

Listening Activities

towards Composition At the Piano

Piece	Possible Concepts to Discuss	Practical Activities
Bach, Prelude in C major, Well-Tempered Clavier I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baroque style and continuous movement. • How repeated arpeggios use different chords in each bar. • The momentum of the piece is generated by harmonic movement, without needing a melody line. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse some of the chords in the piece. • Use the way Bach's chords are split between the hands, but with the chords previously generated from their own key.
Mozart, I Allegro, Sonata in C "Facile"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classical style, clear question and answer phrase at the start and lots of use of scales. • Alberti bass, a key feature of this period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sight read the left hand at the beginning of the piece, teacher could play the right. • Can they spot where the C, F and G chords are? What about a perfect cadence?
Beethoven, I. Adagio Sostenuto, "Moonlight" Sonata	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New features of Romanticism with the deep left hand octaves and use of pedal. • How Beethoven creates the dark mood with steady broken chords and a descending bass line at the outset. • The harmony is primarily in the right hand, as well as the melody – can they hear where it begins? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work out what a C sharp minor chord would look and sound like. • See if they can reach an octave in their left hand! • Use their own chords in the same way as Beethoven, using slow, second inversion broken chords.
Chopin, Nocturne in E flat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bass and harmony combined in LH, and the use of inverted chords. • The singing and embellished melody as is so common in Chopin style. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using their own chords, find two different inversions. • Take a familiar melody (such as twinkle twinkle!) and add embellishment of their own.
Schumann, No 14, Little Study, "Album for the Young"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like the Bach, this piece also uses only harmony to generate the movement within the peace. Here the broken chords are moving in opposite directions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using their own chords, recreate the Schumann's arpeggio style.
Rachmaninoff, Prelude in C sharp minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The drama! Discuss the opening octaves and the use of pianississimo (<i>ppp</i>) and fortississimo (<i>fff</i>). • The texture is very different in the middle section to the outer parts, with the fast movement contrasted with the huge blocked chords if the main theme. • Looking at the score, discuss the use of 2 sets of staves, and why this is useful for the reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similarly to moonlight sonata, discuss the key and talk about octave stretches. Try with two hands simultaneously! • Recreate the beginning of this piece using own bass notes.