

Break Through Classical Music
THE DISCOVERY ORCHESTRA

Discovery Concert™

Bach to the Future©

Study Guide For Teachers

ABOUT THE DISCOVERY ORCHESTRA

The Discovery Orchestra is a nonprofit professional symphony orchestra that teaches the listening skills that help people connect with classical music.

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LEARNING GOALS

- Students will be able to differentiate between **hearing** and **listening**
- Students will learn to notice more detail in music by becoming active listeners
- Students will experience a musical composition as a continuous, focused event

This video addresses the following NJ Core Curriculum Content Standard(s) when paired with suggested activities on the video and this guide:

- 1.1 (Aesthetics) All students will use aesthetic knowledge in the creation of and in responses to dance, music, theater, and visual art.
- 1.3 (Elements and Principles) All students will demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles of dance, music, theater, and visual art.
- 1.5 (History and Culture) All students will understand and analyze the role, development, and continuing influence of the arts in relation to world cultures, history, and society.
- 3.2 All students will listen actively in a variety of situations to information from a variety of sources
- 3.5 All students will view, understand, and use non-textual information.

BEFORE THE VIDEO

1. Have the class explore the difference between **hearing** and **listening**. Have students get into pairs for the following activity. Once in their pairs, ask students to think (silently!) about one subject that they could talk about continuously for *three minutes without stopping*. They could talk about a pet, a parent, a sibling, baseball - whatever they want.

Once they have a subject in mind, give them the following directions:

Each student is going to have to talk about his or her subject to their partner non-stop for as long as possible. If they pause or get distracted by what the partner is talking about, they lose and must stand up and come to the front of the room.

Once most of the class is at the front of the room, stop the exercise. Quiz those few remaining students who were still successfully talking when the exercise ended on what *their partners in the front of the room were talking about*. Ask them to give as many details as possible. (They will likely not be able to tell you much about what their partner said because they were so focused on their own story.) Then, ask if they did in fact hear their partner speaking. (Most will say yes.)

Write the words “hearing” and “listening” on the board and discuss which you were just doing in the activity. Try to define the two words as a class. Then, talk about times that it is appropriate to just hear, and times when you must listen. Use the following definitions if you’d like:

Hear- passive reception of physical auditory signals

Listen- actively pay attention to auditory signals

2. Once you’ve talked about the difference between hearing and listening, begin talking to students about music. When is it appropriate to “hear” music in the background while you are doing something else? Where are some places that they hear music? What kinds of music do they typically hear? When is it appropriate to “listen” to music? Where are some places that they might listen to music? What kinds of music do they listen to?

DURING THE VIDEO

If possible, play the entire tape straight through (56 minutes). If it is not possible to play the tape straight through, pre-select a spot to stop after a point or a specific concept has been concluded on the tape.

1. Photocopy and distribute copies of the listening guide to students
2. Ask students to participate along with the taped audience and do or say everything asked of them by the conductor
3. If possible, the instructor should write listening guide numbers on the board during the final performance on the tape so that students can follow along. For more sophisticated students, you can ask them to cue you for the next number.

AFTER THE VIDEO

1. Challenge students to use what they learned by creating a piece of writing or visual art based on the *Brandenburg Concerto No. 4, Movement III*. In their writing, students could work on a poem or story. In their visual art, students could work in any medium they choose or you have available. Challenge them to adapt as many of the following techniques in their creations as possible, and discuss how they might include each technique, encouraging students to share their ideas with each other:

Polyphonic Texture: Ask students how this might be accomplished in a non-musical medium. In a play different characters could simultaneously say their individual lines. In visual art there might be layered strands of different shapes or colors.

Repetition: Ask what repetition accomplishes in speech?

Sequence: What would sequence look like in a painting?

Imitation: What would one use to achieve imitation in a painting? (Same object or design in a different color?)

Stretto: How could one achieve stretto in the script of a play?

Dynamics: How can you show a difference in loudness and softness in a non-musical medium such as a painting?

Major/Minor Key: How can you accomplish a shift in the feeling of a painting from optimistic to more serious and vice versa? How would you create a moment of seriousness in an otherwise lighthearted poem?

Pedal point: Can you think of a way to create the tension of one sustained pitch, and the feeling of release when it is gone?

Unexpected silence: How can you create this dramatic in visual art?

This may be a challenging exercise for your students, but they will all be able to use at least a few of the techniques in their writing/visual art. This challenge will get them to think in a different way, and encourage their creativity while having them use and internalize the concepts they have just learned. Allow some time for them to revise and hone their work; then, share and discuss the process with the class.

AFTER THE VIDEO, CONTINUED

2. Have students compose their own polyphonically textured musical piece. If they are instrumentalists, in partners they can use their instruments in this process. For non-instrumentalists, encourage them to sing, or to write a spoken-word "soundscape" that has a polyphonic texture with a partner. .

Musicians or non-musicians can also use improvised percussion instruments such as shakers or homemade drums. Remind students that they must have two completely differently melodies occurring at the same time in order for the texture of their piece to be polyphonic.

VOCABULARY WORDS

Chord: a vertical musical event consisting usually of three or more *different* pitches played *at the same time*.

Concerto: an orchestral musical composition which operates as a continuous conversation between the orchestra and a featured solo instrument – usually having three independent movements or chapters

Concerto Grosso: an orchestral musical composition which operates as a continuous conversation between the orchestra and *two or more* featured solo instruments – usually having three independent movements or chapters (The Bach movement on the video is a movement from a Concerto Grosso.)

Dynamics: the use of relative levels of loudness and softness in music for emphasis and expression

Ensemble: the whole group of musicians

Fugue: a polyphonic composition that has a main melody (called the *fugue subject*) which is treated imitatively (like a round – except that the imitations begin on *different* pitches.)

Harmony: two or more pitches played at the same time

Hearing: the passive reception of auditory signals while doing or thinking other things

Imitation: a pattern of pitches played once (the original) and upon completion immediately played again by a different instrument or voice – often in a different range (the imitation)

Listening: actively paying attention to auditory signals, without doing or thinking other things

Melody: a horizontal musical event consisting of a pattern of pitches which occur *one at a time*

Pedal Point: a single pitch sustained while other harmonies are played over, around or sometimes under it.

Repetition: a pattern of pitches repeated one or more times at exactly the same pitch level

Sequence: a pattern of pitches that is repeated at *different* pitch levels – either ascending or descending

Stretto: (the Italian word for "narrow") a musical imitation in which the distance between the original and the imitation is so narrow that they overlap or interrupt each other like the beginning of a round

Texture: the *manner* or way in which sounds are combined – or not – by the composer

Monophonic Texture: only melody – no harmony at all

Homophonic Texture: melody with chords, or sometimes all chords

Polyphonic Texture: two or more *completely different* melodies played at the same time

Bach to the Future© is recommended for students in grades 4 through 12.