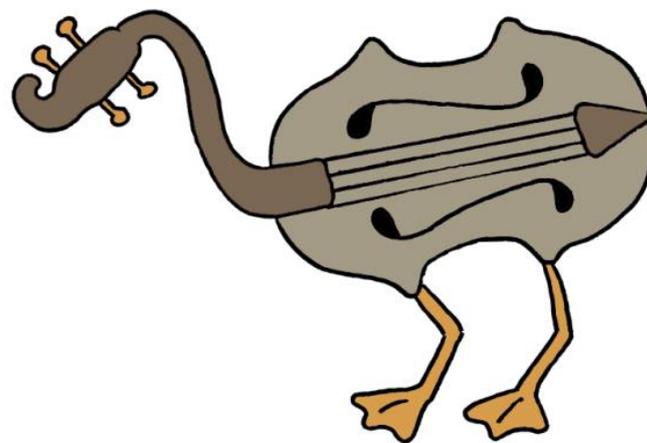




Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra

Gordon Hamilton

The Ugly Sound



Teacher Resource Booklet

Prepared by Dianne O'Toole

Image by Bradley Trevor Greive



<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/au/>

©2019 Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra

Contents

BACKGROUND	1
TEACHING IDEAS	2
1 WORDS, WORDS, WORDS.....	2
LEARNING INTENTIONS AND OUTCOMES.....	2
ACTIVITIES.....	2
2 TEN-SECOND GRABS.....	5
LEARNING INTENTIONS AND OUTCOMES.....	5
ACTIVITIES.....	5
3 SMOOTH AND CRUNCHY.....	7
LEARNING INTENTIONS AND OUTCOMES.....	7
ACTIVITIES.....	7
4 THAT'S SPECIAL!.....	9
LEARNING INTENTIONS AND OUTCOMES.....	9
POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES.....	9
APPENDIX	10
THE UGLY SOUND script with orchestra cues.....	10

BACKGROUND

This 2016 piece by Gordon Hamilton and co-author Tali Kellam-Pearson explores Wellbeing themes of social exclusion and bullying. It is a musical parallel to Hans Christian Anderson's story of *The Ugly Duckling*.

The work was commissioned for performance by the Mini-TSO education ensemble and recorded in 2018 by the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, with narration by Bryony Geeves.

Gordon Hamilton is an Australian composer and conductor. He was born in 1982, and has worked in many parts of the world. He currently lives in Brisbane, where he is Artistic Director of The Australian Voices.

TEACHING IDEAS

I WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

The story was written to be interspersed with musical interludes. Reference to these, and audience interaction, has been deleted in order for the story to stand alone.

NB The complete script with orchestral cues, is included as an Appendix.

There are a number of musical terms built into the narration. This activity is focused on ensuring that these will be understood by the children. They are identified in ***bold italics***. Each word or phrase has a particular musical meaning that needs to be part of the children's prior learning in order for them to understand ***The Ugly Sound***.

LEARNING INTENTIONS AND OUTCOMES

Through work in this activity, students will:

- Develop their vocabulary and understanding of musical words;
- Listen attentively to the work of others;
- Compare their ideas with those of others.

Work in this activity will provide opportunities for assessment of these curriculum outcomes:

- English – Language and Literacy Strands
- Health and Physical Education – Personal, Social and Community Health Strand
- Music – Listening and Responding Strand

ACTIVITIES

- Introduce any of these words that may be unfamiliar, and provide experiences of what each of them means in music:

Lullaby (and discuss what might be meant by “Lop-sided Lullaby”)

Accelerating

Arpeggio

Composer

Committee (and discuss what music composed by a committee might sound like)

Pitch

Melody

Dissonance

Tension and release

Drone

Rhythm

Ostinato

- Read the story to the children.

THE UGLY SOUND

Text by Gordon Hamilton and Tali Kellam-Pearson

Once upon a time in the village of Fermata-cantata-tinned-tomata, there were lots of young sounds.

