



Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra

BRITTEN *Playful Pizzicato*

from *Simple Symphony*, Op. 4

Teacher Resource Booklet

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ABOUT THE MUSIC

Simple Symphony – Playful Pizzicato – Britten (1913-1976)

Benjamin Britten was an English composer who is regarded as one of the most significant British composers ever. He was also a fine pianist, and created the Aldeburgh Festival which is still held every year. This Symphony is based on music that he actually wrote as a child when he was 9 -12 years old.

TEACHING IDEAS

MUSICAL FORM

LEARNING INTENTIONS

Students will:

- Understand the structure of this piece of music;
- Learn the terms “Binary”, “Ternary” and “Coda”;
- Identify similarities and differences between sections;
- Describe the music in movement and words

* * = Assessment opportunities

GENERAL INFORMATION

Form in music can be defined as the design or the structure of a composition i.e. how the composition's parts are put together to make a whole piece. The different sections of a piece are usually assigned a letter from the alphabet A B etc.

Binary = AB (or AABB)

Ternary = ABA

Rondo = ABACADAE etc.

Song (Strophic) = Verse, Chorus, Verse, Chorus

Theme and variation = A A1 A2 A3 etc.

Useful resources:

What is musical form? Meet the Deli Dudes.

<http://musicaldeli.iheartteachingmusic.com/students/whatisform.html>

Common types of form are illustrated clearly at this site:

<http://musicaldeli.iheartteachingmusic.com/students/commonforms.html>

A fantastic visual resource for form is available as a free download from <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Form-Letters-Visual-Aids-to-teach-Patterns-1558954>
The author is David Row (Make Moments Matter)

Here's the opening melody. Try it with just one part to start with, being careful about the rests. Older children may be able to cope with the two overlapping parts.

Critical thinking questions/prompts for form:

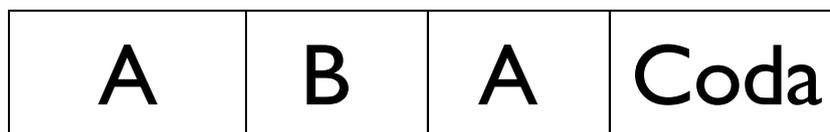
- Raise your hand when you hear something different. How does the music change?
- Have you heard this music before? If so, what does it sound like?
- This music is similar, but what's different or what's new?
- What instruments are playing? How can that help us to decide how to move to the music?
- What about the music makes you think that we should move this way?
- What are some actions you can think of that would match this music?
- How can you change the action to make it fit better?
- If we called the last section A, what do you think we should call this section?
- We're at a new section of music. Is it similar to something you've heard? Is it new?
- How many parts are there in the piece?
- What's different about each section?
- How do you know that you can hear section A?
- What contrasts do you notice?
- What repetition has been used?

LISTEN FOR THE FORM

** Listen to a recording of the piece and ask the students to describe what they notice.

- What instruments are playing?
- How are they being played?
- Is the music all the same?
- How does the music change?
- How many parts are there?
- Raise your hand when you hear something different.

The form for the *Playful Pizzicato* is:



LEARN THE PATTERNS

This is the overlapping rhythm of the A section. Words have been added to help students to memorise it.

Try it with just the top line first. Once that is secure, divide the class into 2 groups to each other as indicated.

It could also be a pairs activity.

Presto

The vi-o-lin's play-ing a song. Per-haps we can all play a - long.

The vi-o-lin's play-ing a song. Per-haps we can all play a - long.

This is the melodic version, in case you want students to sing or play it.

Presto

The vi-o-lin's play-ing a song. Per-haps we can all play a - long.

The vi-o-lin's play-ing a song. Per-haps we can all play a - long.

This is rhythm of the B section (or Trio).

Molto pesante

Left, right, left, right! Lis - ten and you'll soon feel the beat.

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Left, right, left, right! That's how it goes; it's real - ly neat!

It has a completely different feel. Have your students listen carefully and notice what has changed to make this a quite clear section.

Playful Pizzicato is very fast, but students could have a go at playing with an audio clip to see if they can keep up!

MOVE TO THE MUSIC

- Free creative movement for children: how does this music make you feel like dancing or moving? (Children listen to music and move freely around room without contact with each other or talking.)
- Afterwards discuss was the music fast, slow, loud soft, exciting, sad, bouncy, peaceful, happy, restful? What did it make you think of?
- As a class choose one action for the A section e. g clicking fingers on alternating hands, and a different action for the B section e. g patsching thighs. Try to listen for the change in the music and respond with the matching action. Add something for the Coda eg tapping your nose.
- Do the same process as above but with whole body movements around the room.
- Work with a partner on the overlapping rhythm pattern and perform the rhythm with a different sound or action each. (e.g. one person clap the other patsch).

