**Dancing Musical Characters**

**Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra**

**2018 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 collaborators 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: Benjamin Britten (*A Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra*)

2. Musical style: Theme and Variations (*A Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra*)

3. Composer: Edvard Grieg (*Peer Gynt Suite*)

4. Conductor: Adam Flatt

5. Narrator: David Duff

6. Collaborators: Tuscaloosa Community Dancers

7. Orchestra: Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra

In the **Britten** portion of this PowerPoint, there is a clip from a YouTube video featuring the theme (based on a melody by Henry Purcell) of *A Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra*. Students do not have to answer questions about the theme, but if they are able to follow the music with their eyes on the screen, go ahead and direct them. If you are not familiar with reading music, do not worry about doing this. Alternatively, if there is a student who knows how to read music, have him/her come to the front of the class and guide the rest of the students.

**5. Supplemental Listening Activity:**

In the **Britten** portion of PowerPoint 2, there is a clip from a YouTube video featuring another piece he wrote, “Storm” from the *Four Sea Interludes* from the opera *Peter Grimes*. The video is short, but feel free to start from a point you deem appropriate to answer the following questions (without mentioning the name of the piece), some of which are included on the PowerPoint slide:

* What do you think this piece represents?
* What landscape do you imagine?
* What is the weather like on this landscape? (Once it is determined to be a storm, move to the next question)
* Can you hear the ocean? What makes it sound like the ocean?
* What instruments do you hear?

**6. Supplemental Discussion Activity**

**Objective:** To have students take the information they learned about Benjamin Britten and connect it to their own life experiences in a guided discussion.

**Materials:** Whiteboard or chalkboard

**Instructions:** Ask the following questions of the class, and write some of their answers on the board.

* Benjamin Britten was an outcast because he did not support World War II. Because of this, he temporarily moved to the United States to escape persecution in his native England.
* Have you ever felt like an outcast at school? At home? What made you feel like an outcast?
* What could you do to make someone who feels like an outcast feel welcome?
* Benjamin Britten felt homesick when he was living in the United States, and wrote an opera that took place in his homeland to help him deal with these feelings.
* Have you ever felt homesick? What situation made you homesick?
* What did you do to help yourself feel less homesick? Did someone else or something else help you feel better?

**7. Supplemental Interactive 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.”

**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.

**8. Supplemental Interactive Activity: Creating Variations on a Theme**

**Note:** be sure that PowerPoint 2 has been viewed before beginning this activity.

**Materials:** Optional simple hand percussion instruments if in a music classroom. Otherwise, body percussion (clapping, patting legs, snapping, stomping, etc.) works just as well. If you want to simplify it further, have students only use clapping.

**Instructions:**

* Divide class into groups of 5-8 students
* Instruct them to create a short, simple “theme” that fits into four large beats. Demonstrate this “beat” by clapping four times at the pace of the second hand on the clock (60 beats per minute). They can do this using body percussion techniques (described above) or using hand percussion instruments (this should take 5-10 minutes). Suggest that one student per group clap the beat while the other students play the theme
* After checking on the groups to make sure they have completed their theme, move to the next step.
* Now, instruct students to create two “variations” on their theme by having one student clap the beat, one student play the theme, and the remaining students play the variations. Variations can simply be a different rhythm, use different instruments, and/or use different body percussion techniques
* Have each group perform their theme and variations for the rest of the class

**9. Supplemental Writing Activity: Crossword Puzzle**

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