

**SECONDARY
10 PIECES PLUS!**

**TOCCATA AND
FUGUE IN D MINOR
by
J S BACH**

TEACHER PAGES

TOCCATA AND FUGUE IN D MINOR BY JS BACH

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p034fjvf>

CONTEXT

Toccatas and fugues are exuberant, dramatic and virtuoso 'show' pieces, usually composed for keyboard instruments and, in particular, for the church organ (the instrument for which JS Bach composed his Toccata and Fugue in D minor). Toccata and Fugues for church organ are often performed at the beginning or end of a church service to create an atmosphere of 'awe and wonder' as the congregation arrives or leaves, or, sometimes as part of an organ recital in a church. In both cases the acoustic of a church greatly enhances the impact of the music:

'Toccatas best exhibit the out-thrusting, fantastic and dramatic aspects of the Baroque...' (Grout)

They convey the effect of a dramatic improvisation and are designed to demonstrate the skills of the solo performer and to astonish the listener with ever-changing textures and mood. Composers in past eras frequently 'yoked' toccatas to fugues, which, by contrast, are highly organised, disciplined, and technical polyphonic compositions.

The *BBC Ten Pieces Secondary* collection includes an orchestral transcription of JS Bach's famous Toccata and Fugue in D minor conducted by Leopold Stokowski (1882-1977). For his transcription, Stokowski assigned each of the melodies and harmonies of the original keyboard piece to different instruments to create a dramatic orchestral concert piece.

MUSICAL INGREDIENTS

TOCCATA

- Rhythm: Includes sections with irregular or free rhythm and little sense of pulse or meter; some sections have a propulsive incessant drive of semi-quavers.
- Structure: Rhapsodic sections sometimes contrast with imitative counterpoint that frequently exploits the repetition of similar shapes or patterns.
Phrases are often indistinct and irregular
- Texture: Sudden changes of texture
- Harmony: Quick and unpredictable changes of harmonic direction
Slow moving chords often played over a pedal note

FUGUE

Pitch/melody: The main melody (subject), which:

- is introduced at the beginning by a single 'voice'
- is imitated in turn by other 'voices', some starting at a higher pitch.
- returns frequently during the course of the fugue

A second melody (a counter-subject), which follows the subject as a new 'voice' begins

- Structure: Contrasting sections called 'episodes' where the subject is not heard
Imitation across parts
Complex polyphonic textures

LEARNING ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

Active Listening Challenge:	Making Comparisons
Composing Challenge 1:	Compose a Toccata
Composing Challenge 2:	Alternative Creative Approach – ‘From improvisation to organisation’
Performing Challenge:	Making Arrangements

KEY LEARNING FROM THIS UNIT

Knowledge of musical dimensions:	Texture i.e. textural variation and polyphony
Skills development:	Composing and performing; ‘finger pattern’ motifs and melodies

RELATED LISTENING EXAMPLES

- Toccata and Fugue in D minor graphic score <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATbMw6X3T40>
- Toccata and Fugue in D minor performed by voices of the Damour Band https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1rTk2FHg_Og
- Toccata and Fugue in D minor performed by Sky <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QgbgUrp1a70>
- Toccata by Khachaturian <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bfo4-CnJZQQ>
- Fugue from Young Persons guide to the Orchestra by Benjamin Britten <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UuRdm9x6LaI>
- Fugue for Tin Horns from Guys and Dolls by Frank Loesser <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RthEYvh6aMM>

KS3 CURRICULUM LINKS

Toccata and Fugue in D minor would fit very well into any unit of work focusing on, for example:

- the genre of instrumental show pieces
- the keyboard music or improvisation traditions
- the Baroque style
- arranging music etc.

Similarly, the idea of a piece that contrasts an improvisatory introduction with a highly disciplined movement is paralleled Indian Ragas or Gypsy and Roma music.

