**The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry**

**A Musical Project for Years 3 and 4**

**Lesson 1: 45mins (Timbre and Texture)**

**Learning Intentions:** Children learn

A new game

About timbre

About rainforest sounds

About texture

About dynamics (volume)

About conducting and arranging sounds

**Introductory activity (15mins)**

Introduce the game, ‘Switch’

The leader will use body percussion to create a pulse or rhythmic phrase and the children will copy him/her.

When the leader changes the sound which he/she is using, the other children continue with the original sound/pattern until the leader calls out, ‘Switch’.

At this point all the other children change.

Listen to some sounds from a Brazilian rainforest and describe/identify them

<https://youtu.be/tbodhmmqa-g>

Read the story of ‘The Great Kapok Tree’ and talk about the story line and ask the children what they know about deforestation in the Amazon Rainforest.

Today they will be thinking about the sounds that the animals, reptiles and birds might make.

**Main activity (25mins)**

The following link you to a fantastic link which will show the children all the sounds that rainforest animals make

<https://youtu/be/GvxJWsr7uao>

It is very long so the animals in the book are at the following points

Sloth 0.15

Toucan 0.26

Anteater 1.06

Jaguar 4.32

Poison Dart Frog 6.13

Spider Monkey 6.33

Boa Constrictor 10.08

Howler Monkey 10.48

Siamang (Another type of monkey) 11.33

Scarlet Macaw 11.50

Capuchin Monkey 13.12

The children might also like to listen to the Caiman and the Capybara

Caiman 3.48

Capybara 4.10

Explain that each creature has its own sound. In music we call this sound colour or ***timbre***

Explore the different sounds they make and then play, ‘I went to the rainforest and I heard a…’

Each child remembers the sounds that have gone before and then add their own sound. It makes the game more interesting if everyone joins in with the ‘old’ sounds each time.

Divide the class into four group.

Take four of the sounds and build layers of sound e.g. Macaw, Jaguar, Capuchin monkey and Sloth

Show the children how to start and stop sounds by pointing at individual groups and then indicating they show stop with the flat of your palm.

Invite volunteers to conduct the sounds so that they can experiment with layers of sound and explain that what they are doing is creating a ***texture of sounds.***

Think back to the story and the changes of volume

This time they will need 10 groups (groups of three in most cases)

Group 1 will start humming and then group two will add the boa constrictor and so on.

All will stop for the silence at the end of the story.

Add the sounds together cumulatively

* The hum of the forest
* The hissing boa constrictor
* Buzzing bee
* Chattering monkeys
* Toucan and macaw
* Croaking tree frog
* Growling jaguar
* Clattering tree porcupines
* Snuffling anteaters
* Plodding tree sloth
* SILENCE

Use hands to show change of volume and discuss effect of sounds as they build layers

**Plenary (5mins)**

Discuss what they have been exploring today

They have used their own body percussion and vocal skills as well as listening to the sounds of the rainforest.

The term for sound or sound colour in music is ***timbre***

They have put these sound colours together in order to create a ***texture of sounds***

They have learnt how to start, stop and affect the volume or ***dynamics*** of a performance.

**Learning Outcomes:** Children can

Describe sounds

Explore vocal and body sounds

Work in large and small groups

Follow visual cues

**Lesson 2: 45mins (Pace and duration)**

**Learning Intentions:** Children learn

About pace

About duration

About the ostinato

To listen attentively

A new game

To follow signs and symbols

To comment on the effectiveness of their work

**Introductory activity (10mins)**

Ask the children if they remember which country ‘The Great Kapok Tree’ was set (Brazil)

Tell the children that they are going to listen to a piece written by a Brazilian composer called Hector Villa-Lobos called, ‘The Little Train of the Caipira’.

The train is carrying the people of the countryside (the caipira) off to pick berries in the fields Watch the BBC Ten Pieces video

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/ten-pieces/classical-music-heitor-villa-lobos/z4nsmfr>

Ask the children to identify the instruments used to create the sounds of the engine

*Can they hear any changes in speed?*

**Main activity (30mins)**

Use maracas/egg shakers, cabasa/afuche, guiros in three groups and play, ‘Get on Board’

The children will be ‘invited’ onto the train, group-by-group, with the following words, ‘Get on board, get on board. Get on board the maracas’.

