

The Marriage of Figaro Mozart (1756-1791)

Your child has recently been introduced to their first *Fun with Composers* classical music selection "The Marriage of Figaro," by Mozart.

Through storytelling, song, drama, creative movement and instrumental play, "The Marriage of Figaro" came to life, making learning exciting while nurturing the many ways in which children learn.

This story revolves around a very special character named "Figaro," the magical chef. Together the children learned how to make "Magic Soup" with the chef, and share it with the many customers who lived in the village nearby.

Children then sang and moved along with the music and fun-filled lyrics. When secure, they experienced "The Marriage of Figaro" using the orchestral music only. Children then chose instruments for accompaniment which best represented each section of the music. .

Music Maps were also introduced to the children. Together they followed the map of lines and squiggles using their "conducting fingers." In this way, the children were able to visualize the different sections of the music, giving them their first introduction to the concept of "Form."

The following musical concepts were introduced in this lesson:

Presto - Italian term for very fast. Section A (nom a nom part) required that the children add their imaginary spices to their magical soup pots using *presto* fast hands.

Legato - Italian term for "smoothly played." The children stirred their soup with a *legato* stir. They were told that if they stirred it using a "*staccato*" stir (short and detached), the soup would not be magical!

Forte - Italian term for loud. Pronounced *for-tay*. When the soup was ready, the children helped Chef Figaro shout out in his *forte* voice, telling everyone the soup was ready to eat.

Composer: In this lesson, your child was also introduced to the great composer "**Mozart**." Attached you will find an image of Mozart which your child may color and keep in his/her music binder, along with the music map which they would love to share with you. While listening to the music, you may have to help lead your child through the music map using your "conducting finger."

If you have any percussion instruments at home (jingling keys, pots and a homemade shaker with dried beans or peas), perhaps your child can show you how they played along with the orchestral music.

For more information on this new, exciting approach to classical music, feel free to visit the Fun with Composers website at: www.funwithcomposers.com

Slavonic Dance no. 1

Dvorak (1841-1904)

This exciting selection is based on the story of barnyard animals who were invited to perform at the local town fair. "Henrietta" Hen shares her flair for classical music with her animal friends, and together they create a spirited dance to the music of Henrietta's favorite composer, "Dvorak."

In Section A (the first section of the music), you will see your child singing and dancing along to the simple lyrics, "doo, doo, doo, doo, doo, doo, clap, clap, clap, clap, clap." The movement is very simple, with children lifting their knees up high to the beat of the music and then clapping along as suggested.

In Section B the animals realize that no one at the fair seems to be paying much attention to them. Could it be because they forgot to clean themselves up from the dirty barn before coming? Furiously, the animals begin to dust off the hay, dirt and grime from their faces and bodies in hopes that a tidier appearance might help attract some attention. When students hear the music return back to Section A, they must perform the same dance that they began with.

The following musical concepts were experienced through this selection:

A B A Form - Children will recognize that Section A was different than Section B. After experiencing the movement for both sections, they listened to the orchestral music and together recognized that the musical sequence or pattern for this piece was A, B, A.

Improvisation - Section B provides a wonderful opportunity for your child to improvise movement. You will see your child move quickly about, washing himself to the sounds of the barnyard animals.

Music Map:

Listen to Dvorak's Slavonic Dance No. 1 with your child, and trace along the curved lines and clapping hands in Section A. In Section B, let your finger go wild as it moves quickly about the designated area. When you hear the music return to the main theme, you will be back to Section A for the final time.

You may like to **enlarge and post this map** for your child so that he or she can conduct it throughout the day. A plastic top hat and a special pointer stick (baton or fairy wand) help make the Maestro's task even more special!

Through the Slavonic Dance No. 1, your child was also introduced to the **Czechoslovakian composer "Antonin Dvorak."** Attached you will find a biography and image of Dvorak along with the music map.

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Minuet in G Major

J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

Your child recently had the opportunity to participate in a "Royal Dance" which was accompanied by Bach's very well known melody "Minuet in G." Children sang and danced their way through this melodious selection while learning all about the life of Bach.

As the Minuet is a dance in 3/4 time, the children were introduced to the **waltz step**. They soon were all step-toe-toeing around the room to the music, first on their own and soon in pairs. Through the "**mirroring**" technique, children learned this simple yet sophisticated step, and learned to move around to the pulse of the music.

