

Tafelmusik

Educational Resource

A Handel Guide

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Introduction

Welcome, and thank you for downloading and using this educational resource guide. We hope that you will find the material useful. Within this guide you'll find content information prepared by one of Tafelmusik's own musicians, activities for students from grades 6-12 based on this information, and curriculum connections for these grades as set by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Tafelmusik, based in Toronto, is a period instrument orchestra that has achieved international stature through its recordings and concerts. Founded in 1979, the orchestra is currently lead by violinist Jeanne Lamon as music director, a post she has held since 1981.

The Tafelmusik Chamber Choir, specializing in Baroque choral performance practice and vocal technique, was formed in 1981 to complement the orchestra and is currently under the direction of Ivars Taurins.

This resource guide has been created for any teacher that wants to integrate the arts into their classroom; this can include core music teachers as well as classroom teachers who want to deliver a more well-rounded curriculum.

We have created this document in effort to create a strong link between ourselves and educators in the hope of promoting knowledge of Tafelmusik, period performance, and baroque and classical music in general. As such, feel free to recommend this guide to colleagues or other interested parties.

Curriculum Expectations

Tafelmusik focuses its attention to delivering resources appropriate for grades 6 through 12. This educational resource, including the activities presented, address the following curriculum requirements for these levels for the province of Ontario.

Junior Grade 6

Music	<p>Describe, through listening, the main characteristics of pieces of music from the Baroque and Classical periods (e.g., <i>Water Music</i> by Handel, <i>Clarinet Concerto</i> in A, K. 622, by Mozart);</p> <p>Communicate their thoughts and feelings about the music they hear, using language and a variety of art forms and media (e.g., painting, computer animation);</p> <p>Conduct pieces in 4/4, 2/4, and 3/4 time, using standard conducting patterns;</p>
Language (Writing)	<p>Select words and expressions to create specific effects (e.g., to distinguish speakers in dialogue);</p> <p>Integrate media materials (e.g., computer graphics) into their writing to enhance their message;</p> <p>There is opportunity for much more involvement of the Language (Writing) curriculum, including the grammar, punctuation, spelling, and word use and vocabulary building subsections.</p>

Intermediate

Grade 7

Music	<p>Identify the upbeat and downbeat, as well as conducting patterns for 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4 metres, in pieces studied;</p> <p>Recognize binary form (AB) and ternary form (ABA) in music they hear;</p> <p>Communicate their thoughts and feelings about the music they hear, using language and a variety of art forms and media (e.g., a short essay, a dance drama);</p>
Drama/Dance	<p>Identify performance techniques that have an effect on the audience's emotions and senses (e.g., senses of hearing and sight), and evaluate their use in a performance.</p>

Grade 8

Music	<p>Conduct 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4 time, or a metre in a piece appropriate for their grade, correctly using standard conducting patterns (e.g., indications of upbeats, downbeats, and entries);</p> <p>Describe some aspects of the historical context of music that they sing, play, or listen to (e.g., identify some major political events, social or philosophical movements, architectural or painting styles) [dance style];</p> <p>Communicate their thoughts and feelings about the music they hear, using language and a variety of art forms and media (e.g., videotape, improvisation, watercolour paintings);</p>
Drama/Dance	<p>Identify and evaluate the variety of choices made in drama and dance that influence groups to make different interpretations or representations of the same materials;</p> <p>Produce work as a member of an ensemble;</p>

Senior
Grade 9

Music

Grade 10

Music

Grade 11

Music

Grade 12

Music

Notes

Information

Composer's Life

George Frideric Handel was born in Germany in the same year as J.S. Bach, 1685. Although the two famous composers never met, they both suffered from failing eyesight in old age and both went blind after botched eye operations by a shady English eye doctor named John Taylor.



Figure 2 George Frideric Handel



Figure 1 A portrait of Handel's father, a famous barber-surgeon, taken long after his own visit to a barber.

Unlike Bach, who came from a long line of professional musicians, Handel was the son of a barber-surgeon (a common combination at the time) who was determined that his musical son should become a lawyer. He forbade Handel from playing any instruments but the boy smuggled a quiet keyboard into the attic and secretly learned to play. On a visit to the duke who employed his father, Handel gave a dazzling performance on the organ and was then allowed to take lessons in violin, harpsichord and composition, as long as he also promised to study law.

At the age of 18 Handel went to the north of Germany, to play the violin and the harpsichord in the orchestra of the Hamburg opera theatre. This experience inspired a life-long love of opera which three years later took him to Italy. In Florence, Venice, and Rome he became a great success for his church compositions and instrumental music as well as for his operas. For *Rodrigo*, his first Italian opera, the grand duke of Florence paid him 100 "sequins" (gold coins after which the sewing decorations are named) and a set of silver knives and forks.

In 1710, Handel returned to the north of Germany to become the official composer to Georg Ludwig of Hanover who later became King George I of England. During his time as Georg Ludwig's employee Handel made many trips to London where he became idolized for his Italian operas and keyboard performances; like most baroque composers, Handel was also famous as a performer. He found London a much more congenial setting for his talents than the city where he was supposed to be working and he was entertained and housed in the mansions of the rich and famous.

