

STRATEGIES FOR LISTENING TO MUSIC: PREPARATION FOR THE SYMPHONY

“Birds We Have Known”

Marcelline Moody 2023

One of our functions as music teachers is to educate children to be intelligent and discriminating listeners, thereby developing their potential as the concert-goers and "classical music" listeners of the future as well as enhancing their listening skills and stimulating various other intelligences.

Listening to music should stimulate some reaction or response. An emotional response, or how the music makes one feel, can be expressed through various media: movement, graphics/art, speech (discussion, poetry, rhythm patterns). An intellectual response is usually expressed by identifying, understanding and even reproducing elements of music within a piece, e.g. rhythm, melody, dynamics, meter, tempo, timbre, form, etc. [The appreciation of the style of the music in its historical context is an intellectual response, but I feel that, since the study of different periods of history are limited at the elementary level, this approach is less relevant, especially if the other, more personal, “hands-on” approaches to music have not been experienced first.]

Since music is a language and so-called “Classical” music is largely a *foreign* language to many people today, especially children, it is important that we present it to them in as relevant and comprehensible a format as possible. The more familiar students can become with works in this “foreign” language, the better they will understand them and come to love them, so they need to hear the music many times but in ways that stimulate, not bore them. Therefore, different activities must be engaged in during the repeated listenings. A good idea is to play the music as a background during “down” times in the classroom. Ask other teachers to participate in this activity.

Any listening lesson should have a particular focus – the students should be either listening **for** something, probably with pencil and paper in hand to answer questions, or responding **to** something – ready to move, or play an instrument, etc. Movement exploration should consider Rudolph Laban's definitions of different qualities of movement:

Very basically: Light and fast (flick, dab) Light and slow (float, glide)
Strong and fast (jab, punch) Strong and slow (press, wring)

PROGRAMME

Not necessarily in this order

Dance of the Little Swans from Swan Lake **Tchaikowsky**
<https://youtu.be/EVSb3dFszH4?si=rMDRCdQhUXDJk6vK>
Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/track/7hucTf89u7zdLOSto9JJvP?si=736d35405051459d>

Dance of the Cockerels from Maskerade **Nielsen**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKeZnwHW8ig>
<https://open.spotify.com/track/42JUyT0uSUvSOWC3cOHhLp?si=95844ba5eb5549fc>

Hedwig's Theme from Harry Potter **Williams**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTKBLyp7_Dw
<https://open.spotify.com/track/1n8NKQRg8LVHy7oUhUgbFF?si=1fed30f9c6774752>
We will be performing a slightly shortened version of this.

Carnival of the Animals **Saint-Saens**
The Cuckoo
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3u5U1oSmUTU>
<https://open.spotify.com/track/61Ci6OR7mlpgMhzaX5JRSd?si=a90ceaf9f22d4dfb>

The Swan
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qrKiywjo7Q>
ballerina performing the famous choreography: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJ4uowripdw>
<https://open.spotify.com/track/0jOnZhF75V68VsBObWx2XO?si=02bc0960ef5649cb>

The Aviary
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xpbigR1x9jA>
<https://open.spotify.com/track/263Jml8vPXgGpdw9NipjYo?si=03faf3154b6d41e3>

Prelude from The Birds **Respighi**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=upi_eyeNkAs
<https://open.spotify.com/track/2ueOf6XFDqrPPd0ABnXTfD?si=0b7fad1628e84295>

Overture from The Thieving Magpie **Rossini**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JL7ebogHpyl>
<https://open.spotify.com/track/0NOfSOsyZCMzor5TwKjvb6?si=9d1cfc07e6f74ad7>
We will be performing a shortened version of this.

“Spring” from The Four Seasons **Vivaldi**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2keCqJKKu-c>
<https://open.spotify.com/track/0suZI5eDdKGdYtIPGcalbW?si=d1a8da6688f64131>

Finale from The Firebird Ballet

Stravinsky

Conducted by Gustavo Dudamel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rYcz-g8WpMc>

Conducted by Stravinsky himself:

<https://youtu.be/IrMGqAmjbug?si=gQhfT2rZQWHaHvIT&t=592> (starting at 9:53)

<https://open.spotify.com/track/7zeyLTLWKyvZBhQYi5A8c5?si=5f6eb5048a1144ea>

Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks from Pictures at an Exhibition

