

Creating Creative Musicians

Dr. Kris VerSteegt
2022 IMEA Conference

This session will use the following children's books as prompts to build creative musical experiences.

Curtis, C. & Jay, A. (2008). *I Took the Moon for a Walk*. Barefoot Books.

- Students learn rhythmic speech for bordun accompaniment and hand drum, then add body percussion.
- Students substitute instruments for body percussion.
- Students add glockenspiel improvisation.
- Build melody (for recorder or alto xy/met) on the rhythm of this nursery rhyme:

I see the moon and the moon sees me. Bright is the moon as it shines on me.

- Use the composed melody as a theme and use each verse of the story as an episode in an overall rondo form (while the accompaniments (bordun, hand drum, glockenspiel) continue throughout).

Freymann, S. & Elffers, J. (2000). *One Lonely Sea Horse*. Arthur A. Levine Books.

- Students listen for the cast of characters while the teacher reads the story and shows the pictures.
- Students generate a list of characters.
- Students create chain of 4 characters, spoken rhythmically *twice through*.
- Students say and clap the syllables of their 4-character chains, *twice through*.
- Students whisper and clap the syllables of their 4-character chains, *twice through*.
- Students think and clap the syllables of their 4-character chains, *twice through*.
- Students play—on their choice of auxiliary percussion instruments—the syllables of their 4-character chains, *twice through*.
- As the story is read, a melody is inserted after each verse. This melody prompts each group of auxiliary percussion players to insert their 16-beat auxiliary percussion piece.

Who(m) can I count on? 1, 2, 3! Who will be a friend to me?

Martin, B., & Archambault, J. (1988). *Listen to the Rain*. Henry Holt & Co.

THANK YOU TO KENDRA LEISINGER FOR SHARING THIS BOOK WITH ME.

- Teacher reads the story aloud, adding strong dynamic contrast when appropriate.
- Students discuss appropriate ways—with body or voice—to make sound effects for the book.
- These actions are then layered in canon around the circle of students.
- The book is read again, with the layered sounds as accompaniment.

Ramirez-Christensen, E. (2019). *My First Book of Haiku Poems: A Picture, a Poem, and a Dream; Classic poems by Japanese Haiku Masters*. Tuttle Publishing.

- a. Teacher shows a video of a culture bearer discussing Haiku (e.g., <https://youtu.be/r1ZdmMIgEjM>).
- b. Students reflect on the important characteristics of the art form (e.g., 5-7-5 syllables, on a theme of ephemeral nature, a cutting word).
- c. Teacher notes that Japanese is a mora-based language in which each syllable is equivalent to one Hiragana character. This is not true of English where the vowel primarily drives syllabication. Thus, you will often find Japanese Haiku, when translated to English, will not have 5-7-5. Then, one or more Haiku is read from the above-referenced book. It is helpful to read the English translation (often 5-5-5) and the pronunciation of the Japanese characters (always 5-7-5). As time allows, instrumentation is added to the example Haiku to help tell its story through sound.

The seasons have changed—(finger cymbal)

Leaves are damp, crumpled clothing (cabasa and shakere)

Beneath naked trees. (chime tree glissando)

OR

Milky stillness creeps. (alto metallophone slowly plays D'CBAGFED)

The earth bathes neck deep in fog—(D tremolo on bass metallophone)

It waits for the sun. (glockenspiel plays D/F#)

I authored these poems; no copyrights have been violated in this handout.

- d. Students are divided into groups and asked to choose a color and season to help build their Haiku.
- e. Using the graphic organizer (attached) the students brainstorm a list of things that they see, smell, taste, feel, and hear when they think of the season and the color they selected.
- f. Using the brainstormed ideas, students build a Haiku and provide a title.
 - a. I encourage my students to NOT include the color in their text/title. The goal is to write evocatively enough that the listener can effectively guess the color.
- g. Students add instrumentation and describe why each sound was chosen for each line.

“The finger cymbal can make a quick sound, like something has suddenly changed. The cabasa and shakere can make sounds like crunching leaves. The chime tree is the sound of the wind whistling through the tree branches.”
- h. Students perform their compositions for each other.

Rappaport, D. (2007). *Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* Little Brown Books for Young Readers.

- a. Teacher reads the book and discusses the life of MLKJ/the impact of his words on the civil rights movement.
- b. Students are divided into groups.
- c. Each group selects a famous quote that resonates with them. ANY quote will work.
- d. Students work their way through the graphic organizer (attached). My preference is to use recorder for this assignment, but an Orff instrument with hard mallets will also work.
- e. Students perform their compositions for each other with snare drum accompaniment (optional).

Rosen, M. & Oxenbury, H. (1997). *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*. Little Simon.

- a. Teacher reads the book to students.
- b. Students discuss movements for onomatopoeia words.
- c. Teacher adds student suggested movements to rhythmic performance of the text (drop FOREST verse).
 - Students simultaneously imitate teacher movements.
- d. Movements accompany *In the Hall of the Mountain King* from *Pe'er Gynt* by Edvard Grieg.

