rises.

3. The composer builds interest by the use of the extended motif, the repetition of the motifs at different pitches and the addition of harmonising layers



## Activity 2

### Teaching Notes

- The bassoon is playing an augmented version of Theme B, first heard at bar 8.
- The use of the C minor key signature in the question masks the use of the flattened third. The original score is in C major with an E flat accidental. The key signature has been used for convenience.
- The syncopated anticipation of the motif adds variety and enhances the jazz character of the motif, together with the use of the flattened third.
- Allowing students to work out the melody “by ear” on an instrument replicates the way that a jazz musician would approach this task and makes this activity accessible to students without notation skills. Teachers may choose whether to use question 2.
- Questions 4, 6 and 10 in task 3 are key to the students understanding the techniques employed by Ravel in balancing the soloist and orchestra in the texture.

### Task 1

The accompaniment is a march-like beat, played by the *pizzicato* violas and cellos. It firmly sets out the C major tonality but, like the melody, introduces the flattened third, which gives this theme both its Jazz quality and also some major-minor ambiguity.

## Task 2

1. The bassoon melody is repeated by the muted trombone (bars 314 - 345), the oboe, clarinet and cor anglais (bars 335 to 345), trumpets (bars 345 - 356), violins (bars 356 - 394). At bar 304, the piano introduces a second melody in the *Lydian* mode on C and the accompaniment changes to soft, harmonics in the strings. The *pizzicato* accompaniment continues in half the cellos, creating unity. The theme in the orchestra remains based on C but the accompanying harmonies and the piano melody shift downward by minor thirds. Firstly, it is based on A major (bars 315 -335). The A harmonies are reinforced by arpeggio figures in the woodwind, which accompany the piano melody, also based on A. Then, with the melodic theme still on C, the harmony drops another minor third to an F sharp dominant seventh (bars 335 - 345). This F sharp dominant harmony only lasts for the first part of the theme. The second part is harmonised with an E flat dominant seventh (bars 346 - 356). The piano melody is now harmonised and doubled by the piccolo. There are often various dissonant notes in the harmony, but these do not detract from the effect of dominant harmony. Finally the harmony returns to C major (bars 357 - 366), and to A (bars 366 - 372), while the violins play a harmonised version of the main jazz theme. This time the A harmony acts as a dominant and the music moves to a new tonic of D (bar 373). At this point, the pattern of descending minor thirds begins again, moving to B (bar 382).
2. The repetition of the main (Jazz) Theme B is the obvious element of unity in this excerpt. The *pizzicato* bass plays the beat throughout, providing a further element of unity throughout. Variety is introduced through the addition of extra melodic and accompaniment layers (texture), changing harmonies (pitch) and the changes of melodic instruments (tone colour).
3. The composer achieves a sense of climax through the presentation of the main theme in higher octaves, the addition of extra layers in the texture – including the second piano melody, which alternates at first with the main melody and then are heard together – the harmonised presentation of the two themes and the increased dynamic level, changing finally to *fff*.

## Task 3

1. The scale used in the piano melody is the *Lydian* mode. It could be viewed as a G major scale with a flattened third but the prevailing tonal centre is C and Ravel consistently uses modes and avoids the raised seventh in his melodies, which he does here with the B flat.
2. The flattened seventh (B flat) and the augmented fourth (F sharp), help to create a Jazz or Blues sound in this passage. The flattened seventh matches the dominant seventh sound of the accompanying harmony parts.
3. Most of the accompanying layers are sustained notes. This enables the piano theme, which is mostly quavers, to be clearly heard, as it contrasts with the accompaniment. The *pizzicato* second violas and second cellos keep the march-like beat, while the semiquaver harmonic arpeggios in the first violas create a cross rhythm with the groups of three quavers, creating interest.
4. *Sul Do*: on the C string. *Sul Ré*: on the D string. *Sul Sol*: on the G string of the viola.
5. Modern orchestral harps have seven pedals. Each affects the tuning of all strings of the same pitch. Each pedal attaches to a rod or cable in the column of the harp, which connects to a mechanism in the neck. When the player presses a pedal, small discs at the top of the harp rotate and raise or lower the pitch to the sharp, natural or flat pitch required. These directions tell the harp player to change the

settings of the following notes (F, A, B, C and D) ready for a forthcoming harmonic change or modulation.