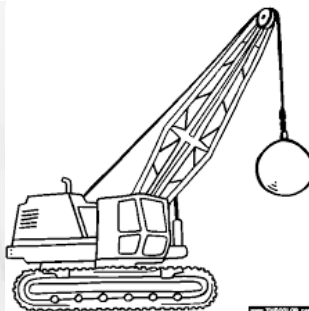
Mussorgsky

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPtSftZ3b0>

<https://open.spotify.com/track/0dRlb0odZNmzrTca1UjzY?si=8c802f6097924b7e>

Please note that many of the timings are approximate. You have been provided with a list of recordings from Spotify and Youtube, but it is possible that the recording you listen to won't be the same as the recording that was listened to in creating the lesson plans.

The following graphics are suggestions for a strategy mentioned in several of the lesson plans. Use these, but also create your own.



Storm



ETC.....

DANCE OF THE LITTLE SWANS from Swan Lake

P. Tchaikowsky
1840 – 1893

(This recording is obviously one made at a performance of the ballet as one can hear the sound of the toe shoes at the beginning.)

Play the first 30 seconds of the recording. Ask if students have heard the music before – it is the dance of four little swans

The following ti-ti figure is constant throughout the piece, mostly on the bassoon, played in a short, detached fashion, called **staccato**.



Perform this rhythm patting evenly on alternate thighs, or alternating a pat on one thigh with a clap.

Over the top of the ti-ti figure is a persistent rhythm that occurs many times:

Which is elongated into a longer phrase and developed throughout.

- Teach the first rhythms (swans and cygnets) then play the recording again. Ask students to count how many times the first rhythm “[x] Four little swans” occurs throughout.
 - The teacher can point them out, or mouth them as a guide.
 - There are sixteen – eight plus eight later.
- Then play again and ask how many times the cygnets rhythm occurs.
 - There are eight – this is a lovely balance.
- Discover that the cygnets rhythm occurs in between the two swans.

- The form can thus be described as: **Intro, Swans, Cygnets, Swans, Coda.**
 - It can be described in those words, or by graphics, maybe using a door for the “opening” and the “closing” and pictures of swans and cygnets.
- Talk about the instruments – mostly reeds for the swans, strings for the cygnets, back to reeds for the swans and a mixture for the coda.
- Notice that the staccato sound of the Bassoons in the introduction is reflected in several of the syllables of “Four lit-tle swans.....” whereas the Coda is very smooth, or, **legato** as the swans *glide* away. Perhaps they have learnt to swim like swans?

My words are just suggestions. Feel free to change them. Extra words could be invented for any rhythms I have left without words.

“SPRING” from The Four Seasons (First movement only)

Antonio Vivaldi
1678 – 1741

Vivaldi was one of the greatest composers of the Baroque period. (basically late 17th to mid 18th century - 300 years ago.)

He lived and composed in Italy and taught at a girls' school. Much of his music was written for those students as part of an orchestra, or as soloists.

His famous work **The Four Seasons** comprises four concerti for violin. (*A concerto is a piece for a solo instrument and orchestra in which the solo instrument and its performer gets to show off style and technique.*) Each concerto is named after a season and has three movements (like chapters).

The main theme of the first movement of the **“Spring”** concerto can be played on recorder. The key below is transposed from E to G major for ease of playing.

Vivaldi is supposed to have written poetry for each of the Four Seasons, and each poem is broken up into three parts, which correspond to the three movements of each concerto. In addition, Vivaldi provided instructions such as *“The barking dog”* in the second movement of “Spring”, *“Languor caused by the heat”* in “Summer”, and *“the drunkards have fallen asleep”* (in Autumn). In “Spring”, we will hear clearly the sound of various birds, a thunderstorm, soft breezes, a murmuring stream.

La Primavera

*Giunt' è la Primavera e festosetti
La Salutan gl' Augei con lieto canto
E i fonti allo Spirar de' Zeffiretti
Con dolce mormorio Scorrano intanto:
Vengon' coprendo l'aer di nero amanto
E Lampi, e tuoni ad annuntiarla eletti
Indi tacendo questi, gl'Augelletti
Tornan' di nuovo al lor canoro incanto*

Spring

*Springtime is upon us.
The birds celebrate her return with festive song,
And murmuring streams are softly caressed by breezes.

