



Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra

Presents

**Igor Stravinsky**  
**Infernal Dance**

Teacher Resource Booklet

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## Contents

BACKGROUND INFORMATION.....	1
FIREBIRD FROLICS.....	2
LEARNING INTENTIONS.....	2
ACTIVITIES .....	2
Introductory Activity .....	2
Creative Activities .....	3
IGOR'S INSTRUMENTATION.....	8
LEARNING INTENTIONS.....	8
LISTENING ACTIVITIES.....	8
DRAMATIC DYNAMICS .....	9
LEARNING INTENTIONS.....	9
ACTIVITIES .....	9
Listening Activities.....	9
Creative Activities.....	10
RACING RHYTHMS .....	14
LEARNING INTENTIONS.....	14
ACTIVITIES .....	14
TRICKY TECHNIQUES.....	17
LEARNING INTENTIONS.....	17
ACTIVITIES .....	19
Introductory Activities .....	19
Creative Activities .....	19
ASSESSMENT.....	20

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

*Infernal Dance* is part of a ballet, **The Firebird**, by Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971). The ballet, a danced version of a Russian folk tale, was first performed in 1910.

The Firebird, the main character in the story, is magic; its favourite food is golden apples. Of course, in the story there's a handsome prince (Ivan), 13 beautiful princesses, (one of whom is Tsarevna, with whom Ivan falls in love) and an evil wizard (Kashchei). In Kashchei's garden there is a tree that grows the golden apples, so Prince Ivan goes into the garden looking for the Firebird. He captures the bird, but lets it go in return for one of its feathers.

*Infernal Dance* occurs when Prince Ivan has been trapped by the Wizard and his monsters. He summons the Firebird by waving the magic feather. The Firebird leads them in a dance which is so exhausting that the Wizard and his followers fall asleep. Prince Ivan, with the help of the Firebird, kills Kashchei by breaking the egg which contains the Wizard's soul. In this way, Ivan frees the whole kingdom. He marries Tsarevna and the Firebird flies away, never to be seen again.

# FIREBIRD FROLICS

## LEARNING INTENTIONS

Students will

- Listen and use their bodies to respond to music (ACAMUM080 / 082 / 084 / 086 / 088 / 090)
- Consider meaning, historical context and story background in music (ACAMUR083 / 087 / 091)
- Create, compose and perform music and movement sequences (ACAMUM081 / 082 / 085 / 086 / 089 / 090)

\*\* indicates Assessment Opportunity

*Infernal Dance* is part of a ballet called **The Firebird**. Igor Stravinsky wrote the music for the ballet by Diaghilev and his Russian Ballet. It was first performed in 1910.

The Firebird is a mythical bird found in legends from Slavic countries. The large bird has magical powers and its feathers are the colour of flames.

There are various versions of the story (as with most fairy tales) and they often involve a quest and a magical feather from the bird.

Listen to the music with this description of the bird in mind.