The young sounds all had fun showing each other their special noises.

There was a bright, sparkly one. There was a fast, jumpy one. There was a low fluttery sound, and one that smelled a bit funny. One sound was tough and sometimes bullied the other sounds.

One day, a new little sound came to Fermata-cantata-tinned-tomata. It was amazed by all the noises and how they could all sound so good together. It wanted to join in. So it made its special noise really loud, but it really didn't fit in. The other little sounds all laughed.

"You're the ugliest sound I've ever heard," said the bully. "No-one will ever want to listen to you!"

And he laughed and laughed.

The Little Sound felt embarrassed, so it ran away as fast as it could.

It ran past a **Lopsided Lullaby**. It ran past an **Accelerating Arpeggio**, and past a **Committee of Composers**.

The Little Sound didn't stop running until it found a cave, and went inside to hide where no one would ever have to listen to it again. And it cried.

"Why am I so ugly?" asked the Little Sound. "All I want to be is a nice sound." It let out a big sob.

Wait! What was that?

The Little Sound was echoing in the cave! It was the first time it had really heard itself. The Little Sound could hear that it was made up of five different **itches**.

The Little Sound wondered what would happen if it made its notes one by one. It tried the first note.

Well, that didn't sound very ugly, did it? It tried the next note.

That wasn't so bad either. The Little Sound was feeling brave. It tried the other three notes all at once.

"Maybe I'm not so ugly after all," wondered the Little Sound. It was excited to see what else it could do.

The Little Sound turned its five notes into a **melody!**

Just for fun, it made a biting **dissonance**.

The Little Sound realised it could use dissonance to make **tension and release**.

The Little Sound tried playing its new song in different ways: it made one note very low – a **drone**.

The Little Sound could do lots of things! It could even make a **rhythm** that repeats. The rhythm became an **ostinato!**

The Little Sound was feeling braver, so it crept out of the cave and into the sunshine, and started walking home, singing its new song.

The Little Sound walked past the Committee of Composers, past the Accelerating Arpeggio and past the Lop-sided Lullaby.

As the Little Sound arrived back on Fermata-cantata-tinned-tomata, all the other sounds were still playing.

But when they heard the Little Sound's new song they suddenly stopped in amazement!

How had the Ugly Sound become so beautiful? They were eager to join in. First the sparkly one, then the jumpy one. Then the fluttery one, and the one with the weird smell. Even the bully felt a bit guilty and said sorry.

"That's OK," said the Little Sound. "Come and join in with all of us."

- Explain that Gordon Hamilton has written music to illustrate the story in sound rather than pictures.
- Ask children for their ideas about the kinds of sounds at the various points in the story.
- Read the story again and include the children's ideas for appropriate sounds.
- Listen to the work and then discuss how was what similar and different between their ideas and Hamilton's choices.

NB The orchestral score is available on the website for you to check the instrumentation used. For excellent pictures of orchestral instruments, go to the TSO Education website, click Online Resources, then *What is a Symphony Orchestra*. <https://www.tso.com.au/what-is-a-symphony-orchestra/> The pictures are in the PDF booklet, free to download. For video clips of each instrument alone, followed by the same snippet played by the orchestra, go to the same site and scroll down to click on the instruments.

2 TEN-SECOND GRABS

There are lots of examples of very short, descriptive sounds in this work; many last only a second or two. You can find them easily in the score, where the narration is included, and then in the audio file.

LEARNING INTENTIONS AND OUTCOMES

Through work in this activity, students will:

- Develop their vocabulary and understanding of musical words;
- Listen attentively to the work of others;
- Compare their ideas with those of others.

