

Area of Study 2: Musical for Ensemble

Skid Row (Downtown) – Teacher Sheet

Taken from the musical Little Shop of Horrors

Words by Howard Ashman / Music by Alan Menken

TEACHING POINTS:

Sonority (Vocal Ranges & Techniques)

Metre

Tempo

Texture

Rhythm (Off-beat)

Harmony (Primary & Secondary chords & Cadences)

Tonality

Musical Styles (Musical Theatre)

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

For the video which accompanies this song, here is the link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1xPq6W1Eolc>

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1) During the Intro, most of the words are set syllabically (each syllable of text is matched to a single note). However, there are occurrences where words are set melismatically (a single syllable moves between different notes). Identify a word that is set melismatically.

town / always / been / PM

2) The main pulse is established during Chorus 1. What is the time signature of this song? (Underline one).

4/4 (four crotchet beats per bar) 12/8 (twelve quaver beats per bar)
3/4 (three crotchet beats per bar) 9/8 (nine quaver beats per bar)

3) How would you describe the tempo which is established during Chorus 1?

Allegro (Quick) Andante (Walking Pace) Adagio (Slow)

4) Verses 1 and 2 are performed by three female singers. How do they perform them?

In harmony (different pitches) In unison (the same pitches)

5) And during the same Verses, which words of each line are the most syncopated (off-beat)?

The words at the start The words in the middle The words at the end

6) What type of voice sings the solo part in Chorus 3?

Soprano (high female) Alto (low female) Tenor (high male) Bass (low male)

7) And what type of voice sings the solo part from Verse 3 onwards?

Soprano (high female) Alto (low female) Tenor (high male) Bass (low male)

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8) There is a tempo change just before the start of Chorus 4. Which term best describes what happens?

Accelerando

(gradually speeding up)

Rallentando

(gradually slowing down)

9) During Chorus 4, identify the type of texture used to perform the word 'Downtown'.

Monophonic

(a single melody line) (melody and chordal accompaniment)

Homophonic

Polyphonic

(independent melodies)

10) Each Chorus is harmonised in the same way. The first line is harmonised with chord I, the second line is harmonised with chord III, but what chord is the third line harmonised with?

IV

11) Identify the tonality of this piece.

Minor

Major

12) Identify the type of cadence (chord progression) used to end the piece.

Perfect

(V – I)

Plagal

(IV – I)

Imperfect

(I/ii/IV/vi – V)

Interrupted

(V – vi)

Total / 12