



The Hut on Fowl's Legs – “Baba Yaga” (Mission One: The Search for Baba Yaga)

Focus

To familiarize students with the A section of The Hut on Fowl's Legs – Baba Yaga in three thirty minute lessons. Students will say/sing, move and play along with the introductory section of the music. If time permits students may also develop the B section and then complete the piece by returning to A1.

Grade Level

Gr. 2-6

Related Concepts

Experience and identify contrasting dynamic levels, symbols and rhythm patterns (fortissimo, forte, piano, Pianissimo, quarter notes (ta), half notes, whole notes). Identify repeat sign, and accidentals. Teach form. Familiarize students with the Russian composer Mussorgsky and his selection “The Hut on Fowl's Legs” from Pictures at an Exhibition.

Cross-Curricular Integration

Science: (Myths and Legends) Language Arts: create a story to the B section of Baba Yaga. Social Studies: Introduce students to Russian folklore and culture. Discuss the rainforests of Brazil, introduce composer Modest Mussorgsky and artist Victor Hartman.

Art Activities

Toilet paper roll flashlights, Baba Yaga Apples

Suggested Themes

Halloween

Recommended Children's Books

Babushka Baba Yaga - Patricia Polacco, Pictures at an Exhibition by Anna Harwell Celenz

National Standards

1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9

Materials required

Music, Class sized music map, large cut out puzzle pieces taped randomly on the wall or white board (templates at the back of book), Brown envelope containing large cards with five “W”s “who, what, where, when and why”. If possible, images to enhance story, large kerchief for head to demonstrate how Russian ladies dressed hair, djembe drums or hand drums for class, other rhythm instruments including cabassa, triangle, claves, metallophone and any others that students may play along to the rhythm of the music with.

Lesson One

Objective

To familiarize students with the Legend of Baba Yaga through the story provided below. To introduce and familiarize students with at least five pieces of the puzzle. Place these puzzle pieces in the correct order by identifying melodic and rhythm patterns in the orchestral music. Familiarize students with the life of Mussorgsky.

Suggested Teaching Process:

- Tell students they have been asked to work together as a team to assist a secret agency on a mission which is TOP PRIORITY!

What: Students have been invited to attempt to solve a mysterious puzzle by one of the top-secret agencies in the country. The puzzle pieces when put together in the correct order will help agents move from their drop off spot in a jungle in South America to a legendary character and her intriguing hut.

The puzzle is a collection of pieces of **TOP SECRET** information assembled from video clips and photos provided by other agents who failed to the mission. Only agents who can identify these pieces in Baba Yaga's very own Hut on Fowl's Legs music will make it possible for other agents to be successful in finding Baba Yaga and her mysterious hut.

Who: Baba Yaga (Show picture provided in book).

She is said to be more than 300 years old. Explain that "Baba" means Grandma in the Slavic languages – (Russian, Ukrainian and Polish) Refer to images in picture books if possible.

Why do they want to find her? They would like to set the record straight once and for all that Baba Yaga is indeed a very kind and gentle Baba, not an evil witch as often thought of in the legend! They want to ensure that others are aware that people should not be judged by their appearances and by hearsay. Scientists are also hoping she can answer questions to which no one else has ever been able to answer. Questions such as: What is the secret to living for 300 years? How did you create a Hut that moves around on large chicken legs? Are there any other questions you can think of that we should ask? (write down a few from students on the board).

- **Where:** South America. They have sent video clips and photos of agents trying to get to the Hut which has last been spotted in a hot, dense rainforest of South America. They have knowledge of the different types of terrain they need to cross to get to her hut as they have been recorded on the following puzzle pieces. The problem is order these pieces of puzzles go in as they were discovered in a scattered pile along with Baba Yaga's music.
- **Why** have we been selected to help? We have been invited because they heard that some of the best musicians come from this school. The secret agents they have presently working for the Agency do not have any musical background and do not know how to match the mixed-up puzzle pieces to the Baba Yaga's music "Hut on Fowl's Legs".
- **When?** Immediately. The sooner we can crack this mysterious puzzle the sooner agents can be trained up to successfully find the elusive Baba Yaga.

Let the training begin!

Suggested teaching process

HOW can we make it possible for other agents to have a successful mission finding the Hut and speaking with Baba Yaga?

- 1. Together, we must work as a team to learn how to say and move to the pieces of the puzzle (which are randomly placed on the board). For thirty-minute class just have the first five pieces randomly placed on board. For 60 minute class place all ten pieces on board. Suggestions for how to move to pieces are found on final page of lesson plan.
- 2. Teach Puzzle #1. Tell students you've looked at the top secret videos you were sent (NO...they may not see them as they are TOP PRIORITY!) and you studied how the agents moved to puzzle piece #1. This is the only piece that you know the order of. It is Piece #1. (Write #1 with white erase marker beside piece).
- 3. As no other puzzle pieces are known, ask students which puzzle piece they would like to learn next. Discuss the selected piece briefly and demonstrate the movement for the entire piece.