## ACTIVITIES

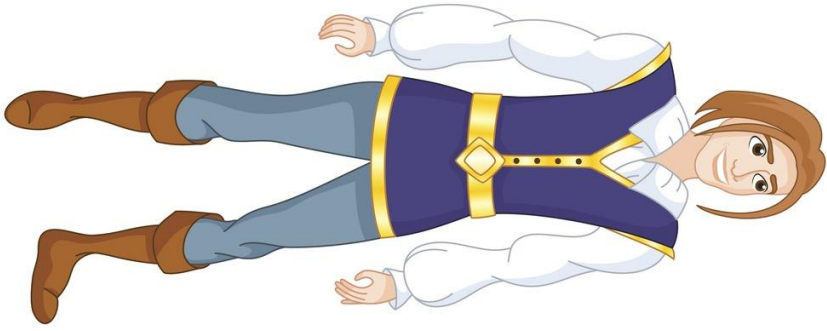
### Introductory Activity

- \*\* Ask students how the music makes them want to move; encourage the use of some describing words. Write them up for everyone to see. What might be happening in this part of the story?
- \*\* Invite free movement to the music. Depending on the age of students and prior experience this may need to be short, or given some structure eg play the mirror game. Children stand in pairs facing each other. One is the leader and the other copies as if in a mirror. Swap roles at a signal from the teacher (e. g triangle tap). Keep swapping roles after short turns. Children become more creative the more often they play this game.
- Introduce the story and explain where this music fits into it.
  1. Prince Ivan is hunting in the forest and wanders into an enchanted realm chasing and capturing the Firebird.
  2. The Firebird begs for her life and promises to give Ivan a magic feather that will rescue him in a time of need.
  3. Ivan meets a princess (one of 13) and falls in love with her but the 13 princesses are all under the spell of a wizard.
  4. The wizard and Ivan quarrel, Ivan uses the feather to make the guards of the princesses and the wizard do a frantic dance. The wizard and his guards fall into a deep sleep. (This is where *The Infernal Dance* fits).
  5. The Firebird shows Ivan to a casket containing an egg which holds the wizard's power. Ivan destroys the egg and the power is broken.

## Creative Activities

- Re-enact the story as a class. Choose students to be the main characters (Ivan, the Firebird, the wizard, the princess). Other students could be the guards or the extra princesses. To make it manageable, use the divisions above to break the story into sections.
- Use the pictures at the end of this section (prince, firebird, feather, princess, wizard, dance, egg) to help structure the order of events for the story activities.
- Keep it short, but discuss how the events and emotions could be portrayed without words by the actors. (This is what happens in a ballet).
- What is a ballet? Discuss this with the class. Ballet incorporates costumes, music and dance.
- \*\* Invite the actors to turn their movements into dance-like moves.
- \*\* Some students could create a sound sequence depicting a part of the story. (Perhaps those who do not want to be actors or dancers.)
- The final performance with actors / dancers could be recorded and played back to the class.
- Add costumes, props; scarves, feathers, toy swords, wands, capes etc could all be useful.
- \*\* Another option could be for each group to work on creating an *Infernal Dance* of their own using instruments and/ or movements. Discuss how the dance should start, progress and end.
- \*\* The Firebird could be drawn or painted as students imagine it.
- Investigate other musical stories based on mythical stories eg *In the Hall of the Mountain King* by Greig, *Baba Yaga* from **Pictures at an Exhibition** by Mussorgsky.
- Research the history of **The Firebird** and watch performances of it.

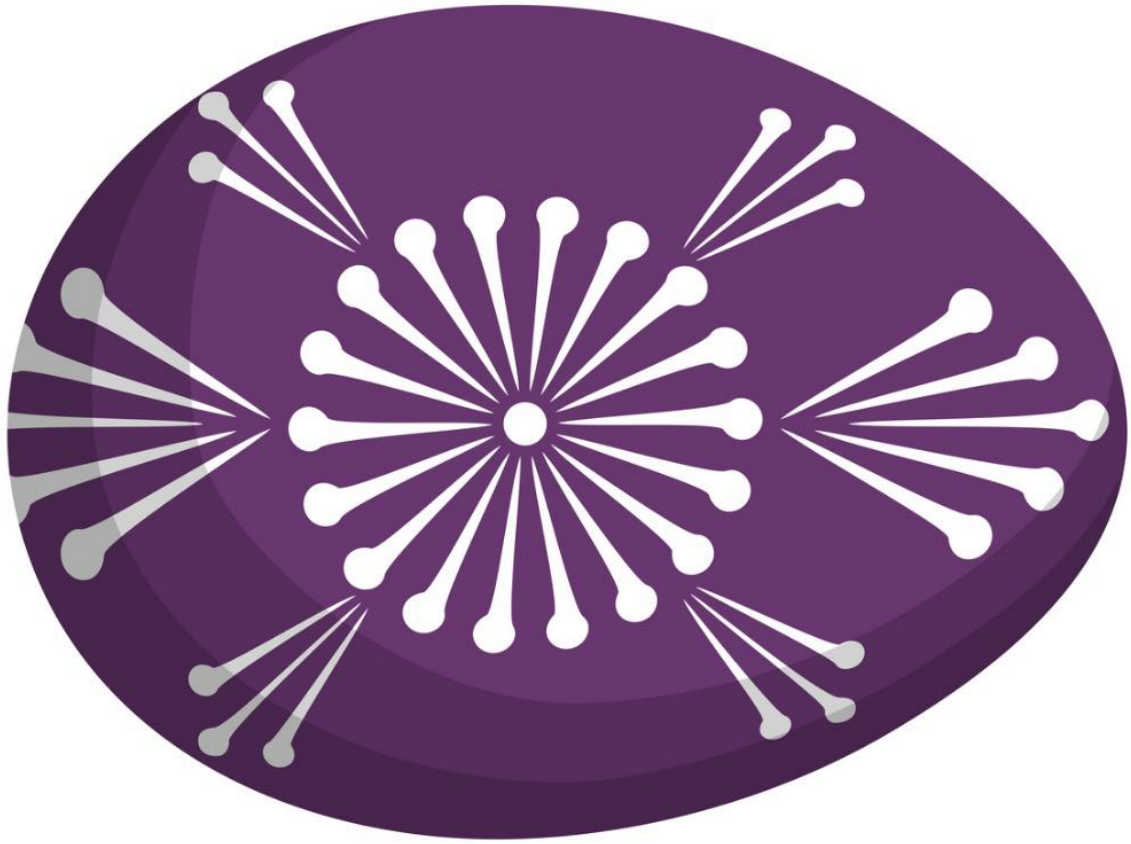
NB It is **essential** that teachers view the video of the ballet before making the decision to let students see it. Try Googling *Firebird Ballet Kirov Part 4/5* to see an authentic version.