SUGGESTED LINKS WITH OTHER SUBJECTS

- RE: music and worship
- Art: the Baroque
- Drama / Film & Media: Hammer House of Horror

LEARNING ACTIVITIES – TEACHER NOTES

ACTIVE LISTENING CHALLENGE – MAKING COMPARISONS

Pupil resource found in the pack

- Listening challenge – Making Comparisons (writing frame)

Task

- Pupils listen to and compare toccata and fugue sections using a scaffolded writing frame

Suggested approach

- Play the opening or the whole of each toccata and fugue section (heard separately). Pupils then work individually or in pairs:
 - **Individually:** Pupils make notes for each section about what they hear in relation to melody, tempo, rhythm, dynamics and texture.
 - **In pairs:** pupils identify and discuss:
 - a) differences between the sections - using answers in relation to each musical dimension provided
 - b) similarities between the sections - completing the 'how alike' section together

COMPOSING CHALLENGE 1 - COMPOSE A TOCCATA

Pupil resource found in the pack

- Composing Challenge 1: Compose a Toccata

Task

- Pupils compose a toccata for keyboard individually or in pairs

Suggested approach

- When students are familiar with the key musical ingredients of the toccata, introduce the composing challenge: to compose a showy piece for keyboard (individually or in pairs) that demonstrates their understanding of the key characteristics and ingredients of the toccata.
- Begin by asking students to compose three contrasting ideas:
 1. an unaccompanied melody
 2. a dramatic chord or chord sequence
 3. either an intricate finger pattern melody over a pedal note or a finger pattern motif that repeats at different pitches
- Support pupils by modelling different ways of extending/developing each of the starting motifs suggested on the composing worksheet.

NB: Some students may prefer to compose using their own ideas, rather than those provided.

COMPOSING CHALLENGE 2: ALTERNATIVE CREATIVE APPROACH

FROM IMPROVISATION TO ORGANISATION

Pupil resource found in the pack

- Composing Challenge 2: From improvisation to organisation

Task

- Pupils work individually or in groups to compose a piece that moves from improvisation to organisation.

Suggested approach

This open-ended composing task takes inspiration from a key characteristic of Bach's Toccata and Fugue - a dramatic introduction with an improvisatory feel, contrasted with a highly organised and disciplined second section. The task grows out of, and builds on, the listening challenge described above.

A pupil worksheet is provided but teachers may prefer a more creative approach that involves pupils working through key questions, for example:

- *How does Bach achieve a feeling of improvisation in his toccata... or organisation in his fugue?* (see prompts on worksheet)
- *Are there other ways of creating a feeling of improvisation/organisation in a composition?*
- *How might these ideas be used in their pieces?*

Experiment with these ideas by setting pupils a series of short exploratory challenges to kick-start the composing process, for example:

- Begin by creating a short catchy melody based on a graphic shape: explore its effect when played.....
in different registers *at different tempi* *inverted (upside down)*
fragmented *in a different meter* *in a particular style*
getting faster / slower
- Create a dramatic (spooky) chord: explore its effect:
 - when played as a block chord / built- up note by note / arpeggio*
 - with different spacings or in different registers*
- Create an intricate 'finger pattern' melody - explore its effect.....
over a drone note played over a ostinato rhythm repeated at different pitches

Next, consider how to use these ideas to create an improvisatory section, for example:

unpredictable *stopping and starting* *sudden changes (texture, dynamics, tempo)*
showy *never seems to get going*

Now explore creating an organised section, for example:

flowing *clear pulse and meter* *clear structure e.g. ABA or ABACA*
repeating motives or melodies that reappear at different pitches binding the piece together

Pupils then develop ideas into a complete composition.

PERFORMING CHALLENGE – MAKING ARRANGEMENTS

Pupil resource found in the pack: Performing challenge – Making arrangements

Task

- Pupils create own arrangement of Bach's **Tocatta** based on three ideas taken from the original.