Musical Concepts explored in "Minuet in G":

Form: Recognize A B form. Children will be able to identify section A and section B of the music.

Legato: The smooth flowing section B is a great example of a "Legato" feel. Even very young children (under 12 months) can identify this and will be quick to sing along to the "la, la, la" lyrics.

History: This piece is one of the selections which is based on true facts about the composer and his life. In this way, children are able to learn about the composer simply by listening carefully to the lyrics.

In this selection, they learned:

- that a "clavier" is a small keyboard
- that Bach was born over 300 years ago
- that Bach had twenty children
- that a minuet is a French dance

If you would like to participate in this "Royal Dance," simply follow your child's simple gestures that were performed for Section A and then join him or her for a majestic waltz in Section B. While waltzing, be prepared to add in a beautiful twirl and a fancy bow at the end.

Music Map: Listen to the music with your child, and follow along the smooth lines and/or images while listening to the music. The idea of the music map is not that every line or squiggle be followed exactly, but rather to give your child an overall visual of what the music "looks" like-- a visual representation of the music. If your child is able to "see" the difference between section A and B, then the music map was a successful learning tool.

Composer: Did you know that Bach had twenty children? Wow, what a busy life he must have had! Take time to discuss this and other important events which occurred in Johann Bach's life.

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Tritsch Tratsch Polka

J. Strauss (1825-1899)

Tritsch Tratsch Polka by **Johann Strauss** brings the intriguing story of a jealous ringmaster and a nice, hard working tightrope walker named "Johnny" to life. Through drama, song, creative movement and instrumental play, your child was able to recreate this circus scenario on his/her very own tightrope which was created on the classroom floor.

In section A of the music, all of the mean ringmasters snapped their whips in the air in hopes of scaring the poor little Johnnys off of their ropes. Johnny became more determined than ever not to fall off and, feeling frustrated with the ringmaster, began to tease and even show off on his rope.

With smoke now billowing out of his ears, the ringmaster tried to wiggle Johnny off his rope. Fortunately, Johnny was able to keep his balance and continue his routine.

Can you help your child act out section A? Let your child teach you how to act out the role of the mean ringmaster or little Johnny. To make this section even more fun, tape a piece of yarn or a skipping rope to the floor and let this be your tightrope!

In section B, the vendors of the circus suddenly make an appearance and try to sell their treats. Your child will demonstrate this section by strutting around pretending to sell peanuts, popcorn or cola. If you notice that a chase breaks out, be aware because someone took a treat and forgot to pay! Oh no!! Can you help chase down this person? Not wanting to lose out on any business, the vendors returned to their selling mode, shouting out to the crowd.

When you hear the music return to section A, be quick to find your rope again! At the end of the music, little Johnny wins and blows kisses to the crowd as the ringmaster becomes fuming mad! Can you see the smoke escaping from his ears?

Musical Concepts explored in Tritsch Tratsch Polka:

A B A Form: This is a great piece for children to experience A B A form, as both sections are so very different, and all children act out both sections.

Improvisation: This selection is filled with many wonderful moments for your child to create his or her own movements. Your child may surprise you with his/her theatrics as this is a very exciting, dramatic piece.

Music Map: This map is very easy to follow: children's conducting fingers follow the rhythmic markings of the piece.

Johann Strauss led a very interesting life. Be sure to ask your child about him!

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"Minuetto"

Mozart (1756-1791)

Your child has recently been introduced to "Minuetto" (The Snobby Pear Dance) by **Mozart**. Children sang, danced, acted and played to this simple melody line which seemed to bring the silly story of the "Royal Pears" to life.

The story takes place in the Royal Garden of the Queen where a beautiful Pear Tree grew. The pears were always very well taken care of and grew into beautiful, perfect shaped pears. The Queen's visitors would always comment on the beautiful pears, and the pears began believing that they were the very best. They developed a bit of a "snobby" attitude.

One day, a little boy visited the Queen and asked if he could pick some pears to sell at the market. The boy quickly gathered a basket of pears and took them to the local market. The pears were not happy about this and decided to try and escape!

If you listen carefully to the music in Section A you will hear the customers sing while they look for pears to buy and pears who sing back with "attitude". **In Section B** the customers warn the pears by whispering in their ears. The pears seem to be very frightened and ask the customers to give them one more chance.

