

LESSON PLAN #3

SSG Alex Tedrow, staff arranger*

Students will use The U.S. Army Band "Pershing's Own" historic resources of Paul Hindemith's *Symphony in B-Flat* to learn about and discuss the process of composition and musical collaboration. Students will compose their own melodies and participate in a "Musical Telephone" game with their peers.



SETTING

General Music (Grades 4-6+, middle school)

AREA OF FOCUS

Composition and Musical Collaboration

NATIONAL STANDARDS ADDRESSED

Creating

Anchor Standard #2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Performing/Presenting/Producing

Anchor Standard #5: Develop and refine artistic work for presentation.

Connecting

Anchor Standard #10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

PRIOR UNDERSTANDING NECESSARY

Students should have at least some limited experience composing or improvising simple melodies. Students should be familiar with very basic music notation (quarter notes, half notes) and the first five notes of the C major scale. Students should be familiar with using a solfege system to sing simple melodies.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Contextual Understanding

Students will examine the historical importance of back-and-forth collaboration between composers and performers in the creation of new music.

Artistic Expression

Students will compose brief melodies in preparation for the "Musical Telephone" game using simple rhythmic patterns and the first five notes of the C major scale.

Knowledge/Skill

Students will perform melodies they compose during class by singing and (optionally) playing instruments.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Projector screen and sound system
- Chalkboard/whiteboard or electronic equivalent
- Recording by U.S. Army Band - MVT III **CLICK TO LINK**
- Pencil and paper (or electronic equivalent)
- Classroom keyboard instruments (optional)

PROCEDURES

PART I: Collaboration

1. Have "COLLABORATION" written on the whiteboard/chalkboard before class.
2. Play recording of 3rd movement of Hindemith's *Symphony in B-Flat* as students enter the room.
3. As students enter, have them write responses to:
 - What do you think "collaboration" means?
 - Why is it important for artists and musicians to work collaboratively?
4. Have a few student volunteers share their responses; write key words that come up in discussion on the board.
5. "Imagine what it was like when Hindemith was working directly with musicians in the U.S. Army Band while he was writing the piece."
6. "Collaboration between creators and performers is important to make sure the music is playable and that the final product sounds good. Without composers, there would be no music to play. Without performers, there would be no one to bring the ideas to life!"

PART II: Composition Warm-Up

7. Have a few different examples of simple quarter/half note rhythms in 4/4 written on the board.
8. Call-and-response clapping the rhythms written on the board. For added challenge, have students count the rhythms as they clap, or split students in half with one side keeping tempo and other half performing rhythms then swap roles.
9. Write out first 5 notes of C major scale on board. Have students sing through notes on letter names and do a quick call-and-response improvisation activity using these notes.
10. If there is extra time, complete a "classroom composition" on the board where student volunteers use the first 5 notes of the C major scale and quarter notes and half notes to suggest ideas for a 2-measure melody.
11. Model the completed melody and have students sing through it in call-and-response with teacher.

PART III: Individual Composition

12. Have students spread out with staff paper handout and pencils; write a 2-measure melody using only quarter notes and half notes and the first 5 notes of the C major scale.
13. Float around the room and assist students as necessary.
14. Allow students to experiment with their melodies by singing or playing them on classroom keyboards, Orff instruments, recorders, etc.
15. Once students have composed their melodies, have them learn how to sing them on their own using note names or solfege syllables; students may practice in groups if desired.

PART IV: Musical Telephone Game

16. Choose one student volunteer to come to the front of the class and whisper-sing their melody quietly for ONLY the teacher to hear.
17. "Musical Telephone" game:

Student #1 shares melody privately with Student #2. Student #2 embellishes idea and passes to Student #3, #3 to #4, #4 to #5, etc. Students must collaborate to come up with musical ideas that are singable from one student to another and watch how the idea transforms from start to end. At the end of activity, Student #1 and the final student in the telephone line share their different versions of the melody for the whole class. Teacher transcribes both versions of the melody on the chalkboard/whiteboard for the entire class to sing and compare.
18. Repeat game with new volunteered melodies as desired.

PART V: Wrap-Up

19. Ask students:
 - What did you notice about this activity? Did the melody change from person to person?
 - Why do you think it is important for artists to work with each other directly? Do you think ideas can get lost when we aren't working together openly?
 - Look back at the picture of Hindemith working with the U.S. Army Band musicians and the sheet music he wrote. How do you think this relates?
20. Collect intro sheets as students exit the classroom.

ASSESSMENT

Informal

Listen to student verbal responses. (Procedures 4, 5, 6, 19)

Float around students and observe as they compose their own melodies and practice singing them on their own and in groups. (Procedures 12-15)

Observe as students participate in the "Musical Telephone" game. (Procedures 17-18)

Formal

Collect completed answer sheets as students exit. (Procedure 20)

NOTES/FEEDBACK/SUGGESTIONS

Please let us know how this went in your classroom! Email our educational outreach coordinator: SFC Sonia Dell'Omo: sonia.c.dell'omo.mil@army.mil

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