The children playing maracas/egg shakers will then need to keep in time with the beat that is played. They will need to stop when they hear the words, ‘Getting off, getting off. Getting off the maracas’.

Show the children how they might add a tuned ***ostinato*** or repeated pattern by using the notes G, D and E in the following pattern – GDED

Now tell the children that you are going to make the game harder by changing the pace or speed of the beat which they are to follow.

As with players in an orchestra, they will need to look and listen to the beat as it is played.

***Assess: Can follow a changing beat***

Think about the ways in which the animals move in the book and the verbs which describe it

* The boa constrictor slithered
* Bee flew
* Monkeys scampered
* Birds flew/soared
* Frog hopped/crawled
* Jaguar leapt and padded
* Tree porcupines swung down
* Anteaters climbed down
* Sloth plodded slowly

Divide the actions into fast and slow and then think of the sounds that will be needed.

*Are they long or short sounds?*

*Should the long sounds be played slowly and the short sounds repeated quickly?*

***Remember- it is the sound of the creatures moving and not what they make with their voice boxes/wings***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Creature | Fast/short sounds | Long/slow sounds |
| Boa Constrictor |  | / |
| Bee | / |  |
| Monkey | / |  |
| Birds |  | / |
| Tree Frog | / |  |
| Jaguar |  | / |
| Tree Porcupine |  | / |
| Anteaters |  | / |
| Sloth |  | / |

Lay out a selection of percussion instruments

* Shakers (maracas/jingles/egg shakers)
* Rain sticks
* Guiros/cabasa/afuche
* Castanets/claves/woodblocks
* Tambourines and tambours
* Cymbals/Temple bells and triangles
* Chime bars (CDEGA)
* Xylophone with F and B turned over

Tell the children that they are going to play a game called, ‘Pass the Sound’- each child has a sound in front of them. The first child plays a sound and the person next to him/her must not play the next sound until the first sound has disappeared

Discuss which instrument produce long/short sounds

Ask those children with long sounds to try making them short

*How did they do this? (By holding the instrument in a different way or by ‘dampening’ the sound with their fingers, knees or the floor)*

Ask those children with short sounds to try making them long

*How did they do this? (Usually by playing a series of quick short sounds)*

Place suggested instruments around pictures of each of the 9 creatures (see below)

Place pictures near children in the circle and hand out instruments

Try making sounds to illustrate their movement, not forgetting the pace at which the creature moves

Whilst instrumental group play, other children should make vocal sounds

Record the music for each creature and then pack away the instruments.

**Plenary (5mins)**

Listen to the recording and discuss the effectiveness of the music

*Did the timbre/sound colour of the instruments illustrate the creature effectively?*

*Did the performers play at the correct pace?*

*What might make the pieces sound better?*

The children might mention the fact that everyone in the group played at the same time or that there was no rhythm or structure to the piece.

We will explore this in the coming sessions.

**Learning Outcomes:** Children can

Comment upon music that they hear and compose using musical language

Maintain a beat with awareness of changes in pace

Select and change the duration of sounds

Follow signs



**Boa Constrictor**



**Bees**



**Monkeys**



**Frogs**



**Toucans**



**Macaws**



**Jaguars**



**Giant Ant Eater**



**Sloth**

**Lesson 3: 45mins (Pitch)**

**Learning Intentions:** Children learn

About pitch

About ascending and descending sounds

About intervals between sounds (steps, skips and leaps)

How to relate pitch to the verbs which are used in the text

How to create and play rhythmic phrases

How to listen attentively

**Introductory activity (10mins)**

Tell the children that today they will be investigating the pitch of the animal sounds and the way in which pitch might illustrate the way in which they move.

Begin with a few volunteers helping to illustrate story about a baby squirrel in a tree, using a set of chime bars or xylophone.

Stand the xylophone on its end so that it looks rather like a fir tree.

The smallest note-bars are at the top of the tree and the largest, at the bottom.

