

Antonín Dvořák's *New World* Symphony: In Search of An American Voice

Transforming Dvořák's Themes



Skills/Learning Goals:

- Understanding how composer and performer decisions affect the feeling or character of a theme.
- Understanding how combinations of themes can tell a story.

Big Idea:

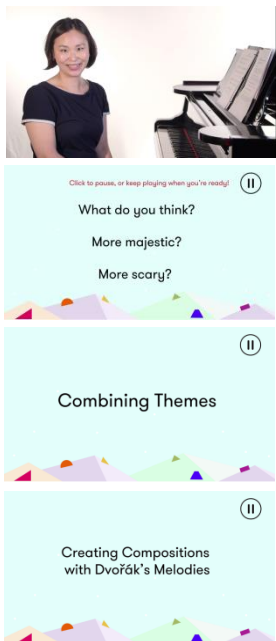
Musical themes can be transformed to convey different emotions, and can be combined to suggest a story.

Preparing for the Video:

Become acquainted with Antonín Dvořák's *New World* Symphony themes by playing the video "Singing Dvořák's Themes."

How to Use this Video:

Pause the video at five points to discuss what you have heard. Teaching Artist Jihea Hong-Park plays a series of themes in their original form, and then transformed, and asks how its feeling has changed. She then combines themes and asks how they create a scene or story.



Pastoral Theme: When it is played louder, does it become more majestic, or more scary?

Finale Theme: When it is played quieter, faster, and bouncier, does it become more serious, or more playful?

Combining Themes – Allegro Theme with Finale Theme: Which way of combining them best conveys a busy scene?

Stacking Themes – Finale Theme with Goin' Home Theme: Which way of stacking them best creates a scene of walking home after school?

Creating Compositions with Dvořák's Melodies: Jihea paints a picture of her first time in Central Park, using the Pastoral Theme and the Finale Theme.

Extension: Think of characters from your favorite story. Invite students to draw before and after portraits that capture how the characters transformed in the story because of their adventures. If you were to compose music to go along with each portrait, what would it sound like and why?