



The Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra in Your Classroom

Insights into the workings of music with Richard Gill AO

NICOLAI RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

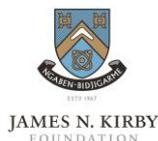
Sinfonietta on Russian Themes, Op 31

II Adagio

Teacher Resource Booklet

Prepared by Marla Leitch

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INTRODUCTION

Early in 2016, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra secured funding to make a series of short videos with conductor and music educator Richard Gill AO.

Maestro Gill worked with the orchestra and groups of children from local schools, exploring aspects of standard repertoire. The videos demonstrate key teaching techniques, including the importance of:

- Knowing your material very well;
- Asking good questions;
- Being positive, encouraging and attentive to all responses children make; finding something valuable to build on in every response;
- Giving children the chance to self-correct by re-visiting the point at issue;
- How valuable it is to have a great memory for names!

In this movement from Rimsky-Korsakov, the focus was on instrument identification. It became obvious, though, that this piece offered very clear examples of a number of musical concepts and thus warranted further time, attention and effort to produce a teaching kit that would be of use to teachers in their on-going work of helping students to understand how music works.

This resource is the outcome.

BACKGROUND

Nikolai Rimsky Korsakov (1844-1908) was one of a group of five Russian composers known as “The Five” or “The Mighty Handful”. Other members of the group were Balakirev, Borodin, Cui and Mussorgsky. They wanted to move away from the influences of German and Austrian music towards a sound more evocative of their own country. They favoured simple, lyrical forms and the use of folk music, and represent the Russian school of what has become known as the period of Nationalism in music.

Sinfonietta on Russian Themes was written in 1884. It is a re-working of a string quartet which was completed in 1879. The second movement, marked Adagio, is based on a Russian folk tune and its use of simple structures and flowing melodies makes it an excellent example of the early Russian Nationalism. The tune appears three times in F major, with each appearance separated by a contrasting section in 5/8 time.

A copy of the score is included with this package and all bar (measure) numbers refer to this version.

There are many recordings of the work available; any standard version may be used with the activities in this resource. The Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra website has a video of the TSO playing the work, conducted by Richard Gill. The recording was made in the TSO Studio and begins with Maestro Gill interacting with a group of Year 3/4 students from a school in the Hobart area. The timing references throughout the following activities refer to this recording. The work starts at 11'45”.

The activities here explore the musical elements of Tempo, Meter, Structure and Texture.

GENERAL POINTS

Allow time at the beginning and end of each lesson to identify specific intended learning outcomes. Briefly first outline the planned activities and at the end of the lesson reflect with the children on progress made towards achieving those outcomes.

Some possible guiding questions:

- What are we going to do /did we do and why?
 - What can you do now that you couldn't before this lesson?
 - What do you know now that you didn't before this lesson?
 - What can you do / understand better as a result of this lesson?
 - What might be next?
-
- Foster critical listening at every opportunity. Critical listening teaches us to learn to identify and appreciate qualities we might otherwise not be aware of.

Some possible guiding questions/statements:

- This music feels.../reminds me of.../sounds like.../makes me...
- Brainstorm words which spring to mind to describe the music.
- Could there be a story to this music?
- How does the music make you feel? Do you like that feeling?
- How does it have this effect? How has the composer managed it?
- Is anything repeated? (think rhythm and instrumentation, not just melody);
- How did it start? What was the composer wanting to achieve?
- How did it finish? Why did it do that?
- Listen for the shifts in dynamics.
- Which instruments feature?
- Which instruments do you like the best? Why?
- What is the style of this music?
- Does the style appeal to you?
- What appeals to you/ does not appeal? Why do you think that is?

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

I TEMPO

Learning Objective

Students will:

Demonstrate an understanding of the Italian term *Adagio* (English: slow) as an indicator of tempo

Assessment Outcomes

ACAMUM080 / ACAMUM084 / ACAMUM088

ACAMUM081 / ACAMUM085 / ACAMUM089

ACAMUM082 / ACAMUM086 / ACAMUM090

Activities

Listen to the main theme at approximately 12:48 -13:35, measures 24 – 43 in the score. Ask the students how the music makes them feel and why. Direct the discussion towards the tempo. Ask the class to come up with a definition of *Adagio* stemming from the discussion. Then students could do one or more of the tasks below:

- Express the music through movements to suit the theme and the tempo.
- Draw a picture to demonstrate how the music makes them feel.