Breakdown the entire phrase found in the puzzle piece by teaching small sections by rote. (Have students echo back speech while performing the same actions that you showed them.) Whenever possible ask students for their own thoughts on what these movements might look like and whenever possible incorporate their ideas!

- 4. Repeat this process until all puzzle pieces are familiar to the students.
- 5. Listen to the music. If only five pieces are learned, leave 5 minutes at the end of the class to let students listen to the Hut on Fowl's Legs up until the end of the fifth piece. Remind students that you know where the first piece is (try it together) but you do not know what comes next.

Important: When playing the music only play up to two puzzle pieces ahead of the one they know. If you play more than this it will be overwhelming for the students. In this way you won't "give away" the entire puzzle either. It keeps students intrigued and excited as to what comes next!

Lesson Two (Puzzle pieces #6-#11)

One hour classes: Teachers should be able to work through all 11 puzzle pieces in a one hour time frame.

Suggested Teaching Process

- After puzzle piece number 5 "Reach the hut scan the grounds look round, Baba Yaga she must be found" remind students that in order for Baba Yaga and her hut to detect that the agents are friendly and they mean no harm, they must first learn the secret code and then to show they are friendly, create their own secret hand shake.
- Demonstrate first part of code: Baba Yaga, Baba Yaga, Secret (patsch legs alternately on Ba-ba-Ya-ga to the rhythm or each syllable). On "secret" clap own hands together.

- Ask students to create a very simple three beat spy hand shake with a partner. Provide a few examples for students and then give them a few minutes to create one with their partner. Ask various groups to demonstrate for the class. If one person does not have a partner teams can go in three!
- If Baba Yaga does not come out to greet the spies they will have no choice but give her a warning. Ask students if they think there any puzzle pieces that might go next? Yes, the Warning Puzzle pieces! Demonstrate how the " Baba Yaga warning" section is the exact same body percussion movement that they did before their handshake. Easy!
- On "Baba Yaga" they pat their thighs (patschen) alternately, and on the word "warning" clap their hands together. Students can then count backwards beginning with "3", then Baba Yaga warning 2 and Baba Yaga warning 1! What dynamic level were the agents saying the warning numbers at? Yes, fortissimo!

What might come after the Warning? Yes, of course....secret agents must activate their watches with FOUR taps. By activating their watches the magnets in the nearby ocean will begin to rise causing the Hut to be magnetically pulled to the ocean where the secret agents ocean liner awaits to carry away Baba Yaga and her hut! Why pull the hut to the ocean you ask? The answer is simple! Baba Yaga and the Hut do not know how to swim! So....they have no choice but talk to the secret agents and answer all the questions which they have had for many, many years! The perfect secret agent plan!

If you were able to speak with Baba Yaga what types of questions might you ask? See if you can think of at least three!

Which other piece would students like to learn? Guide them through the pieces as they ask about them. The search lights? The helicopter? Let them choose! Refer to puzzle piece guidelines to demonstrate movements.

After students believe they have put together the first section A have them listen to the music one more time to be certain it fits in with the rhythm of the music. If time permits try to move through the entire section A.

Music Map

With students sitting on the floor in front of you, show students the class size music map. Play the music and conduct through the map with students conducting along in the air. The special helper might like to assist you on the other side of the map! Reproduce the maps so students can have their own copy. Discuss the composer and if possible even how Mussorgsky was inspired by Victor Hartman's Art. Pictures at an Exhibition is a fabulous book for this connection!

Lesson Three

Add in Djembe drums or other rhythm instruments.

This is a fabulous piece to play with the djembe drums! Play one of the puzzle pieces on the djembe. Ask students if they can detect which puzzle piece you played. "Search lights piece I suggest running nails down the djembe for the full 4 beats of each whole note. Refer to music as a reference.

Continue to play random puzzle pieces to see if students know which piece you are playing. This is a good form of evaluation as well. Ask various students if they would like to choose a mystery piece to play.

Are there other instruments that would sound good? Discuss with students and integrate their ideas whenever possible! Cabassa or the triangle are nice and light for the Alligator section. Are there any other ideas? Have fun discovering what others to add in!

Suggested Movements for Puzzle Pieces

Puzzle Piece #1- Introduction

At-ten-tion, Mission One, Prepare, Only those who dare:

Demonstrate placing hand to forehead and out as you would in a salute to At-TEN-TION (the "At" is not stressed with hand to forehead on syllable "TEN" and out on 'TION"). Mission One (Stomp one foot then other), Prepare (pretend to put on spy gloves by sliding one hand along the interior of other arm and switch), Only those who dare (place hands in front slightly, feet apart and hunched over as if challenging to conquer the mission! After you've demonstrated entire phrase to piece #1, teach this piece by rote. Practice until secure (twice should be sufficient).