Work in this activity will provide opportunities for assessment of these curriculum outcomes:

- English – Language and Literacy Strands
- Health and Physical Education – Personal, Social and Community Health Strand
- Music – all strands

ACTIVITIES

PREPARATION

- Assemble whatever pitched instruments you can; mallet percussion, guitars, ukuleles, keyboards, recorders, anything on which it's easy to play a few notes.
- Ensure students are familiar with the sound of each.
- Prepare a list of descriptive words that could apply to musical phrases. Some examples: happy, energetic, weary, sobbing, nasty, friendly, smooth, gentle, jumpy, jangly, sparkly, dark, spooky, sleepy, aggressive, raucous, fluttery, flowing

WHOLE-CLASS ACTIVITY

How long is 10 seconds? Trial ways of measuring when this amount of time passes – the second hand of a clock, the seconds counter on a watch or digital device, a metronome set at 60 pm (so 6 clicks), counting aloud, counting “in your head”; stand when you reach 10 seconds.

Each student is given a word from the list.

In turn, they have a TOTAL of 20 seconds to choose an instrument and create a short pattern to fit the word. The pattern must last no longer than 10 seconds.

When all have had a turn, discuss and comment on the exercise, covering things such as:

- Did the time limit make the task harder or easier?
- What was most challenging: choosing an instrument or creating the pattern?
- If you had another turn, would you make the same choices?
- Were there patterns and sounds that you thought worked particularly well? Which, and why?

GROUP ACTIVITY

Divide students into groups of 3-4, and allocate instruments, one per student.

Explain the task. The groups will have 5 minutes to complete it.

- each student in the group will choose a different word, and create a very short pattern that suits it;
- memorise the pattern;
- the patterns must then be combined into a group piece, in which each person must play at least once. Every time an individual plays, their pattern must be the same. They can play separately, together, or a mixture of these;
- make a graphic score of the work, ensuring that it shows which instruments are playing when and for how long;
- the group piece must last no longer than 30 seconds.

Expand the list of words if students have further ideas.

Discuss strategies: direct the discussion towards recommending that the group listen to each person's pattern before deciding the structure of the piece, that they write down the playing order, and try it out then make any changes they think would improve it.

Allow 1 minute of group discussion time, in which the group decides whether they will use similar or contrasting words, bearing in mind that they already know which instruments they have, and agree on which student will have which word.

Start the timer – they have 5 minutes!

Share the work, recording and playing it back if possible. Ask for feedback, including from the group members themselves.

Refine the work.

Make any changes they think would improve it.

Once the group is happy with the sound of their work, remind them to alter their graphic score. They could include the descriptive words the work is based on, and playing hints such as dynamics.

Give the piece a name and a story.

Share the refined work, including the title, descriptive words and the story the group devise.

3 SMOOTH AND CRUNCHY

LEARNING INTENTIONS AND OUTCOMES

Through work in this activity, students will:

- Develop their vocabulary and understanding of musical words;
- Listen attentively to the work of others;
- Compare their ideas with those of others.

Work in this activity will provide opportunities for assessment of these curriculum outcomes:

- English – Language and Literacy Strands
- Health and Physical Education – Personal, Social and Community Health Strand
- Music – all strands

ACTIVITIES

LISTEN AND PLAY

Play the students a series of 3rds (major / minor, doesn't matter), 5ths, octaves and then triads.

Then add intervening notes to form clusters.

Which are “smooth” and which “crunchy” ie to our ‘conditioned’ ears, which sound jangly?

Allow the students to experiment with tuned instruments on which they know the names of the notes. They may need to be in pairs or small groups, depending on available instruments and prior learning.

Lead them to discover what makes the “crunch” – notes next to each other alphabetically.

Introduce the terms **dissonance** and **tension and release**. Cross-reference Activity 1 (Words, Words, Words).

NOTHING WRONG WITH CRUNCHY BUT ...

The “crunch” adds interest, but too much of it can be a bit overpowering, while no crunch at all can be a bit boring. A mixture of both is great!

To turn crunchy into smooth, move the “crunch” note either up or down 1 letter name.