6. There are two types of harmonics used in the string parts of this passage. The first violas, first cellos and first and third double basses are directed to play natural harmonics, while the violins and the second double basses are playing artificial harmonics. Natural harmonics are created by subdividing the string into equal parts. The finger touches the string very lightly without pressing it down to the fingerboard. This allows the entire string to vibrate in multiple and equal parts. The resulting pitch may be an octave, a fifth + octave, two octaves or two octaves + a third higher, depending on where the string is divided (touched). For artificial harmonics, the first finger is pressed all the way to the fingerboard, and the fourth finger lightly touches the string. This resulting note sounds an octave higher than the written (solid) note.
7. The first cellos play the same notes as the first violas, commencing one bar later. This creates contrary motion between the ascending and descending versions of the patterns.
8. The tenor clef used in the bassoon and trombone parts. The second top line of the staff is middle C.
9. The tenor and treble clefs are used in the cello part to keep as many notes as possible on the staff and avoid multiple ledger lines. Cello players learn to read three clefs – bass, tenor and treble – which often coincides with playing in particular positions.
10. The sustained notes, harmonic tone colours, *pizzicato* bass and *ppp* dynamics ensure that the single note piano part is heard. The piano, which is also playing *pianissimo*, is playing in a higher register than the accompanying strings.

## Activity 3

### Teaching Notes

- The Audio Excerpts have been broken up to assist the students. However, it may be more convenient to play the complete excerpt **Audio Excerpt** (2:20 - 6:21) each time.
- The bare organum-like 4ths and 5ths are a common feature in Ravel's music, as is the use of consecutive, or parallel triads.
- The composition task is designed to be completed at a piano or keyboard. Notation software may also be employed, in which case the students may need guidance when adding thirds to the harmonies.
- The examples are four bars, for demonstration purposes. The students are asked to write eight-bar melodies.
- Note how the stacking of thirds creates the seventh and ninth chords often found in jazz harmonies, as well as the music of Ravel.
- These close harmonies are obviously written to be played comfortably with one hand. In the concerto, Ravel usually only asks the pianist to play these fuller chords in close proximity, while leaps of wider intervals land more frequently on single notes.

## Task 1

1. The opening bars have an oriental or modal sound.
2. The elements which contribute to this sound are the use of the pentatonic, *Slendro* scale and the parallel octave and fifth harmonies.
3. The harmonies of these bars are parallel octave and fifth harmonies.
4. The scale used in the melody is a Lydian mode on D.
5. The harmonies used in bars 36 - 45 are based on the D pedal point. Using this as the bass note, the resulting harmonies are major seventh, major ninth and major eleventh chords.
6. The chords are: D minor seventh (bar 46), B flat (bar 50) and F diminished seventh (bar 54).
7. Theme A is repeated by the full orchestra.

## Activity 4

### Teaching Notes

- The Jigsaw strategy asks a group of students to become “experts” on a specific text or body of knowledge and then share that material with another group of students. This strategy offers a way to help students understand and retain information while they develop their collaboration skills.
- Ravel refused to join a group known as the National League for the Defense of French Music, which proposed to ban all future works by Austrian and German composers.
- The linked M\*A\*S\*H video is an excerpt from the suggested episode. It may be necessary to provide some background information for students about the Korean War or the M\*A\*S\*H series and explain the differences as well as the similarities between the circumstances of Paul Wittgenstein and the fictional M\*A\*S\*H character, Private David Sheridan.

## Task 1

- a) Bars 33 - 58
  - This passage employs modes. The melody is in a Lydian mode (D with a G sharp).
  - The harmonies include sevenths and ninths as well as other added notes, suggesting a jazz influence.
  - Commentator Norman Demuth says that the dotted rhythm is suggestive of the atmosphere of a Spanish royal court (Demuth, N., 1947, *Ravel*, London: J. M. Dent)
- b) Bars 83 - 96
  - This passage is in a Dorian mode.
  - It employs polyrhythms (the deliberate 2 against 3).
  - The passage is in the nature of a jazz improvisation.
- c) Bars 315 - 335

- The use of the flattened third in the melody is reminiscent of the blues scale, displaying the jazz influence.
- The harmony is in A major, while the melody is a C blues scale. This is an example of bi-tonality.

## Activity 5

### Teaching Notes

This arrangement has parts of differing levels of difficulty.

There is a bass version of the melody, as in the concerto, and a treble version.

## Glossary

Musical term	Definition
<b>a2</b>	Two instruments play the given pitch.
<b>Accompaniment</b>	The part of the music that is not the main theme or tune, but the musical support.
<b>Aeolian mode</b>	The Aeolian mode is also called the natural minor scale. On the white piano keys, it is the scale that starts with A. The Aeolian mode uses this formula of semitones and tones to form its scale: T – S – T – T – S – T – T, which in half and whole steps is: W – H – W – W – H – W – W.
<b>Alto flute</b>	The alto flute has a highly expressive tone and a range that extends a fourth lower than the standard concert flute. The alto flute is a transposing instrument pitched a fourth below what it is written.
<b>Bi tonality</b>	Where two keys are used simultaneously.
<b>Cadenza</b>	A cadenza is that part of a concerto, usually shortly before the end of a movement, when the soloist plays alone to demonstrate their virtuosity.
<b>Chromatic</b>	Progressing by semitones; chromatic as opposed to diatonic.
<b>Da capo</b>	From the beginning.
<b>Dissonant</b>	The term describing the sound when notes played simultaneously do not blend together but clash.
<b>Dorian mode</b>	The Dorian mode is very similar to the modern natural minor scale. The only difference is in the sixth note, which is a major sixth above the first note, rather than a minor sixth.
<b>Duration</b>	Referring to the rhythmic aspects of music, length of sounds or silence.
<b>Dynamics and expression</b>	Volume and choice of how the sound is made.
<b>Expressive techniques</b>	Ways of playing or articulating a sound often related to the interpretation of a style.
<b>Extended Techniques</b>	When a player is required to play their instrument in an untraditional manner, such as blowing into a trumpet without the mouthpiece or tapping the belly of a stringed instrument.
<b>Forte (f)</b>	Loud
<b>Fortepiano (fp)</b>	To commence a note loudly and becoming very soft immediately after.
<b>Gli. Altri</b>	The rest of the players in the orchestral section, other than the solo player.
<b>Graphic Notation</b>	A method of indicating pitch, rhythm and dynamics using symbols instead of traditional musical notation.