Thunderstorms, those heralds of Spring, roar,
Casting their dark mantle over heaven,
Then they die away to silence, and the birds take up
their charming songs once more.*

- Teach the main melody (*Transposed*) on voice and/or recorder. Add words to aid learning, if desired, e.g. *“Springtime is in the air--, Singing birds are ev'rywhere...*

A sectn

- Note the narrow range of notes in the melody, with many notes repeated
- Play the recording
 - Define, or discover, the structure of this main melody as **AABB**.
 - **B** begins at the upbeat to measure 13 – about 20 seconds into the piece. The second **A** has two fewer notes at the end.
 - This **A** theme is rather like a **fanfare** – evocative of the entrance of Spring.
- After the opening “fanfare” there are various bird calls. Ask students if they can suggest which birds make these calls or sounds.
- Give the title. Put up the words of the poem and make a skeleton “picture” of them: i.e. list/draw the important events and sounds (bird calls, breezes, storm) they are describing.
- Movement could be created to represent the different sections of the piece, using scarves, ribbons, fabric, masks etc. etc.
- Distribute pieces of paper and crayons, pencils, or felt markers.
 - Play the recording and ask students to draw any of these different events/sounds when they think they are being portrayed in the music.
 - Using several long sheets of paper on the floor (newsprint paper works well), with **six** students per sheet, put each student in charge of one of the items. **Use the same graphic symbol each time, e.g., a trumpet, or a flower.... for the fanfare melody above (or any part of it).**
 - Each student draws his/her item **in the sequence** on the long paper whenever it appears in the music.

OR

- Instead of graphic pictures of what the music is supposed to represent, i.e., birds, streams, thunderstorms, etc, abstract lines and shapes could be used to more closely represent what the **music** is doing, in terms of

pitch, volume, tempo, other dynamics, etc. allowing about 10-12 (not fixed!) seconds of music for each student, before calling "next".

- Play the recording again, and follow the "scores" through. Move students around to another "score" to see if they can follow another group's interpretation.
- Show the following structure on the board. Play the piece again and follow the structure through. A student could also be charged with leading the class through the chart of the structure.

"Le Printemps" - structure.

1. 

2. 

3. Solo - bird calls

4. #2. - once only

5.



6. #2 once only

7. "Shivers and swoops"

8. #2 once only

9. Smooth and high with low sustained cello

10. Variation of #1

11. Solo - Smooth

12. #2 TWICE - second time slower and softer (echo)

**Overture to “LA GAZZA LADRA” (The Thieving Magpie) Gioacchino Rossini
1792 – 1868**

Very briefly, the story of the opera is about a magpie that steals some silver and the theft is blamed on a servant girl who is sent to prison. Friends discover that the magpie is the thief, and they recover the silver from its nest, thus saving the girl’s life.

The music is from the Overture (Opening) to the Opera. It is very long, and the performance at the concert has a cut to shorten it.

There are basically four sections, each connected by a bridge, and preceded by an introduction, and followed by an ending called a “Coda” (Italian for “tail”).

Perhaps do one section per lesson, reviewing each taught section before proceeding to the next.

STRUCTURE:

Introduction:

0:00 – 0:14	Drum rolls – NB the echo, then the crescendo
0:14 – 2:00	Marching tune - NB the echoes
2:00 – 2:22	Drum rolls as before; Plus FANFARE; Big cresc.

Sect. I	2:23 – 2:41	Diddlely Dum
	2:42 – 2:50	Bridge
	2:51 - 3:19	Diddlely Dum – extended; NB the crescendo

Sect. II	3:20 – 3:56	Ascending and Descending
	3:57 – 4:20	Bridge

Sect. III	4:21 - 4:39	“Can you see this?” (NB the diddley dah rhythm)
	4:40 – 4:47	Bridge
	4:47 – 5:06	Repeat of “Can you see this?”
	5:07 – 5:14	Bridge

Sect IV	5:15 – 6:06	“How do you...” NB cresc. and added instruments
	6:07 – 6:14	Bridge

Sect II rep	6:15 – 6:29	Shortened ascending/descending theme
	6:30 – 6:40	Bridge

All sections repeat here, but this will probably be cut at the concert.

9:19 - end	Coda
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- Play from 3:20- 3:56, explaining that Rossini is playing around here with all sorts of variations of **up and down**.
 - Can they describe them?
 - **Can they move to them?** – perhaps work in pairs, one up, one down.
 - (NB that some passages have slower notes than others, some are single notes, etc. etc.)
- Draw the ups and downs of the sounds on individual pieces of paper, or on the board, or on a long piece of paper on the floor or wall.
- Discuss the instruments being played.