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When his German employer came to England to become the king in 1714 Handel was able to stay in London and he lived there for the rest of his life. By the time of his death in 1759 at the age of 74 he had become England's most beloved composer. He composed over 30 operas for the London public; when his style of opera fell out of fashion he turned to the composition of 30 oratorios, dramatic but unstaged sacred works for soloists, orchestra and choir. The most famous of these was *Messiah*, which remains one of the most often performed pieces of music today. Handel also wrote hundreds of instrumental works. The most famous of these is the orchestral suite known as *Water Music*.

Composer's Times

Handel first arrived in London on a chilly day in the autumn of 1710. Visitors at this time often remarked on the thick black smoke which hung over the city from the coal which people used to heat their homes.

Like modern Toronto, eighteenth-century London was a city of contrasts. Although it was a time of great prosperity, many people lived in extreme poverty and some had to sleep on the streets. Well-to-do people gathered in coffee houses to drink the new hot beverage which had just arrived from Turkey. They also loved to attend the opera and it was this audience which first attracted Handel to the city.

After 13 years of living as a long-term guest in various mansions around the city, Handel moved to his own house on Brooke Street, which was within walking distance of Hyde Park. He spent his time in a variety of London buildings, depending on what kind of music he was composing.

Figure 3 Street vendors of knives, kitchen goods, barrels and laces. Handel used London street cries in one of his works.



Composer's Music

Church Music

Handel was a famous organist and often went to St. Paul's Cathedral in the evening after the services were over to improvise on the organ. Afterwards he went to the nearby Queen's Arms tavern to eat, drink and play the harpsichord!

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He also composed music for the choir of Westminster Abbey, including the famous anthems for the coronation of George II in 1727. The music was performed by a choir of 40 singers and a huge orchestra of 160 players.

Operas and Oratorios

As a composer of dramatic works, Handel was closely associated with two theatres in the centre of London – the King's Theatre in the Haymarket, and the Covent Garden Theatre, so-called because it was built on the site of a former convent.



Figure 4 An engraving by William Hogarth depicting a line-up of singers, dancers, stage hands and audience members waiting to get into the new theatre at Covent Garden in 1732.

Handel often had preliminary rehearsals for the singers at home where he was famous for his hot-headed but humorous rehearsal style. Then when the orchestra arrived, he kept up a punishing schedule at the theatre leading to performances of up to five different oratorios in a matter of days. In the intermissions of performances he often performed organ concertos.

Music for the King

Handel often visited at St. James Palace, the main residence of King George and Queen Caroline, to attend social functions, to perform concerts and to give music lessons to the two princesses. He composed music for national occasions such as victories in war and royal funerals. His most famous royal commission was the music for the water party that took place on the Thames river on July 17, 1717.

Water Music

From a report of the German ambassador to London:

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A few weeks ago the king expressed his desire to have a concert on the river. The necessary orders were given and the entertainment took place the day before yesterday. About eight in the evening the king repaired to his barge. Next to the king's barge was that of the musicians, about 50 in number, who played on all kinds of instruments. The music had been composed specially by the famous Handel, a native of Halle and his majesty's principal court composer. His majesty approved of it so greatly that he caused it to be repeated three times in all - twice before and once after supper.

Handel's *Water Music* is made up of three suites of overtures and dance pieces. This resource will focus on three movements which can be found on Tafelmusik's recording of *Water Music*, Sony SK 68257: the hornpipe (track 8), the sarabande (track 12) and the rigaudon (track 13).

HORNPIPE (TRACK 8)

The hornpipe was a lively English dance, often in 3/2 time with intricate dancing steps. Like most baroque dances, it has two sections, each of which is repeated. In the *Water Music*, Handel indicates that the entire piece should be played three times. If you listen to the piece while counting along in three you will hear some cross rhythms or syncopations which give this music its characteristic flavour.

SARABANDE (TRACK 12)

The sarabande from *Water Music* is the first piece from the G+ suite, originally scored for flute and strings. It is a stately French dance with a characteristic accent on the second beat of some of the bars (see bars 1,3,5,7, for example). Each of the two main sections ends with a "hemiola" - a cadence where the rhythmic emphasis shifts from three to two.

RIGAUDON (TRACK 13)

This pair of dances follows a typical baroque format; the first is in G+, the second in G- followed by a repetition of the first movement. The rigaudon was originally a French folk dance which became popular at the court of Louis XIV and then was adopted by English royalty. In 1711 a "Royal Rigadoon" was composed for the birthday of Queen Anne. It is a lively dance in duple metre with its phrases preceded by an upbeat, which was danced by couples at balls or on stage at the theatre.

Activities

These activities are meant to accompany the content given in the Information section of this document. Presented in three levels – junior, intermediate, and senior – each activity helps makes use of the content to teach students in an activity-based manner that is guided by the curriculum mandated by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Teachers should recognize that the categorization of these activities serves only as a helpful guide. Please feel free to adapt any activities to your age group and class.

