

Music Decoded

*United States Coast Guard Band School Concert- May, 2009
Teacher Packet*

Overview:

In this School Concert Program, the Coast Guard Band will teach students how to break music down into different elements. By learning how to “decode” the music, students will see how different aspects of music, such as melody, harmony, form, and instrumentation work together to give each piece of music its own unique sound.

Objectives:

- Introducing students to the concepts of melody, harmony, form, and instrumentation.
- Teaching students how to identify these elements while listening to music.
- Showing students how the sound of the music is affected when one, a few, or all of these elements are changed.
- Introducing the students to a wide variety of music.
- Challenging the students to use the knowledge they have learned to change how they listen to all types of music, from classical and jazz, to hip-hop and pop.

Pre-Concert Discussion Suggestions:

Class brainstorm ideas:

“What makes one song/piece sound different from another?”

“What is a melody? What are some well-known melodies?”

“What things are you thinking about/listening for when you perform/listen to music?”

Review with the class the different instruments in the band. Define “instrumentation” and discuss how music can sound different when performed by a different set of instruments: “How would a hip-hop/pop song sound if it was played by a concert band/brass band/clarinet quartet, etc. instead of the instruments it is usually played?”

Review with the class the terms “solo” and “concerto”

Discuss the concept of a round, or canon, and have the class sing a canon, like “Row, Row, Row Your Boat,” or “Frere Jacques (Are You Sleeping)”

Sing *America (My Country 'Tis of Thee)* as a class. Define “Theme and Variations”

Program:

United States National Anthem

**Tuba Concerto*

Edward Gregson

**Concerto for Marimba*

Ney Rosauo

MUC Adam Crowe, tuba

MU1 Christopher Smith, marimba

Various Dixieland Tunes

U.S. Coast Guard Dixieland Band

Sonata Octavi Toni

Giovanni Gabrieli

Fugue in G Minor

J.S. Bach

Coast Guard Band Clarinet Quartet

Variations on America

Charles Ives

The Stars and Stripes Forever

John Philip Sousa

March, Op. 99

Sergei Prokofiev

*Tuba Concerto to be performed on May 4, 8, 12, and 15

Marimba Concerto to be performed on May 5, 11, and 13

Post-Concert Discussion Suggestions:

Review the concept of melody, and how composers can change the melody to create different sounds.

- The melody can be changed through improvisation, as heard in the Dixieland Band
- The melody can be played by one person (Tuba/Marimba Concerti), by large groups alternating (*Sonata Octavi Toni*), by individuals alternating (Clarinet Quartet), or a combination (full Band pieces).
- The melody can change tempo (slow down/sped up), like in the Ives *Variations on America*.

- The underlying harmony can affect the sound of the melody (all pieces in the program)

Brainstorm how composers can use instrumentation to create different types of sounds.

- Which group was the loudest? Softest?
- Which instruments were the highest? Lowest?
- Which instruments were used in the Dixieland Band?
- How did the sound of the full Band sound different than the smaller groups?
- How did the sound of the different groups in the concert sound different than the music you listen to on the radio? How did it sound the same?

Review the concept of Theme and Variation; have students brainstorm different emotions a composer could try to express by changing the melody (happy, sad, scary, frantic, etc)

Helpful Definitions and Links:

Melody: (the tune) A succession of musical tones. It represents the linear or horizontal aspect of music

Harmony: The sounding of two or more tones simultaneously; the vertical aspect of music.

Instrumentation: The art of composing, orchestrating, or arranging for an instrumental ensemble. More simply, which group of instruments a piece is written for, and how the music is written for each of the instruments in that group.

Form: The design, or structure of a musical composition.

Solo: To perform alone or as the predominant part.

Concerto: A piece for a soloist and ensemble (such as a band or orchestra).

Canon (Round): The strictest form of imitation, in which two or more parts have the same melody but start at different points.

Theme and Variations: A statement of musical subject followed by restatements in different guises.

The above definitions can be found at:

<http://library.thinkquest.org/2791/MDOPNSCR.htm>

Music and lyrics to *Frere Jacques*:
<http://www.kididdles.com/lyrics/f010.html>

Information on the marimba:
<http://mallet-percussion.com/>

Information on Dixieland music:
<http://www.hypermusic.ca/jazz/dixie.html>

Music and lyrics to *America*:
<http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/lyrics/mycountry.htm>