**Grand Tour**

**Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra**

**2019 Family Discovery Concert**

**Pre-Concert Lesson Plans**

**Objectives:** Students will learn the names of the instruments of the orchestra, their families, and what to listen for in the concert. They will also learn information about the composers, places explored through the music, the conductors, and collaborators behind the music. Lastly, they will participate in interactive games/activities designed to supplement this information.

**1. The instruments of the orchestra**

Introduction: Ask the students if they can name an instrument or family of instruments in the orchestra.

**Strings:** Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass

**Woodwinds:** Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon

**Brass:** French Horn, Trumpet, Trombone, Tuba

**Percussion:** Timpani, Bass Drum, Cymbals, Snare Drum, Other miscellaneous percussion instruments (triangle, ratchet, etc.)

**Other:** Saxophone, Guitar, Voice, etc. are not used in the orchestra, but are used in some pieces

Learn the Instruments: Read through or present the first PowerPoint presentation with the students and ask them to pay careful attention to the way the instruments look, how sound is produced through them, and what each instrument sounds like.

**2. Instrument Families**

Introduction: Inform or remind the students that there are four families of instruments **(String, Woodwind, Brass, and Percussion)**. Ask the students what similarities they notice in the instruments and in which family each instrument belongs. Focus on instruments that look similar, sound similar, or produce sound in a similar way, and refer to the instrument chart in the first PowerPoint presentation for reference.

Here are some answers to look for:

* They are made of brass
* They have strings
* They have a reed
* You blow air into them
* You use a bow to produce a sound
* You strike them to produce a sound

**3. What to Listen For**

Refer to the first PowerPoint starting on page/slide 10 and go over how the orchestra is arranged and why it is arranged that way.

Answer the questions on the slide with your class, and ask the students to focus on using the information they learned about the different instruments in the orchestra and their families.

Finally, play about a minute or two of this link from George Gershwin’s *An American in Paris* (also provided on the first PowerPoint on page/slide 14): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KU1X3Wut-k0>

Answer the questions listed on the slide.

**4. Concert Etiquette**

Introduction: Inform students that there are certain guidelines to follow when attending a concert. Play this link to the concert etiquette rap (also provided on the first PowerPoint on page/slide 15):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykk5TF-pKw4&feature=youtu.be>

After playing the video, please refer to the first PowerPoint, page/slide 15 and read the material to better reinforce the message in the video.

**5. People and Places**

You can print or present the second PowerPoint for this section of the lesson plan to teach students about:

1. Composers George Gershwin, John Philip Sousa, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Manuel de Falla, Jacques Offenbach, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Richard Wagner, and Antonin Dvorak

2. Music from these places: United States, England, Spain, France, Russia, Germany, and the Czech Republic

3. Conductor: Adam Flatt

4. Collaborator: Theatre Tuscaloosa

5. Orchestra: Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra

**6. Supplemental Listening Activities**

There are several listening activities embedded in PowerPoint 2. You can include any or all of them in your pre-concert lessons. They are listed below:

1. John Philip Sousa: *Stars and Stripes Forever*. Page/Slide 7-8

2. Traditional/Vaughan Williams: *Greensleeves*. **Answer:** the melody is also used with new lyrics in the Christmas song “What Child Is This?” so students may have heard it before during the holiday season. Page/Slide 9-10

3. “Trepak” from *The Nutcracker.* Page/Slide 15-16

4. Dvorak: “Goin’ Home” (If possible, focus on the concept of “home” and what it means to be “home” – what that might mean musically, etc.). This concept will be explored in more depth in the discussion activity below. Page/Slide 19-21

**7. Supplemental Discussion Activity**

**Objective:** To have students take the concepts presented in both PowerPoints and apply it to their own life experiences in a guided discussion. The discussion will center on the sense of home and the sense of place.

**Materials:** Whiteboard or chalkboard

**Instructions:** Ask the following questions and write some of their answers on the board.

* During the performance, you will take a musical journey to many different countries. Have you ever traveled to a different country? If so, how was the place different from your home? If not, can you imagine how you would feel in a new place?
* What does it mean to you to be home? How do you feel when you are home? Have you ever been homesick when traveling to different places? Does a certain kind of music make you feel at home? How does that music sound (slow/fast/specific instruments)?
* When you were homesick, what did you do to make yourself feel less homesick? Did someone else or something else help you feel better?
* Antonin Dvorak was focused on writing music that sounded “American.” What are some different types of American music? What instruments are used in American music?

**8. Supplemental Interactive Activity #1: Art and Music**

**Objective:** To have students use music to create a work of art, and to have them use information about a specific piece of music to inform the art they create (in this case, Richard Wagner’s “Ride of the Valkyries”).

**Materials:** Markers/crayons/colored pencils, speakers/sound system

**Instructions:** Refer to PowerPoint 2 page/slide 17-18 and give students preliminary information about Wagner’s piece, “Ride of the Valkyries.” Play the piece for students by following this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykk5TF-pKw4&feature=youtu.be>

Focus points may include:

* What a Valkyrie is in Norse mythology (woman warrior figure who controls the fate of soldiers on the battlefield)
* How visual artwork, theater, and music often go together, and that many visual artists used this musical piece to create works of art
* That the warrior figure may be imagined as looking many different ways depending on the artist

Ask students to draw their own version of “Ride of the Valkyries” using this information. You can play the music over the speakers while they draw for inspiration. At the end of the activity, select several students to present their work of art to the class, and encourage them to explain why they made specific choices based on what they heard.

**9. Supplemental Interactive Activity #2: “Leitmotifs” and Musical Themes**

**Objective:** To have students understand the concept of a “leitmotif” in Wagner’s music and to create their own musical leitmotifs guided by “Ride of the Valkyries.”

**Materials:** Whiteboard (optional), small hand percussion instruments if available (optional)

**Instructions:** Explain to students what a “leitmotif is.

* A leitmotif is a musical theme that represents and idea, person, or specific “feeling” in the music. It is repeated throughout a musical piece whenever the composer wants the audience to think about this idea, person, or feeling. Richard Wagner is known for his use of leitmotifs in his music.
* Students will learn about three kinds of leitmotifs, both found at the beginning of “Ride of the Valkyries:” Play the first minute or two of the piece using the above link and have students listen for the following leitmotifs:
  + The **TRILL (you can also call it a wobble)** – a fast back and forth fluttery sound between two notes. It is often associated with excitement in the music
  + An **UPWARD SWOOSH** – when instruments make sounds that go from low to high very quickly. It is often associated with jumping or flying
  + A **BOUNCY RHYTHM –** in “Ride of the Valkyries,” the **BRASS** instruments play this – it is the main melody one would sing after listening to this piece
* Divide the class into groups of 5-7 students. Have them make a circle. If hand percussion instruments are available, hand them out. If not, tell students that they can use a combination of “body percussion” techniques in the activity. These include: clapping, stomping, leg-patting, snapping, etc.
* Instruct students to create an exciting piece of music using the leitmotifs they learned about. They have the option of playing the leitmotifs all together as a group (meaning the whole group only plays one leitmotif at a time in whatever order they want – this might be appropriate for younger students), OR they can mix them together (different students play different leitmotifs at the same time to create a more “orchestral” texture)
* Have each group perform their composition for the class!

**10. Supplemental Activity: Crossword Puzzle**

Print the crossword puzzle for students to work on quietly, if time permits. All clues are found in the study guide PowerPoints and materials. This crossword is appropriate for grades 5-8, but any grade level can try it if the teacher believes it is appropriate.