Junior

Using the three movements listed above for Handel’s *Water Music* – the Hornpipe, Sarabande, and the Rigaudon (tracks 8, 12, and 13 on the Tafelmusik musik recording) – as a basis, students will write a fictional story.

Analyze the music. Have students listen to each of the three movements mentioned above. On a section of the blackboard for each, record the discussion as a class that the affect, or emotional qualities, of each movement have. Remember to discuss what musical qualities contribute to the affect (pitch, beat, rhythm, melody, dynamics, tone colour, texture (homophony, polyphony), and form). As an exercise, have students conduct to better feel the music and discover its elements (is the movement in 2, 3, or 4). Are the students conducting emphatically, precisely, gently?

Organize the emotions. On the blackboard, above each movement’s writings, summarize the mood the class came up with for each movement. For example, “happy” for the Hornpipe, “stately” or “gentle” for the Sarabande, and “joyful” for the Rigaudon.

Create a story. Individually or in pairs, have the students write a story that fits with the three movements discussed. Each story should have a protagonist (hero), a friend (human or animal) or family member, and an obstacle to overcome (human, nature, or both). The story should feature a peaceful resolution to the obstacle. Students should be given four time segments to write this story. The first is a brainstorming session. The second, third, and fourth time periods should have the Hornpipe, Sarabande, and the Rigaudon playing in the background, respectively.

Share the story. Divide the class into circle groups of 4-5. Have the students read their story to their group members while the music plays for each of the three movements. Repeat until everyone has had a chance to share their story.

Variations and resources. This activity lends itself to including different approaches and consequently addressing different parts of the curriculum. For example, students can also write a comic, or prepare a small script for a play. For other ideas and lesson plans, visit the website [readwritethink](http://www.readwritethink.org/index.asp) at www.readwritethink.org/index.asp.

Intermediate

Dancing was very important in the Baroque period.. As mentioned, Handel's *Water Music* is made up largely of dance pieces (and overtures). This activity involves students analyzing the components of music and dance, and creating their own dance composition that can be shared with the rest of the class.

Analyze the music. Have students listen to the Sarabande of the third suite (track 12 of Tafelmusik's *Water Music* recording). Students should comment on what elements make this piece suitable for dancing (strong downbeat, steady pulse/tempo) and on what kind of dance would be produced by this music (fast, slow, passionate). What is the time signature of the piece? Have students conduct to explore a beat pattern. More in depth, students should analyze the form of the piece (how many measures make up the themes for each section). Create a T-chart on the board and record your answers on one side of the chart.

Analyze the dance. Next, show the video of a demonstration of a Sarabande found online at <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/musdivid/023.mpg> to the class. As with the music, have the class analyze what they are seeing. How is the man moving (gracefully, methodically, rapidly)? Notice details about his movement (arms out, mostly on the balls of his feet, angles of his feet, knee bending, weight on one foot or two). Baroque dancers usually bring their feet completely down on the downbeat. Record your answers on the T-chart next to the music analysis.

Create a dance. Divide the class into groups of 2-6 students. Have students create a dance using the elements discussed above to accompany the opening theme of the Sarabande, importing any other dance elements they feel might be appropriate to how they interpret the music. The first section of the Sarabande, the first minute and four seconds on the Tafelmusik recording, plays the opening theme twice (each theme statement is eight measures long). Students should compose a dance for the theme only (eight measures), not for the first section (16 measures). For a greater challenge, have students compose a dance in which there are two parts, a different part of each half of the group to perform together.

Share the dance as a game. Pair up groups after dances have been composed. As the first theme of the Sarabande is played, one group will demonstrate its dance to the other group. The other group must pay attention, because when the opening theme is repeated, that group must mimic the dance. Play the opening section two or three times until most groups have successfully learned the other's dance, and then have them switch the role of demonstrator and imitator. Groups can then switch to meet new groups and learn new dances.

Review. Reassemble the class and discuss the dances learned from other groups. Analyze movements and expressions used by different groups and compare them to the analysis done earlier on the board.

Resource. For more information about baroque dance, visit the U.S. Library of Congress website on ballroom dancing which can be found at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/dihtml/diessay4.html> (the source of the video for this activity).

Senior (under development)

Improvisation and ornamentation are very important traits of Baroque music. In this activity students will learn about basic ornamentation and prepare their own ornamented versions of a simplified melody line from *Water Music*. Then students can analyze other instance of ornamentation within the suite.

Learn about ornamentation. Using definition and example, introduce students to ornamentation using four examples: a run, a trill, a mordent, and a passing note.

Apply learning through composition. Hand out a copy of the sheet music below titled Sarabande – simplified first violin. This music is from the Sarabande of *Water Music's* third Suite (the full, unaltered version can be listened to on track 12 of Tafelmusik's *Water Music* recording) and has been stripped of most ornamentation.