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Piece #2 River– Pretend to step on rocks on the outskirts of the river to the lyrics "step wide". On "step it inside" take smaller steps as if moving on a sandbar in the middle of the river. Continue through as pattern suggests: Step wide step it inside, step wide, step it inside, step it inside, step it inside, THREE BIG STEPS TURN!!! What do you do on three big steps? Step on the tortoises backs of course! Thank goodness they are there! Don't forget to turn however...any direction you like.

Piece #3 Running – How must you run in the jungle? With very high knees of course! What could you step on? What do you think? Possibly snakes, poisonous frogs, vines....hmmm what else? Ask the students! Keep those knees up however!

Piece #4 Gators! - Be careful! Gators are everywhere in the jungle and you never know if they are sleeping or not as their eyelids are translucent! Yikes! Ask the students to say the words with you as you point to them. How would they say them? Soft or loud? How would they move to them? Very softly and lightly of course! Pianissimo would be a great choice! Can a student volunteer and show you what it might look like to cross a gator pit? Are there vines hanging from the trees? What could you do with these vines to make sure that if a gator snapped at you that you wouldn't have your foot eaten off? Yes...of course you can grab them as you lightly tiptoe through the gator pit! Good luck! What do you do once you make it through? Run of course! (This matches another piece, which is it?)

Piece #5 Baba Yaga's Hut – Point to the Hut as you sing "Reached the Hut". Scan the grounds by looking around with your spy binoculars which are around your neck. Look all around! Put this part together having students echo back the melody "Reached the Hut, scan the grounds look round" What can you do on "Baba Yaga she MUST be found!" Look on the accents! Look left, right, high and low!

Piece #6 Search Lights - Imagine you have very powerful spy flashlights. How might you search with them? Sing or say this part for the students so they have an idea of how long each word sounds for (four beats each). Ask for suggestions how you would move to this. I suggest slow movements changing direction after the word "search". On "move right" move right using two big, slow steps. On "Spy Mode" flip infra red switch on side of glasses on. Move it forward on "spy" and flip back on "mode". On "prep code" turn to the spy you created the secret handshake with. Get ready....handshakes coming!

Piece #7 – Secret Handshake:

- Baba Yaga, Baba Yaga, Secret (patsch legs alternately on Ba-ba-Ya-ga to the rhythm or each syllable). On "secret" clap own hands together.
- Ask students to create a very simple three beat spy hand shake with a partner. Provide a few examples for students and then give them a few minutes to create one with their partner. Ask various groups to demonstrate for the class. If one person does not have a partner teams can go in three!

Piece #8 Warning

- If Baba Yaga does not come out to greet the spies they will have no choice but give her a warning. Ask students if they think there any puzzle pieces that might go next? Yes, the Warning Puzzle pieces! Demonstrate how the " Baba Yaga warning" section is the exact same body percussion movement that they did before their handshake. Easy!

- On "Baba Yaga" they pat their thighs (patschen) alternately, and on the word "warning" clap their hands together. Students can then count backwards beginning with "3", then Baba Yaga warning 2 and Baba Yaga warning 1! What dynamic level were the agents saying the warning numbers at? Yes, fortissimo!

ACTIVATED!!

secret agents must activate their watches with FOUR taps. By activating their watches the magnets in the nearby ocean will begin to rise causing the Hut to be magnetically pulled to the ocean where the secret agents ocean liner awaits to carry away Baba Yaga and her hut! Why pull the hut to the ocean you ask? The answer is simple! Baba Yaga and the Hut do not know how to swim!

Once you activate your watches hit the ground! The hut will start to crawl towards the ocean and if you get caught? You get turned into a CHICKEN!! YIKES!!!

Piece #9 – Copter Hovering, crawl past cov'ring!

Point to the helicopter that has come to rescue you! Crawl past the covering of the long jungle leaves so you are out in the open.

Piece #10 - Last hope grab robe! Grab the rope!!! Quickly!!!!

Didn't make it? Oh oh....listen to section B to see what comes next. What do you think? Listen a few times discussing possibilities. Ask students to write about section B. Work through and create this next class!

Create Section B with the students

What happened to the last A section? It changed slightly (intro changed, river section changed and running section changed). Is the ending the same? No...it isn't! Discuss all the possibilities that there are out there! Have fun!

If you are interested in other lessons to similar to this one visit www.funwithcomposers.com They can be found in the Fun with Composer Teacher Guides and as individual lessons. Feel free to try one of our many free lesson samples on our home page.

If you are interested in the official audio and video files Lesson and Final outcome with the sound effects as seen in the video footage) for Baba Yaga this lesson will be available for purchase as an individual online lesson in a book format shortly. The music which I used in this Zoom lesson was Pictures at an Exhibition -The Hut on Fowl's Legs "Baba Yaga" by the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra. This may be found on ATM, itunes, spotify or other similar platforms.

The FWC crew has also created an ongoing music library with activity pages and lesson plans which may be found on www.funwithcomposers.com as well as on the Fun with Composer YouTube channel. Subscribe, like and share it today!