**Minimalism**

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Grade: 6th

Materials: Instruments (brass, winds, percussion, strings..etc)

* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eu-tRXgOrdg>
* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YdMAC0vXIA>
* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ch-R1aIM-C0

**Big Idea:** How can we understand the concept of minimalism in music, and how to compose using minimalism?

**Enduring Understandings:**

* How a simple idea (rhythmic, melodic, loop, etc) grows and becomes a larger idea.
* How layering sounds creates a compositional whole
* How the idea of phasing (shifting beats) creates a different layered texture to create a minimalistic effect.
* The concept and importance of looping and repetition in minimalistic music

**Process:**

Begin with a class discussion on Minimalism. Write the word on the board and make a comprehensive list with the students about what they’re preconceived definitions of “minimalism” is.

Show clip of Philip Glass’s “Glassworks – Floe”. Discuss what new ideas and definitions have emerged about “minimalism” after the listening. How were we right? How were we wrong? What new ideas emerged after the listening?

Introduce the idea of phasing. How might this idea be musically portrayed in minimalism? Show a clip of Steve Reich’s “clapping music” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eu-tRXgOrdg> emphasizing the visual effect the two different lines and how they’re phased and layered.

Students will create their own clapping music by creating rhythms as a class and practicing the idea of phasing with theses rhythms. (Example: Write a simple 4 beat pattern, shift each beat to the left one space, creating a phased and layered texture, do this until the pattern loops back to the original). Create different patterns and clapping music with the class.

Break students into groups where they will create their own minimalistic improvisatory compositions. Group percussion together and pitched instruments together. In their groups students must employ one of two following characteristics: phasing or layering.

Have each of the groups perform for the class. Show Sesame Street - Geometry of Circles - Phillip Glass <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ch-R1aIM-C0> to as an example and to clearly emphasize the idea of something starting in a simple format and growing into a larger idea.

**Assessment:**

* Are students able to listen critically and respond critically with definitions about minimalism? Are students able to critique their own definitions and preconceived notions of a musical idea?
* Ability to carry a concept and idea (minimalism) and connect it to an improvisational composition resulting in a spontaneous group performance. Participation?
* Transfer of a concept (minimalism: looping, phasing, layering) to a composition, to a performance?