Suggested approach

- Pupils begin by learning how to play each of the three ideas, either individually or as a whole class. **NB: Playing the chords may require specific support.**
- Discuss how best to sequence each idea, pointing out that in order to make their performances longer they will need to repeat some, or all of the ideas.

Extension

- Challenge pupils with 'What if?' questions, for example: '*What if they are played in swing / hip hop / waltz style?*' encouraging them to make their arrangement in a distinctive or personal style.
- Listen to Bach's Tocatta and notice how other ideas are incorporated in addition to the three provided.
- Challenge pupils to either create or re-create additional ideas to add to their arrangement.

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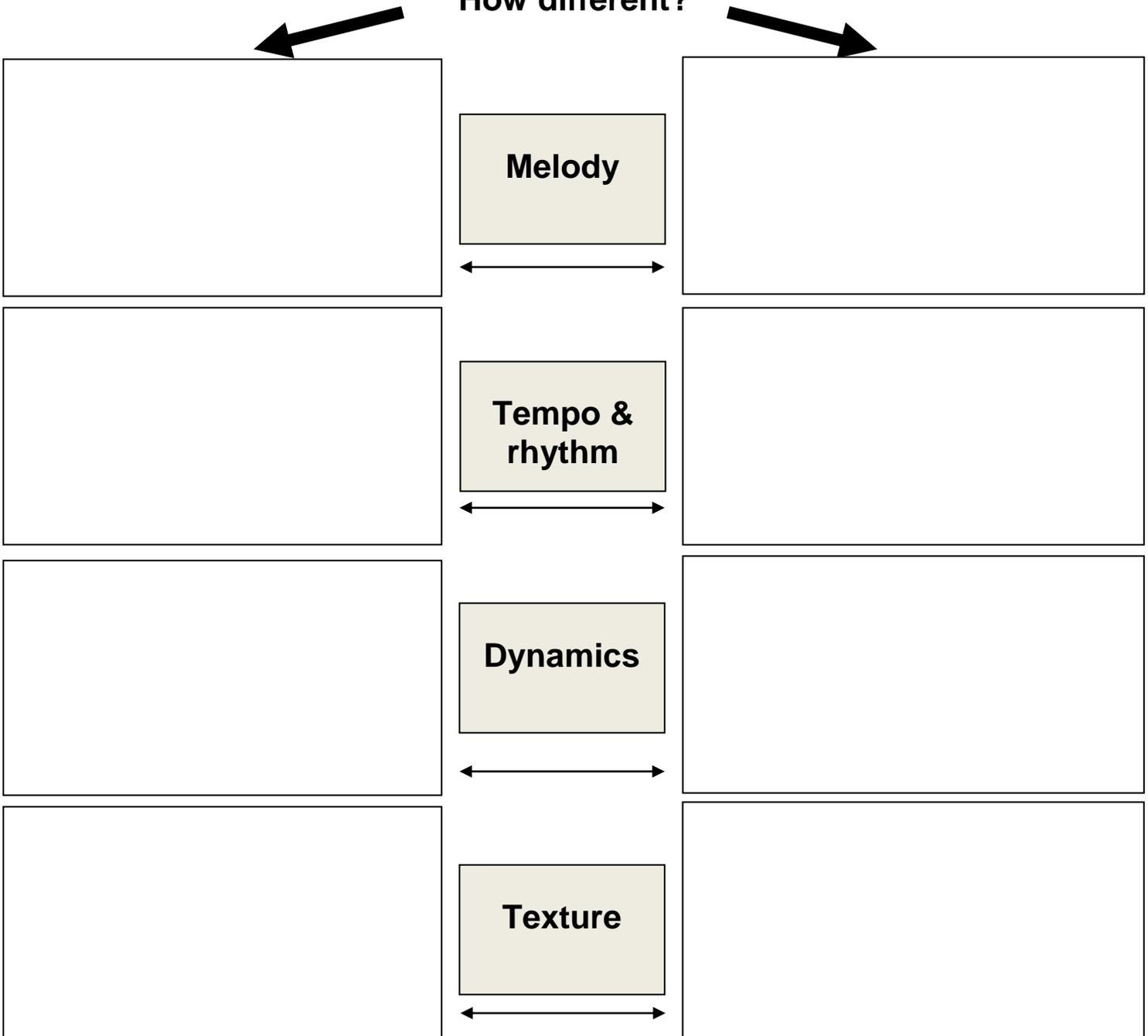
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PUPIL PAGES

LISTENING CHALLENGE - MAKING COMPARISONS



How different?



