

New Music Alive!

Lesson Two

Conductor



Strand: *Composing*

Strand Units: *Improvising and creating; Talking about compositions*

Curriculum Objectives:

- invent and perform pieces that show an increasing awareness and control of musical elements
- describe and discuss his/her work and the work of other children
- perform with increasing understanding and control of pitch and extended vocal range
- perform with increasing awareness of dynamics and expression
- record compositions on electronic media

Linkage: *Listening and Responding – Exploring sounds; Listening and responding to music; Performing – Singing/Playing*

Concept Development: *Pulse, duration, dynamics, timbre, texture*

Additional Skills: *Performing as a group and devising gestures for communicating musical instructions*

Warm-Up: *Changing Voices*

10 mins

Stand in a circle and stamp out a steady beat. Take turns calling out your name, followed by three short claps. E.g. “Jen-ny!” clap-clap clap, “Pat-rick!” clap-clap clap.

Go around the circle again. This time, say your name in your lowest, highest or silliest voice.

- What other voices can you make?
Suggestions: a scary voice... a robot voice... a sliding voice...
- What else can you call out, instead of your name?
Suggestions: your favourite singer... your favourite band...

Recap

5 mins

- How many different kinds of voices did you use so far?
Add them to your list of sounds from last week.
- And how many different sounds can you remember from Lesson One? Sing them.
- Can you think of any new sounds you have never made before? Add them to the list.

Game: *Conductor*

25 mins

In this game, the class are conducted like an orchestra.

- ▶ To start, one person stands up in front of the class to be their conductor.
- ▶ The rest of the class choose their favourite sound to sing.
- ▶ Let the students decide which signs the conductor will use to tell the orchestra when to start and stop.
Suggestions: pointing a finger, or giving a thumbs up to start... holding up a hand, or making a fist to stop...
- ▶ Now you're ready to perform! Make a piece of music by conducting your orchestra and telling them when to start and stop.
- ▶ Play a few times and take turns at being the conductor.
- ▶ When it's going well, try splitting the class into two or more groups. Or everyone could play as individuals.
- ▶ You can make an exciting piece of music by pointing quickly at one person after another, or by quickly pointing at each person around in a circle.
- ▶ When you've really got the hang of it you can start coming up with more signs and instructions.
Suggestions: signs for singing loudly and quietly... signs for getting louder and getting quieter...

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Supplementary Notes

Warm-Up: *Changing Voices*

This is a fun and simple game to warm up the voice and start the children thinking creatively, and it is a good rhythmic exercise.

Recap

See if the children can build on what they have learned so far by coming up with new sounds of their very own and then describing them.

Game: *Conductor*

Play this game many times to develop the students' abilities to devise and communicate musical instructions, to perform together as a group, and to make artistic decisions (what sounds good, what sounds bad, etc.).

They can also review and refine each performance through discussion and repetition.

Try grouping the class in different ways according to what sounds they make.

Suggestions: put all the short sounds in one group and all the long sounds in another... put all the pitched (or sung) sounds in one group and the unpitched (or percussive) sounds in another...

(Remember, "Com-Position" is about *putting* sounds *together*.)

Your list of all the sounds the students have come up with so far should help to keep their ideas varied.

If they need further stimuli, ask them to imitate sounds they already know.

Suggestions: a sound from the jungle or the sea... imitate the sound of one of the percussion instruments in the room... an instrument played underwater...

Here's a tip: When the students (inevitably!) draw on some of the ruder sounds in their repertoire, treat them as you would any other musical idea. Humour is an important part of music, and you may also find, once the students have gotten over the funny part, that they will give more serious musical consideration to their ideas.

◀ Listen to an example of one class playing *Conductor*. In this recording, the children used sounds taken from the games and the recordings used on this course as well as adding a few of their own. They also devised symbols to start and stop the music, to make high and low sounds and to control the volume of the music.

Compose and Record

After each time that the game is played, more advanced children might be able to pick out some specific moments where they felt the piece sounded particularly good. Make a note of these moments by writing down a description of them, or even just recording them if possible. They can be put together and rehearsed later on as a composition in their own right.

If there are instrumentalists in the class, another activity for more advanced students is to challenge them to recreate some of these vocal sounds using their instruments. Percussion instruments are generally not as flexible in this exercise, but strings, for example, can be bent, scratched or played in all variety of different ways to imitate the voice with no harm to the instrument. Some wind instruments can be even more directly manipulated by vocal effects. This exercise can really push a child's imagination and make them think outside the box.

Try to get a recording of the students' work which can be compiled onto a CD later.