You will hear the music return to Section A where once again the customers and pears sing to each other. If you are interested in finding out if the pears ever escape, ask your child to sing and act out "The Snobby Pear Dance". If you really want to participate, ask your child to teach you the part of either the pear or the customer.

Musical Concepts Explored:

Note Duration: Short versus Long sounds (quarter note vs. half note). Children discovered which instruments were better at playing shorter and longer sounds. They noticed that instruments which were metallic would vibrate for longer allowing the sound to linger through the air. A triangle is a good example of an instrument which "rings". Wooden rhythm sticks are an example of an instrument which produced shorter sounds.

Tremolo: In Section B, children could hear the tremolo being played (one note which is played quickly over and over) when the pears sang out, "Oh no....oh....oh" "Don't go...oh"

Form: Children learned that the music's form (order) went from Section A to Section B and then back again to Section A.

Music Map

Your child will enjoy demonstrating how to follow this simple music map as he or she sings the melody. You will notice that the markings follow the rhythm of the music. By looking at the map, can you tell which notes in Section A might be longer? If you said the last notes of each line, you were correct. What words land on these longer sounding half notes? (fair and pear). Find simple home made instruments to play along to the music with.

For information on this simple, fun approach to classical music visit the website at www.funwithcomposers.com

Pizzicato Polka

Johann and Richard Strauss

Pizzicato Polka is a fun polka which captures the attention of young children. Children are captivated by the story of "Bugsy and the Pizzicato Polka," and are very eager to learn the "Bug Polka."

Bugsy invites all his favorite bug friends including Frau Butterfly, Herr Dragonfly, Fraulein Ladybug and Herr Mosquito to the "Bugsy School of Dance." Together they learn the "Bug Polka" as they dance to their favorite melody, the **Pizzicato Polka**, composed by the Strauss brothers.

In the dance, they discover how to do a bug wiggle, turn, heel-toe step, twirls and even special flitters! **Your child learned most of these steps through the discovery method** as he or she responded to sounds presented on instruments such as the hand drum, guiro, triangle and others.

At times the children worked in partners, exploring different ideas as to how they could perform a few of the special moves together. **Good listening skills for this piece were an absolute must** as children were presented with a sequence of sounds and movements which they needed to remember and respond to in order to perform the dance.

Musical concepts and skills explored in the Pizzicato Polka:

Terms Pizzicato and Legato: Children learned that **pizzicato** meant a "plucked" sound which is made through plucking the strings of a stringed instrument. Since it is plucked, the sound produced is short and detached sounding. **Legato**, however, is a smooth, flowing sound.

In the introduction, children will say, "Pizzicato, not legato." When saying this line, they will be pretending to pluck the strings of the violin on the word "pizzicato" and then smoothly bow them on the word "legato."

Heavy and light sound qualities: This selection provides many good listening examples of contrasting sound qualities. The children are very quick to identify the lighter sounds played on the triangle as they step in and out nodding to each other. The heavy sounds being played on the cello entice the children to jump as bugs who are learning how to fly.

Music Map: Your child will enjoy showing you how the pictures, squiggles and markings in the map can be followed by moving your conducting finger along to the rhythm of the music. If the music is available, ask your child to show you how it works. Have fun!

Composers: Your child will love to discuss the interesting life of Johann and Richard Strauss with you. You may be intrigued by how the Strauss brothers worked hard to create a very strong musical empire, despite their father's wishes!

For more information on this fun, new approach to classical music, visit our website at www.funwithcomposers.com

Aquarium

Saint-Saens (1835-1921)

Aquarium by Camille Saint-Saens is a melody which is known and loved by many. This piece evokes images of all types of sea creatures as they swim throughout the sea.

Your child was able to become one of these interesting creatures in class, and swam smoothly along to the waves in the music. If you listen closely, you will hear the tale of how these creatures of the sea were feeling scared of a giant octopus in the ocean depths. Together the creatures visited this giant octopus, and soon discovered that he was really a very gentle creature.

In the music, you will hear where the sea creatures swim around, up and down to the flow of the music. The giant octopus in the middle of the group of sea creatures was re-created by many children. They discovered how to make an eight-armed giant by working together.

Listen to the music with your child and see if you can hear the captivating story.

Musical Concepts explored in Aquarium:

Ascending and descending: Children learn the difference of going from a low to high position (*ascending*) and then from a high to low position (*descending*). They experience these two terms through movement.