Section III (4:21 – 4:39; 4:47 – 5:06)

- Explain that the piece we are listening to is from an opera called “The Thieving Magpie”. Talk about the fascination bright, shiny things have for Magpies.
- Teach the following speech pattern.
 - Divide and conquer – Teacher asks questions, students answer in rhythm; Switch parts.

Can_ you see this? Can_ you see this? It's a ve ry, ve ry shi ny, ve ry ve ry shi ny ve ry ve ry shi ny object.

Adapt to movement –

- One student lures a “magpie” by waving something shiny; magpie tip-toes, or hops, to see.
 - The “magpie” needs to be far enough away from the lure so that the distance may be covered in the time of the musical phrase.

The musical picture painting here is lovely: little bird-like steps, and the two bridges bird-like in sound, especially because of the flute.

- Play from 4:21 – 5:06
 - How many times do we hear this speech/movement pattern? [*Four*]
 - Is it continuous? [*No, there is a little bridge between the first two times and the last two, and another leading to the next section,*
- Perform the Magpie movement with the music, deciding what to do with the bridges. There should probably be 4 “lurers” to one magpie.

Section IV (5:15 – 6:06)

- Teach the following speech pattern to children who are ready. (It may be too difficult for very young children.)

How do you like this fine day? How do you like this fine day? To - tal - ly

great, to - tal - ly great, to - tal - ly great, I'm wil - ling to say.

- Divide the class into two, or have students in pairs, and say it as a question and answer at least twice – with some kind of movement or gesture and facial expression to indicate the meaning of the words. Switch.
- Distribute scarves or ribbons preferably of only two colours, one colour for the Q and the other for the A, for students to manipulate while questioning and answering.
- Play the recording from about 5:07. Ask students to raise hands when they hear the above rhythm that they have just spoken and moved to.
- Play again; have them raise hands when the rhythm is replaced by something else. (At 6:07 – there is a Bridge)
- Play again and ask how many times they hear the **whole** speech pattern. [Six]
- Ask if they noticed anything about the music at 5:15 (“How do you like this fine day?”) [It gets louder – **Crescendo** – and more instruments are added, and note the snare drum roll, the triangle, and the piccolo.]

CONCLUSION

- EITHER play the whole piece and discover the Introduction, the Bridges, and the Coda,
- OR, explain that there is an Introduction, Bridges to link the sections, and a “tail piece”, or Coda to end and then play the CD.
- Notice in the Introduction that there are Snare Drum Rolls and a Marching Tune. Some of the actors in the opera are soldiers or policemen, so there is a military feel to this part of the music.
- Notice in the Coda that the triangle is prominent, and that the music gets faster, which is called an **accelerando**.

FOLLOW UP

Because of its crisp and relentless beat, this whole piece would make a wonderful choreography with balls and balloons. They could be passed; tossed, bounced, either to self, or partner, or around a circle; Experience the preparation of the arm reaching back before the throw forward.

THE BIRDS – Prelude

Ottorino Respighi
1879 – 1936

- Play the music through, indicating the sections, **A B A**.
- Learn the following A section rhythm with the speech pattern; perform it on some Body Percussion – have students invent their own body patterns.
 - OPTIONAL: Invent non-pitched percussion patterns for it.

(R) tick - a ti ti ti tick - a ti ti
(Oh) I'm a fan - cy bird, I'm a fan - cy bird

- Play the A section and ask students how many times do we hear this rhythm in the first A section? (12)
- Teach the following rhythm with the speech pattern. Invent some Body Percussion.

(R) ti ti - cka ti - cka ti ti - cka ti - cka ti - cka ti
(Oh) I'm peck-ing like a wood-peck-er, fly-ing like a crow.

- Play the A section again and ask students to raise hands when they hear this rhythm. (*It comes right after the “Fancy Bird” rhythm.*)
- Put these two rhythms and their speech patterns together. The second one follows straight on from the first without any break or rest. Say them with the A section music.
- Ask students to describe this music. They can do it in their own words, or give them a list of words or pictures to circle. e.g.,

BRIGHT
QUIET
FRAGILE
BRASSY

SLEEPY
ROYAL
WHIMSICAL
IMPORTANT

FANFARE-LIKE
EERIE
STRONG
CALMING Etc....

