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An Introduction to Music for Preschool Students

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An Introduction to Music for Preschool Students

Children's Literature Curriculum: An Introduction to Music for Preschool Students

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Rationale

Music has evolved throughout history. It has developed from ancient cultures to the present day and continues to adapt. Music can be applied in any situation from healing the mind and soul in tragic times, to bring people together during a pep rally and rallying a crowd during a sports game. Music is also a method used with parents to soothe, engage, and connect with children. With a variety of options to choose from, music has seemingly endless possibilities and can influence children in multiple ways.

When choosing a topic for a children's literature curriculum, music swiftly came to mind. The influence of music in child development offers many benefits. From playing to listening, it helps with cognitive, emotional, and motor skills that can only be developed at an early age. Exposing children particularly at the age of four and five can enhance those skills, because the brain is malleable and able to take in new information.

Children are unique in that they have the ability and the opportunity to take on challenges that adults cannot master even after years of trying. They can learn multiple languages simultaneously and become skillful in sports such as in skiing and horseback riding, which adults may find intimidating and less accessible. Developing an ear for music can evolve at any time, but children are given the chance to cultivate these skills in a more efficient way. Adults, can learn a new instrument and take lessons, but they would have to immerse themselves into the task and train vigorously to acquire the skills that may come more naturally to children who have been practicing since they were four or five years old.

Technology has changed how we look at and hear music, but the influence of how it enhances our well-being remains the same. Children can easily swipe and tap on a cell phone or iPad. Through those devices, music can be played anywhere today, which is an advantage for children .

While children live in a society where music is often diluted to background music on a game or television show, as educators, we have an opportunity to introduce them to music by breaking down what music is at its simplest and purest form and discuss its foundation. This way, children can build a vocabulary and appreciation of music and possibly influence them to learn an instrument or join a music class.

As educators continuously find new ways to introduce music to children, it is important for music to be incorporated into a child's daily life. The purpose of music is to ultimately entertain, and therefore, educators should always make sure that their children are enjoying the musical journey.

When music is taught in the classroom, it brings students together, because it involves everyone, and each child gets an opportunity to express themselves. Singing or playing an instrument as a class can result in a harmonious environment, because it increases confidence, is a form of communication, and improves self-esteem in young children.

Through this curriculum, children were introduced to a selection of books regarding the foundations of music, the various genres stemmed from early music, followed by a collection of stories about famous musicians who revolutionized the art form. Students were exposed to

history, languages, and new vocabulary through this particular literature. Each lesson involved at most two picture books that center around a theme for the day. Children were then invited to participate by asking questions and offering comments through a guided discussion.

As the curriculum evolved, the students engaged in a variety of activities that centered around the picture books from each lesson. Some lessons focused on a new idea or vocabulary, while other lessons were more hands on. For instance, the students constructed instruments using accessible materials found in a home or classroom. Through that experience, the children were inspired by the stories read in class. Learning new songs and singing together as a class was also a crucial aspect to each lesson, because it provided a sense of unity to the lesson and would help put into practice the lesson for the day.

Overall, this music centered curriculum and its influences on young children was important for their development. This study was an opportunity to encourage the children to take risks and enjoy the musical journey as a whole class. Through the selection of this children's literature, I was able to learn more about myself as an educator and witness my students engage in ways I had not seen before. Music has played a particularly large role in my childhood and has shaped who I am as an educator. I studied vocal performance in undergrad and in my first master's program. I firmly believe that music should be cherished and taught to young children so that they may find their own voice early on in their development.

Child Development

This curriculum is intended for four- and five-year-old children. Preschool students are at a pivotal point of their development where they are spontaneous, imaginative, talkative, eager to learn. Since this curriculum is designed for young students, it was important to understand where they are in their development and how a music-focused curriculum will enhance their learning. Working with this age group also required a level of understanding of how patient, interested, and steady a four- and five-year-old can be during a lesson.

In the book, *Child and Adolescent Development Ages 4-14*, Chip Wood (2017) breaks down what the characters of a four- and five-year-old are like socially, emotionally, and cognitively. He writes, “Fours tend to be ready for everything. They are explorers and adventurers who are soaking up the world of knowledge with incredible speed” (pg.32). This sense of energy from the children creates an engaging environment if the children are open minded. As for five-year-old children, Wood (2017) writes, “They’re consolidating the rapid growth of the previous year, becoming calmer, more literal and exact, and more attuned to details as they rest from the wild exuberance of four” (pg. 44). While the children grow rapidly each year, their eagerness to explore new topics that will involve creativity and class unity remains the same at this age.

Understanding the foundations of music and its impact on children’s development is crucial. Knowledge of music history, music evolution, and its impact on emotional and behavioral development will enhance the experience for both the teachers and the students. In

order for teachers to cultivate this curriculum, it is beneficial to research the impact of neuroscience and psychology as well as with music, and how it coincides with child development.

The influences of music on child development have continuously been explored over time through literature. The effects of music can play a crucial role for children from when they are in utero to their adolescent years. Music, unlike language, has the power to activate every subsystem in the brain. From listening to a song to playing an instrument, music has the ability to build a child's motor coordination and spatial abilities. Exposure to music at an early age benefits children's language and literary skills. Music has also been proven beneficial to a child's development through different learning and attention strategies. Through literature about music and the brain, parents and educators can learn for themselves the positive influences that can enhance key abilities of a child's development.

