

THE POWER OF A PROP!

Musicplay Live with Artie, Denise and JJ 2023
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Prop 'til you drop with these listening lessons your students will love. Child-appealing pieces by Tchaikovsky, Rossini, Sousa, Avicii, Bruno Mars and the Baha Men will be brought to life via movement, props, and manipulatives. These activities have all been thoroughly field-tested and are favorites of my students. Some of the lesson activators we'll use include Fish Sticks, Pop Toobs, cups, kickballs, plates and stick horses.

1. Who Let the Dogs Out (Baha Men) – Plastic Plate Routine

Source: Almeida

Focus: Steady Beat, Form, Non-Traditional Instruments

Materials:

- ♪ *Recording of Who Let the Dogs Out*
- ♪ *Downloadable Projectable Visual of Doggie Directions Page*
- ♪ *Two Doggie Plates per child: prepare plates by duplicating downloadable doggie clip art and taping onto 6-inch plastic plates. I suggest laminating the dog clip art before applying to the plates.*

Process:

1. Display the visual for Who Let the Dogs Out. Note: Although I go through this visual with the students, they will not be able to follow it during the performance. It is intended for you to project and use to call cues for the children.
2. Lead children through the form of the song, simply reading the large section names, while pointing.
3. Using two plates, demonstrate the movements for each section:
 - a. **Opening Refrain:** Clap the bottom of both plates together on each occurrence of Who? Who? Who? Who? Who? Who? with the first set being up above your head and to the students' right (your left), the second being up and to their left, the third being down and to their right and then use both plates to "shimmer up." This means to wave the plates quickly while moving them from low to high.
 - b. **Verse 1:** Perform four sets of: 4X-Tapping head with plates, then 4X-tapping shoulders with plates.
 - c. **Refrain:** (*this refrain is a FULL refrain, whereas the Opening Refrain was abbreviated*): Clap the bottom of both plates together on each phrase "Who? Who? Who? Who? Who?" with the first set being up above your head and to the down and to their right and the fourth being down and to their left. There will be no shimmer here, as there was in the Opening Refrain.
 - d. **Interlude (Short):** Floppy Ears: Hold plates on top of head like dog ears and wave up and down for 8 beats. Tail Wags: Hold plates behind your backside like a dog tail and "wag" back and forth for 16 beats. We are quite silly with the tail wagging music – swinging our tushies back and forth vigorously.
 - e. **Verse 2:** Perform four sets of: 4X-Clapping plates in front of body, then 4X clapping plates behind back.
 - f. **Repeat Refrain:** (see direction "c")

- g. **Interlude (Long):** (This interlude is longer than the one in direction “d”). Do 8 beats of Floppy Ears, 8 beats of Tail Wags, 8 Beats of Floppy Ears, 8 beats of Tail Wags. Next, rub the plate bottoms together for 4 beats, then howl like a doggie for 4 beats, “ba-roooo . . .” with a rising and falling pitch to the howl. We hold our plates like “doggie paws” during the howl.
- h. **Repeat Refrain:** (see direction “c”)
- i. **Repeat the Short Interlude:** (see direction “d” but with only 12 beats of Tail Wags)
- j. **Verse 3:** Perform 16 beats of The Sprinkler, first 8 in one direction, then 8 beats in the other direction. This involves holding one hand behind head and the other arm straight out. The straight arm moves from one side of the body to the other, vigorously showing the steady beat with a little pulsing motion – like a sprinkler spraying water across the lawn. This is followed by 16 beats of The Cabbage Patch. Demos of these moves are available on YouTube.
- k. **Repeat Refrain:** (see direction “c”)
- l. Fade the music out after this Refrain, unless you want to have a “Doggie Free-Style” dance event during the last 55 seconds of the piece, which is simply the Refrain repeating numerous times. In the performance I spared the parents 55 seconds of the refrain again and again, and simply faded the music while the “doggies” howled, waved paws and bowed to the audience.

