

Kentucky Orff Schulwerk Presentation

Words: Robert Louis Stephenson Music: Dave and Jean Perry

Chris Dillon

Introduction:

- Divide students into groups of three to four.
- Through dramatic play, have students reenact their favorite recess time activity.
- Allow students to share with the rest of the class and gather them in a circle.
- Demonstrate YOUR favorite recess activity (which is Swinging!) for the class.
- Have the class describe how the swing moves—back and forth.
- Keeping a steady beat, have the students move with you—first back and forth then side to side—saying “swing” each time your weight transfers.

Body Percussion:

- Keeping the macro beat in your feet, allow students to explore the space in the classroom, while continuing to say the word “swing” each time their feet touches the floor.
- Once students are moving through the space, add the micro beat using a series of claps and pats on the chest. Clap on beats 1 and 4 and pat your chest lightly for the weaker beats.
- Teach the first verse of the poem by rote, allowing students to echo you after each four bar phrase, then connecting the phrases together.
- Bring the students back to the circle and have them sit down.

Melody:

- Teach the melody by rote, in the same manner as the words, allowing students to make connections between rhyming words at the end of each phrase and keeping the micro beat on a part of the body of their choosing.
- *Some students may only be able to keep the macro beat—that’s ok! These students will come in handy later on in the activity!*
- After teaching them the melody of the first verse, and accompanying them with the piano ostinato, ask the students this question: “If your swing detached from the rail, and floated up and over the countryside, what do you think you would see while floating up in the air?”
- Allow students to brainstorm ideas and list them on the board.
- Draw upon student examples and teach them the words to the second and third verse.
- *If you’re feeling super creative, use the student-generated ideas and have your students compose new words to the song (that rhyme).*

- Allow your students to talk to their neighbor about the characteristics of the two contrasting musical sections (this is very important later). Guide students to hear how the piano changes from an ostinato to a more melodic line.
- Have the students perform the entire song, adding the last part, with the piano.

Instruments:

- For this section, you will only need to teach one more thing—an ostinato with the words “I love swinging.” This needs to be taught in a strict eighth note pattern.
- Divide students in half. Have half of your students keep the “Swing” ostinato in their feet while saying it aloud (from the very beginning of the activity). Have the second half of your students play the new ostinato “I Love Swinging” on some part of their body. Have the students switch.
- Have the students perform this activity one more time **while you accompany them on the piano**. The 6/8 feel of the piano ostinato is in direct contrast to the ostinato that you just taught. It will take them a few times performing this activity before it will run smoothly. Be patient—it’s totally worth it later!
- Transfer the ostinato to the various instruments (I have included a score with this handout).
- Have students layer in the different ostinati one single instrument at a time, starting with the bass voice. When every student is playing, start accompanying them on the piano.
- When the contrasting B section starts, all students must stop playing (the Orff instruments are in F pentatonic and the melody has modulated to Bb).
- Bring the instruments in one by one when the contrasting section is over and perform the end of the song.
- After students are finished singing, fade out each instrument one by one starting with the bass voice. This will allow for a very unconventional ending that will surprise and please your audience (you should end with one student playing the tonic F on the highest instrument—it’s a great effect!).

Notes:

I only teach the melody of the piece and ignore the second voice due to the complex nature of the Orff accompaniment—do what you will!

For performance, the movement activity at the beginning of the piece can be utilized as a nice introduction to this work.

I have had this activity work successfully from 2nd-4th grades. The ostinato in the xylophone part is a bit difficult to fit in, but very impressive when done correctly!

If you have any further questions, my email is chris.dillon82@gmail.com Thank you!