Music is an art form and cultural foundation that is used more than for just listening. While music has been used with adults for health, pleasure and healing, it benefits children as well. There are many aspects that strengthen a child's development, and music is one area that can increase cognitive, emotional and motor skills from an early age.

Neuroscientists Dr. Oliver Sacks and Dr. David Levitin and educational psychologist Dr. Jane M. Healy have researched the nurturing and beneficial abilities of music in children. Both neuroscientists have proven that it not only increases the stimulation of the child's brain, but it can help children who are struggling with the ability to focus and/or learn in a conventional

classroom environment. The power of music therapy through classes such as Dalcroze Eurhythmics, which uses the body to promote a strong musical foundation and natural feel for music, also play a role when a child is behind the learning curve. These movement type classes have been researched and developed over the past century and the classes are accessible worldwide.

Each child develops differently, and music can offer many positive aspects. From learning to play an instrument to implementing songs in a home or classroom, children quickly apply their skills. The ways in which we listen to music have increased over time through technology as well as through the internet. The resources are plentiful with one's ability to listen to music anywhere with the touch of a button today. There are also a variety of genres to choose from for educators and parents.

The benefits of music stem from its abilities to unite, heal, and entertain throughout history, the world over. The ability to hear a pitch, dance to a rhythm, and create harmony are basic principles of music that have been applied to the art form for over thousands of years. While adults can enjoy music and choose to engage or listen to it, children should be given the opportunity as well. From the book, *Your Child's Growing Mind*, Healy (2004) writes:

Newborns can distinguish frequency and pitch; at one to two months infants can tell the difference between sounds and even perceive rhythm. Although auditory pathways continue to develop until seven to ten years, the first year is a crucial period for learning the sounds of language and developing an interest in communicating with others.

(pg.45-46)

With the ability to build these skills so early on in their development, children can learn to socialize and begin to process memory even as a preschooler while singing and dancing to songs.

Various music classes can enrich children as well. From incorporating fun to encouraging spontaneity in the classroom, a few composers over the past few centuries have developed methods that can enhance variety of skills. Emile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865-1950) created Dalcroze Eurhythmics which uses rhythm as its vital element. Carl Orff (1895-1982) adapted a child's world of play and created the Orff Music Training that encompasses music, movement and drama. Zoltan Kodaly (1882-1967) and Shinichi Suzuki (1898-1998) both incorporated the environment and music theory into their methods and created the Kodaly Method and the Suzuki Method.

Though these classes are offered in and outside of school, parents can choose how they would like to expose their child to music. Dr. Healy (2004) concludes, "Preliminary studies of musical training affecting cognitive skills suggest that carefully designed experiences that link written notes with hand movements on the piano may increase visual spatial and memory" (p.361). Each method is beneficial and will enhance motor and cognitive skills differently. It will also help better prepare them for language and literary skills later on.

Neuroscientists Dr. Saks and Dr. Levitin have both researched and written about the impact music can provide for children. Music may have evolved over the centuries from

Gregorian Chant to Electronic Dance Music, but its effects on the brain remain the same. While the brain has a left and right hemisphere, music appears to live in both sides of the brain. As Dr. Saks (2007) states in his book, *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain*, “This might go with the fact that there is no single “music center” in the human brain, but the involvement of a dozen scattered networks throughout the brain” (preface).

Exposure to music does not always imply that children should take lessons at an early age. Listening to music will still affect the brain in multiple ways. From *This Is Your Brain on Music: The Science of a Human Obsession*, Dr. Levitin (2005) writes the following:

The structural processing- the musical syntax-has been localized to the frontal lobes of both hemispheres in areas adjacent to and overlapping with those regions that process speech syntax, such as Broca’s area, and shows up regardless of whether listeners have musical training. (p. 126)

Through listening to various genres of music, children will begin to process music differently and it will benefit with their speech as well.

Learning to play an instrument is different for a child and an adult. Certain skills are easier to accomplish mainly because the brain is still developing. Dr. Levitin (2005) writes:

Musical training appears to have the effect of shifting some music processing from the right (imagistic) hemisphere to the left (logistic) hemisphere...and the normal course of development seems to cause greater hemispheric specializations: Children show less

lateralization of musical operations than do adults, regardless of whether they are musicians or not. (p.125)

Dr. Levitin (2005) also writes, “Experiments have shown that young children, as well as adults, are better able to learn and memorize melodies that are drawn from scales that contain unequal distances such as this” (p. 36-37). Melodies are easier to memorize when the musical notes are next to each other such as in the nursery rhyme, “*The Wheels on the Bus*”. This demonstrates that music shares certain aspects that children and adults can both grasp and other skills that children can master faster because of where they are in their development.

Overall, if given the opportunity, children’s development skills can be amplified through listening or playing music. Music can also help children focus and tune in better to their surroundings. According to Dr. Saks (2007),

The implication of all early education is clear. Although a teaspoon of Mozart may not make a child a better mathematician, there is little doubt that regular exposure to music, and especially active participation in music, may stimulate development of many different areas of the brain-areas which have to work together to listen to or perform music. For the vast majority of students, music can be every bit as important educationally as reading or writing. (p. 101)

Music should be enjoyable, educational, and applied in every household and classroom for its benefits are powerful.

