

Break Through Classical Music
THE DISCOVERY ORCHESTRA

Discovery Concert®

Discover Vivaldi's Four Seasons®

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
- Students will understand the concept of program music

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 **(Listening)** All students will listen actively in a variety of situations to information from a variety of sources
- 3.5 **(Non-textual information)** All students will view, understand, and use non-textual information.

BEFORE THE VIDEO

1. Have the class explore the difference between *hearing* and *listening* using the following activity devised by R. Murray Schafer in his book *Ear Cleaning*. Select a student volunteer to be the narrator.

Give the narrator a copy the following script (modified with age appropriate vocabulary as needed) to study for a few minutes *"My voice will at times be smothered by sounds that are louder than my reading. At other times my voice will be heard as the only sound in the room. The sounds the others are making are considered noise because they interfere with a true comprehension of my reading. This is why at concerts, plays and poetry readings, the audience is asked to sit quietly."*

Write these four words on the blackboard or whiteboard: 'coughing' 'foot-stomping' 'clapping' 'booming.' Instruct the class to make the appropriate noise when you point to it and to stop making the noise when you stop pointing to it. Rehearse this until they start and stop precisely on your cue.

Rehearse now with narration. Instruct the narrator to read straight through the narration – loudly - without stopping when the noises are made. *You* cue the noises using this annotated text: *"My voice will at times be smothered by sounds (coughing) that are louder than my reading. At other times my voice will be heard (foot-stomping) as the only sound in the room. The sounds the others are making are considered noise (clapping) because they interfere with a true comprehension of my reading. This is why (booming) at concerts, plays and poetry readings, the audience is asked to sit quietly."* If the narrator finishes too quickly, ask for a slower paced reading. If *you* need to, adjust the timing of your cueing. After a 'satisfactory performance' has been achieved, in which the narrator reading non-stop *through the noises and all noises occur within the narration*, have the narrator read the text again *without* the interruptions. Discuss.

Write "hearing" and "listening" on the board and discuss their relationship to the activity. Ask the class to define the two words and what makes them different. Use the following definitions if you'd like:

Hear- passively receive auditory signals

Listen- actively pay attention to auditory signals heard

2. After defining hearing vs. listening, ask: When and where is it appropriate to 'hear' music in the background while you are doing something else like texting or reading? When and where might it appropriate to 'listen' that is, give your full attention to music?

DURING THE VIDEO

If possible, play one of the DVDs straight through (56 minutes). If that's not possible, it's perfectly fine to teach *one season (approximately 28 minutes) or even just one movement of one season at a time*. Download the listening guide from the TDO website; photocopy and distribute the listening guide to the students.

1. Ask students to participate along with the television audience and do or say everything asked of them by the conductor.
2. During the final performance select the menu option that displays the listening guide numbers on the screen so that students can follow along.

AFTER THE VIDEO

1. Challenge students to use what they learned by creating a piece of writing or visual art based on a movement of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*. In their writing, students could work on a poem or story. In their visual art, students could work in any medium they choose or which 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:

Ritornello: Can you think of a way in a drawing to mimic the effect of a theme that returns over and over again?

Dynamics: How can you show getting louder or softer in a non-musical medium such as a painting or sculpture?

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

Repetition: Ask what repetition accomplishes in speech?

Rest: How can you create the dramatic effect achieved by inserting an instant of silence in music in visual art? Can this be done in the dialogue of a play?

Unison Texture: Ask students how this might be accomplished in a non-musical medium. In a play could different characters *simultaneously* say the *same* lines? In visual art there might be a single, solid color dominating the surface.

This may be a demanding 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; share and discuss the process.

AFTER THE VIDEO, CONTINUED

2. Have students compose their own Ritornello Form musical piece. Students can share responsibilities with separate individuals being responsible for different parts. If they are instrumentalists, they can use their instruments in this process. For non-instrumentalists, encourage them to sing, or to write a spoken-word Ritornello Form "sound-scape."

3. Have students discuss the concept of program music. Ask them how *they* might depict in other media some of the things Vivaldi musically portrayed...the wind blowing, thunderstorms, birds singing, etc. Encourage them to verbalize, write or paint about this.

VOCABULARY WORDS

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

Concerto: A musical work, usually in three movements or chapters, in which a solo instrument is engaged in a kind of conversation with the rest of the orchestra

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

Ensemble: the whole group of musicians

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 about other things

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

Movement: a chapter of music, like a chapter in a book

Program Music: music which intentionally depicts a story, scene from nature such as 'the ocean', or specific location such as 'downtown'

Ritornello Form: a recipe or scheme for creating a movement of music in which a common phrase begins the movement, keeps returning throughout the movement, and often ends the movement as well

Soloist: the one player who is engaged in a 'conversation' with the rest of the orchestra

Tutti: the word for 'all' in Italian; used in music to refer to all of the players in the ensemble or orchestra – as opposed to the soloist

Unison: A musical texture in which everyone performing plays or sings the exact same pitches at the same time – or at the "octave" – that is pitches that are eight scale steps apart

Discover Vivaldi's Four Seasons© is recommended for students in grades 4 and above.