



National AES Conference
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“Show Me the Music!”

Session presented by:

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I. What is plastique animée?

Plastique animée is an instructional process through which students can determine and show what they hear in a piece of music.

It differs from “creative movement,” in which students move freely to a piece of music.

It differs from “choreographed dance,” in which students are expected to use dance steps and/or hold some degree of dance training, and in which the movement is “prescribed.” The purpose of choreographed dance is = the dance.

The purpose of plastique animée = the music. It is to develop understanding of the music and SHOW that understanding through use of the full body.

II. How is it beneficial to children in classroom settings?

- Teaches all 3 of Artistic Processes within the National Music Standards: **Creating, Performing, Responding**
- Fosters **collaboration & teamwork**
- Group **decision-making, problem-solving**
- Creates **ownership** through embodiment
- Helps **make learning visible**; can be used for **assessment** and/or **performance before an audience**

III. Sample Plastiques, created with children in mind...

- A. “Lullaby” (Johannes Brahms, performed by Yo-Yo Ma/Kathryn Stott)
- B. “Why” (Bart Quartier, *20 Children’s Songs for Marimba, No.13*, performed by Randall Chaves Camacho)
- C. “Mobile” (Bart Quartier, *20 Children’s Songs for Marimba, No.7*, performed by Nonoka Mizukami)

IV. Some general principles for doing plastique animée with children

- LISTEN to the piece frequently over time with children
- BRAINSTORM about what they hear (verbally, in writing)
- CHOOSE two musical elements that really stand out to them, and focus on these
- LISTEN AGAIN!
- Invite children's voices to be heard – everyone's idea is important!
- Write down ideas; save using interactive whiteboard
- Brainstorm about what kind of "props" might help show the music
- aim for kid-friendly objects that can be held/manipulated easily during movement and that can "bring out" an aspect of the music!

- Discuss how SPACE can be used in room, i.e. formations, groupings (solo, partner, small group?)
- Think about levels that may show the music (i.e. laying, crouching, sitting, standing, reaching, etc.)
- Experiment! Talk about which ideas work well, which ones don't work as well as anticipated. Help students make decisions as a group.
- LISTEN AGAIN!
- Try out ideas and be okay with scrapping them to try out other ideas!
- Let children rest between plastique sessions; creativity requires time for incubation
- Come back and change, tweak, build on ideas from last session

V. Recommendations for choosing plastique music (for use with children)

- Consider ATTENTION SPAN LENGTH for child's age
- SHORT = ideal (i.e. 2-3 minutes in length)
- Look for pieces that have VERY OVERT, CLEAR musical aspects that children will be able to hear/recognize
- If possible, look for pieces that expose musical concepts the grade is ALREADY STUDYING
- Consider letting children CHOOSE from 2 or 3 pieces you've pre-selected – so they take OWNERSHIP!

VI. Questions/comments are welcomed!

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