



## ***REVERBERATIONS: TEACHERS TEACHING TEACHERS***

Welcome to the November/December 2017 issue of *Reverberations: Teachers Teaching Teachers*. Other articles in this issue may be accessed from the links in the At-a-Glance table, and can be downloaded and printed using the included PDF files. Please refer to the [AOSA Copyright Policy](#) before printing multiple copies.

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# **USING MOVEMENT TO INTRODUCE A MASTERWORK**

By Darla Meek, AOSA Teacher Educator

As I remember my first few years of teaching, visions arise of students gazing at a listening map while seated cross-legged on the floor and raising their hands when they heard the main melody. Over several years, as I became more comfortable with classroom management, the idea of using movement in listening lessons evolved.

***The child should learn to feel music not only with his ear but with his whole being.***  
***~ Emile Jaques Dalcroze***



Movement may be one of the greatest tools at our disposal for introducing little ones to masterworks. Using the powerful kinesthetic sense helps students learn faster - and retain information longer - because we are etching the concept into our students' muscle memory. Movement stimulates the prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for focus, concentration, creativity, planning, and organization. (This is the same place in the brain where medications for ADHD have an effect.) Therefore, movement is a natural way to help students focus and increase attention. Movement can also increase organic brain chemicals (such as dopamine) which elevate mood and create positive emotions.

This article models a way to craft your own listening lessons featuring movement and includes a sample lesson idea, lesson planning template, and a list of suggested pieces. You may also want to create an extension for a lesson you already use, or design a new, original lesson for your students.

**Choose a Piece of Music** - It is important to select music that has artistic, intellectual, cultural, or historical value. When we offer songs, poems, books, and listening examples of high quality, we are artistically feeding our students, nourishing their minds and their souls. Not every piece will work well with creative movement. Here are some things to look for:

- Is it well written? Is it structured well? Does it have the right amount of complexity to be accessible yet challenging for students of any particular age? Does it have a singable melody?
- Does it have depth? Is it rich in emotional meaning, or cultural insights? Will the student discover more things about the piece with repeated listenings?
- Does it have an element of surprise? A twist in the melodic line? Interesting chord progressions? A shift in the structure? A bit of drama? Tension and release?
- What role can this piece play in the musical training of the students? Can you use elements in the piece to prepare, present, or practice a music concept? For example, are there rhythms inherent in the text...or patterns that can be derived? Are there expressive elements that can be highlighted?
- Will an encounter with this piece elevate the listener? Is this piece one I want the students to remember for the rest of their lives?

**Analyze the Chosen Piece** - A good listening lesson requires careful analyzation and thoughtful preparation.

- Purchase a recording and a copy of the notation. Number the measures.
- Diagram the form of the piece, both the large form and the smaller forms that make up the large sections.
- Make note of any key changes and transitions.
- Consider the tempo. Is it appropriate for moving?
- Is there a consistent melodic or rhythmic figure that can be pulled for a mini-lesson and reinforced through movement?
- Research information about the piece and the composer, both to share with the students and to guide your choices for movement. Many excellent children's books are available for learning about composers and their work.
- If the piece has historical significance, what qualities of the period are found in the piece? Perhaps this is an opportunity to teach a bit about a dance style from that period.
- What is the main quality that attracted you to the piece (e.g., rhythm, melody, form, style, or phrasing)? This will probably be the starting point for introducing the piece to the students.
- Does the piece seem to tell a story?
- If the piece is too long, consider using a software program such as Garage Band or Audacity to shorten it. Remember to adhere to all copyright rules.

## **STRUCTURE FOR A LISTENING/MOVEMENT LESSON**

### **Imitation & Exploration**

- A good way to start is with simultaneous imitation. Simply have the students mirror you as you move to the music.
- Be mindful of the steady beat, the length of the phrases, and the overall form.
- Change movements at logical places, such as cadences.
- Use the same movement choices for all sections of the piece that are identical.

### **Label**

- Have the students listen to the recording and derive the form. Label each section visually.
- Teach the students to sing the main thematic material, if appropriate, and perhaps even create their own lyrics to help themselves remember the piece.

### **Improvisation step 1** - Develop a repertoire of movements.

- Distribute props (if desired) to the students: scarves, streamers, paper plates, etc.
- Have the students explore for a minute to discover movements they can make with their props, alone and with a partner.
- Have volunteers demonstrate movements. After each volunteer, have all the students practice the offered movement and name it. Write the name of the movement on the board.

- Continue until you have eight or so different movements. As each one is listed, have the students go back and practice all the previous movements to be sure the students have memorized them.
- Choose two of the suggested movements. Ask the students to figure out how they would move slowly and cleanly from one to the next, combining the two short movements into one longer movement. Give them time to try out several combinations.
- Play the recording, having students practice some of the movements on their own, determining how they would fit nicely with the melodies they hear.

### **Improvisation step 2 - Choreograph.**

- Section by section, guide the students to offer ideas about which movement would work well with each phrase or section.
- Rehearse until the basic choreography is learned.
- Depending on the length of your piece, you may choose to choreograph only the main section on the first day. Finish the remaining sections on subsequent days.

### **Creation**

- Over several class meetings, gradually introduce other elements, such as body facings, locomotor/non-locomotor movement, and levels.
- Perform with the recording.