Santat, D. (2017). *After the Fall*. Roaring Book Press.

- To prepare, the teacher buys and disassembles two copies of the book. Facing pages are taped together prior to numbering and laminating. **VERY IMPORTANT: This book is NOT read to the students prior to the composition activity.**
- Students form 6 groups.
- Each group of students is given two sets of facing pages and a collection of instruments. I provide a floor tom filled with its mallets, a pair of finger cymbals, jingle bells, tambourine, thunder tube, tweeter, woodblock with mallet, triangle with striker, pair of *claves*, pair of *chaquitas*, rainstick, *agogo* with striker, *den-den daiko*, and *castanets* (A labeled card naming each instrument and reminding how each instrument is played is also included). Each group has access to Orff instruments and mallets. I also provide a pair of sandblocks, a hand drum, and a crow sounder with striker. Finally, the students have access to several sound effects including a horn, a chime tree, a gong and striker, *cabasa*, *shakere*, ratchet, etc.

Note: When I made my extractions, I combined some pages. The final product was 13 pages. I give each of the six groups one of the following sets of pages: 1 & 7, OR 2 & 8, OR 3 & 9, OR 4 & 10, OR 5 & 11, OR 6 & 12. I keep page 13 (which is the epiphany) for the teacher.

- Students add sound effects to their excerpts of the book (using instruments, body percussion, or vocalizations).
- The teacher reads a third copy of the book and shows the pictures while the students add their sound effects.

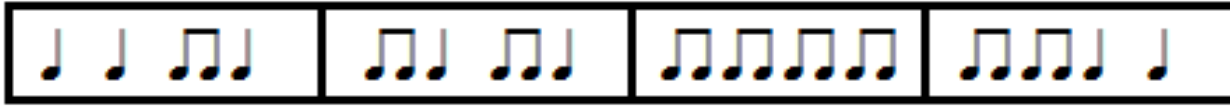


If time allows, session goers will engage in the **Machine Game**.

- The teacher makes a sound which repeats continuously.
- Each student adds a sound which complements the previous sound(s).
- On subsequent repeats of this activity, interlocking poses are added to the sounds. OR, on subsequent repeats of this activity, actions accompany the sounds.

Big Words

YOU WILL NEED A **FAMOUS QUOTE** TO COMPLETE THIS PROJECT



- Select two different four-beat rhythm patterns from the options provided.
- Copy your two chosen rhythms (the ♩ and ♪) onto the lines below.
A _____ B _____
- Using a pitched instrument, decide on which pitches (B, A, G, E, or D) you will play the rhythms.
- Write those note names (from #3) underneath the rhythms (from #2).
- Practice playing the patterns you have created until you can play them correctly.
- On the staff lines below, write the patterns you created in AABA form. For your reference, the notes and recorder fingerings are provided.



A A

B A

- Practice playing what you have written in #6. *Feel free to add or change notes but be sure you change your notation to show what you will actually play.*
- Read your group's **FAMOUS QUOTE** *expressively*. These are famous words; read them carefully!
- As the words are read, decide which 2-3 words or phrases are most important and underline them. Choose 2-3 instruments to be played during those words or phrases.
- Plan, practice, and present your performance.

Introduction (optional): _____ at the very beginning.

A: Play the above song on a pitched instrument

B: Read the **Big Words** your group has chosen and:

play _____ on the word(s) _____

play _____ on the word(s) _____

play _____ on the word(s) _____

A: Play the above song on a pitched instrument.

Coda (optional): _____ at the very end.

HAIKU

EXAMPLES

The seasons have changed—
Leaves are damp, crumpled clothing
Beneath naked trees. (Autumn: Brown)

Milky stillness creeps
The earth bathes neck deep in fog—
It waits for the sun. (Spring: White)

Work in a small group to create a poem in the style of the Japanese Haiku tradition.

Traditional Haiku are inspired by the seasons. Your Haiku poem should *also be* inspired by a particular color. Haiku have three lines of text.

There is no need to rhyme, but the first and third lines must have five syllables and the middle line must have seven.

Haiku often include a *cutting word* or punctuation (—) that divides the poem into two parts.

The reader is supposed to reflect on the relationship between those two parts.

Arrange and perform your Haiku using your choice of classroom instruments.

Choose a season:		Choose a color:		
Think of your color in that season. What do you				
See?	Smell?	Hear?	Feel?	Taste?
Write your Haiku using the ideas you wrote in the five boxes above.				
A. 5 syllables:		B. 7 syllables:		C. 5 syllables:
Create a title for your Haiku:				
Choose an instrument that helps tell the story of each line of your Haiku. Write the name of each instrument below.				
A.	B.	C.	C.	C.
Explain why you chose each instrument				
A.	B.	C.	C.	C.