<b>Harmonics</b>	A series of notes, called partials that accompany the fundamental tone when it is produced with a string, a pipe, the human voice, etc. On a string, harmonics can be produced by lightly stopping it at various points along its length.
<b>Legato</b>	Smoothly
<b>Lydian mode</b>	The Lydian mode has just one note changed from a modern major scale. The fourth note is sharpened to give a slightly unsettling sound. It also provides an oriental sound.
<b>Melody</b>	Tune
<b>Metre</b>	The way that the beats are grouped in a piece of music, i.e. the number of beats in a bar
<b>Mezzo-soprano</b>	A voice having a compass somewhere between soprano and contralto, which differs from the soprano by missing some of the higher notes and with a darker tone quality. The normal range is from A below middle C to the F an eleventh above middle C.
<b>Mode</b>	Western modes are a type of scale with distinct melodic characteristics. The 7 modes are: Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian and Locrian. Each follows a specific pattern of tones and semitones. For example, the pattern of the Ionian mode is the same as a major scale, while the pattern of the Aeolian mode is that of a natural minor scale.
<b>Orchestra</b>	A group of mixed instruments comprising woodwind, brass, percussion and stringed instruments and usually directed by a conductor.
<b>Ostinato</b>	A repeating pattern – may be rhythm only or rhythm and pitch.
<b>Parallel chords</b>	A sequence of chords where the intervals remain unchanged as the notes of the chord changes. For example, a major chord of C, E, and G would be parallel to a following chord of F, A, and C, which, in turn, would be parallel to a chord consisting of G, B, D. There are no inversions used in the sequence.
<b>Pentatonic Scale</b>	A scale consisting of five notes only – the most common being the 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> , and 6 <sup>th</sup> notes of the scale.
<b>Phrygian mode</b>	The Phrygian is the third mode. It is also very similar to the modern natural minor scale. The only difference is in the second note, which is a minor second not a major. The Phrygian dominant is also known as the Spanish gypsy scale, because it resembles the scales found in flamenco music.
<b>Piano (p)</b>	A dynamic marking meaning soft.
<b>Pitch</b>	The relative highness or lowness of sounds. Discussion of pitch includes the melody and direction of pitch movement and the harmony (different parts).
<b>Pizzicato</b>	A technique used by string players where the sound is made by plucking the string rather than bowing it.
<b>Program music</b>	Music which is inspired by a story, character, place or atmosphere i.e. it is inspired by a

	non-musical program.
<b>Sequence</b>	A pattern that repeats at a higher or lower pitch.
<b>Sforzando piano (sfp)</b>	To accent the start of the note loudly, then become suddenly soft.
<b>Slendro scale</b>	A pentatonic (five tone) scale, one of the two most common scales used in Indonesian gamelan music, the other being the pelog scale. Western listeners often think it sounds like an out-of-tune version of the pentatonic scale as played on the black keys of a piano.
<b>Soundscape</b>	Compositions of organised sounds which are describe a scene of a place.
<b>Staccato</b>	Playing a note so that it sounds short and detached.
<b>Structure (form)</b>	The plan underlying the construction or the design of a piece of music. Structure relates to the ways in which sections of music sound similar or different.
<b>Sul Do, sul Ré, sul Sol, sul La</b>	These tell the player which string to play. The strings are identified by their solfège names. Do=C, Ré=D, Sol=G, La=A
<b>Texture</b>	The layers of sound in a piece of music.
<b>Timbre/Tone Colour</b>	The particular features of a sound which distinguish one sound (instrument or singer) from another.
<b>Tuned and Untuned percussion</b>	Tuned percussion refers to percussion instruments which play specific pitches such as xylophones. Untuned percussion instruments include shakers, triangles and other instruments with no definable pitch.
<b>Whole-tone scale</b>	A six note scale where the interval between successive notes is a tone (whole step). The scale that lacks a dominant, and either major or minor triads.