To turn smooth into crunchy, fill in the “gap” alphabetically.

CRUNCHY IN THE MIDDLE

Here is a version of **Twinkle Twinkle**, with a very smooth start and finish.

Invite students to improvise (or compose) a harmony part for the middle 4 bars which is crunchy.

(NB You'll need to substitute Bb bars).

Crunchy in the Middle

MAKE IT A MELODY

The 'new little sound' is comprised of a major triad with an added 2nd and minor 6th (A, C#, E, + B, F). These notes are then used to make a melody. You can hear it happening at 2'59" (chord, bar 63) then 2 single notes at 3'13" (bar 73) and 3'20" (bar 75), and the triad at 3'29" (bar 77). The initial 2-bar melody begins at 3'39" (bars 81-2) and is then elaborated from 3'55" (beginning bar 84).

♩ = 90

Transpose this for classroom percussion; the best option is C, E, G, plus D and F#.

Ask students to use these notes to create a melody, short enough to remember, so the work can be shared. They can use any note as often as they choose, in any order, in any octave, but should use all 5 notes. You could give them a rhythm pattern to work with, or ask them to write one, or just go free-form! Set whatever parameters would make the task achievable for your students.

4 THAT'S SPECIAL!

Ideas in this section would fit into a unit of work with a focus on anti-bullying, valuing diversity, tolerance and empathy, building self-esteem and self-knowledge; wherever there's a major thrust on the importance of getting to know people and situations that are initially unfamiliar rather than reacting without thought.

LEARNING INTENTIONS AND OUTCOMES

These will change with the chosen focus and activities selected, but would provide opportunities for assessment of these curriculum outcomes:

- English – Language and Literacy Strands
- Health and Physical Education – Personal, Social and Community Health Strand
- Arts – Making and Responding Strands

POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES

Work in a number of curriculum areas is possible.

Language and arts activities could include:

- Role play in various ways – interviews, enactment and/or mime of experiences;
- Creating a video documentary that includes research and commentary as well as role play activities;
- Classroom debate;
- Creative and transactional writing;
- Visual art work;
- Classroom guests, to share experiences / cultural practices.

All of these should be assessable also against Health and Physical Education outcomes.

Possible points for discussion:

- Why were the other sounds so mean to the new little sound?
- Did the little sound do the best thing by running away to be on its own?
- What happened to make the little sound feel braver?
- How did the new little sound become part of the group?
- Are there other things it could have done?
- Read the story of *The Ugly Duckling* as well as *The Ugly Sound*. What do they have in common?
- The new little sound discovered its special sound, which everybody loved. The duckling became a swan and everybody thought it was beautiful. Is it true that everyone has something special about them? What things can you think of that make you special, and other people around you?
- What can we learn from these stories?

APPENDIX

THE UGLY SOUND script with orchestra cues

THE UGLY SOUND / for orchestra and narrator

Text by Gordon Hamilton and Tali Kellam-Pearson

Music by Gordon Hamilton

NAR. Once upon a time in the village of Fermata-cantata-tinned-tomata, there were lots of young sounds. ORCH. [*a texture of sounds*]

NAR. The young sounds all had fun showing each other their special noises. ORCH. [*accent*]

NAR. There was a bright, sparkly one... [*sparkle*] There was a fast, jumpy one... [*jumpy*] There was a low fluttery sound ... [*low fluttery*] and one that smelled a bit funny [*tuba*]. One sound was tough and sometimes bullied the other sounds [*nasty brass*].

ORCH. [*all sounds recombine in the texture*]

NAR. One day, a new little sound came to Fermata-cantata-tinned-tomata. It was amazed by all the noises and how they could all sound so good together. It wanted to join in. So it made its special noise really loud...

ORCH. [*SOUND. Everything stops*]

NAR. ...but it didn't really fit in. The other little sounds all laughed. ORCH. [*laughter*]

NAR. "You're the ugliest sound I've ever heard," said the bully. "No one will ever want to listen to you!" ORCH. [*bass drum*]

NAR. And he laughed and laughed.