# IGOR'S INSTRUMENTATION

## LEARNING INTENTIONS

Students will listen to, recognise and respond to the orchestral instruments and their family groups. (ACAMUM080 / 084 / 088; ACAMUR083 / 087 / 091)

\*\* indicates Assessment Opportunity

Stravinsky was composing music in an era when the symphony orchestra had developed to its biggest and most exciting. Composers of the time were writing dramatic, romantic and emotionally expressive music just as the artists and writers of the time were painting and writing in a similar way.

## LISTENING ACTIVITIES

- *Infernal Dance* opens with fast exciting timpani and double bass driving rhythms then the horns open with their short tune that recurs later in the piece.  
\*\* See if students can recognise it again later in the music.
- The suddenly loud (*sfff*) chords that are scattered through the piece are played by the whole orchestra.
- \*\* See if students can name the instruments or families as they play while listening to the piece again.
- \*\* Decide whether one instrumental family has more prominence or if the sound is balanced between the families. What do students think?
- \*\* Some percussion instruments are used. Ask students to name them (eg triangle, timpani, xylophone).
- Use the TSO orchestra website to listen to and learn about all the orchestral instruments and their families. Go to TSO Education, click on Online Classroom Resources, then *What is an Orchestra?*
- Divide the class into 4. Each group represents an instrumental family. (Strings, Woodwind, Brass, Percussion).  
\*\* As students listen to the music, if they hear their instrument family playing, they stand up (or raise a hand). This could be tricky and chaotic but will focus listening and could be fun!
- Watch a youtube clip of an orchestra performing **The Firebird**. The Moscow City Symphony version, conducted by Dmitri Jurowski, gives you good close-ups of instruments.
- \*\* Research the size of the orchestra Stravinsky used... how many violins, trumpets etc.

# DRAMATIC DYNAMICS

## LEARNING INTENTIONS

Students will

- Listen, recognise and respond to the musical element of dynamics. (ACAMUM080 / 084 / 088)
- Improvise, compose and perform sound sequences using dynamic variations. (ACAMUM081 / 082 / 085 / 086 / 089 / 090)

\*\* indicates Assessment Opportunity

Music tells stories and expresses moods. One of the ways music does this is to vary the volume of the sound.

Many years ago (300 +), composers in Italy wanted to write their music down so it could be played again. Symbols were invented for varying degrees of volume. The Italian word for soft is *piano* so the symbol *p* underneath music means the performer is to play it softly. The Italian word for strong or loud is *forte* so the *f* symbol is used.

Igor Stravinsky wrote the music for **The Firebird** ballet and it was first performed in 1910. This time in musical history leading up to the 1900's was called the Romantic Period. Many composers were writing music about their homeland and its folk stories or legends.

Composers made more use than ever before of techniques such as these dynamic variations to make their music more expressive and dramatic as was characteristic of the music of this time.