Legato vs. staccato: Through a movement warm up, and then once again in the music, your child will experience the smooth *legato* feel of the music. Although there are no short, detached *staccato* sections in the music, your child was introduced to this term through the movement warm ups.

Music Map: This easy-to-follow map reinforces the story for your child. Through this map, he or she will easily be able to tell you the story as it unfolds throughout the music.

Camille Saint-Saens: Let your child tell you the story of this French composer who is most well known for his works "**Carnival of the Animals.**" "**Fossils**" is one other selection from the "Carnival of the Animals" which has been included in the *Fun with Composers* series. This celebrated collection of pieces contains humorous tales of many of children's favorite zoo animals . It is a favorite for children of all ages!

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Symphony no. 94 Surprise Symphony

Haydn (1732-1809)

In the Surprise Symphony, your child learned all about the life of the very famous composer Joseph Haydn. Children discovered many important facts about his life, including how he decided to compose a symphony which would truly "shock" or "scare" his audience.

Haydn was tired of how people always seemed to fall asleep during long performances; he felt this was quite rude. He didn't realize that this was not usually intentional, but simply because the sweet music seemed to lull people to sleep over the course of a few hours.

Determined to change this, Haydn decided to add in a special "surprise" to his Symphony No. 94. His mischievous plan was to begin with some very soft, flowing music and then introduce a very, loud and abrupt musical chord. This was sure to waken anyone that might have been falling asleep!

Listen to the music with your child, and see if you can discover where this hidden chord might be. You may even pretend to fall asleep and become very startled when you hear this "surprise" chord.

Musical Concepts explored in Symphony no. 94:

Dynamics - *forte* (*fort-ay*) and *piano*; These are the Italian terms for loud and soft respectively. What dynamic is the "Surprise" played at? (**Forte**)

Form: Children will recognize that there are two different sections in this music; section A and section B. Ask children to show you how they moved about to the two different sections.

Repeat: Which section was repeated? (Section B). What does a repeat sign look like? (two lines and two dots).

Music Map

Can you help your child tap along to the beat of the music? Simply tap the images to the pulse of the music in Sections A and B.

Composer: We hope you take time to ask your child about Joseph Haydn's life as it was a very intriguing one indeed! Did you know that Haydn once cut the pony tail off of a little boy's wig in the church choir simply because he was bored? Ask your child what other mischief Joseph got into as a child! No wonder this great composer wanted to create a "Surprise" Symphony! What could be more fun than startling a bunch of sleeping people?

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Persian March

J. Strauss (1825-1899)

If you recently heard your child shouting out, "Ahoy Mate!" it might be because he or she recently sailed the seas while listening to **Johann Strauss's "Persian March."** The Persian March will have your child walking, skipping, jumping and searching the seas as only a pirate would.

The **Persian March** unveils the story of the Sneaky Sam and its crew. Children love having the opportunity to act as pirates of the sea, especially when they are aboard a fun-loving, adventurous ship like the Sneaky Sam!

Musical Concepts explored through the Persian March:

Phrasing: Your child learned how to sing and move through the phrases of this selection.

Dynamics: **Forte** and **Piano** (loud and soft)

Improvisation: In Section D, children have the opportunity to create their own movements as they search for the infamous "Bad Bart." Once it's spotted, they shiver in fear and then unanimously decide that they have nothing to fear after all! They continue to search the seas for treasures and other interesting sights.

Patterns and Sequence: The movement for the **Persian March** was introduced through the hand drum stimuli. Your child first listened to the patterns played on the hand drum and then, through the discovery method, was able to determine the required steps and their sequence.

When all the children were comfortable with their movement sequence for one section, they were asked to listen to the sequence played for the next section. This process requires active listening and critical thinking, both very important life skills.

Music Map: Using your conducting finger, follow the squiggles and lines to the rhythms of the **Persian March**. In Section D, tap the images to the pulse of the music.

Composer: **Johann Strauss** led a very interesting life. Although he had a father who was a famous musician, Johann was forbidden to take music lessons himself. Are you wondering how Johann became a famous musician, then? Take time to ask your child about Johann's life, and you will discover the secret that Johann and his mother shared.

If your child brought home the image of Strauss, keep it somewhere visible so your child will be reminded of this interesting composer and the wonderful music he shared with the rest of the world. Perhaps your child can color it while listening to Strauss's music!

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