



ROYAL  
COLLEGE  
OF MUSIC  
*London*

# RCM Sparks Explorers

## Singing the RCM Museum to Life Project

### Sensational Music-making, Storytelling and Theatricality

The inspiration for this activity pack is an item from the RCM Museum.

## A Music Competition in Ancient Greece

RCM Sparks is the Royal College of Music's learning and participation programme.

To find out more and get involved visit [www.rcm.ac.uk/sparks](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/sparks)



## The story from King Midas as depicted on the virginal

Welcome to ancient Greece, I am King Midas. The first picture that you can see is of a virginal, a keyboard instrument in the harpsichord family which is now in the museum of the Royal College of Music.

Virginals were often highly decorated with stories! If you look at the close-up second picture you will see two gods, Apollo and Pan. They are both sitting on rocks, playing instruments in a forest and a King is standing behind them.

That King is me! And that picture tells the story of A Music Competition!

Imagine it – we are in the forest and it is a warm sunny day in ancient Greece, the perfect day for music! Gods and mortals and animals have gathered together for a concert when suddenly Pan, god of nature, challenges Apollo, god of music, to a music competition! Everyone in the forest gathers to watch.

Pan played on his pipes and Apollo in his lyre. I was so struck by Pan's raw and rustic music that I declared in front of everyone that Pan's music sounded better than Apollo's.... Uh-oh... Why did I do it! Apollo was so infuriated with me that he turned to me, his face glowing with anger, and he said: 'Since your ears can play such tricks on you then you will now have donkey ears for the rest of your life!'

## Activity 1: Watch the accompanying film 'A music competition in Ancient Greece'.

## Activity 2: Design a background for the forest setting of the competition.

Draw on the characters from the story and insert speech bubbles for each character. Use clues from the story to decide what each character is saying at this moment!

## Activity 3: Create a Rap Battle between Pan and Apollo!

Listen to the backing track. It already has some ideas for a rap battle on it. Have a go at making up your own lyrics and rapping along to the track!

### Information and ideas to help you with Activity 3

Apollo and Pan are having a rap battle talking about why they think they are better than the other. Pick a character, or pretend to be both Pan and Apollo (you could use different voices!), practice saying your raps over the beat of the backing track.

Ideas:

Pan might say something like:

Listen, Apollo, I never felt so bored than when you're playing fancy music on your shiny harpsichord!

Apollo might say something like:

Pack up your pipes, Pan, better get going, my ears deserve better than your tuneless blowing!

## Activity 4: Compose a Rap Battle tune/riff using the backing track

Listen to the backing track. It already has a few ideas for a tune or riff (a short section of music) that go over the main drum beats and keyboard sound. Have a go at playing along to the track!

### Information and ideas to help you with Activity 4

Don't worry if you don't know the chords or notes below, you can try making something up of your own that you think sounds good with the backing track.

The backing track is eight-bars long and contains the chords D Minor (Dm) and C Major (C), moving alternately bar to bar: Dm / C / Dm / C / Dm / C / Dm / C /.

Here are some ideas to help you:

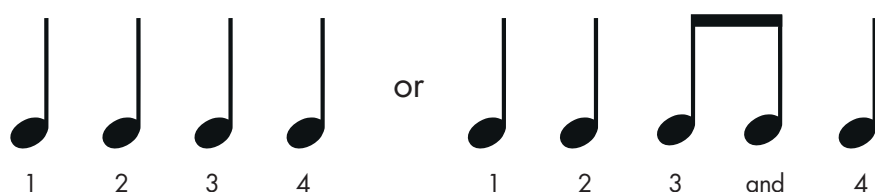
On a tuned instrument, you could play a D in every D Minor bar, and a C in every C Major bar

or

On a piano or guitar you could play the chords D Minor and C Major on these bars. Make up a rhythm to play them to

or

Clap a rhythm that fits into 4/4 time. E.g.:



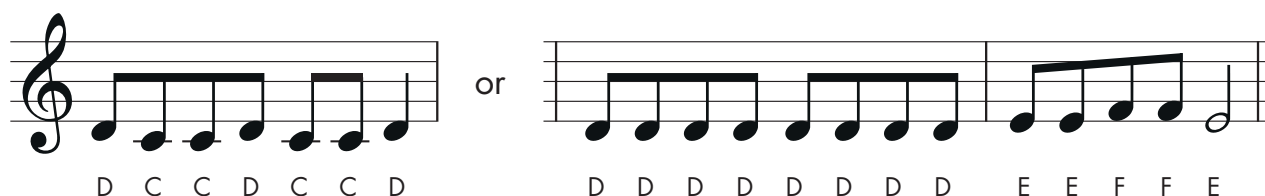
or

Maybe you have an idea for a more complicated rhythm you can use?

or

You could use the following notes to make up a short, repeated pattern that sounds good over the backing track: C D E F G A Bflat.

You could make up a short pattern of notes (a riff or ostinato) and repeat it. E.g.:



or

Make up a longer tune which takes up the whole eight bars of the backing track

or

You could sing a tune which fits over the top of the track. You could sing it to 'la la la' or 'do do do'!