(Some of these words are quite sophisticated. Choose words that are suitable for the age group, but also take the chance to extend the students' vocabulary)

- Play the recording to the end of the B section. Ask students to raise hands when they hear something a bit different. Define this as the **B Section**.
 - Ask students how does this section sound different from the A section. (*Bird calls; not like a Fanfare.....*)
 - What birds can you imagine in the B section? (*Chickens, or woodpeckers; Swallows, or other birds that fly swiftly; Cuckoos; Doves; A stately bird – a Peacock?*)
 - Teach the Stately Bird Theme:



- Discover that the peacock theme has beats grouped in 3's – 3/8 or 3/4 time.
 - OPTIONAL: Note that a distinctive rhythm for this section in 3/8 is **tim-re ti**
- Create movements for the different birds and choreograph the whole B section
- Choreograph the entire piece – three sections: A B A

Following is a four-part transposed arrangement of the Prelude.

Gli Uccelli (The Birds)

O. Respighi
arr. M.K.M.

Soprano Recorder

Prelude

The musical score is arranged in four systems, each with four staves. The instruments are Soprano Recorder (top staff), Alto Recorder (second staff), Tenor Recorder (third staff), and Bass Recorder (bottom staff). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes measure numbers 4, 7, and 10. The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

THE CUCKOO from “The Carnival of the Animals” – Camille Saint-Saens 1835 - 1921

The first 5 steps may be difficult for non-music teachers, so they may be omitted in place of the following: Ask students if anyone can imitate the call of a cuckoo. Have the whole class echo.

1. Play some music of a moderate speed on the piano, or a moderate-tempo drum beat, occasionally interrupting it with a mi-doh motif. (Play as C-Ab if possible as this is the pitch used in the performance. Otherwise, just E-C is fine).
2. Ask the students do they recognise that sound – or, define it as the call of the Cuckoo.
3. Have the children walk on the beat to the music, but whenever they hear the cuckoo motif, make a shape, or put the hand behind the ear in a listening gesture.
4. Ask if the students can identify what sol-fa sounds, or hand-sign sounds made that special sound. Maybe sing and/or play some other sol-fa combinations, e.g., lah-so; doh-mi, etc. to see if they are the same as mi-doh. Lead the children to identify that the call is mi-doh.
5. If students are reading notation, ask a child to show where mi-do might be on a staff: both on neighbour lines, or both in neighbour spaces.
6. Explain that there is a cuckoo bird hiding in the recording to be heard. Students will walk very slowly on the beat, and whenever they hear the cuckoo calling, they are to stop with a hand behind the ear and listen.
7. Play the Saint-Saens.
8. After the piece finishes, sit down and discuss the experience, leading the children to discover that:
 - Sometimes the cuckoo’s calls are close together and sometimes they are far apart
 - The cuckoo call is being played by a clarinet
 - Ask: Since they are in the woods, what do they think the piano chords represent? (Trees?)
9. Teach the following song and game.

Marcelline Moody

Cuck-oo in the tree, Hid-ing far from me, If I'm ve-ry qui-et, will you sing for me?

Teacher: Who has the cuck-oo? *Child in the middle:* has the cuck-oo.

Xylophone played by unseen child

- a. Seat one child in the centre of the circle with eyes closed. Eyes are opened at the end as the teacher asks the question.
- b. Distribute four or five alto xylophones, or alto metallophones, or mi-do chime bars around the circle, or a mixture of these. Recorder could also be used. Appoint a bordun player on a bass, and appoint **one** of the other instruments to play the mi-do motif (the cuckoo call) in the appointed place.
- c. Encourage the child in the middle to sing alone answering the question "Who has the cuckoo?", but if he or she is too uncomfortable they can point, and then the whole class can sing who it is with him or her.
- d. The child in the middle becomes the new Bordun player on the Bass Xylophone, and another child is chosen to sit in the middle. Once the child in the middle has eyes closed, a new cuckoo player is chosen from the instruments around the circle.
- e. Since there will not be enough instruments for every child seated around the circle, children can move around the circle after every instrument has been played once.