*p* = soft

*pp* = very soft

*ppp* = very, very soft

*mp* = moderately soft

*spp* = suddenly very, very soft

*mf* = moderately loud

*f* = loud

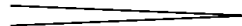
*ff* = very loud

*fff* = very, very loud

*sfff* = suddenly very, very loud



*crescendo* = getting gradually louder



*diminuendo* = getting gradually softer

## ACTIVITIES

### Listening Activities

- \*\* Ask children to listen carefully to *Infernal Dance* from **The Firebird** and show the changes in volume with their hands...hands close together for soft and wider apart as it gets louder. Listen carefully for sudden changes but try to show the gradual changes too.
- \*\* Older students could map the dynamics by writing the loud and soft symbols (if they already know them) as they listen.
- Introduce the dynamic symbols using cards (signs for changing volume are at the end of this section; write the symbols for the various dynamic level).  
\*\* Listen to the piece again; ask individual students to point to the appropriate card as the music plays.
- In Stravinsky's music, the first dynamic is **sfff** which means suddenly very, very loud then the music immediately changes to **pp**. This happens many times during the piece.

\*\* See if students can find some of them.

Listen to the piece again. \*\* Is it mostly loud, soft or a balance of both?

- Play an instrument game with untuned percussion using some of the dynamics symbol cards (or write them on a whiteboard); start with just *p*, *f*, crescendo, decrescendo and add more as you go.  
\*\* Appoint a student conductor to point to a dynamic and students all play accordingly. Use a backing track with a good beat to play along to. Swap conductors.
- Listen to other pieces of music that have changing or varied dynamics eg **William Tell Overture** by Rossini, **Surprise Symphony** by Haydn, **In the Hall of the Mountain King** by Grieg or for a more modern example **Shout** (Otis Day and the Knights) or **I Will Wait for You** by Mumford and Sons. Ask students to find other examples from their own listening.

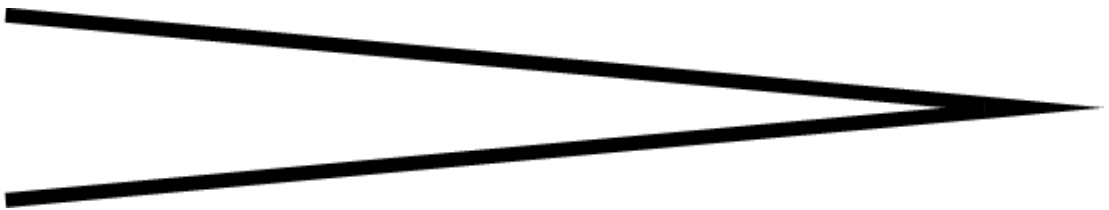
## Creative Activities

- \*\* Ask students to work in small groups to create and perform their own loud/ soft piece using all the dynamic symbols and performing it on untuned percussion. Write it down using the symbols and instrument names or simple pictures.
- \*\* Choose a poem, rhyme or song that is familiar to the class and do a class arrangement of it using dynamic symbols for each line or verse.
- \*\* Students could be given a printed copy of the poem or song and write their dynamic directions then perform it for the class.
- \*\* Use the poem “It’s Dark in My Room” for experimenting with dynamics with voice or instruments.

“It’s Dark in My Room”

*ppp* It’s dark in my room and it’s late at night,  
It’s the first time I’m sleeping without my light  
*pp* There’s something downstairs, it’s in the hall.  
Well maybe it’s nothing.....nothing at all.  
*p* But there it is again at the foot of the stairs.  
There’s something in the house! I know it’s there!!  
*mp* It could be the tiger I saw on TV  
It’s coming upstairs to gobble up me.  
*mf* Maybe it’s a lion or a big black bear,  
I can hear footsteps at the top of the stair.  
*f* Closer and closer now it’s coming to my room!  
Maybe it’s a ghost who escaped from his tomb!  
*ff* It’s turning my doorknob, it’s opening my door!  
What if it’s a dragon? Maybe 2, 3..... or 4!  
*fff* It’s coming into my room! Oh what will I do??  
Ooooooooooh (decrescendo)  
*mp* .....Hello mother..... it’s only you!

Unknown author; you can find the poem by Googling “scary dynamics story”.



***p***

***f***

*pp*

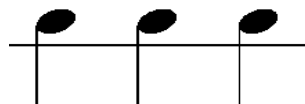
*ff*





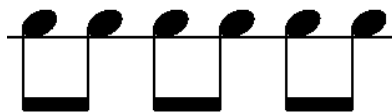
- The simpler rhythms that Stravinsky uses are notated below.  
 \*\* Clap one at a time, using a steady slow drum beat to keep the main beat.