CREATE YOUR OWN PATTERNS

Composing 1

- Compose an overlapping rhythmic pattern with a partner. Perform your composition for the class.

Composing 2

Compose a piece that has two sections (binary form) A B. Each section should be at least four bars long. What musical elements are you going to use to show the change between section A and B so that the audience can clearly hear the two parts? Pitch, rhythm, timbre, dynamics? Are you going to use body percussion, untuned or tuned percussion instruments?

This activity could be extended to include movement also. Students could work in small groups with tasks divided so, for example, 2 students play the music and another performs a dance to match the A and B sections.

TIMBRE ACTIVITIES

LEARNING INTENTIONS

Students will:

- Listen carefully and identify the instruments being played:
- Understand the playing technique used;
- Learn the term “pizzicato”;
- Make a simple stringed instrument;
- Recognise some differences in sound between the instruments made, and what causes the differences.

LISTEN TO PLAYFUL PIZZICATO

Prepare to listen to Britten Simple Symphony Op 4 (2nd Movt), *Playful Pizzicato*. Ask students to listen out for which orchestral families they can hear in the piece.

** After listening, ask students what they heard. (*Only the string family play this piece.*)

Ask students to listen again to some of the piece and focus their listening on the style of the notes being played.

** Ask students what they heard. (*The notes are all played pizzicato*).

** Ask students how they think string instruments make that sound. (*Plucking the strings with their fingers*).

** Ask students how string players create long smooth sounds on their instrument. (*They use a bow to slide across the strings*).

How it's done: <https://youtu.be/LU4fexkx2D8> This pizzicato clip is a recording of "Playful Pizzicato".

PLAY PLAYFUL PIZZICATO ON YOUR OWN INSTRUMENT

Explain to students that they are going to make an instrument that can also play "pizzicato" like the orchestral string instruments.

Watch a You Tube clip of *Playful Pizzicato* so students can see how to play in this manner:

<https://youtu.be/LU4fexkx2D8>

Brainstorm with students what materials they would need to create a string instrument.

Students will need a small wooden or cardboard box or plastic tub with an open side. Rubber bands and/or string or wool will be needed to stretch across the box. To secure the rubber bands or string apply tape to the back of the instrument where the "strings" sit.

Ask students to apply at least 2 rubber bands or pieces of string so they can also play a pizzicato chord on their instrument.

** When the instruments have been made, experiment with plucking a single string and multiple strings to make a chord.

** Students can play their string instrument along with the recording of Britten Simple Symphony Op 4 (2nd Movt), *Playful Pizzicato*.

To develop the activity further students could be grouped with created instruments of either similar pitch or box material playing together.

** Each student could play their instrument to the class, and the class could help decide if it is a high-pitched instrument or low-pitched instrument, rather like the violin and a cello in a string orchestra.

** Each group could play along to the music one at a time to hear the different pitches or timbral sounds created by the various materials used to make the instruments.

ASSESSMENT

Successful completion of any of the activities in this pack will offer evidence against one or more of these outcomes, at the appropriate level for your students:

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL CURRICULUM FOR MUSIC, Version 8.1 (sourced 25/01/2017)		
F-2	3-4	5-6
<p>ACAMUM080 Develop aural skills by exploring and imitating sounds, pitch and rhythm patterns using voice, movement and body percussion</p>	<p>ACAMUM084 Develop aural skills by exploring, imitating and recognising elements of music including dynamics, pitch and rhythm patterns</p>	<p>ACAMUM088 Explore dynamics and expression, using aural skills to identify and perform rhythm and pitch patterns</p>
<p>ACAMUM081 Sing and play instruments to improvise and practise a repertoire of chants, songs and rhymes, including songs used by cultural groups in the community</p>	<p>ACAMUM085 Practise singing, playing instruments and improvising music, using elements of music, including rhythm, pitch, dynamics and form in a range of pieces, including music from the local community</p>	<p>ACAMUM089 Develop technical and expressive skills in singing, playing instruments with understanding of rhythms, pitch and form in a range of pieces, including music from the local community</p>
<p>ACAMUM082 Create compositions and perform music to communicate ideas to an audience</p>	<p>ACAMUM086 Create, perform and record compositions by selecting and organising sounds, silences, tempo and volume</p>	<p>ACAMUM090 Rehearse and perform music including music they have composed by improvising, sourcing and arranging ideas and making decisions to engage an audience</p>