THE SWAN

Camille Saint-Saens

From the Carnival of the Animals

- Play the recording and have students select from a word list (“**gliding**” should be one of the words) or a various selection of pictures what might describe the music.
- Then ask what **bird** this music might represent. Many birds would be appropriate, including an Eagle, or a Condor. If it is proving difficult, it might be mentioned that this is a water bird.
- Once the Swan has been identified, ask students to move to the music in as swan-like a movement as possible.
- Or, if this does not appeal to some (especially boys) ask students to perform some movement as **slowly** and **smoothly** as they can: e.g., playing a sport (tennis is a good one, or archery, or bowling), or writing their name in the air, eating supper, etc. etc.
- Discuss the shape (and form)of the melody:
 - Intro
 - Inverted rainbow,
 - Scale ascending
 - Inverted rainbow
 - Scale ascending
 - Inverted rainbow
 - Inverted rainbow
 - Inverted rainbow
 - Inverted rainbow
 - Original inverted rainbow
 - Original ascending scale
 - 4 descending scoops
 - 2 longer and slower scending scoops
 - Coda descending – (harp)
- Once it has been discussed, draw it on individual pieces of paper, on on a long sheet, different students taking responsibility for different parts as the teacher calls “next”.
 - Follow this “score” when it is finished and the piece is played again.
 - One group can follow other group’s score to see how each group approached the task.



- Watch a video of a ballerina performing the famous choreography.

THE AVIARY
From the Carnival of the Animals

Camille Saint-Saens

- Ask students if they know what an Aviary is. Ask what sounds they might expect to hear in the music and what instruments
- Play the recording and discuss what was heard:
 - tremolo strings sounding like ruffling feathers,
 - flute fluttering and flying
 - flute “pecking”
 - piano trilling which also sounds like fluttering
- Have a group of students draw a graphic representation of the piece on a long piece of paper, each student taking responsibility for a small section. Students can continue to embellish their drawing when the next student has taken over the drawing.
- Follow the “score” during a subsequent listening, and the scores of other groups.

HEDWIG'S THEME from Harry Potter

John Williams
b. 1932

This piece needs little introduction. The story concerns wizardry and magic, and the magic spells are spoken in an invented language.

Discuss what techniques of composition or instrumental playing describe an owl flying and lend a magic, other-worldly atmosphere to the music. *[Resonating glockenspiels and vibraphones; glissandi; tremolo; minor key;]*

0:40 ON CD

Alto recorder

Here is the first phrase transposed for soprano recorder.
The remainder becomes too difficult in terms of sharps and flats and register.

Alto recorder fingerings:

Don't forget pinky!

Above is the melody of the theme. Ask:

- How many times it is heard? *[three]*
- What instruments play it *[glockenspiel; French horn; trumpet;]*
- Is it complete every time? *[No – only half is played the third time (trumpet)]*
- What happens between the repetitions?

- What instruments play this new section?

THE DANCE OF THE COCKERELS from “Maskerade” - Carl Nielsen. 1865 - 1931

The Dance of the Cockerels comes from an Opera (a happy one for a change!) by Nielsen, called *Maskerade*. The action takes place largely at a Masquerade Ball, attended by people in masks, among them some dressed as cockerels.

- Ask students if they know what a cockerel is. [*A male chicken, not yet an adult rooster*]
 - How do chickens move? [*pecking, scratching, strutting, flapping, running, etc. etc.*]
 - Can students invent some chicken movements?

It is most effective if chicken and rooster hats, or masks, can be found for the children to wear. Or if they can make their own, either their own design, or from a template.

- Cockerels (and roosters) usually don't tolerate another male in the same territory.
 - What sort of movements would indicate this? (*No touching allowed!*)
- What sort of sounds might represent pecking, or scratching? What instruments?
 - Experiment with different vocal, body, found, and instrumental sounds.

If a string instrument can be found, pizzicato (plucking the string) can be illustrated.

- Play the recording up to about 1:07 and ask students to use their hands to imitate chickens when they think the music is imitating them.
(It is a good idea to do an exercise like this with eyes closed, so that the students are listening for themselves, and not checking up on each other)

Following are the themes heard in this robust and dramatic piece. They are not simple although I have put silly words with Theme C, C1, C2, C3 if you wish to use them to aid learning. Feel free to invent new ones with the students, and words for the other themes.

A good way of listening would be to provide twelve cards, with duplicates, as follows:

A – rooster

B – a different rooster

B1 – a hen

C – a different rooster

C1 – a different rooster, *or a Sun if the words below have been used.*

C2 – a different rooster

C3 – Group of hens – several children will need this card

Fanfare – picture of a trumpet

Bridge – one large

– one small

Accelerando – a sign for getting faster (someone running?)