1. When the squirrel was a baby, his mother only allowed him to explore the branches (bars) immediately below him and to only step from one to the next
2. When he was a little older he could step carefully down to the middle branches and then back up again
3. When he was a few months old he was allowed to skip over branches in order to get from his nest at the top of the tree to the middle branches, and then back up again.
4. By skipping over branches.
5. When he was nearly a year old, the squirrel was allowed to go to the bottom of the tree by stepping on each branch and then to return to his nest at the top of the tree, also using steps.
6. He was then allowed to do the same using skips
7. Finally, the squirrel was allowed to descend and ascend the tree using leaps

Give out sets of chime bars between pairs/threes and ask them to take it in turns to be the squirrel as the story is re-told.

**Main activity (25mins)**

Look at the pictures of the animals from the Rainforest at the beginning of the book and remind the children of the creatures that feature in the story.

They are going to find an animal or word that reminds them of the story for each of their chime bars (CDEFGABC’)

Here are some examples:

C’s for Coati/Canopy

D’s for Deforestation

E’s for Equator/Emergent Trees/Eagle

F’s for frog

G’s for Golden Poison Dart Frog

A’s for anteater/Anaconda

B’s for Brazil/Boa Constrictor/Butterfly/Black Caiman/Bees

C’s for Capybara

Play one version as a class like so:

Teacher plays and says: 1, 2, 3, 4, C’s for canopy

Children play and say: 1, 2, 3, 4, C’s for canopy

The rhythm of the spoken words are played on the C chime bar.

The teacher then does the same with the D chime bar and a new phrase and so on.

 Divide the children into pairs and ask them to make up their own version

Complete, ‘C’s for Capybara’ sheet (see resources)

*Year 4 children could use phrases or words to do with care of the environment e.g. care, don’t cut the trees down, everyone needs a home, flooding will occur, greenhouse effect, act now, build on brown sites, carbon dioxide*

Listen to each pair and make sure they are saying the words clearly and playing the rhythm of the syllables

***Assess: Can create a simple rhythmic phrase***

**Plenary (10mins)**

Ask the children to listen to a few minutes of each of the two pieces below

*Can they identify the animal by the way in which the pitch move and by whether the composer has chosen high or low sounds?*

Kangaroo (short/skips and leaps) from ‘Carnival of the Animals’ by Camille Saint-Saens

Elephant (low/short/mostly by step) from ‘Carnival of the Animals’ by Camille Saint-Saens

They can respond orally or use the listening log (see below).

**Learning Outcomes:** Children can

Play and identify ascending/descending sounds

Can identify high and low sounds

Play and identify movement of pitch by step, skip or leap

Can play the rhythm of words and phrases accurately

**Lesson 4: 45mins (Pitch and Structure)**

**Learning Intentions:** Children learn

About duration

About the movement of pitch

A new song

About the pentatonic scale

About question and answer phrases

**Introductory activity (15mins)**

Remind the children that in the previous session they explored the way in which creatures from the rainforest moved using sound ***(timbre),*** speed ***(pace or tempo)*** and length of sound ***(duration).*** They also considered the way that the pitch moved- by step, skip or leap/ascending or descending.

Ask the children to listen to two pieces of music. Both describe the movement of creatures.

They will be better able to guess what if they think about the pace, timbre and duration of the sounds. They should also try to comment on the movement of pitch. All this can be done orally or noted down in listening logs and assessed

***Assess: Can identify the use of the inter-related dimensions of music***

Listen to ‘The Swan’ from ‘The Carnival of the Animals’ by Camille Saint Saens.

The children should be able to identify the sounds as ***smooth, long and moving by step.*** The piano accompaniment seems to be moving likes ripples but the cello moves with longer time values.

Now listen to ‘The Flight of the bumble bee’ by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. The children should be able to identify the sounds as ***smooth, fast and moving by step.*** They may be able to identify the main instrument as the violin.

**Main activity (25mins)**

Explain to the children that they are going to sing the chorus of a song about Noah’s Ark.

Sing, the first part of ‘Who built the Ark?’ and ask the children to notice how the song is made up of a question and an answer

*Q: Who built the Ark?*

*A: Noah, Noah*

*Q: Who built the Ark?*

*A: Brother Noah built the Ark*

Ask the children to show the movement of pitch of each of the lines, starting with the second (descending by step and repeating); then fourth (descending by step); then the first and third (descending by skip and then step).