Here is the main theme of the piece:

In the Garden

Trad Russian

The image shows a musical score for the piece 'In the Garden'. It consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time, written in a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is simple and folk-like. The first staff contains the lyrics: 'In the gar - den, by the green grape vine, there wan - dered a'. The second staff starts with a measure rest (marked with a '4' above it) and continues with the lyrics: 'hand-some young_ man. In the gar - den, by a green_ grape_ vine.' The music ends with a double bar line.

- Create an accompaniment for it by improvising with rhythmic percussion instruments (12:48 – 13:35). Discussion of ideas regarding appropriate instruments should take place before starting.
- Learn to play the folk melody on mallet percussion instruments, or any others you have available. Add a rhythmic accompaniment, either improvised or planned.
- Create fun lyrics to go with the theme. Students brainstorm ideas about what the music could be about, keeping the expressive character in mind. The lyrics included are a possible starting point. Students practise singing their lyrics before performing for the class.

Note: Students could sing or play along with the recording for the above activities.

2 METER

Learning Objective

Students will:

Demonstrate an understanding of time signatures with 5 beats per measure.

Assessment Outcomes

ACAMUM080 / ACAMUM084 / ACAMUM088
ACAMUM081 / ACAMUM085 / ACAMUM089
ACAMUM082 / ACAMUM086 / ACAMUM090

Activities

- Listen to examples of music with time signatures in 5/4. Some possibilities are:
 - Dave Brubeck's *Take 5* (for a definitive version, choose one by the Dave Brubeck Quartet);
 - *5/4 Groove* by Susie Davies-Splitter (from her book of teaching activities *Razzamajazz*; there's a Youtube demonstration);
 - *Child of Song* by Andy Beck and Derryl Herring. This song appears in the ABC 2010 Songbook. There are many choral versions available on Youtube.
- In small groups or as a class, invent body percussion patterns that emphasize the 5/4 feel in each of these recordings (they are all 3+2).
- Create a class or small group composition that incorporates one or more of the following elements:
 - Body percussion ostinatos in 5/4 time
 - Rhythmic percussion ostinatos in 5/4 time
 - Melodic improvisation in 5/4 time
 - Vocal improvisation in 5/4 time
- Play the piano chord or mallet percussion ostinato from Dave Brubeck's *Take 5*. Although the original is in Eb minor, the following in A minor works well for classroom instruments. Students can:
 - Improvise over the ostinato on classroom xylophones and glockenspiels;
 - Improvise over the ostinato with rhythmic percussion instruments;
 - Vocally improvise over the ostinato.

Note: An A minor pentatonic scale is a simple scale for students to improvise with. It uses the notes: ACDEG

a) TAKE FIVE - PIANO



The image shows the beginning of the piano accompaniment for 'Take Five'. It is written in 5/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) starts with a quarter rest, followed by a dotted quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. The left hand (bass clef) starts with a quarter note G2, followed by a quarter note A2, a quarter note B2, and a quarter note C3. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

b) TAKE FIVE – MALLET PERCUSSION



The image shows the mallet percussion part for 'Take Five', consisting of three staves: Soprano Xylophone, Alto Xylophone, and Bass Xylophone. All are in 5/4 time. The Soprano part has a quarter rest, followed by a dotted quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. The Alto part has a quarter rest, followed by a dotted quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. The Bass part has a quarter note G2, followed by a quarter note A2, a quarter note B2, and a quarter note C3. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

- Listen to the section of the *Sinfonietta* in 5/8 time, on the recording (12 – 16:06, Letter D in the score). Ask students to determine the time signature.

3 STRUCTURE

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Understand that music can contain different sections;
- Identify the different sections in a piece of music.