Triangle – picture of a triangle

Timpani – picture of timpani

Explain the meaning of the cards, and put them on the board in the order of the structure of the piece (see below). Distribute copies of the cards among the class – some children will have duplicates, and as you point to the appropriate card on the board, the child or children who are holding that card will raise it. Or children will act out the part on the card that they are holding

Theme A



Theme B + B1

B1



Theme C + C1

C1

I am the mast-er of the yard. I am the mast-er of the yard. List-en to my

voice when I see the morn - ing sun _____ I will cock - a - doo - dle

doo to _____ wake ev - 'ry one be - cause it's morn - ing.

Theme C2



Cock-a-doo-dle, cock-a-doo-dle, cock-a-doo-dle

C3

See the sil - ly hens do as they're told be - fore the King

FORM

:00	A
:19	Fanfare
:20	A
:36	Fanfare
:38	B
:45	B1 <i>(pecking.....)Softer, then crescendo</i>
1:07	A - slightly extended
1:27	Fanfare
1:30	C
1:38	C1
1:44	C2
1:46	C3
1:56	C
2:03	C1 a bit longer
2:08	C2
2:11	C3
2:20	Long Bridge – made up of C2, fanfare and some pecking and swooping
2:38	C Canon
2:48	C
2:54	C1
3:03	C2
3:05	C3
3:11	Tiny Bridge ending in a Fanfare
3:21	A
3:33	New material and some of B
4:08	Accelerando
4:13	Triangle
4:21	Coda – Timpani! Neilsen loved the Timpani – uses it a lot in his symphonies

BALLET OF THE UNHATCHED CHICKS

from *Pictures at an Exhibition*

Modest Mussorgsky
1839 – 1881

- Discuss the movements that chicks in their shells might perform to break out.
- Write the suggested movement words on the board being sure to include the words “peck”, “kick”, “scratch” and “push”. Circle these four words.
- Perform movements on the floor for peck, kick, scratch, push.
- Write the following pattern on the board in words and in *graphic* notation (i.e. symbols) not notation at first.

[temple blocks]

Peck, peck, peck, peck peck, peck, peck, peck, peck,

[hand drum]

kick - ing, kick - ing, kick - ing, kick - ing, kick - ing, kick - ing, kick - ing, kick - ing.

[guiro]

Scratch, scratch, scratch, scratch, scratch, scratch, scratch, scratch, puuuuush... [cymbal or triangle]

- Say it in rhythm (*not too fast*)
- Perform it with body movements or Body Percussion.
- Choose four instruments to play each word’s pattern (e.g., Drum, Temple Blocks, Guiro, Triangle.) The piano could also be used creatively.
- Perform the movements with the instruments, following the graphic notation.
- Listen to the recording up to about 0:32 – end of the A section. The rhythm already performed will be discerned, but is played fast, and the whole sequence is **repeated**.
- Perform movement with the music up to the end of the A section.
- Without movement, listen to the music again and ask students to raise hands when they hear something different – *at about 0:33*. Identify this as the **B section**, and the previous music as the **A section**.
- Play the music through to the end. Have the students raise hands if they hear something familiar. What is it? [*At about 0:55 the first section returns.*] Identify this first and last section as the **A section**.

- Play again and ask if there is anything different about the repeat of the first section. [*a. The section is not repeated; b. Something else happens at the end.*]
- Identify this little ending as a **Coda**, or “tail piece”. Discuss whether this is the moment that the chick actually breaks out of the shell.
- Identify the form as A-A-B-A-Coda. Listen to the entire recording and ask students how many beats are in the B section (It is easier to count **half-note** beats, of which there are 32. If the quarter note beats are counted, as in “peck peck”, there are 64.)
- Use the B section for an “exercise period” where the students improvise movement to help release them from their shells for the 32 half-note beats and have them be aware of when they should begin the A section movement again (at about 0:55).
- Perform the whole piece with movement.
- Also, graphics can be used in place of the letters A&B to describe the form.
- At some point, if the students are reading notation, the graphic notation used at the beginning can be translated into traditional rhythm notation – ta, ti, ta-a-a-a (see above)

THE FIREBIRD SUITE – FINALE

Igor Stravinsky
1882 - 1971

1. OPTIONAL: If preferred, go straight to #5 and teach the whole melody by rote with the suggested words.

However, to discover how a composer creates a melody out of a narrow range of notes, use the following sequence:

1. If the students are familiar with the Sol-fa and hand signs, teach the first line above, with the hand signs, explaining to the students that this phrase is the bare bones of a famous melody that is actually a Russian Folk Song that Igor Stravinsky used for his Firebird Ballet.

