

New Music Alive!

Lesson Seven

The Golden Section

Strand: *Composing*

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

Curriculum Objectives:

- invent and perform pieces that show an increasing awareness and control of musical elements
- reflect upon and evaluate his/her work and the work of other children
- devise and use graphic symbols to record simple musical patterns and inventions
- distinguish between sounds of different duration (long or short)
- perform with increasing understanding and control of pitch and extended vocal range
- perform with increasing awareness of dynamics, expression and control of diction and posture
- perform as a group
- select from a wide variety of sound sources for a range of musical purposes
- record compositions on electronic media

Linkage: *Performing – Singing/Playing*

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

Preparation

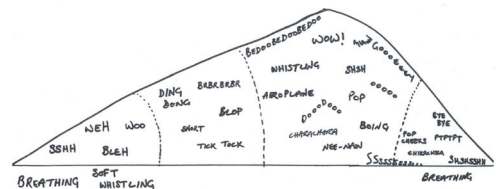
10 min

Test the students' memory of all the sounds on the list they have made so far.
Or look back to earlier lessons and play one or two of those games or warm-ups again.

Class Composition

20 mins

- ▶ Draw a large triangle on the board, or large sheet of paper.
Let the students dictate what sounds should go where and then write their instructions in. It might look something like this:
- ▶ The students could also stick some of their notations from the earlier *Maestro* games into the piece.
- ▶ You can guide the compositional process with some leading questions.
Suggestions: What are some quiet sounds you can make...? Which of these quiet sounds should go at the beginning and which at the end...? What are sounds that build up, and what are sounds that die away...?



Evaluation and Rehearsal

10 mins

The picture above is taken from a class where the children had the idea to draw lines in the triangle, dividing the class into boys and girls so that different groups would sing different sections.

- How will you perform your piece?
- *Suggestions: Will it be all together or will different groups sing the different sounds...? Will individual students be in charge of specific sounds...? Will you use instruments for special effects...?*

If you are recording your work, this piece could be the highlight of the CD, since everyone can contribute to it and it is likely to be the longest piece of music they have created on the course.

Lesson Seven

Supplementary Notes

The Golden Section

The Golden Section (or Golden Ratio) in music is a commonly used structure whereby a piece reaches its climax two-thirds of the way through. This two-thirds to one-third relationship can be found throughout nature, such as in the proportions of the human body, the arrangement of petals around a flower, or the spiral of a mollusc shell. It is also used in art and architecture to represent this natural aesthetic.

Class Composition

If the students need help developing their ideas, remember some of the simple tools we have used before like silence and repetition, or some of the rhythms you created playing *One Clap, Two Clap, Three Clap, Four...* in Lesson Four. Here, you can replace the claps from the game with new sounds.

Evaluation and Rehearsal

At this stage in the course, the students may well have developed quite keen musical instincts, free from any constraints of how things “should” be done. Keep an eye out for this and you may be surprised!

Take a moment to look over the finished product and remind the children of their achievement.

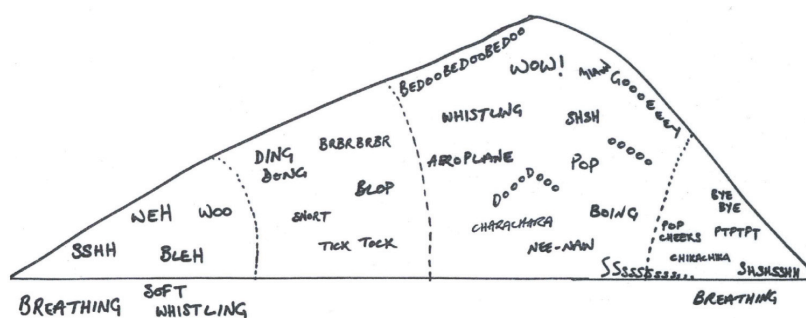
Remember, this is a piece of music they have created which has never existed before. Nobody has ever written this exact composition and no-one has ever heard it before.

The children have created something entirely original and unique, using the same structure that Mozart or Beethoven would have used!

Music Notes

This picture contains many good examples of students’ musical instincts developing independently.

As the music builds up here, the children have used sounds that are naturally long (“ooo” and “sss”), and as it dies away again they have chosen naturally short sounds (“pt” and “ch-k”).



Some sounds are used more than once in the piece, but in a different way each time according to where they appear in the piece, e.g. short/quiet at first, long/loud later.

Interestingly, these children chose to end their piece using the same quiet breathing sounds of the opening, creating a “cyclical” structure. That is, we could loop the piece many times as if it had no beginning or end.

Such subtle details as these might easily go unnoticed, so do draw the children’s attention to these things if you see them cropping up.

❖ On the CMC web site you can listen to one class’s performance of this piece.