At Bank Street School for Children, the philosophy and research about the developmental interaction approach is useful when children are growing and learning. In the book, *Revisiting a Progressive Pedagogy*, Nancy Nager and Edna K. Shapiro write:

The changing pattern of growth, understanding, and response that characterize children and adults as they *develop*; and the dual meaning of *interaction* as, first, the interconnected spheres of thought and emotion, and, equally, the importance of engagement with the environment of children, adults, and the material world. (p. 11)

Through this approach, it can be applied to children's literature. Storytelling is a powerful tool for teachers. While reading a story can teach a lesson, engaging the children in the discussion and permitting them to create the conversation about the story, applies the developmental-interaction. Nina Jaffe, who contributed to the book as well, writes,

If it's in a story, it's believable it's an emotional truth. Storytelling is the most ancient of communal occupations. By following a child through his particular interest in story, teachers can understand a child's needs on a deeper, more comprehensive level. In so doing, they can create a learning environment that encompasses more fully the child's cognitive development and growth as a social being....storytelling offers teachers a way of building a sense of comradeship and group identity; and a deeper sense of both individual children and the life of the group as a whole. (p. 162-163)

Music and storytelling are interconnected, because they create images and narratives. Music can be a form of storytelling and therefore, unite children and their teacher. Together,

music and storytelling creates a harmonious classroom setting, which makes it enjoyable and social for young children.

Blending the music as a theme in picture books enables children to comprehend visually and audibly simultaneously. In *A Critical Handbook of Children's Literature*, Rebecca J. Lukens, Jacqueline J. Smith, and Cynthia Miller Coffel (2013) write:

The illustrations tell a second story, simultaneously pulling the eye from the text, disrupting the fluency as a new story is constructed from the interaction of the text and illustration. The combination of the two may provide readers with additional interpretations based on their individual personal responses to the text, the pictures, and their interactions. (p. 50)

Through the picture books, each child can take away something different from the text and illustrations. Additionally, it provides visual support when they are learning new vocabulary. Moreover, music and storytelling can go together. One can read a story about music followed by creating a song or recreating the story through musical instruments.

Ultimately, music positively guides children through their social, emotional, and cognitive development. Through picture books and storytelling, children are exposed to many aspects of learning and a variety of tools that they can take away from the curriculum. Teachers provide the materials of literature, activities, and songs, but children shape where the conversations and discussions will alter the curriculum's course and through that experience, the students will develop.

Children's Literature Review

Below is a children's literature guide to the books selected for this curriculum. It has a wide range from A to Z books to biography stories. Each book was specifically chosen to enhance a child's development. Through this exposure to a variety of musical genres, children can take away knowledge of musical vocabulary, history, and literature.

Auerbach, Adam. *Edda: A Little Valkyrie's First Day of School*. Henry Holt and Company, 2014.

This tale is about a young girl who lives in a magical world, called Asgard. She has many mythical creatures as friends and hunts for monsters with her father. Although she likes her daily life, she would like to meet other people her age. Edda's father enrolls her in school on Earth. Edda encounters many obstacles being a new student; she realizes how different she is and now has to be part of a community. In her class, she must follow rules; wait on lines, and writes stories. Through her storytelling, she is able to find her own voice and learn to make friends.

Many children can relate to Edda, as every child has been a new student at one point. It discusses rules, patience, and community building. While this is a fictional story, it stems from the Ring Cycle Opera composed by Richard Wagner. Therefore, this is a blend of music history and relatable lessons for children. It is a good addition to the library because, it teaches children about being brave and acceptance and it incorporates a music related story.

Garriel, Barbara S. *I Know a Shy Fellow Who Swallowed a Cello*. Boyds Mills Press, 2004.

Through rhyme and repetition, this fantastical book tells the story about a man who begins by swallowing a cello. From there he ingests other instruments such as a harp, flute, and saxophone. Once, he fills up his stomach with too many musical instruments, his body rejects each instrument until they are all out of his body. This book is intended for young children who understand the concept of pretend situations that are for stories and not real life. With its disproportionate illustrations and expressive facial expressions, the readers can visualize how this man is swallowing multiple musical instruments.

This humorous tale engages children by introducing instruments in a fun and outrageous plot line that young children often enjoy. This book also shares scenes of performers playing music in different scenarios and genres. Therefore, children can see the context where the man is swallowing each instrument. For instance, the man swallows a cymbal within the marching band.

Hayes, Ann. *Meet the Orchestra*. Voyager Books, 1991.

Anthropomorphism is a popular and effective way to tell a story or introduce an idea or lesson to children. In this book, children learn the foundations of an orchestra; what it is, who plays in it, and the function of each instrument. By implementing animals as humans playing each instrument while dressed up in black tie attire, children can engage in the lesson in a fun and engaging way. While the story resembles an alphabet book, it is more of a vocabulary lesson with animated illustrations of animals playing various instruments in a welcoming and nurturing way. Each page entails a word that fits in an orchestra setting and a picture to accompany the new vocabulary.

Many of these instruments may be new to young children, which is why this book would work well in this curriculum. It would be used in the classroom as a reference book throughout the lessons. The book is assembled by first introducing the string family, then the wind family, followed by the brass family, and lastly the percussion family. Each family of instruments is then brought together where children can see what an orchestra looks like when performing.