### CROTCHETS



- Count and clap **123 123** , or say ta ta ta . This pattern is played by the whole orchestra very loudly at various times during the piece. Listen to the music and ask students to clap or stamp this rhythm when you hear it.

## QUAVERS



- A quaver is one beat divided equally into 2 shorter pulses. Count and clap **1&2&3&** (ie twice as fast as above) or say tete tete tete. This pattern is played by the trumpets at various times during the piece. The first time is at the beginning just after the horn theme. (See bars 9 & 10 in the above simplified score).

## SEMIQUAVERS

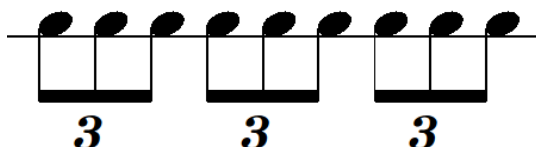


A semiquaver is one beat divided equally into 4 very short pulses.

Count and clap **1234 2234 3234 4234** or say tefetefe tefetefe tefetefe. This pattern is played softly in the opening of *Infernal Dance* on timpani and double bass on very low notes.

- **\*\*** Once the rhythm patterns are secure, try to play the melody softly on marimba or bass xylophone. If no chromatic instrument is available, the G# could be replaced with an E. Add some very soft drum semiquavers too. (See bars 1 to 10 in the bass part of the simplified score above).
- **\*\*** If you are brave enough, try the bass line on a low-pitched instrument, then the 2 parts together. If the bass part is too hard to keep steady, simplify it to quaver or crotchet beats to begin with. Finish together with a very loud final chord.

## TRIPLETS



A triplet is one beat divided into 3 even pulses. Count and clap **123 223 323**, or say Tetete Tetete.

This rhythm and more complicated variations of it are played during the piece, sometimes by the woodwind.

- **\*\*** Discuss how skilled and clever orchestral players are to perform all these well. Ask students **HOW** the orchestral players get these to sound good together? (Lots of practise alone and together, lots of listening, watching the conductor, rehearsals.....). Just like a great sports team it requires team work and lots of training!

# TRICKY TECHNIQUES

## LEARNING INTENTIONS

Students will

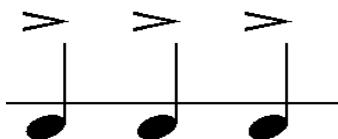
- Listen to, copy, experiment with, compose and perform simplified versions of some of the musical techniques used in the music. (ACAMUM080 / 081 / 082 / 084 / 085 /086 / 088 /089 / 090)
- Develop understanding of how musical elements and techniques create variety, drama, emotion and interest in musical performances. (ACAMUR083 / 087 / 091)

\*\* indicates Assessment Opportunity

The rhythms in *Infernal Dance* are very fast, changing and some are very complicated. Many of them are probably too fast to clap along with, but this piece certainly shows the skills of the orchestral performers who can keep up! This section looks at some of the other tricky techniques Stravinsky uses to provide even more colour and excitement.

These include:

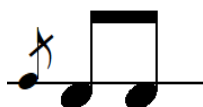
**ACCENTS** - mean to stress or attack the note



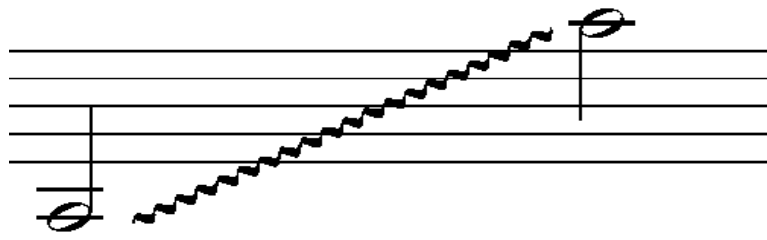
**TRILLS** – mean to alternate the note above and the main note quickly



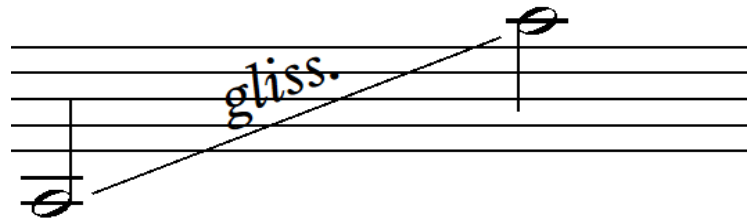
**GRACE NOTE (OR APPOGGIATURA)** - a decorative note squeezed in before the main note is played