EXTENSION:

This piece is loads of fun in a performance setting, especially when done in a circle around the audience. After doing this in music class, a number of my second graders wanted to perform this for their parents. At the PTA meeting it was a big hit, with lots of happy “dancing doggies” and their parents!

2. The Wellerman – A Kickball (or Basketball) Routine

Source: Almeida

Focus: Steady Beat, Form, Phrases, Non-Traditional Instruments

Materials:

- ♪ Recording of The Wellerman, performed by Nathan Evans
- ♪ Downloadable Projectable Visual of Kickball Routine
- ♪ Kickballs or Playground Balls for the instructor and each student.

Process:

Refer to the detailed Directions and the Form Visual of the piece, provided in the Projectable Visual.

3. El Capitan (Sousa) – A Plastic Cup Routine

Source: Publication: Parachutes, Ribbons and Scarves, Oh My by Almeida

Focus: Steady Beat, Form, Phrases, Non-Traditional Insts (Plastic cups – preferably Red, White & Blue)

Materials Prep:

- ♪ Recording of El Capitan
- ♪ Downloadable Projectable Visual of the Cup Routine
- ♪ A pair of plastic Solo-type cups for the instructor and each student. Be sure to purchase extra cups in case of breakage. They are available at party stores and big box stores.

Process:

Refer to the detailed Directions and the Form Visual of the piece, provided in the Projectable Visual.

4. Count on Me (Bruno Mars) – A Pop Toob Rhythm Score Experience

Source: Almeida

Focus: Steady Beat, Note Values, Form, Non-Traditional Instruments

Materials:

- ♪ Recording of Count on Me
- ♪ Downloadable Projectable Visual of Pop Toob Note Value Score
- ♪ A Pop Toob and drumstick for the instructor and each student. The pop toobs are placed on a horizontally held drumstick and played by pulling back and forth with one hand to produce the notes of various lengths. (Buy extra pop toobs in case of breakage.)

Process:

Refer to Form Visual of the piece, provided in the Projectable Visual. Lead the students in some rhythm pattern warm-ups before analyzing score and performing the piece.

5. *Trepak* from *The Nutcracker* (Tchaikovsky) “Fish Sticks”

Source: This delightful activity was shared with me by a dear friend and colleague, Suzette Swallow. She graciously allows me to share it with you and your students. It works well in the classroom and is a “Smash Hit” onstage in a concert performance for the families.

Focus: Rondo Form

Materials:

- ♪ Decorate a large length of butcher paper for the “ocean” and use large clip art sea creatures on rulers for the A Section “actors.”
- ♪ I feature one or two students wearing shark hats for the B Section (while fish hide), although I have also used an inflatable shark toy mounted on a dowel.

Process: Divide the class in half, with one group dramatizing the sea creatures and the other group being the audience. Then trade jobs to give all students a chance to perform. Students kneel behind the ocean and use the fish sticks to match the A Section melody of *Trepak*. The fish leap up out of the water on each of the two strongly accented notes at the beginning. Then they wave to the beat for four beats in one direction, then four in another. The shark(s) prowl the waters on the B Section, while fish hide behind the paper ocean, then fish & sharks both join forces for the exciting coda! In a holiday performance setting (the parents go *WILD* for this piece!) consider presenting the piece under blacklight! Use black paper for the ocean and paint your sea tableau with florescent paint. Consider large “fish sticks” (18” X 24”) on poster board and painted in florescent colors to maximize the blacklight experience.

6. A “Giddy-Up” Experience - Shoe a Little Horse

Source: Almeida

Focus: Steady Beat, AB Form, Tempo, Coda, Fermata

The A Section of the song is the simple Shoe a Little Horse melody, and the B section is the well-known melody to the main theme of *The William Tell Overture*. See notation in the projectable.

Materials:

- ♪ Teacher Leader instrument: Temple Blocks or Tick-Tock Block.
- ♪ Student Instruments: ½ class - Rhythm Sticks or Woodblocks, etc., other ½ of class – Maracas or other shakers.
- ♪ A Stick Horse for every child, or a half-class set, with children taking turns to ride.