Lithgow, John. *Never Play Music Right Next to the Zoo*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2013.

For children who grow up in the city, this book is for them. This story takes place in Central Park right next to the Central Park Zoo. For a family that is going to watch a concert, this night is not like other nights. The animals break from their cages and overtake the orchestra. Once they take control, the animals play a concert themselves. The children are so enthralled by the animals playing in the orchestra, that they forget to follow their parents. Luckily, they eventually find them and all is well again. It is a night that they will not forget.

This delightful tale is not only entertaining to younger students, but it teaches them about instruments and what a family outing would look like when attending a classical music concert. The book can be implemented into the curriculum as an engaging way to discuss the instruments and relate the story to what we have learned so far about music.

Moss, Lloyd. *Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin*. Simon & Schuster for Young Readers, 1995.

This Caldecott Honor Book is known for its zany rhythmic words. What begins, as a violinist playing a solo, becomes a duo when another instrument joins in, followed by another instrument until there is a complete orchestra. Together, they all play at the same time creating music. These whimsical illustrations create an inviting and engaging world where children can imagine what it could sound like to add more and more sounds at once. In addition, with all of

the different people playing who may be tall or short, this demonstrates that playing music is for everyone and anyone can play.

Once there is an understanding of what an instrument is and its function in the orchestra, this book is the perfect way to begin or end a lesson. It is an example of how working well together can create something even greater. Not only are the colorful illustrations beautiful, but they also create a world to which children can escape and drift off into their imaginations.

Munoz Ryan, Pam. *When Marian Sang*. Scholastic Press. New York, 2002.

This book captures the essences of Marian Anderson's upbringing and career. Marian Anderson was an opera singer who was known for her gospels and art songs. She was the first African American female to sing at the Metropolitan Opera and sang at the Lincoln Memorial in 1939 where she received a medal from Eleanor Roosevelt. Other than her countless performances and successful career, Anderson fought bravely for what she stood for and wanted from her audiences.

Caldecott Medalist Brian Selznick illustrates each page with dignity and grace just like Marian Anderson herself. While the colors are muted in each page, the details of Anderson's private moments stand out and are memorable. This biographical picture book is important for children to read, because it discusses many different topics: courage, race, music, and history. Marian Anderson's legacy should live on and this book succeeds in bringing her story to the next generation.

Prelutsky, Jack. *The Carnival of the Animals*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2010.

By adapting Camille Saint-Saen's (1835-1921) classical music piece set to words and including illustrations, children can get a glimpse of what *The Carnival of the Animals* may be about. While it is the author's interpretation, children can be exposed to a beautiful and historic piece of music in a new way. With the addition of short poems on each page, children can listen to the words and possibly make connections to the music.

A CD accompanies this book, which is beneficial to both educators and students, because it creates an entire experience for the class. The illustrations on each page tell a story that coincide with the words. Each page is filled with colorful, creative, and artistic drawings that bring the story to life. Through this adaptation of the music, children can learn about a variety of topics at once. For instance, their discussions can evolve about the composer, the animals, the instruments, and a variety of other topics that are key to a child's development.

Roth, Susan L. *Do Re Mi*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2006.

This book teaches children about the origins of music through storytelling and beautiful illustrations. Guido d'Arezzo was the founder of music notation and discovered that people could unify this system so that singers and musicians could read the same music. Bringing this story to children not only teaches them about Guido d'Arezzo's life, but it is an example of someone taking a chance to change history.

The illustrations in this book have a puppet and collage look to each page. Music notes are pasted throughout the entire book in the background as wallpaper, a garden, and actual musical text. While this book is for children who are learning music, it is a story for everyone. Parents, educators, and children can learn together about the foundations of music in an engaging and visual way. Without Guido d'Arezzo, music would look very different today, which is why children should know about his contribution to history and music.

Shefelman, Janice. *I, Vivaldi*. Edermans Books for Young Readers, 2008.

Today, music from the classical piece, *The Four Seasons*, can be heard all over the world from concerts to movies and commercials. While many recognize the melody from the "Spring" section of the piece, most do not know about the composer who wrote it. Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741) was one of the composers, who took music out of the Baroque Music period and bridged his music into the Classical Music Period. Vivaldi was also one of the few composers to see his own success in his lifetime. His *Four Seasons* piece, not only changed music forever, but it created a new gateway for other composers.

The illustrations in this book provide real insight to what Antonio Vivaldi's life was like growing up to his work as a composer. They are vivid in color and provide a solid visual for children. This book is a perfect introduction for a music history lesson or curriculum with a focus on music and famous musicians. Vivaldi was a pioneer for music and paved the path for many to follow. As a result, *I, Vivaldi* is educational for parents, educators, and children.

Shulman, Janet and Malone, Peter. *Peter and the Wolf*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2004.

While the classical music piece was written in 1936 by the composer, Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953), this story is retold through illustrator Peter Malone and how he creates a new adaptation for children to enjoy. This particular book comes with a CD that is played with a full orchestra to pay homage to the original piece of music, but also to enhance the experience for children while being truly authentic to the composer.

