

The Minnesota Sinfonia  
Music in the Schools 2019-20 Lesson Plan  
Listening for Animals in Music

Rationale: The selections in this year's program all have a musical reference to an animal. The composer chose a known characteristic of the selected animal to depict in sound. Students can connect their knowledge of animals and animal behavior with music by selecting sounds they associate with an animal. Students can make connections between themselves, music and a composer's piece of music depicting the same animal.

Objectives:

SWBAT name or describe characteristics of a given animal.

SWBAT select and describe instrument sounds musical qualities they associate with the animal's characteristic(s).

SWBAT describe how a composer depicted the given animal in music (sound).

Materials:

A curated list of easily available recordings (YouTube) is included.

Additionally the Sinfonia CD recordings may be used for this lesson.

Procedure:

Whole Class:

1. Share some biographical information about the composer. Give the title of the piece. Explain that in this music the composer is describing an animal, bird, fish or insect.
2. Class brainstorms or researches characteristics of the animal in the title of the piece. Teacher writes animal characteristics on board.
  - a. Questions to answer:
    - i. How does this animal move?
      1. Could be more than one way that the animal moves....
    - ii. What sounds does this animal make? (i.e. donkey = hee-haw, horse = neigh etc)
    - iii. How does this animal eat?
    - iv. How does this animal sleep?
    - v. What else do you know about this animal?
3. Define these musical terms: tempo (speed of the beat), dynamics (loudness or softness of the music), tone color (which instruments are playing / quality of the sounds heard). Consider describing the sound quality (tone color) of classroom instruments and allowing students to discuss which classroom instrument(s) they would select to depict the animal's characteristics – as a model for the following 'think-pair'share' activity.

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4. Think-Pair-Share: In partners, students select one of the animal's characteristics and discuss what musical sounds, tempi, dynamics, instruments would best show that characteristic. Share suggested musical sounds with the class – teacher writes on board.
  - a. Example: A horse galloping would probably be a fast tempo because a gallop is a fast movement.
  - b. Example: A swan glides through the water when it swims. The music would be legato (smooth) and not bouncy.
  - c. Example: A mosquito flies very fast and buzzes – what instruments make a buzzy sound – would it be high pitched or low pitched to be the mosquito?
  
5. **Listen to the music. How did the composer depict the animal?**
  
6. Remind students to listen in silence as the music is playing; play the musical selection. If the selection is longer than 3 minutes consider playing only the first 2 – 3 minutes of the music. If not playing the entire piece, be sure to play the portion with music most descriptive of the animal in the title.
  
7. After listening to the music (in silence), students share their thoughts on how the composer showed characteristics of the animal in music.
  - a. Example: The lion's roar in the Saint-Saens piece is depicted by an upward - downward melodic line that gets louder and softer.
  - b. Example: The lion, king of beasts, has a stately tempo – showing the lion to be an important animal whose steps can be neither slow nor fast.
  
8. LISTEN AGAIN: this time, think about hearing sounds other students suggested which you may not have heard on the first listen.