

Music and Drama Lesson (Secondary)

This lesson is based on the Oneg Shabbat case study.

Aim: To develop a set of musical and/or dramatic images inspired by original writing found in the hidden archive of Oneg Shabbat.

Starter:

Explain that you are going to explore ways to create musical or dramatic images inspired by words and events. And that you will use eye witness accounts from the Warsaw Ghetto as a starting point.

Stage one

Tell the story of the Secret Archive of Oneg Shabbat using the case study as a guide.

Discuss the types of material found in the archive, factual historical accounts, creative work etc and link these with the requests from Oneg Shabbat that their creators be remembered. **Read aloud** the final wishes of:

Dawid:

“What we were unable to cry and shriek out to the world we buried in the ground...I would love to see the moment in which the great treasure will be dug up and scream the truth to the world. So the world may know all. So the ones who did not live through it may be glad and we may feel like veterans with medals on our chests. We would be the fathers, the teachers and educators of the future...May the treasure fall into good hands, may it last into better times, may it alarm and alert the world to what happened...May history attest for us.”

Israel:

“I wish my little daughter to be remembered. Margalit is twenty months old today.”

and eighteen year old *Nahum:*

“I don’t know what’s going to happen to me. Remember my name is Nahum Grzwacz.”

And **say** that, as part of **The Legacy of Hope**, you are going to create a performance piece in honour of them. First however you need to explore how writers and/or musicians convey a message.

Stage Two

Explain that famous writers and composers have sometimes been inspired by historical events and eye witness writings and give some examples. Music - Benjamin Britten dedicated his *War Requiem* to four people who died in the Second World War and wove the words of a First World War poet into his composition. You can listen to his music on www.passionato.com/release/4757511/britten-war-requiem/ Drama - Arthur Miller wrote *Playing For Time* about Musicians held in a Nazi concentration camp.

Listen to or **read** a short extract from either a music or drama piece and **discuss** how the playwright or composer creates a scenario and conveys a particular message, perhaps through repetition of key phrases, a change of rhythm, or the use of silence.

Stage Three

Divide students into groups and **give** each group extracts taken from the Oneg Shabbat archive. You can decide which group receives each extract or give each group all the extracts and ask them to select their own. Some are poems and others are prose descriptions. The extracts can be found over the page.

Group Extracts taken from the Oneg Shabbat archive:

The first one is a poem for the people of Nazi Germany. It asks why they allowed so many people to die.

From *Woe To You* by Yitzhak Karzenelson

We will stand on all the roads,

Quiet, quiet like the grass.

Quietly stand and quietly ask,

Why did you kill us, why?

The second is a simple description of a birthday party.

Dedicated to the bright memory of my only beloved daughter Ninkele, by a teacher, Natan Smolar.

It wasn't so long ago...that we all celebrated your third birthday. Dear friends came...there were so many toys, so much noise and play, so much happiness and children's shouting. And as we drank a cup of tea, we all wished you, from the bottom of our hearts that you celebrate your fourth birthday in freedom. And today there is no more Ninkele, her mother is gone along with my sister Etl...

The third is taken from a street song and dance and describes the plea of a young child. A ration card was used to claim a small portion of bread but the ration was too small.

The Ration Card

I don't want to give up my ration card

I'm still young.

I want to see something good in life,

I want to survive the war,

Please give me something.

As this is a short extract present it together with this short description of Ghetto children, written by an un-named person:

A very thin boy walks along Grzybowska Street. He walks bent down, scours the mud with his hands and puts some stuff in his mouth. In the mud some kernels of ersatz coffee made out of wheat. Then he walks some more and puts something else into his mouth. The boy does not yell, he does not beg, he just walks on, looking down, searching for what he might find...a baby about a year and a half old sits on a pillow. It sits quietly. A short distance away a girl is standing, watching the baby. Men and women go by, no one pays any attention, no-one takes any interest in the Ghetto's youngest beggar...

The final extract is taken from the writings of Cecilia Slapakowa. She provided many descriptions for the archive. Her aim was to show that creativity could not be crushed by oppression. She believed that it would reawaken after the war was over. She describes a busy morning behind Ghetto walls, filled with the hope of survival.

It's ten o'clock...a hot sunny day. The Jewish street pulsates with the intense rhythms of its anaemic life. People push, hurry, shove, stand close against the wall. A mix of faces, voices, smiles-"Rolls, fresh, tasty, white-cheap!" "Morena, your eyes glowed like two stars!" ..."Cheap cigarettes!" "Dear God have mercy on the mother of three orphans" "Oh my God, catch the thief!" "I have a hairdresser's appointment." "Thank God, I earned some money this week." "They're behind on paying wages in the office, how will I support my family?" "It's such a beautiful Spring. You so much want to live. We have to survive." It's ten o'clock and the Jewish street is full of voices of need and of hope...

Music Task

Ask the students to use the passages to inspire them to create a short musical piece suitable for performance to an audience of young people and their parents or guardians. This should be an instrumental piece based on a simple melody, which changes rhythm to suggest different moods or actions of people represented in the extracts. They should base their ideas on a list of key words or phrases selected from the passage.

Or

Drama Task

Ask the students to read the passages looking for words to describe either emotions felt by the people featured in passages or words which compel us to respond today to the story of life in the Ghetto. **Ask** them to improvise a short scene or scenes, without actually speaking the words, to express these feelings or ask students to use their voices to express the emotions by using the passages in a choral speaking piece.

Please note you are not asking students to imagine and recreate life in the Ghetto but you are asking them to think about timeless and common human emotions and the way we either ignore or respond to the needs of others.

Or

Joint Task

Music and drama students work together and create a performance piece of dramatic movement and music called "Voices and Echoes; **a Legacy of Hope.**" The aim of the piece is to encourage people to listen to the voices of the past, respond to them in the present and take a message of hope into the future. The extracts may be read aloud as part of the performance. **Again remember you are not asking students to recreate the Ghetto but you are asking them to devise a new way to draw the attention of their audience to the messages and requests from the secret archive of Oneg Shabbat.**