COMPOSING CHALLENGE 1: COMPOSE A TOCCATA

Work individually or in pairs, to compose a keyboard piece that has similar characteristics to Bach's Toccata - your piece should be showy, improvisatory and dramatic. Compose your Toccata in E minor:



Starting point: Begin by composing three contrasting ideas

1	2	3
<p>An unaccompanied melody (broken up with silences?), which has no strict sense of meter.</p> <p><i>Use one of these motifs to get you started if you wish or compose your own if you prefer:</i></p> <p>E E B</p> <p>B A G A B</p> <p>E F# G B</p>	<p>A dramatic chord or chords that either builds up note by note from the root, or is used as the first of a series of chords.</p> <p><i>Use one or more of the following chords if you wish or create your own:</i></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-right: 10px;"> C A F# D# </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-right: 10px;"> D Bb F# E </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-right: 10px;"> A F D# B </div> </div>	<p>A short repeating pattern that changes pitch.</p> <p>Either: A melody, which alternates melody notes with a pedal note.</p> <p><i>Use one of the following patterns if you wish or compose your own:</i></p> <p>B E A E G E</p> <p>E B G B F#B</p> <p>Or: A pattern/shape that repeats at different pitches. Your left hand could hold down the first note of each repeated pattern.</p> <p><i>Use one of the following patterns if you wish or compose your own:</i></p> <p>B C B A B A</p>

- Experiment with the order of the three ideas: *Which idea would make a good beginning?*
- Find ways of linking your three ideas to form a continuous piece.
- Add additional sections to lengthen your piece, either by repeating and developing your ideas, or, perhaps, by composing new ones.

Extension: Compose a second section that contrasts with your toccata.

This section should be disciplined, highly organised and should be about the same length as your toccata. This section might be characterised, for example, by:

- a strong sense of pulse and meter
- unbroken, continuous melodies
- imitation (follow my leader effects)

COMPOSING CHALLENGE 2

FROM IMPROVISATION TO ORGANISATION

Compose a piece in two sections that moves (a) gradually, or (b) suddenly from improvisation to organisation.

Here are some characteristics that might help you plan and develop your piece:

Section 1 (improvisation) general characteristics:

- unpredictable
- stopping and starting
- sudden changes (texture, dynamics, tempo)
- showy
- never seems to get going

Section 2 (organisation) general characteristics

- flowing
- clear pulse and meter
- clear structure e.g. ABA or ABACA
- repeating motives or melodies that reappear at different pitches binding the piece together

Here are two graphic shapes that could be used to create melodies for your piece.

Either: Use both graphic shapes e.g. one for each section

Or: Use the same graphic shape to start each section, extending and developing it in different ways (using the general characteristics as a guide).

Graphic shape 1



Graphic shape 2



PERFORMING CHALLENGE: MAKING ARRANGEMENTS

Work individually (solo) or in pairs (duet)

Use the three musical ideas below to make your own arrangement of Toccata in D minor by J S Bach.

A. The opening melody

AGA GFED C#D AGA EF C#D

B. Dramatic chords (build up the first chord, one note at a time, from lowest to highest)

E C# Bb G E C#
E C# A D
D A F# D

C. A 'finger pattern' melody and pedal note accompaniment

D E F D E F G E F G A F G A Bb G A F G E F D E C# D A Bb G A F G E

5
A