Creative Music Workshop
Performing Arts Teaching and Learning Resources

Suitable for primary to junior secondary school students

Suggested participant no.: 15 to 20

Learning focuses: Rhythm, listening, concentration, sound imitation and reproduction, the use of imagination to tell stories or present mental images in an abstract way

To many, the first step to their music journey is to take up a musical instrument, or to learn to read the music notes on the stave. Certainly, one can learn about music the traditional way. Yet, ‘traditional’ learning aside, ‘music’ can be used as a way to unleash their creativity and imaginative power, even for those who are not familiar with music. In fact, every one of us is inherently ‘musical’. For instance, as a fetus in our mother’s body, we listened to heartbeats similar to the rhythm made by a metronome; on hearing upbeat melody, we have the urge to dance; we express our feelings through songs when we are excited or sad. To express and imagine by means of different rhythms and sound qualities could be your first ‘lesson’ in music.

The ‘Creative Music Workshop’ in Performing Arts Teaching and Learning Resources this time begins with simple rhythm exercises. We hope participants can grasp the basic elements of music and subsequently express, via ‘unconventional’ musical way, their creativity, imagination and feelings. At the same time, they can learn to cooperate and listen. We create ‘music’ based on the concept ‘we are all musical instruments’.

Learning Objectives:

To allow participants to grasp the basic elements of music through simple exercises on rhythm, tempo and scale. To give participants opportunities to use their voice, their body and simple musical instruments to make and imitate different sounds, encouraging them to use ‘music’ to express feelings and imagination. After that, to get inspiration by listening to different music pieces and to tell a story via ‘music’.

Duration: 4 sessions, each around 1 hour (adjustable according to individual activity’s needs)

All rights reserved by Performing Arts Education Centre, HKAPA. Photocopying for classroom use is permitted by non-profit educational institutions, please specify the source.
### Content: The first session - Rhythm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Learning Activities</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5mins</td>
<td>● Instructor introduces what creative music is, how to create music and tell stories through basic music activities. This session is mainly about rhythm.</td>
<td>Pay attention to the body movements, which should go along with the sounds produced. In fact, voice projection is a type of body movement as well. Ask participants to sing their name with a ‘stiff’ and a ‘relaxed’ body respectively to see the differences. The human voice is our innate ‘musical instrument’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 10mins| ● Sing the Praises of Yourself
   1. Participants group in a circle and ‘sing’ their own name by turn. The singing style can be an imitation of different music genres, e.g. rock, opera, folk or hymn.
   2. Ask everyone to ‘sing’ once more in a different music genre and move their body while singing. (Need not worry about not being tonally accurate when singing in Cantonese) |
| 10mins| ● Human Voice Orchestra
   1. Divide participants into groups. Instructor distributes cards with different musical instruments to participants. The combination of musical instruments can be mixed freely and different from that of a standard orchestra.
   2. Different ‘musical instruments’ work in groups to do a sound check.
   3. Instructor conducts the ‘performance’ of different combinations of musical instruments.
   4. Choose a familiar music piece or song for the orchestra to be led by the ‘conductor’.
   5. In the process, the ‘conductor’ can suggest the ‘musical instruments’ to change in volume and tempo. ‘Musical instruments’ can accompany their voices with movements.
   6. For students who are not familiar with musical instruments, instructor may ask them to try the above exercise by imitating sound-emitting devices or phenomenon, such as vehicle, phone or wind. | Prepare cards with the names or images of musical instruments. If necessary, play the recording of some of the musical instruments for participants to imitate. At the same time, let participants imagine the sounds made by different musical instruments. Play in the orchestra by listening and observation. |

### Preparation:

1. venue with sufficient space for movement and different group activities
2. Whiteboard, whiteboard pens, paper, pens of different colors, metronome
3. Simple musical instruments, e.g. rattles, triangles, recorders, harmonicas and mini xylophones

### Teaching Methods:

1. Explicit Teaching
2. Cooperative learning
3. Hands-on learning
4. Problem Solving
25 mins  

● **Clap It Out**  
1. Instructor leads participants to clap a four-beat rhythm. The movement-and-beat combinations are as follows:  
   i) a. both hands clap the laps x 2  
      b. spread hands x 2  
   ii) a. left hand claps left lap x 1  
       right hand claps right lap x 1  
      b. snap fingers x 2  

Ask participants to keep a steady pace and not to accelerate or decelerate in the process.

2. After acquiring and grasping the beats, participants, apart from clapping the beats, can say words aloud at the first and second beats:  
   - their name  
   - their favourite sport  
   - film title  

3. Then, vary the exercise by saying name or title aloud at the third and fourth beats.  

4. Lastly, try different ‘four-beat’ combinations. Write them on the whiteboard to make it easier for the participants to follow.  
   (can be aided by a metronome)

   Beats are the foundation of rhythm. When the beat combination and the speed change, the resulting rhythm is different.

5 mins  

● **Clap to Speak**  
1. Divide participants into groups of two. Select a topic, e.g. what to do during holidays or what to buy for a friend’s birthday.  
2. Both participants try to communicate via clapping rhythms and develop a dialogue to try to express simple messages and feelings via clapping rhythms. The key is to listen, communicate and imagine.
find out what happens.
3. After that, both can talk about what they have experienced in the dialogue.
4. Invite a group of participants to demonstrate.