Assessment outcomes

ACAMUM080 / ACAMUM084 / ACAMUM088
ACAMUM081 / ACAMUM085 / ACAMUM089
ACAMUM082 / ACAMUM086 / ACAMUM090

Activities

- Students listen to one or more chorus and verse pieces and identify the different sections in the music. The Adagio movement is in Ternary form (Intro ABABA coda). *Yesterday*, by The Beatles, has the same form: A (chorus), B (verse), ABA. Other examples of this form are,

Can You Keep a Secret? from the Music Room, book 2 by Bushfire Press, or *Dancing Queen* by ABBA. When listening to the above pieces the students can:

- Raise their hand when a new section begins
- Create a pose or tableau for the verse and one for the chorus. This could be done as individuals or in small groups. When they hear the verse, strike the verse pose. When they hear the chorus, strike the chorus pose.
- Learn the main theme of the Adagio by singing it and clapping the rhythm.

In the Garden

Trad Russian

In the gar - den, by the green grape vine, there wan - dered a

hand-some young_ man. In the gar - den, by a green_ grape_ vine.

- Listen to the recording from 11:52 -15:12. Students could do one or more of the activities below:
 - Students stand when they hear the theme. Keep standing during theme fragments. When the music changes, (at 14:20) sit down. The theme is in the A section, everything else could be considered the B section. For younger students, start the music at 12:48. Ask the students “What happened when the theme was not heard?” (Answers will vary)
 - Divide the class into two groups. One group makes up an A section dance and the other, a B section dance. Students perform their dance when their section of the music is played.
 - Students move freely during the A section and ‘freeze’ in the B section, then vice versa.

Note: These activities could also be used with the songs listed in Activity 1.

- Discuss with students that composers often write contrasting sections of music and introduce the following forms: AB and ABA.
- In small or large groups, students create a 16-measure composition using classroom instruments. The first 8 measures must contrast the second 8 measures. Some elements for the students to consider are:
 - How will the rhythms, instrumentation, tempo, time signature or dynamics differ between the sections?
 - Will a conductor be required for the performance?

Suggestion: Performances may be videoed for evaluation purposes, including self-evaluation by the students.

- Listen to the recording from 15:23 – 15:55, measures 89 – 107 in the score. Students describe how the texture of the music develops and changes by doing one or more of the tasks below:
 - Have a class discussion;
 - Draw a picture;
 - Create a graphic score that visually represents the layers of the music and how they progress;
 - As a group, create movements that demonstrate the changes in the music. One person could represent each part;
 - Write a short description;
 - Video themselves talking about the texture on an iPad, computer or other device.

In the Garden

In the gar - den, by the green - grape vine, there wan - dered a

hand - some young - man. In the gar - den, by a green - grape - vine

- Learn to sing the main melody. Add the piano accompaniment, starting with just the left hand and then the full accompaniment so students hear it:
 - Unison melody line;
 - Melody + bass part;
 - Melody plus full accompaniment.

- Discuss how the texture changes.
- Change the texture in other ways by improvising rhythms on classroom instruments. This can be done in small or large groups. Practise and perform.

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</p> <p>Develop aural skills by exploring and imitating sounds, pitch and rhythm patterns using voice, movement and body percussion</p>	<p>ACAMUM084</p> <p>Develop aural skills by exploring, imitating and recognising elements of music including dynamics, pitch and rhythm patterns</p>	<p>ACAMUM088</p> <p>Explore dynamics and expression, using aural skills to identify and perform rhythm and pitch patterns</p>
<p>ACAMUM081</p> <p>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</p> <p>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</p> <p>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</p> <p>Create compositions and perform music to communicate ideas to an audience</p>	<p>ACAMUM086</p> <p>Create, perform and record compositions by selecting and organising sounds, silences, tempo and volume</p>	<p>ACAMUM090</p> <p>Rehearse and perform music including music they have composed by improvising, sourcing and arranging ideas and making decisions to engage an audience</p>
<p>ACAMUR083</p> <p>Respond to music and consider where and why people make music, starting with Australian music, including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p>	<p>ACAMUR087</p> <p>Identify intended purposes and meanings as they listen to music, using the elements of music to make comparisons, starting with Australian music, including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p>	<p>ACAMUR091</p> <p>Explain how elements of music communicate meaning by comparing music from different social, cultural and historical contexts, including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p>