**The Composer Is Dead!**

**Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra**

**2017 Fifth Grade Concert**

**Pre-Concert Lesson Plans**

**Objectives:** Students will learn the names of the instruments of the orchestra, their families, and what to listen for in the concert. They will also learn information about the composers, conductor, and writers behind the music and stories in the concert, and will participate in interactive games/activities designed to supplement this information.

**1. The instruments of the orchestra**

Introduction: Ask the students if they can name an instrument of the orchestra

**String:** Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass

**Woodwind:** Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon

**Brass:** French Horn, Trumpet, Trombone, Tuba

**Percussion:** Timpani, Bass Drum, Cymbals, Snare Drum, Other miscellaneous percussion instruments (triangle, ratchet, etc.)

**Other:** Saxophone, Guitar, Voice, etc. are not used in the orchestra, but are used in some pieces

Learn the Instruments: Read through or present the first PowerPoint presentation with the students and ask them to pay careful attention to the way the instruments look, how sound is produced through them, and what each instrument sounds like.

**2. Instrumental Families**

Introduction: Inform the students that there are four families of instruments (**String, Woodwind, Brass, and Percussion**). Ask the students what similarities they notice in the instruments and what family they believe each instrument belongs to. Focus on instruments that look similar, sound similar, or produce sound in a similar way, and refer to the instrument chart in the presentation for reference.

Here are some answers to look for:

* They are made of brass
* They have strings
* They have a reed
* You blow air into them
* You use a bow to produce a sound
* You strike them to produce a sound

**2. What to Listen For**

Refer to the first PowerPoint starting on page/slide 10 and go over how the orchestra is arranged and why it is arranged that way.

Answer the questions with your class, and ask the students to focus on using the information they learned about the different instruments in the orchestra and their families.

Finally, play about a minute or two of the link on the PowerPoint on page/slide 14 and ask the questions provided.

**3. Concert Etiquette:**

Introduction: Inform the students that there are certain guidelines to follow when attending a concert. Play this link to the concert etiquette rap (also provided on the PowerPoint): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykk5TF-pKw4&feature=youtu.be>

After playing the video, please refer to PowerPoint 1 page/slide 15 and read the material to better reinforce the message from the video.

**4. Meet the People**

You can print/present PowerPoint 2 for this section of the lesson plan to teach students about:

1. Composer: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (*Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*)

2. Composer: Nathaniel Stookey (*The Composer Is Dead!*)

3. Writer: Lemony Snicket (Daniel Handler)

4. Conductor: Demondrae Thurman

5. Narrator: Joey Lay

For **Mozart**, there is a clip to a YouTube video with a version of his “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” variations (he composed the melody). Here is the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fS7yiD6cz8A>

You can stop the video after about a minute. Ask students if they recognize the piece.

For **Stookey**, there is a clip to a YouTube video featuring a piece that he wrote for percussion instruments made from materials found in a garbage dump. The piece is called ***Junkestra*.** The video is short, but feel free to start it around the **30-second mark**, which is where you see the instruments being played. Emphasize how Dr. Stookey made music from what he heard and saw around him. Make sure they recognize the instruments as **percussion**. Here is the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-Tw7psncFo>

**5. Supplemental Activity: Solving a Mystery!**

**Objective:** To have students use the information they learned about the instruments and their families to guess which instrument their partner “is.” They will be solving a mystery – just as they will be solving a mystery through the storytelling in the concert.

**Materials:** Large post-it notes, pens/pencils.

**Instructions:** Make a post-it note for a variety of instruments in the orchestra. Violin, trumpet, clarinet, piano, timpani, etc. Divide your class into groups of two or three. This could also be done as a class with one person at the front of the class. Without looking at the post-it, one team member (or the person at the front of the class) takes a post-it and sticks it to his/her forehead. He/she will then ask questions of his/her class, partner, or teammates to determine what instrument he/she is. Questions could include:

\*What instrument family am I in?

 \*Do I use a bow to produce sound?

 \*Am I large, small, or medium?

 \*What kind of sound do I make?

 \*Where do I sit in the orchestra?

Play rotates through the class or team.

**6. Supplemental Activity: Rhythm Composition**

**Objective:** To understand how simple it is to create basic rhythms – just like a composer does. You can emphasize how Mozart composed music when he was as young as five, and that many composers, including Nathaniel Stookey, are inspired to create music based on sounds they hear in their everyday lives.

**Materials:** none!

**Instructions:** Have students sit or stand in a large circle on the floor. Explain that everyone is going to compose his/her own rhythm! Get a rhythm going by simply to 4 by (quietly) patting your legs twice following by (quietly) clapping twice (pat-pat-clap-clap). If you need help figuring out how fast to go, you can use the second hand of a clock. While everyone is quietly patting and clapping, explain that the goal is to fit the rhythm into 4 beats (pat-pat-clap-clap) and that they can use any type of body percussion, meaning they could:

 \*pat their legs

 \*clap their hands

 \*snap

 \*pound or knock on the floor

 \*tap their head or chest

 \*stomp their feet

You can start the rhythm. Once you are done, the person to your left has to repeat your rhythm, and then create his/her own. It gets passed around the circle from there. The entire time, the class keeps the stead beat. You can repeat this as many times as you want. Students are bound to get more creative as the game goes on.

**7. Supplemental Activity: Crossword Puzzle**

Print the crossword puzzle for students to work on quietly if time permits. All clues are found in the study guide PowerPoints and materials.