Process:

1. Begin the lesson with some equine questioning for the kiddos:
 - a. Any horse facts they may know
 - b. Who has ridden a horse before?
 - c. Tell your neighbor a name that you would give your horse if you had one.
2. I use the syllables “Da da dunt, da da dunt, da da dunt, dunt, dunt!” for the B Section galloping music. It looks ridiculous here in print, but it seems to be the universal pronunciation for horse galloping sounds. ☺
3. Ask children to listen to the song you are about to sing for them, Shoe a Little Horse, and decide how many large parts it had: one, two or three. The children will certainly answer with “two.”
4. Sing the song again for them to confirm that the right answer is two, being sure to pause a bit at the fermata over the rest.
5. Put the alphabet letters “AB” on the board and lead the children to the understanding that this letter combination represents a song that has two large parts, and they are different. Musicians call this “AB Form.”
6. Move on to discuss the differences between the two sections, with tempo being the most frequently offered answer. “Which section was faster . . . the A or B section?”

7. Draw attention to the short, accented sounds of the words “bare, bare, bare!” Sing the A Section again to focus on those accented words.
8. Direct students to sing the entire song: adding alternating lap pats to the moderate tempo of the A section and doing crazy-quick rolls on their laps for the B section.
9. My students’ favorite motions for this were always the universal two-handed action that is best described as “swipe hands together, then pat one leg, then the other very quickly.” Giggle time, for sure! (This hard-to-explain motion matches the galloping horse lyrics: Da-da-dunt.) ☺
10. Divide children into two groups: (1) Horse Riders (2) Shaker Players. The horse riders adopt a horse from the barn and make a circle in the room. The percussion section gets a shaker and a pair of rhythm sticks and sits off to one side of the room.
11. Percussion parts are as follows. **A Section:** Sticks or Woodblocks to the steady beat, **B Section:** Maracas or Shakers playing continuous rolled sounds until the song ends.
12. **CODA:** Draw students’ attention to the glissando lines and fermata in the Coda. Demonstrate the “Whoa, horsey!” part for them, emphasizing the rise and fall of the voice. Practice this a few times, until it sounds accurate and enthusiastic!
13. Have the groups change jobs so each child got to ride a horse and play an instrument while experiencing some *Tempo Fun!*

7. Finale to The William Tell Overture (Rossini) – A Giddy-Up Experience

Source: Almeida

Focus: Steady Beat, Form, Coda

Listen to the piece many times before you teach it, to be secure in your cues for the kiddos! ☺

Materials:

- ♪ *Recording of Finale to the William Tell Overture*
- ♪ *A stick horse for each child, or divide the class in half with one half riding horses & the other playing non-pitched percussion to the beat*

Process:

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR FULL STICK HORSE DIRECTIONS.

William Tell – Stick Horses

FORM: Introduction -ABACDCBA-Coda

Introduction:

Pawing ground, smoothing mane, flexing muscles, “Neigh . . .”

A Section (0:14):

Trotting to right around circle, heads up high on measure 4, then turn.
Trot to left four measures.

B Section (0:26):

Step into circle 4 beats, look at all your horsie friends.
Step back out of circle 4 beats, look at your rider.

Repeat A Section (:45)

C Section (:58):

(Staying in place in the circle.) Leap on accented notes. Kick up heels while turning in place (“Silly Circles”)

D Section (1:10):

Eat snacks from rider’s pocket, then drink water. 8 beats each, 4 times.

Repeat C Section (1:32)

Repeat B Section (1:45)

Repeat A Section (2:03))

Coda (2:15):

- Leap over fence. Free riding throughout room.
- “Uh-oh! Did I hear a coyote??”
- On 4 big notes, raise horse heads and check N/E/S/W.
- “No coyotes! . . . Neigh (Yay!) . . .”
- Free gallop around room.
- Repeat N/E/S/W, then spin in a circle, kicking up heels.
- “No coyotes! . . . Neigh . . . Yay! . . .”
- Bounce in place
- Free gallop, but beginning to tire.
- Yawns, stretches, sink down to sleep. Snore . . .