Peter and the Wolf is a fairy tale where in the music, each instrument is a character within the story. In this adaption, the illustrations bring the story to life about a brave boy, name Peter and his encounter with a wolf who is attempting to eat the boy's duck, cat, and bird. Through this

adaptation, it exposes children to classical music in an indirect and engaging way. The story can then be adapted with the classroom and brought to life through the music in the background.

Stosuy, Brandon. *Music Is...* Little Simon, 2016.

This book is the perfect introductory book for children who are exposed to music for the first time. It is written for young children who are three to four years old. It is simple and its illustrations reflect the short sentences, such as, “Music is Loud” with a drummer hitting a drum with force. Throughout the book, the pictures and statements show children different instruments and how people use them in various places. It discusses tempo, volume, and genres.

For young children who have not had access to music, this book is a terrific way to begin a curriculum. It engages the children to see other children like them, playing instruments and singing through colorful and detailed illustrations. The book also provides basic knowledge of music and how it is all around us. By looking at the illustrations, the children can make inferences about what the picture is showing the children. After reading this book, children will have a better understanding of what music is and how it used in our environment.

Stringer, Lauren. *When Stravinsky Met Nijinsky*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013.

Igor Stravinsky, a composer, and Vaslav Nijinsky, a choreographer, were Russian artists who collaborated for the infamous ballet, *The Rite of Spring*. The ballet premiered in May of 1913 to outrageous and polarizing reviews. Revolutionary for its time, Stravinsky and Nijinsky went down in classical music history as two innovative artists for their time. This ballet remains one of the most controversial pieces of music written and dances choreographed, because its impact on the audiences and other musicians was so profound, that music was never the same again.

Once students have learned about an orchestra and what is involved, this book is perfect for a social studies lesson. It shares a true story about two men who took a risk and reshaped history. It is a good learning tool for those who are too afraid to try something new. Not only is it a fascinating story, but also, this particular version is easy for children to digest and understand. The colorful and lifelike illustrations give an added aspect to the story and bring it to life.

Tripp, Paul. *Tubby the Tuba*. Penguin Group, 2006.

This charming story is about a young tuba named Tubby who yearns to fit in with his orchestra friends. He discovers that he also plays the beat slowly, one puff at a time. Tubby would like to play the melody, but is quickly brushed off, since it is not suited for him. Afterwards, Tubby encounters a frog that helps him find a melody suited for himself. Tubby shares this melody, that fits for his instrument, and is welcomed back in.

Finding your place in a group of friends can be very challenging and frustrating. Young children are looking to make friends, and this story can be relatable. Tubby eventually finds a tune that fits for him and young children are figuring out who they are as well. By creating instrumental characters which are used within the illustrations, students can learn and participate in a conversation about friendship and what it means to be part of a class. Additionally, the illustrations provide a friendly way to invite the children to connect with the story.

Wargin, Kathy-Jo. *M Is for Melody: A Music Alphabet*. Sleeping Bear Press, 2004.

An alphabet book is an efficient way to teach children about word recognition with letters and also infuse some information about that new vocabulary word. Each page shares a different letter with a focus on a musical word. Within the colorful and detailed illustrated pages, there are also small paragraphs for older children who may want to know more about the instrument or type of music. For younger children, one can read the four-sentence, rhyming stanzas that briefly defines the word.

This book can be used in the classroom multiple times throughout the curriculum. From letters to defining the words on each page, there are a variety of lessons that can be taught throughout. It can be simplified for young children and or challenging for older children. For instance, one could ask for an example for R (Rhythm) or M (Melody). Overall, it increases vocabulary for children and teaches them about music in a different way.

Introduction to Curriculum

Music is a vital part of the classroom environment. Throughout the entire day, songs are sung for transitions, lessons, and morning meeting on the rug. This curriculum was designed to expose and engage students in ways in which we learned about music and how we could incorporate the art form in and outside of the class. From setting the foundations of music to studying specific artists who revolutionized music, each session built upon the knowledge from the prior lesson. Utilizing children's literature as a key source for each lesson provided us with the theme of the day as well as the purpose.

Each lesson was comprised of a children's book with a musical plot followed by a discussion to accompany the focus of the session. As the curriculum evolved, activities were added post discussion. Songs were taught and instruments were created out of household and classroom materials. A special guest was able to visit and play violin and guitar for the students, so that they could hear the instruments first hand. A trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to study instruments was the ultimate goal, so that the children could see how instruments have evolved over time.

This three-week curriculum was ultimately created for four- and five-year-old children to visualize, listen, and play musical instruments that they created themselves. The hope was that after weeks of reading children's books, the classroom would bond over the same songs, familiarity of musical instruments and history of specific musicians. Through this sense of unity, we wanted the children to take what they learned in school and hopefully, teach their grown-ups, appreciate different genres of music and possibly, show an interest in taking up an instrument to learn. Overall, our main goal was for the students to have fun and enjoy the musical journey.

Curriculum Map

Week 1: Introduction to Music

Key Question: What is Music?

This week will set the foundation of music- where, how, why, when we listen to music. Through an introduction to various instruments and examples of music through storytelling, children will learn about classical music.

Week 2: From Stravinsky to Trombone Shorty

Key Question: How did famous musicians revolutionize music?

The lessons this week will reflect on the composers, performers, and writers of music. With a special guest and making instruments, children will be able to hear music in a different way.

