

Lesson Five

Maestro

Strand: *Composing*

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

Curriculum Objectives:

- show a developing awareness of musical elements
- describe and discuss his/her work and the work of other children
- devise and use graphic symbols to record simple musical patterns and inventions
- recognise and demonstrate pitch differences
- distinguish between sounds of different duration (long or short)

Linkage: *Listening and Responding – Exploring sounds; Listening and responding to music; Performing – Literacy*

Concept Development: *Duration, pitch, dynamics, timbre*

Additional Skills: Effectively communicating one's own ideas and understanding the ideas of others

Maestro Demonstration Game

20 min

This game encourages the students to think about how ideas can be communicated.

- ▶ Begin by making a simple sound. *Suggestions: a repeated note ... a high note and a low note with a silence in between (see Figure 1) ... a descending tone (see Figure 2)*
Let each student draw a picture to describe that sound.
They might look something like the examples given here.
- ▶ Any pictures or words the students draw can be acceptable. The object is to explore and understand what a picture and a sound have in common, and how the picture can describe the sound more accurately.
- ▶ The students may find that leading questions will help them to express their ideas more clearly.
*Suggestions: Is the sound high or low...? Is it continuous or broken up...?
Does it sound like any everyday objects or animals...?*
- ▶ Select a few of the students' pictures to draw on the board and discuss them.
Ask them to explain why they drew what they did, and encourage simple, direct answers. The answers might sound something like: "it starts loud and gets quiet", "it stops and then starts again" or "it sounds like the sea".
- ▶ Play a few times and watch as the students develop their own logic for communicating musical ideas.



Figure 1



Figure 2

Maestro Picture Game

20 mins

In this game the students choose their own sound and they draw a picture to describe that sound.

- ▶ First, let each student draw a picture of a sound they like, but don't let anyone else see it!
- ▶ To start the game, choose any student to sing their sound to the class first. They can be the *Maestro*.
Now ask the rest of the class to describe how they think the picture should look.
Draw their ideas onto the board. Now look at the *Maestro's* picture and compare.
- ▶ Play again and choose another student to be the *Maestro*.
If the children need help coming up with sounds for this game, they can refer to the list of sounds you have been keeping since Lesson One.

Collecting Scores

Consider asking the students to pick out their favourite sounds from the pictures they have drawn today. These could be set aside for later, when they could be arranged into small compositions.

Alternatively, you could select some of the more successful notations yourself. You may find that pictures drawn earlier in the class are less effective, while later ones are more communicative and musical.

Lessons Five and Six

Supplementary Notes

Maestro Games

For this lesson each student will need a pencil and a few small sheets of paper to draw on. It would help the communication process if there was some indication on the page of which side was up (so that a student's picture isn't read upside-down, for example).

☞ A blank page which simply has the words "Graphic Score" written at the top can be printed off as a handout.

These games develop a student's skills of description and communication, both in getting their ideas across to others effectively and in understanding what others are trying to communicate to them.

After playing this game a few times, you will find that students soon develop a clear logic in their notation. For example, high-pitched sounds tend to appear at the top of the page, and low pitched sounds at the bottom. Long sounds tend to start on the left hand side of the page and end on the right.

Sometimes the children will use larger and smaller symbols and letters to notate loud and quiet sounds.

Often they will draw a picture of something in the real world that makes a similar sound, e.g. the rain, a bird etc.

Encourage the children to explain these things for themselves. There are no wrong answers of course, but try to guide them towards consistency in their answers, e.g. if the top of the page is used to represent sounds that are both high *and* loud, they could easily be misinterpreted.

For more advanced students, you could draw a stave (even just three parallel lines will do) onto the "Graphic Score" page before printing it out. This will enable the students to explore pitch in more detail when composing.