- Be sure to make the hands descend as they perform the signs while the tune is being sung.

(If the students are not familiar with the sol-fa just sing the phrase to “lie” and lower the hands.)

- Accompany the singing with BP (Body Percussion) to keep the three beats: pat, clap, clap which will result in nine beats at first, but show that there are twelve in line 4.

2. Sing and/or play line 2 to discover the note/interval that has been added in the second bar. (G, and the interval is m-s as quarter notes).

- Have students raise hands **each time** in the following steps when something different is heard.

3. Sing and/or play line 3 to discover the change at the end (fa instead of re)

4. Sing and/or play line 4, still accompanying with pat, clap, clap, to discover that there is now another bar in which m-d-r is sung

5. Sing and/or play line 5, with or without words the first time to discover that the long “fa” in measure four is shorter and is followed by three new notes: m-r-f

6. OPTIONAL. Sing and/or play line 6 and discover that the first note has been divided in two.

7. Teach the suggested words if they haven’t already been sung.

8. Invent some fluid, stately movement, maybe starting with a soloist and adding more and more bodies. Bird masks would be a nice touch.

Students could be put into groups of about 6-8 to work on their own choreography following the guidelines given.

1.
s f m r d r

2.
s f m s r d r

3.
s f m s r d f

4.
s f m s r d f m d r

5.
Fire - bird full of ma - gic, Soar - ing through en - chant-ed skies.

5a.
s f m s r d f m r f m d r

The following is a structural description of the piece.

The numbers on the left are the number of appearances of the **entire** theme.

The numbers on the right are the number of appearances of **any** part of the theme.

1 & 2	French horn over very soft string tremolo	2
	Harp glissando	
3	Strings (flute joins at end)	3
4	Flute	4
	Last two measures only	5
5	String Orchestra	6
6	Full Orchestra; Brass playing melody	7

Bridge – String tremolo

TEMPO AND RHYTHM CHANGE:

7	Full Orchestra; Timpani on first beat; Trumpets on melody	8
8	Full Orchestra; Timpani on first beat; Trumpets on melody	9
	First two measures only; Higher; Timpani on first beat; Trumpets on melody	10
	First two measures only; Timpani on first beat; Trumpets on melody	11
9	Full Orchestra Brass on melody	12
	Last two measures only	13
	First two measures only Trumpets on melody	14

TEMPO CHANGE: The marking is “Maestoso”, which means “Majestically”

10	Full Orchestra	15
11	Full Orchestra	16
	Last two measures only; Trumpets on melody	17
	Last two measures only – slowing down	18
	Cymbal crash + String tremolo	
	Brass + String tremolo	19
	Crescendo on the last long note.	

You can see **Igor Stravinsky** himself conducting the last three movements of The Firebird on You Tube.

Another wonderful version of the piece is to be found on YouTube: Stravinsky: ***Suite from The Firebird/Los Angeles Philharmonic, Gustavo Dudamel***

I recommend showing this performance to the students. It highlights different instruments as they play, and it shows a conductor full of passion for his art.

Gustavo Dudamel is from Venezuela where he was a student in the *El Sistema* music programme set up originally for disadvantaged children by musician and activist, José Abreu. It is now publicly funded in Venezuela and has inspired similar programmes in more than 60 other countries.^[3] By 2015, according to official figures, El Sistema included more than 400 music centers and 700,000 young musicians. The original program in Venezuela involves four after-school hours of musical training and rehearsal each week, plus additional work on the weekends.^[1]

Speaking about El Sistema, Dudamel said, "I have made it my personal mission not to rest until music is truly a fundamental human right for everyone. El Sistema has endured through seven different governments in Venezuela. It is not about politics. It is about the shared belief that art must be a part of the fabric of society".

An El Sistema mantra is that music education is a human right, and it was, at Abreu's insistence, written into the Venezuelan constitution.

Maestro Abreu said something that was very important," Dudamel noted. "We are always achieving at a better level."