



Canberra Symphony
Orchestra

UNIT #2

Medieval madness

MUSIC ACTIVITY LESSON PLAN 2.1			
Focus element	Pitch and texture	Focus piece	“Dies Irae” (Gregorian chant)
Learning type	Listening	Lesson length	Approx. 8–12 minutes
Resource links	Video #1 "Dies Irae" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dir90NLDp-0 (0' – 1') Video #4 PAGANINI <i>Caprice No. 24</i> (main theme) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WsJyuJppA7s		
Learning objectives	Students will become familiar with a Gregorian chant and its features.		
Australian Curriculum alignment	ACAMUR088 Explore dynamics and expression, using aural skills to identify and perform rhythm and pitch patterns. <i>Scoutle resources</i> http://www.scoutle.edu.au/ec/search?accContentId=ACAMUM088		



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LESSON 2.1

Familiarise

APPROX. 2–4 MINUTES

Measures of understanding

Students can link imagination and music, articulating what they think the music might be about and *why* they think this.

Note This is subjective – look for the student's ability to explain *why* they think that.

Watch and listen	Watch and listen to the first minute of “Dies Irae” as a class (Video #1) Ask students to think about what they think the music might be about and why . You may like to run this activity after a play break to resettle and focus the class – ask students to find a quiet spot in the room and close their eyes to listen.
Discussion	Ask students to share their thoughts (with the class or in pairs) about what the music might be about – focus on the ‘why’ . After the first playing, share the below context with the class. <u>Context:</u> One of the musical ideas that Paganini incorporated into his <i>Caprice</i> was based on a chant. This chant has been performed for hundreds of years, starting off in the monasteries of Europe where it was sung by monks and other people in churches in the 13th Century – that’s over 800 years ago! “Dies Irae” (which means ‘Day of Wrath’ or ‘Judgement Day’) is sung as part of a Requiem Mass (a mass for the dead which is often part of a funeral in the Catholic Church). This chant has been used by many composers in their music including Berlioz’s <i>Symphony Fantastique</i> .



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LESSON 2.1

Listen and discuss

APPROX. 6–8 MINUTES

Measures of understanding

- Students can articulate the similarities and differences between “Dies Irae” and the main theme from Paganini’s *Caprice No. 24* as a class.
- Students can articulate what their preferred piece of music is and **why**, using musical terminology.

Activity	<p>Listen to the first minute of “Dies Irae” a few times (Video #1).</p> <p>Divide students into small groups and give them some butcher’s paper. Ask them to note down similarities and differences between “Dies Irae” and the main theme from Paganini’s <i>Caprice No. 24</i>. You may like to play Paganini’s theme again for reference.</p> <p>Ask students to share with the class, noting the comparisons on the board.</p> <p><u>Examples</u></p> <p>Similarities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Both have more than one instrument / voice.• Both are historical (not contemporary) pieces of music.• Both are expressive and communicate a mood / emotion.• Both are repetitive. <p>Differences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paganini’s theme has a strong 2/4 beat. “Dies Irae” does not have a clear sense of beat or a clear time signature.• Paganini uses orchestral instruments. “Dies Irae” uses voices.• Paganini’s theme is upbeat / dance-like. “Dies Irae” is slow, solemn and reflective.• Paganini’s theme has a clear melody that you could sing / remember. “Dies Irae” has a very repetitive melody, which is harder to remember.
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Listen and discuss (cont.)

Reflection / discussion

Ask students to think about the effect of the absence of a clear beat in “Dies Irae”.

- What effect does this have on the listener and the mood of the piece?

Ask students to think about what piece of music they prefer, and **why** they prefer it, referencing the musical comparisons they have noted as groups and as a class.

Ask students to write down their thoughts and / or share with a peer or the class. Encourage students to start using the musical terminology identified through the previous activity (model this first).

Example

“I prefer the main theme from Paganini’s *Caprice No. 24* because it has a strong sense of beat, it’s fast and joyful and I like the sound of the instruments of the orchestra.”