*What have they noticed about lines 1 and 3? (They are the same)*

This song is based on a five-note ladder called the ***pentatonic scale***

Pent= five

Tonic/tone = sounds

Scale = ladder

They are going to make up some Question and Answer phrases using the notes of the C pentatonic scale-CDEG and A

Use the notes C and D as a class to play ‘Play a Pattern in Space’. The children will play CDCD all together over 4 beats and then rest for four beats.

Now ask the children to make up a rhythm over the empty four beats using E only first. Progress to using E and G and E, G and A

Now ask the children to decide on which notes they will use in the answer that they will show the class and play by themselves.

All the children play CDCD and then each child plays his or her melody over the four empty beats

***Assess: Can create a simple melodic phrase***

(Answers using E (LA), E and G (MA), E, G and A (HA))

If time, ask the children to work in pairs in order to compose their own Q&A phrases with 4 beats using a selection of notes from the C pentatonic scale (CDEGA)

**Plenary (5mins)**

Ask each pair thinks up a question that they would like to know about the rainforest/environment. Ask them to find out the answer for next week

**Learning Outcomes:** Children can

Identify the musical elements that make up a piece of music

Identify the structure and movement of pitch in the chorus of a song

Use notes of a pentatonic scale to create original melodic phrases

Work in pairs in order to create question and answer phrases

**Lesson 5: 45 minutes (Composition)**

**Learning Intentions:** Children learn

To identify sounds from recorded music

To create question and answer phrases

To adapt phrases to fit the rhythm of words

About ostinato

**Introductory activity (20mins)**

Ask the children to listen to ‘Rainforest Dream’ by Joji Hirota and identify sounds of raindrops, birdsong and a deep drum by silently miming drops with their hands, beaks with their fingers and tapping ‘air-drums’ with their hands when they hear them.

Now ask each pair to remember their questions about the rainforest and the answers they have found.

Most will fit over eight silent beats. They should try saying their phrases whilst drawing two squares in the air.

E.g. Why does a sloth grow moss on its fur?

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Because it sleeps on a branch all day

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Ask each pair to make a note of their questions and answers on the ‘Secrets of the Rainforest’ composition sheets (see resources) and then to clap and say their phrases to the class.

Give the children time to play these on notes of the pentatonic scale.

**Main activity (20mins)**

Explain that the children will be composing music for each animal in the story in groups.

Use the woodcutter as an example.

Firstly they should think of what un-tuned percussion they would select for a woodcutter.

They could play the melody on xylophones of they have them, using CDEGA

Player 1) will play an ***Ostinato (repeated pattern)*** = chop, whack, chop, whack on wooden sounds

Player 2) Melody 1= getting tired, getting hot on any notes from CDEGA

Player 3) Melody 2 = humming lulls me to sleep on any notes from CDGA

Player 4) Copies the ostinato or creates new rhythm/sound effects on un-tuned instruments

***Duration***=short sounds (wooden)

***Pace***= medium and then slowing down

Ask the children to notice the suggestions for pace above.

Form 7 groups (One for each animal) and give out composition sheets for each. Each sheet has suggestions of phrases but they should feel free to change them.

They should fill in which instruments they will need and the pace at which they will play them.

They should also consider whether to play the notes on the tuned instruments by step (e.g. slithering), or skip (e.g. hopping) or leap (e.g. jumping or swinging)

**Boa Constrictor**

* Slithering snake –
* Hissing in your ear –
* Kepok tree is my home

**Bees**

* Bees –buzzing
* Hive is in the tree –
* Collecting pollen

**Monkeys**

* Scampering monkeys
* Climbing in the canopy
* Chattered to the man

**Toucans and Macaws**

* Squawking toucans
* Colourful beaks, colourful feathers
* Soaring over the forest

**Frogs**

* Crawling and hopping
* Colourful but poisonous
* Squeaky voice, in his ear

**Jaguars**

* Sleeping on a branch
* Spotted coat blending
* Shadows of the understory
* Padding Silently

**Anteaters**

* Clinging to their backs
* Un-striped anteater
* Long tongues, long nose

**Sloth**

* Three-toed sloth –
* Plodding ever-so slowly
* Deep, lazy voice-

Give the children time to write down their ideas and to practise clapping their rhythms alone and together.

They will probably not have time to fetch instruments today.