ORCH. [*brass mean laugh!*].

NAR. The Little Sound felt embarrassed...

ORCH. [*sad SOUND.*]

NAR. ...so it ran away as fast as it could

go. ORCH. [*footsteps*]

NAR. It ran past a Lopsided

Lullaby. ORCH. [*wonky lullaby*]

NAR. It ran past an Accelerating

Arpeggio... ORCH. [*augmented arpeggio*]

NAR. ...and past a Committee of

Composers. ORCH. [*random drivel...*]

NAR. The Little Sound didn't stop running until it found a

cave... ORCH. [*pizzicato arrival*]

NAR. ...and went inside to hide where no one would ever have to listen to it again. And it

cried. ORCH. [*sad SOUND*]

NAR. "Why am I so ugly?" asked the little sound. All I want is to be a nice sound. It let out a big

sob. ORCH. [*sound. Echo. Echo.*]

NAR. Wait! What was

that? ORCH. [*sound.*

Echo. Echo.]

NAR. The Little Sound was echoing in the cave! It was the first time it had really heard itself. The Little

Sound could hear that it was made up of five different

itches. ORCH. [*5 notes*]

NAR. The Little Sound wondered what would happen if it made its notes one by one. It tried the first note.

ORCH: [*note*]

NAR. Well, that didn't sound very ugly did it? It tried the next

note. ORCH. *[note]*

NAR. That wasn't so bad either. The Little Sound was feeling brave. It tried the other three notes all at once.

ORCH. *[chord]*

NAR. "Maybe I'm not so ugly after all," wondered the Little Sound. It was excited to see what else it could do.

ORCH. *[melody]*

NAR. Do you hear that? The Little Sound turned its five notes into a

melody! ORCH. *[melody blooms]*

NAR. I wonder if the Little Sound can do anything else? Just for fun it made a biting

dissonance. ORCH. *[semitone]*.

NAR. Hear how it clashes? The Little Sound realised it could use dissonance to make tension and release. Boys and girls, can you squeeze your hands when you hear the dissonance?

ORCH. *[repeat dissonance / resolution; narrator and conductor demonstrate clenched fists]*

NAR. The Little Sound tried playing its new song in different ways: it made one note very low – a

drone. ORCH. *[drone]*

NAR. The Little Sound could do lots of things! It could even make a

rhythm... ORCH. *[motif]*

NAR. ...that

repeats. ORCH.

[motif x 3]

NAR. The rhythm became an ostinato! Boys and girls can you tap the ostinato rhythm on your knees?
[kids join in]

NAR. Very good.

ORCH. [*happier chords*]

NAR. The Little Sound was feeling braver, so it crept out of the cave and into the sunshine.

ORCH. [*sunshine + birds*]

NAR. ...and started walking home singing its new

song. ORCH. [*drone + ostinato + melody*]

NAR. The Little Sound walked past the Committee of Composers [*sonic chaos*], past the Accelerating Arpeggio [*fast arpeggio*] and past the Lop-sided Lullaby [*lullaby*].

NAR. As the Little Sound arrived back in Fermata-cantata-tinned-tomata, all the other sounds were still playing.

ORCH. [*texture / then melody*]

NAR. But when they heard the Little Sound's new song they suddenly stopped in amazement!

ORCH. [*more melody*]

NAR. How had the Ugly Sound become so beautiful? They were eager to join in. First the sparkly one... [*sparkle*] Then the jumpy one... [*jumpy*] Then the fluttery sound. ... and the one with the weird smell [*tuba*]. Even the bully felt a bit guilty and said sorry.

ORCH. [*'Sorry' sound*]

NAR. That's ok, said the Little Sound. Come and join in with all of us.

ORCH. [*Big happy texture, dancing.*]