

Teaching Musical Concepts through Movement #1: establishing a link between mind, body and music

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVE:

Ensemble: Form social relationships and develop expressive self-assurance in a social context.

Student: Establish link between notation, kinaesthetic and aural intelligences through movement.

Director: Establish personal safety and self-assurance in the rehearsal space the ensemble.

MUSIC CONCEPTS:

Structure/Form * Expressive techniques * Timbre * Tone colour

Part 1: Establishing movement vocabulary

Room formation:

1. Students – stand in the place where they would usually sit in band but without instruments, chairs or music stands
2. Teacher – stand in the conductor's usual position (no podium)

Equipment requirements:

1. Clear your rehearsal space of all equipment
2. Class set of markers
3. Whiteboard and coloured whiteboard markers or large pieces of paper and markers
4. CD/mp3 player and sound system
5. Large space (see addendum for recommendations)
6. Vocabulary stencils for pitch and timbre

Teacher preparation:

1. Develop playlists for movement activities
2. Print cheat sheet
3. Print a class set of Holst melodic shape stencils
4. Practice movement routine as per below.

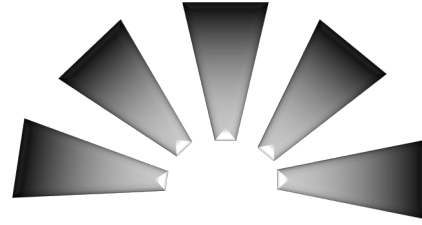
Approx. Lesson Time: 2 x 45 minutes

ACTIVE & REFLECTIVE TEACHING ROUTINE: Learn-Apply-Create -Perform-Reflect

1. LEARN (1): introduce lower body movement & pulse through mirror (15mins)

- a. Play audio from track 1. (The silent track gives you, the teacher time to move into place before the music starts playing.)
- b. Memphis Soul Stew 1: bounce on balls of feet
- c. Change movement with the introduction of each new layer of sound (each instrument):
 - 'Give me a half a tea-cup of bass'
 - 'Give me a pound of fat-back drums'
 - 'Now give me 4 tablespoons of broilin' Memphis guitar'
 - 'Just a l'll pinch of organ'
 - 'Now give me a half a pint, of horn'

- d. Ask students to listen to the words during movement – what is this song about?
- e. REPEAT (a-c) ACTIVITY
- f. Establish 'Recipe' analogy. Ask students to listen – how many instruments are introduced? What are they?
- g. REPEAT (a-c) ACTIVITY
- h. Invite response to questions posed in (f) from students.
- i. Divide ensemble into 5 groups like this:



- j. Assign layer of sound and corresponding movement to each group from left to right as it is introduced in 'Memphis Soul Stew' until all groups are moving simultaneously (see DVD).
- k. REPEAT (j) ACTIVITY but this time, randomly assign any instrument to any group (*i.e.* don't simply go from left to right – surprise them!).
- l. Introduce the idea of 'layers of sound' and the music concept 'Texture' by drawing layers on a whiteboard.

2. LEARN (2): introduce upper body movement concepts through mirror (15mins)

- a. WESTLAKE A: Teacher lead, students mirror movement from the waist up. Each is facing each other. No lower body movement.
- b. WESTLAKE A: Students break into pairs, one nominate themselves as leader (known herein as leader 1), the other the mirror. Listening to the music again, they move using upper body only. The leader moves in a way that follows the music, their partner mirrors their movement.
- c. WESTLAKE A: Students remain in pairs, but the leader changes (now leader 2).
- d. WESTLAKE A: Students remain in pairs, commence with *leader 1* but teacher calls out 'change leader' whilst the music is playing. Student goal is to seamlessly change leader mid-movement without any dramatic change to what they are doing.
- e. Teacher demonstrates how to change leaders without using voice *i.e.* to freeze
- f. WESTLAKE A: Students remain in pairs, commence with leader 2 but only change leaders through the freeze movement, rather than voice command.
- g. Teacher demonstrates alternative form of movement that is in the formation of front to back. To change leaders, the leader simply turns around and as their partner mirrors them, they become the new leader.
- h. WESTLAKE B (new orchestration): Leader 1 commences mirror movement in new formation.
- i. Discuss challenges and how it feels to work in this formation.
- j. WESTLAKE C (new orchestration): 2 pairs join together to form groups of 4. Stand in diamond formation, front to back. Using a quarter turn motion, a new leader is chosen without voice command and mirror movement is continued.
- k. Discuss layers of sound, draw melodic line on whiteboard, use vocabulary stencils to describe the music. Did it change?

2. **APPLY: combine texture and pitch concepts through movement (15mins)**

- a. MIRROR: Students mirror upper body actions to the first 9 repetitions of the melody from Holst 1st Suite in E^b.
- b. Movement is related to the changing nature of the MAIN THEME.
- c. Students sit on the floor
- d. Hand out 'Melodic Shape' worksheet and coloured marker
- e. Play audio from track 37 – follow play list as detailed below (watch DVD to see Jodie conduct this lesson):

37. MAIN THEME: trace top line of worksheet with **finger**
38. 10 second silence
39. MAIN THEME: trace top line of worksheet with **marker**
40. 10 second silence
41. MAIN THEME: trace **middle line** of worksheet with marker
42. 10 second silence
43. MAIN THEME: trace **lower line** of worksheet with marker
44. 10 second silence
45. MAIN THEME: trace melodic shape in the air with marker
46. 10 second silence
47. MAIN THEME: trace melodic shape in the air with 2 hands
48. 60 second silence: stand up and face your partner, leader 1 to start
49. MAIN THEME: mirror in pairs – trace melodic shape (leader 1)
50. 10 second silence: change leader
51. MAIN THEME: mirror in pairs – trace melodic shape (leader 2)
52. 10 second silence: change leader
53. MAIN THEME (SLOWER): mirror in pairs – trace melodic shape
54. 30 second silence – Ask 'What did you notice?'
55. MAIN THEME (LOUDER): mirror in pairs – trace melodic shape
56. 30 second silence - Ask 'What did you notice' How does this change how you move?
57. MAIN THEME (LOUDER and FASTER): mirror in pairs – trace melodic shape

- f. Discuss how changes in tempo and dynamic changes movement gesture. Use vocabulary stencils to encourage scholarly music concept description.

----- **End lesson (part 1)** -----

3. **CREATE (1): combine texture and pitch concepts through movement (5mins)**

- a. Students form groups of 8-10 and create mirror movement to the melody of Holst Excerpt.
- b. Nominate a leader to begin. The remainder of the group to mirror them.
- c. Change leaders (moving to the left) with each repetition of the melody.
- d. When you are the leader, listen to the melody. Is it different? Use your movement to show this.

4. **CREATE (2): students create mirror movement to melody OR anything else happening in the music (10mins)**

- a. Nominate a different leader to begin. The remainder of the group to mirror them. Students can move to the melody or to an alternate layer of sound that takes their fancy.

TEACHING TIP: Remember to remind students that body contact is not permitted. If you have an exuberant group, you may wish to instruct the students to move from the waist-up only.

- b. Change leaders (moving to the left) with each repetition of the melody.
- c. Allow 2-3 repeats of the full Holst excerpt, starting with a different leader each time to allow the students to really hear the different layers of sound and react to them through movement.