**Plenary**

Talk about the two activities they have explored today

First they made up question and answer phrases about the Rainforest and played their rhythm on the notes of the C pentatonic scale

Then they looked at how phrases might be sequenced or combined in order to create a piece of music about the woodcutter.

Next week they will perform their Q&A phrases and use the instruments to create their pieces of music about the creatures that inhabit the rainforest.

**Learning Outcomes:** Children can

Create melodic phrases to fit the rhythm of words

Play them as questions and answers

Use their knowledge of pitch, pace, duration and timbre to create a sound picture as a class

Plan group pieces to work on and perform next time

**Lesson 6: 45mins (Composition, Performance and Evaluation)**

**Learning intentions:** Children learn

How to revise and perform their work

To work on group compositions creatively and co-operatively

To perform, record and evaluate their work and the work of others’

**Introductory activity (5mins)**

Tell the children that they are going to practice and perform their Q&A phrases on tuned instruments in their pairs and then work on and perform their rainforest compositions. They must work quickly, carefully and co-operatively.

They will have the opportunity to evaluate their own work and the work of others’ at the end of the lesson

**Main activity (30mins)**

Give out the ‘Secrets of the Rainforest’ sheets and allow the children a few minutes to practise playing their Q&A phrases before performing and recording them

***Assess: Can create a simple melodic phrase***

Now ask the children to go into their groups and read/clap the rhythms that they will be playing on un- tuned/tuned instruments.

They should collect their instruments, practise alone and then decide on an order/combination of sounds.

Stop the children frequently to remind them to:

- Order, sequence or combine their ideas

- Consider the pace and dynamics of their work

- Practice starting the piece and finishing it convincingly

Listen to each group and give them feedback on which to work during the lesson.

Give each group the opportunity to play their piece and then to perform it whilst it is being recorded.

Whilst each group is performing the other children should be evaluating what they hear, using the sheet attached.

**Plenary (10mins)**

Listen to comments about each group from members of different groups, remembering to ensure that they comments are positive and constructive.

***Assess: Can maintain an independent part within a large group***

*At another time the children could read the Great kapok Tree and insert their compositions.*

**Learning Outcomes:** Children can

Work co-operatively and creatively in order to compose Q&A phrases and apiece of descriptive music

They can use their knowledge of the inter-related dimensions of music to inform the selection of, manipulation and performance of sounds

**The Great Kapok Tree Music Project for Years 3 and 4**

**Assessment**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of child** | **Can follow a changing beat****Date:****Date:** | **Can create a rhythmic phrase****Date:****Date:** | **Can create a melodic phrase****Date:****Date:** | **Can identify the use of the inter-related dimensions of music****Date:****Date:** | **Can maintain an independent part within a group****Date:****Date:** |
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**3 = emerging 2 = achieving 1 = exceeding**

**The Great Kapok Tree Listening Log**

**Listening Log**

**Name: ……………………… Class:**

Ring the way in which each musical element is used in the piece e.g. slow, loud, short sounds and step

Then complete the title

**‘The ……………………..’ from ‘Carnival of the Animals’ by Camille Saint-Saens**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Pace** | Slow  | Medium | Fast |
| **Duration** | Long sounds | Short sounds | Mixed |
| **Dynamics** | Quiet | Medium | Loud |
| **Pitch** | Step | Skip | Leap |

**‘The ……………………..’ from ‘Carnival of the Animals’ by Camille Saint-Saens**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Pace** | Slow  | Medium | Fast |
| **Duration** | Long sounds | Short sounds | Mixed |
| **Dynamics** | Quiet | Medium | Loud |
| **Pitch** | Step | Skip | Leap |

**‘The ……………….’ from ‘The Carnival of the Animals’ by Camille Saint Saens.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Pace** | Slow  | Medium | Fast |
| **Duration** | Long sounds | Short sounds | Mixed |
| **Dynamics** | Quiet | Medium | Loud |
| **Pitch** | Step | Skip | Leap |

**‘The Flight of the ……………................’ by Nikolei Rimsky-Korsakov**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Pace** | Slow  | Medium | Fast |
| **Duration** | Long sounds | Short sounds | Mixed |
| **Dynamics** | Quiet | Medium | Loud |
| **Pitch** | Step | Skip | Leap |