Week 3: From Be-Bop to the Beatles

Key Question: How did music evolve over time?

This week will highlight stories about people of color and how everyone has their own take on music. We play different instruments, sing songs, and write lyrics all over the world. After a field trip to look at instruments from all over the world, we will transition the focus to the Beatles. We will study about how they revolutionized music and then learn a few of their songs to sing with their family and classmates.

Lesson #1	Lesson #2	Lesson #3	Lesson #4	Lesson #5
<p>Begin the lesson by asking what they know about music: On a chart piece of paper and colorful marker, write, “WHAT IS MUSIC?”</p> <p>Write their ideas down and read the book: <i>Music Is...</i> (discusses tempo, volume, and where it can be heard)</p> <p>Discuss if they’d like to add anything to the list provided and</p> <p>End with the book <i>M Is for Melody</i>, which explores the alphabet</p> <p>*Tell the children to think about where (Subway platforms, street corners, car radio, musicians in the park) they may hear music at home and ask their grown-ups about music</p>	<p>Pull out the chart from the previous lesson and ask if they would like to add anything to the list</p> <p>Ask the children what they notice about the cover of the book <i>Meet the Orchestra</i></p> <p>Read the book and begin a discussion through guiding questions:</p> <p><i>What are their thoughts about instruments?</i></p> <p><i>Why are there so many?</i></p> <p>Define Orchestra, band, and classical music</p> <p>End the lesson with <i>Tubby the Tuba</i></p>	<p>Revisit the <i>Meet the Orchestra</i> book and see if they have any questions</p> <p>Read <i>I Know a Shy Fellow Who Swallowed a Cello</i></p> <p>Create a chart with the students to include the instruments that may be in each “family” (brass, wind, percussion, and string)</p> <p>Define Conductor</p> <p>Assign a child an instrument and ask them to sit with their family so that they can visualize the placement of an orchestra</p> <p>End the lesson (audience style) with <i>Never Play Music Right Next to the Zoo</i></p>	<p>Begin by going over the instrumental groups and ask if they can name any within each “family”</p> <p>Discuss how in classical music, the composer (who wrote the music) tells a story through his music</p> <p>Ask them what they notice about the book, <i>Carnival of the Animals</i> -read it</p> <p>Play some examples of Camille Saint-Saens- have them stand up and dance around gently- I will call out an animal and they will “quietly” act it out.</p> <p>End the lesson with <i>Edda: A Little Valkyrie’s First Day of School</i></p>	<p>Revisit <i>The Carnival of the Animals</i> and pull out <i>Peter and the Wolf</i> -discuss how there are other composers who wrote stories with their music.</p> <p>Read the story- there’s a theme about bravery and courage.</p> <p>Ask the children about why Peter is a brave boy and how the animals helped each other</p> <p>Play parts of the music, have them dance around as different animals- the cat, bird, duck, and wolf</p> <p>End the lesson by summarizing orchestras and stories with music and then read <i>Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin</i></p>

Lesson #6	Lesson #7	Lesson #8	Lesson #9	Lesson #10
<p>Review what we learned about last week with orchestras, instruments, and storytelling</p> <p>Introduce the book <i>Do, Re, Mi</i> and discuss that music is written down so that singers and musicians can read the music just like you're learning letters that makes words!</p> <p>End the lesson with writing down some musical notes and words underneath so that the children can visualize music- have the children come up with words and ideas</p>	<p>*Special Guest Day</p> <p>Begin by bringing back <i>Do, Re, Mi</i> and talk about how there are many famous musicians who wrote music with instruments and how their stories about their lives are interesting and important to how music evolved</p> <p>Introduce the composer Antonio Vivaldi and then read <i>I, Vivaldi</i></p> <p>**Special Guest (violinist) comes in to play various pieces of music and engage with the children</p>	<p>Today's lesson is about Igor Stravinsky and Vaslav Nijinsky</p> <p>Discuss how music can have dance "choreographed" like in ballets and in shows</p> <p>Read <i>When Stravinsky Met Nijinsky</i></p> <p>After, they will make shakers and rainmakers out of cups, rubber bands, cloths, and beads/rice</p> <p>End the lesson with playing parts of <i>Rite of Spring</i> and have the children dance with their shaker/ rainmakers</p>	<p>Moving on from classical music, explain how there are other "genres" of music and that music can change from one sound to another and build upon music from before</p> <p>Music can be used in different situations such as in celebrations</p> <p>Read <i>Jubilee!</i> And create a discussion about how this story and the instruments in the book are different from the other stories we have read so far (show them some of the previous books)</p>	<p>Revisit Jubilee and introduce <i>Jazz</i> and how people of color were creating beautiful and energetic music</p> <p>Read <i>Charlie Parker Played Be Bop</i></p> <p>Play some Charlie Parker Jazz music and have the children dance to it</p> <p>Talk about how different instruments are used in this book</p> <p>Move on to read <i>Trombone Shorty</i> and play some of his music -discuss how this boy was brave and took risks.</p> <p>Summarize the week about famous people and how music has changed over time</p>