**GLISSANDO** - a slide up or down all notes on an instrument within the given range



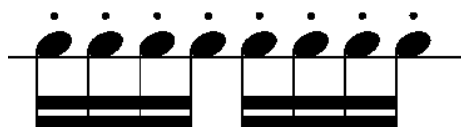
or



**MARCATO** - is to emphasize or lean on a note (not quite the same as an accent which is more of an attack)



**STACCATO** – means to play the note in a detached or crisp way



# ACTIVITIES

## Introductory Activities

- \*\* Try some **accents**. Write up 4 ta beats and choose which ones will be accented and clap or play them together. Change the accents. Have more than one accent. Students make their own pattern write it down and play or clap them to the class asking “Which beats did we accent?” Extend to 8 beats if needing more challenges.  
eg 4 crotchets accents on 2 and 3, same again with accents on 1 and 4
- \*\* Try some **trills** on xylophones or glockenspiels. You will need 2 beaters. Choose 2 adjacent notes. Hold the beaters lightly and keep them close to the bars. See how even and controlled you can make the sound. Be careful not to play too loudly. Try some trills altogether as a class. (Keep it soft!)
- \*\* Try **grace notes** on xylophones or glockenspiels: choose 2 notes next to each other. Make sure the second note is the strong one on the beat. Make up a pattern eg A to G 4 times in a row where A is the grace or decorative note and G is the beat note. Try it together. Make up some patterns or sequences as a class then split up into pairs and invent your own to share with the class later.
- \*\* Try **glissandos** on xylophones, starting and stopping on definite notes. Try glissandos going up and then try them going down.
- \*\* Try playing a known piece such as *Hot Cross Buns*, or just a pattern eg CCCCFFFGGGGCCCC, playing each note in **staccato** fashion.
- \*\* Do the same piece with **marcato signs** over some notes.

## Creative Activities

- \*\* Use a known tune or short melodic pattern. eg *Hot Cross Buns*, *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*, *Frere Jacques*. Make up a class decorated version using glissandos, grace notes and accents. Perform it together. Keep it slow and together!
- \*\* Let students work on their own versions or with a partner, then share them with the class. Write them down.

# ASSESSMENT

Successful completion of any of the activities in this pack will offer evidence against one or more of these outcomes, at the appropriate level for your students:

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL CURRICULUM FOR MUSIC, Version 8.1 (sourced 25/01/2017)		
F-2	3-4	5-6
<p>ACAMUM080</p> <p>Develop aural skills by exploring and imitating sounds, pitch and rhythm patterns using voice, movement and body percussion</p>	<p>ACAMUM084</p> <p>Develop aural skills by exploring, imitating and recognising elements of music including dynamics, pitch and rhythm patterns</p>	<p>ACAMUM088</p> <p>Explore dynamics and expression, using aural skills to identify and perform rhythm and pitch patterns</p>
<p>ACAMUM081</p> <p>Sing and play instruments to improvise and practise a repertoire of chants, songs and rhymes, including songs used by cultural groups in the community</p>	<p>ACAMUM085</p> <p>Practise singing, playing instruments and improvising music, using elements of music, including rhythm, pitch, dynamics and form in a range of pieces, including music from the local community</p>	<p>ACAMUM089</p> <p>Develop technical and expressive skills in singing, playing instruments with understanding of rhythms, pitch and form in a range of pieces, including music from the local community</p>
<p>ACAMUM082</p> <p>Create compositions and perform music to communicate ideas to an audience</p>	<p>ACAMUM086</p> <p>Create, perform and record compositions by selecting and organising sounds, silences, tempo and volume</p>	<p>ACAMUM090</p> <p>Rehearse and perform music including music they have composed by improvising, sourcing and arranging ideas and making decisions to engage an audience</p>
<p>ACAMUR083</p> <p>Respond to music and consider where and why people make music, starting with Australian music, including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p>	<p>ACAMUR087</p> <p>Identify intended purposes and meanings as they listen to music, using the elements of music to make comparisons, starting with Australian music, including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p>	<p>ACAMUR091</p> <p>Explain how elements of music communicate meaning by comparing music from different social, cultural and historical contexts, including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p>