



Sheet Music from Canada's Past



Musical Art Student Handout

This learning opportunity explores music from Canada's past and invites you to use sound recordings from the Library and Archives Canada's *Virtual Gramophone* site, and view sheet music cover art in *Sheet Music from Canada's Past*. You will learn about and use all stages of the design process to create, in the role of commercial artist, CD cover art for an early twentieth-century Canadian song. You will be able to select the materials, media, style and techniques that you judge best reflect the song's theme and artists, as well as its historical and technological context.

The Design Process

1. Specifications:

A clear statement describing the expected outcome of the design process.

The Library and Archives Canada has hired you to create the CD cover artwork for an early twentieth-century Canadian song from their *Virtual Gramophone* website.

2. Research:

Searching for, and obtaining the essential information needed for a successful design

- You will research and document:
 - a) The song's theme
 - What important subject or issue does this song explore? What insight, opinion or point of view does the song express about this issue?
 - b) Biographical information regarding the performing artist(s), lyricist(s) or composer(s)
 - What do we know about the above contributors that might explain the perspective expressed in the song's music and lyrics?



- c) The song's historical context
 - How might major world events of the time have affected the music and song? See the [History](#) page on the *Virtual Gramophone* website for help.
- d) Technology
 - Investigate the different sound qualities of the old recordings. Visit the [Technical Notes](#) page of the *Virtual Gramophone* website and research or brainstorm reasons for these characteristics. How and why might sound be distorted on an old recording?

3. Experimentation:

Bringing innovation to previously existing designs

- You will rework an existing sample of CD cover artwork of your choice by substituting, exaggerating, combining, altering or reversing one or several of its elements of design (colour, line, shape, space, texture, form). Present and explain your explorations to the other groups. Invite their responses to this creative “warm-up.”

4. Roughs:

Initial representations: sketches, models (the “first draft” of ideas)

- Based on the information you obtained during your research (Step 2), you will produce as many different “thumbnail” sketches as possible of your initial ideas for the song's cover art.

5. Prototypes:

Refinements brought to the selected rough(s)

- Using the questions from the initial class discussion of CD cover art, ask your classmates for a critical review of your “roughs”. Use their responses to prepare and present a more refined product, which incorporates suggestions related to the artwork's images, materials, techniques, media, etc.

6. Revision:

Consultation/feedback

- You will seek feedback from someone outside your classroom and consider this input as you finalize the production of the artwork.

7. Presentation:

Communicating to an extended community

- You will collaborate with the other artists (classmates) who have been involved in this project in order to prepare a formal exhibit of the various cover artwork designs.



8. Reflection:

Evaluating both process and product

- In a teacher-student conference, you will provide a reflective commentary on the challenges you encountered and the solutions you arrived at in working through the design process.