5mins
- **Conclusion**
  Instructor recaps and explains the contents of this session. Ask participants to end the session by clapping hands from a slow tempo to a fast tempo.

---

**Content : The second session - Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Learning Activities</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5mins</td>
<td>● Instructor recaps the contents of last session. This session is mainly about scale.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 10mins| ● **Follow Me**
  1. Participants group in a circle. Instructor claps a specific rhythm.
  2. The next participant listens and follows the clapping and so on. Pass the rhythm on one-on-one until all participants can clap the rhythm.
  3. Any participants can vary the initial rhythm, e.g. divide one beat into two (clap two times within one beat), three (clap three times within one beat), four (clap four times within one beat) or silence it (no clapping).
  4. Listen and coordinate to make it consistent.
  5. Get mutual agreement on when to stop.                                         |         |
| 10mins| ● **Human Voice Orchestra**
  Content of the activity same as above                                           |         |
| 25mins| ● **Jumping on the Stave**
  1. Use colour tapes to mark a ‘stave’ on the floor. Write ‘do, ra, mi, fa, so, la, t’ or ‘1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7’ at the lines to represent the scale: ‘do’ at the lowest line and ‘t’ at the highest.
  2. Assign participants to take up each music note. When the participant steps on a line, it is similar to pressing a piano key, e.g. when he steps on ‘do’, the participant(s) singing ‘do’ need to sing ‘do’, when he steps on ‘ra’, the participant(s) singing ‘ra’ need to sing ‘ra’ and so on.
  3. Participants can improvise by stepping or jumping on the ‘piano keys’ to let others sing. Apart from this, the following variations can be used:  
  
<p>| |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>t 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>so 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ra 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instructor can play ‘do, ra, mi, fa, so, la, t’ with a simple musical instrument to make it easier for the participants to grasp the tonal difference.

3. Participants can improvise by stepping or jumping on the ‘piano keys’ to let others sing. Apart from this, the following variations can be used:  

<p>| |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>t 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>so 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ra 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A melody is made up of the variation of pitches, lengths, tempo and loudness. A consistent and structured combination is able to express the theme and meaning of a piece of music.
4. Depending on the number of participants, they can work in groups.

5 mins

● Conclusion
Instructor recaps and explains the contents of this session. Ask participants to end the session by 'singing' their feelings about this session.

Content：The third session – Music Appreciation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Learning Activities</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 mins</td>
<td>Instructor recaps the contents of last session and briefly introduces the contents of this session, moving from music appreciation to music creation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 mins</td>
<td>● <strong>The Music in the Image</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. Instructor chooses some atmospheric music, e.g. film soundtracks.&lt;br&gt;2. Before playing the track, instructor gives participants some directions for music associations, e.g. feelings, views, atmospheres, scenarios and events.&lt;br&gt;3. Divide participants into groups and ask them to listen attentively.&lt;br&gt;4. While listening, participants can express their immediate feelings with colour-pen drawing.&lt;br&gt;5. After that, participants can share in groups their feelings about the track and the drawing.&lt;br&gt;6. Each group concludes the feelings and images that track has given them and shares in the big group.&lt;br&gt;7. Instructor guides participants to the parts that have evoked their various associations. Instructor can play the track once more.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Learning Activities</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 30mins | **Can you See the Music?**  
1. With reference to the graphs on the right, create different lines.             |                                                                         |
|        | 2. Referring to the lines, participants can produce the imaginary sounds by singing. |                                                                         |
|        | 3. Apart from simple lines, lines of different thickness and geometric shapes can be used. Let participants collaborate when producing the imaginary sounds. Apart from vocals, simple musical instruments can be used. Under the conductor’s direction, participants can create as an orchestra. |                                                                         |
|        | 4. Participants can work in groups and exchange ‘sheet music’ to create ‘music’.        |                                                                         |
| 5mins  | **Conclusion**  
Instructor recaps and explains the contents of this session. Ask participants to end the session by expressing their feelings about this session by writing ‘sheet music’.  
After previewing the music creation assignment in the next session, instructor can assign in advance the topics and stories for each group to allow more time for the participants to create and rehearse. |                                                                         |

**Content：The fourth session – Music Creation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Learning Activities</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 10mins | **Warm-up Activity**  
Any activity of the previous workshops may be chosen and simplified to conduct in class. |                                                                         |
| 40mins | **Creative Music Presentation**  
1. Choose different themes or stories and compose ‘sheet music’ of 1 to 2 minutes’.  
2. Make use of vocals, simple musical instruments or other sound-making objects, e.g. paper, plastic buckets and plastic bags. Compose and arrange the music according to the ‘sheet music’.  
3. After rehearsal, each group by turn presents their music creation. | Each group can choose the presentation form, e.g. standard band/orchestra, movement or installation, according to the music contents. |
4. Each group briefly explains their creative elements and ideas. Instructor and other participants can respond.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10mins</th>
<th>Conclusion and Sharing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Explain the music elements: rhythm, scale and melody.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Explain the variations of their combination and how they can express feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Discuss how participants has made use of the music elements to 'tell a story' in the workshop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Before the end of the workshop, ask each participant to 'sing' or 'play' a melody to express their feelings about the workshop.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above activities are applicable to workshops of other themes. They can be used as exercises in listening, movement, teamwork, creativity and story-telling.

Acknowledgement:

Karry Li (Graduate of School of Music, HKAPA)

Chan Pui Ching (Music Demonstrator and Technologist of School of Music, HKAPA)