Lesson #11	Lesson #12	Lesson #13	Lesson #14	Lesson #15
<p>Revisit Jazz music and begin to talk about other famous people taking risks and stories about different instruments from other cultures and how music comes from all over the world</p> <p>Read <i>When Marian Sang</i></p> <p>Play an example of her singing, and ask the children why she was a brave singer</p> <p>Continue the brave conversation and end the lesson with <i>Joshua's Masai Mask</i></p> <p>Create a discussion about musical instruments and how they are from all over the world and how Joshua is brave</p>	<p>**Field Trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to look at and observe instruments from all over the world</p> <p>(Walking distance from school and arrange a tour guide and bring snack)</p> <p>Return to class and discuss what we saw at the museum- write it down on chart paper</p> <p>Lastly, make instruments out of shoeboxes and add large rubber bands around them. They can color the sides of the boxes.</p> <p>They will leave the boxes at school- End the lesson with <i>Imagine</i>, but do not discuss much about it</p>	<p>Today, we move on to the BEATLES! (bring back <i>Imagine</i>)</p> <p>A discussion about how music has moved on from just instruments, to adding dances/ telling stories, to famous/brave people, and other genres such as “Jazz,” to a group of four men who “revolutionized” music</p> <p>Talk about the Beatles a bit, and read <i>A, B, See...The Beatles!</i></p> <p>Then play the song, “Octopus’s Garden” while flipping the pages of the book, <i>Octopus's Garden</i></p> <p>End by playing the song again and have the children dance</p>	<p>Beatles continued... discuss more about who they were as a group and how the genre “Rock and Roll” came about with electric guitar</p> <p>Read Yellow Submarine and teach them the first verse and chorus to the song!</p> <p>Play the song “Yellow Submarine” and sing along to it- then the children can dance and sing to it again-they can grab their shoeboxes and pluck along as well, while the song is being played</p> <p>End the lesson with the book, <i>All You Need is Love</i></p>	<p>Summarize the past few weeks by bringing back the charts, going over them and asking the children what they have learned about music</p> <p>Bring out the shakers/ rainmakers/ and rubber band shoeboxes and play some music (that we listened to in previous lessons) while they play their instruments</p> <p>Children can then look through the books that we read when music is playing in the background</p> <p>Play “Yellow Submarine” again and have the class sing together!</p>

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A Selection of Lesson Plans

Lesson	Guiding Question & Key Concepts	Activities
Lesson #1: Introduction to Music		
	<p><i>What is Music?</i></p> <p><i>Vocabulary: Pitch, Tempo, Volume, Rhythm</i></p> <p><i>What is sound? How can we make sounds?</i></p> <p><i>Where do we hear music inside and outside the classroom?</i></p>	<p>Warm up (10 minutes): Have the children sit on the rug in a circle and once meeting has finished, pull out the large, yellow chart paper and use thumbtacks to attach it to the wall. With a colorful marker, ask the children, “When you hear the word music, what do you think of?” Write down what the children say.</p> <p>Discussion/Work Time (15 minutes): Show them the book <i>Music Is...</i> and ask them, “What do you notice about the cover of this book?” Only call on friends who are steady and have a hand raised. After reading the book, ask the children, “Now that we have read the story, would you like to add anything to the list?” Ask the students, “How can we make sounds? Does it always have to be a song?”</p> <p>Demonstrate how to create a sound by using materials found in the classroom. Make sounds by hitting two blocks together, using a spoon and a pan from the dress up area. See what they observe about sounds. Through these sounds we can change the volume, tempo, pitch, and rhythm, depending on the instrument material.</p> <p>Wrap-Up (5-10 min): The children gather on the rug for closing. Pull out the book, <i>M Is for Melody</i>. Ask the children again, “What do you notice?” Read the A to Z book. If you do not think they know what the definition of the word is for a specific letter, explain it. Tell the children to think about where they may hear music at home and to ask their grown-up about music and to come back tomorrow to add to the list.</p>

Lesson	Guiding Question & Key Concepts	Activities
Lesson #5: Peter and the Wolf/ Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin		
	<p><i>How can music tell a story without Lyrics (words)?</i></p> <p><i>What is courage/ bravery and how do we see it in this story?</i></p> <p><i>How can music be told in different ways?</i></p>	<p>Warm up (5 minutes): Revisit <i>The Carnival of the Animals</i> and pull out the book, <i>Peter and the Wolf</i>.</p> <p>Discussion/Work Time (20 minutes): Talk about how other composers (people who write the music) wrote stories through their music. Ask them, “What do you notice about the cover of the book?”</p> <p>Read the book and discuss how the book is about bravery and courage. Ask the children, “Why is Peter a brave boy and how did the animals helped each other?”</p> <p>Tell the children that we’re going to dance to the music and the children can choose what animal that they would like to be from the story. They can choose from the cat, bird, duck, and the wolf.</p> <p>Play clips of music and have the children dance around for a few minutes .</p> <p>Wrap-Up (5-10 min): End the lesson by summarizing orchestras and stories with music and then read <i>Zin! Zin! A Violin</i></p>