**Assessment** - A reflection time at the end of each lesson helps the students fully synthesize their learning.

- Consider guiding the students to create their own assessment rubric. Ask them what kinds of things are important when working together to create a movement piece. In addition to listing elements they were required to include in their performance, they may offer ideas that support group success (e.g., cooperation, contributing to the group's effort, using practice time well, etc.)
- Display the finished rubric and give the students time to assess themselves.

## **Template for Planning Active Movement/ Listening Lessons**

### **LISTENING STRATEGY FOR (Piece title – Composer)**

#### **ANALYSIS**

- Meter
- Tempo
- Form
- Main melodic material (use solfege, if possible)

- Main rhythmic material
- Basic harmonic patterns
- Dynamics
- Text
- The history of the piece, and information about the composer and the time period in which it was written
- The instruments featured in each section
- Mood

### **PRELIMINARY LEARNINGS**

The following learning must be accomplished before introducing (name of piece):

1. The pitch (most recent pitch learned that is used in the piece) must be conscious.
2. Students must be familiar with (meter of piece)
3. Students must be familiar with (rhythm)
4. Students should have mastered (movement concepts)  
etc.

### **LESSON PROCESS**

**Imitation & Exploration**

**Labeling**

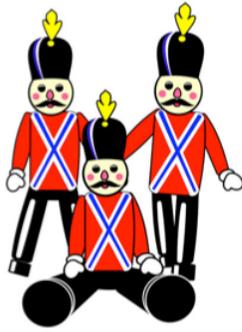
**Improvisation**

**Creation**

**Assessment**

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### **EXAMPLE LESSON**



## ***March of the Wooden Soldiers***

from *Album for the Young*, Opus 39 by Peter Tchaikovsky (suggested for Kindergarten)

**About the Piece:** Tchaikovsky's *Album for the Young* is a collection of miniature pieces illustrating various images, moods, or emotions of childhood. The book contains 24 short descriptive piano pieces which Tchaikovsky composed between April and May, 1878, expressly for children.

**Materials:** recording of *March of the Wooden Soldiers*, visuals of form

**Musical elements:** steady beat, accent, ABA form, preparation of major/minor tonality

**Movement formation:** scattered, or in two concentric circles with partners

**Formal Structure:** ABA (each section contains four sets of four beats)

**Warm Up:** Play the recording and lead students to mirror your steady-beat movements such as stepping, bending, patting. Be mindful of the form and length of the phrases as you model movements for the children.

**Exploration:** Have the students brainstorm favorite toys and ways in which they might move. Show the students a toy soldier, either a real one or a picture. Discuss its attributes. If it were alive, how would it move? How would it salute? Bow? March? Ask, "How would the soldier move if it were made of something other than wood, such as ice, metal, or rubber bands?"

**Imitation** - Teach a simple choreography: A section - four salutes with left hand (on the steady beat); four salutes with right hand; jerky bow for 8 beats (down for 4, up for 4); B section - step back and LUNGE forward, step back and LUNGE forward, then march, turning in a circle, for 8 beats (note: lunge on the accents).

**Label** - Have the students listen to the recording and guide students to derive the form using the terms "same" and "different." Label the form as A B A. Ask students to describe the difference in mood in the B section (e.g. more serious) as preparation for a future lesson on major/minor distinction.

**Improvisation and Creation** - Guide the students to create new movements for the A and B sections. Encourage the students to try changes in formation (e.g., perform the movements in two concentric circles, facing partners). Allow the students to decide on a formation they prefer for a final performance.

### Suggested Pieces for Listening/Movement Lessons

- *Carnival of the Animals* (Saint-Saens)
  - *The Stars and Stripes Forever* (Sousa)
  - *Symphony #94* (Surprise), Andante (Haydn)
  - "The Viennese Musical Clock" from *Hary Janos Suite* (Kodály)
  - *Peter and the Wolf* (Prokofiev)
  - *Hansel and Gretel* (Humperdinck)
  - *Peer Gynt Suite* (Grieg)
  - *Pictures at an Exhibition* (Mussorgsky)
  - *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* (Mozart)
  - *The Nutcracker Suite* (Tchaikovsky)
  - *Little Fugue in G Minor* (Bach)
  - *Music for the Royal Fireworks* (Handel)
  - *Symphonies #5, 6, and 9* (Beethoven)
  - *The Four Seasons* (Vivaldi)
  - *Billy the Kid* (Copland)
  - *Rodeo* (Copland)
  - *William Tell Overture* (Rossini)
  - *The Barber of Seville* (Rossini)
  - *1812 Overture* (Tchaikovsky)
  - *Light Calvary Overture* (Von Suppe)
  - *Air for the G String* (Bach)
  - *Canon in D* (Pachelbel)
  - *Fur Elise* (Beethoven)
  - *Clair de Lune* (Debussy)
  - *Variations on "Pop Goes the Weasel"* (Cailliet)
  - *Twelve Variations on "Ah vous dirai-je, Maman"* (Mozart)
  - *The Trout Quintet* (Schubert)
  - *Blue Danube Waltz* (Strauss)
  - "Minuet in G" from *Anna Magdalena Notebook* (Bach)
  - *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* (Britten)
  - *Fanfare for the Common Man* (Copland)
  - "Russian Sailor's Dance" from *The Red Poppy* (Gliere)
  - "Troika" from *Lieutenant Kije Suite* (Prokofiev)
  - *The Moldau* (Smetana)
  - *Rhapsody in Blue* (Gershwin)
  - *The Planets* (Holst)
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