Lesson	Guiding Question & Key Concepts	Activities
Lesson #7: Special Guest/ I, Vivaldi		
	<p><i>What is the difference between seeing a violin and listening to a violin?</i></p> <p><i>How does a violin sound?</i></p>	<p>Warm up (5 minutes): Bring everyone to the rug- Review <i>Do, Re, Mi</i> and briefly talk about the fact that Guido D'Arezzo created how people write music. Introduce Antonio Vivaldi (composer from the 1600s) Read <i>I, Vivaldi</i>.</p> <p>Discussion/Work Time (20 minutes): Next introduce how music can be performed and our guest violinist. The violinist will come in and talk to the kids about what a violin is, where it can be played and a little about the history of it.</p> <p>Wrap-Up (5-10 min): The violinist will play some tunes for the children! The children can then ask question about a violin.</p>

Lesson	Guiding Question & Key Concepts	Activities
Lesson #8: When Stravinsky Met Nijinsky		
	<p><i>How can we bring music and dancing together?</i></p> <p><i>Define: Choreographer</i></p>	<p>Before class (MATERIALS): cups, rubber bands, cloths, beads/rice, tape, and paper towel rolls for shakers and rainmakers.</p> <p>Warm up (5 minutes): Begin by sitting on the rug. Pull out the book, When Stravinsky Met Nijinsky. Discuss how music can be choreographed and how there are dancers who dance to the music the same way every time with the same moves.</p> <p>Discussion/Work Time (20 minutes): Ask the children if they have any questions about these two men from long ago who created the music and the dance moves. Play excerpts on the spotify playlist of <i>The Rite of Spring</i>.</p>
	<p><i>How can we make our own instruments?</i></p>	<p>“How do we make our own music?” Then tell the children that they can choose one instrument to make. They can pick a rainmaker or a shaker.</p> <p>Divide the children into three groups and assign them a table to work on their instruments with a teacher.</p> <p>Work on helping the children with their choice of instrument.</p> <p>Wrap-Up (5-10 min): Play the Rite of Spring again and have the children dance around shaking their shakers and rainmakers. Can play freeze dance with the children too, time permitting.</p>

Lesson	Guiding Question & Key Concepts	Activities
Lesson #10: Charlie Played Be Bop/ Trombone Shorty		
	<p><i>How does music transition and evolve?</i></p> <p><i>What is Jazz music?</i></p> <p><i>Who was Charlie Parker?</i></p> <p><i>Who was Trombone Shorty?</i></p> <p><i>Why are there so many instruments?</i></p> <p><i>How did composers and musicians from this past week change music?</i></p>	<p>Before Class: (MATERIALS) Have Charlies Parker queued up on Spotify.</p> <p>Warm-Up (5 minutes): Review Jubilee! From the previous lesson. Introduce Jazz and how people of color were creating beautiful and energetic music with other instruments such as the Saxophone and a Trombone.</p> <p>Discussion/Work Time (20 minutes): Read Charlie Played Be-Bop. Play some of his music. Have the children stand up and dance to the music.</p> <p>Then have the children sit back down and read Trombone Shorty. <i>"How are Charlie Parker and Trombone Shorty brave men?"</i></p> <p>Have a discussion about how Charlie Parker and Trombone Shorty took risks and changed music.</p> <p>Wrap-Up (5-10 min): Summarize how famous people that we have read about have changed music and watch it evolve. (Guido D'Arezzo, Vivaldi, Stravinsky, Nijinsky)</p>

Lesson	Guiding Question & Key Concepts	Activities
Lesson #14: Yellow Submarine/All You Need Is Love		
	<p><i>Who were the Beatles?</i></p> <p><i>What is an electric guitar?</i></p>	<p>Warm up (5 minutes): Beatles continued from the previous lesson- review the A, B, See...The Beatles! and Octopus's Garden. Remind the class that this was a group that changed music. They played a different genre of music to Classical or Jazz and it has now evolved into Rock N' Roll with an electric guitar.</p> <p>Discussion/Work Time (20 minutes): Read Yellow Submarine and then verse by verse, teach the words to the song (mainly the chorus)</p> <p>Play the song for the children and all sing together on the rug. They can bring out their shakers, rainmakers, and or rubber band boxes that they made the previous lesson and play the their instruments while singing to "<i>Yellow Submarine</i>".</p> <p>Wrap-Up (5-10 min): Read All You Need Is Love</p>

Reflection

This Integrated Master's Project has taught me to examine my practice as a teacher in the classroom and reflect on my time at Bank Street as a student. I entered Bank Street two years ago, unaware of where my degree would ultimately take me. Since I have changed careers from Classical Music, I always knew that I had a passion to work with children and create a new chapter in my life through teaching.

As I have stepped into the classroom this year, I have discovered that each day is a new opportunity to explore a new topic. This topic can be under a larger umbrella of a curriculum, which is what has been explored through this project. Throughout this experience the past few months, I have developed, cultivated, and immersed myself into a curriculum that I watched evolve. With a core group to support my work and invest time and advice, I am fortunate to have a product that feels ready to be implemented into the classroom.

Most curriculums are designed to be created by more than just one teacher and can also be passed down from classroom to classroom. This particularly developed project has stemmed from my knowledge and interest in the subject of music, and I think I have created lessons that will not only engage childrens, but expose them to something new that that can take beyond the classroom.

Overall, we are the curriculum makers. This Integrated Master's Project has pushed me to create something of my own to incorporate into my teachings in the future. Bank Street has prepared me and given me the tools to use in my classroom. This project has taught me that it is a continuous process and I look forward to seeing how it will transform over time.

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