



## MUSIC AND RITUAL

*Classroom Resources from St  
Cecilia's Hall: Concert Hall and  
Music Museum*

This is a set of three lesson plans to facilitate cross-curricular learning using musical instruments as inspiration, intended for children in either Primary 3 or Primary 4. It may be used to enhance a class visit to St Cecilia's Hall, Edinburgh.

Each lesson addresses a different aspect of music's relationship to ritual: the first is an introduction to what 'ritual' means and how music can elicit different emotions; the second covers music in celebrations and religious practices; the third addresses how music plays a role in our everyday lives. There is an accompanying PowerPoint with pictures and musical examples for each lesson, and a worksheet for the first lesson.

**St Cecilia's Hall**  
CONCERT ROOM & MUSIC MUSEUM

## LESSON 1: What is ritual?

### Objectives:

- To understand what 'ritual' means in different contexts.
- To understand that music and musical instruments can have different functions and roles.

### Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes (for First and Second Level):

- I can use my voice, musical instruments and music technology to discover and enjoy playing with sound, rhythm, pitch and dynamics. (EXA 1-17a)
- I can use my voice, musical instruments and music technology to experiment with sounds, pitch, melody, rhythm, timbre and dynamics. (EXA 2-17a)
- Inspired by a range of stimuli, and working on my own and/or with others, I can express and communicate my ideas, thoughts and feelings through musical activities. (EXA 1-18a/EXA 2-18a)
- I have listened to a range of music and can respond by discussing my thoughts and feelings. I can give and accept constructive comment on my own and others' work. (EXA 1-19a/EXA 2-19a)
- Inspired by a range of stimuli, I can express my ideas, thoughts and feelings through creative work in dance. (EXA 1-09a/EXA 2-09a)
- Inspired by a range of stimuli, I can express and communicate my ideas, thoughts and feelings through drama. (EXA 1-13a/EXA 2-13a)

### *What does 'ritual' mean?*

- Ask if anyone has had a birthday in the past week (or past month) – what is a common way to wish someone a happy birthday? Through a song! All sing 'Happy Birthday'. – Or, if the children are not keen on singing, play clips of 'Happy Birthday' on PowerPoint.
- Discuss how music can be a way of marking special occasions.
- Do you know what the word 'ritual' means? **A ritual is an action or a series of actions which is always performed in the same way – it can be religious or non-religious.**
- Why is music important in rituals? Does it make you feel joyful, or like you want to dance? For instance, how did you feel when you sang 'Happy birthday'? How did the person whose birthday it was feel?

### *Activity 1:*

- Hand out the worksheet 'Instruments and Their Uses Matching Game'.
- Then, in in pairs or individually, try to match pictures of the instruments with some of their uses – don't worry if you have to guess! Play the excerpts of each instrument on the PowerPoint before they guess.
- The matching pairs are:

Drumkit – To keep time during a pop song

Singing Bowl – To help someone focus during meditation

Pipa – A Chinese instrument used to imitate the sounds of nature whilst someone tells a story

Batá drum – To summon spirits in the ceremonies of the Yoruba people of western Africa

Lute – To accompany an ancient love song in Europe

Organ – To accompany hymns in church

*Activity 2:*

- In groups, make up a short (20-30 seconds) dramatic/dance response one of the following pieces of music. Introduce the term classical music and play them the pieces on the PowerPoint.
- Discussion: How did you feel when you heard this music? Did you enjoy working with your group to produce the dance? Was it difficult in any way? How did you make sure that everyone shared their ideas/took part?

## LESSON 2: Music, Celebration, and Religion

### **Objectives:**

- To understand why music is used in celebrations and the different emotions music can make us feel.
- To learn about how musical instruments are used in different religions.

### **Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes (for First and Second Level):**

- Inspired by a range of stimuli, I can express and communicate my ideas, thoughts and feelings through activities within art and design. (EXA 1-05a/EXA 2-05a)
- I can create and present work using the visual elements of line, shape, form, colour, tone, pattern and texture. (EXA 1-03a)
- I can create a range of visual information through observing and recording from my experiences across the curriculum. (EXA 1-04a)
- I am discovering how followers of world religions demonstrate their beliefs through prayer/meditation, worship and special ceremonies. I am developing respect for the practices and traditions of others. (RME 1-06a)
- I can use my voice, musical instruments and music technology to discover and enjoy playing with sound, rhythm, pitch and dynamics. (EXA 1-17a)
- I can create and present work that shows developing skill in using the visual elements and concepts. (EXA 2-03a)
- I am increasing my knowledge and understanding of different forms of worship and artefacts within world religions and can explain their importance for followers of world religions. (RME 2-06a)
- Through observing and recording from my experiences across the curriculum, I can create images and objects which show my awareness and recognition of detail. (EXA 2-04a)

### *Case Study 1: Music and Celebration*

- What is a famous song we sing at New Year, especially in Scotland? 'Auld Lang Syne' – it is about friendship and remembering the past year and you will often hear it as fireworks go off. Play verse and chorus from 'Auld Lang Syne' and sing along if you know it!
- Music is used all over the world in many celebrations. Klezmer music is part of Jewish traditions from Eastern Europe. Most Klezmer pieces are for dancing to, at weddings for instance.
- Ask children if they can identify any instruments in the picture (Back row, left to right: flute, trombone, clarinet, cello. Front row: two violins)
- Show pictures of instruments used and play example.
- In what way is this music different to music we may hear at a wedding in Scotland? How does it make you feel?
- How would you describe the sounds in this music?

### *Activity 1:*

Listen to the Klezmer music again and draw the patterns or shapes you hear in it.

### *Energiser:*

- Show a picture of a military side-drum and explain that they were used while marching into battle.
- Why might a group of soldiers need a drum? How do they keep their marching in time?
- Try walking on the spot in time with each other, first in silence, then with someone beating a steady pulse on a 'drum' (this can be a pot, box etc. and wooden spoon or similar) – which was easier?

### *Case Study 2: Music and Religion*

- Play an example of an organ introduction to a carol.
- What does this sound make you think of? Christmas! Music is part of many religious rituals, which non-religious people often also take part in.
- The ney, for example is a flute from the Middle East which has been played for nearly 5,000 years, making it one of the oldest musical instruments in use today. Show a picture.
- In Turkey, the ney is used by Sufi Muslims during 'whirling' rites, in which they turn round and round while focussing on the music as a form of worship. In the picture, you can see the long clothes which form circles during whirling.
- Play example of what the ney sounds like.
- Similarly, the gyaling is a woodwind instrument used in Buddhist temples in Tibet. Show a picture and play example.
- The colours and materials this instrument is made of are symbolic for Tibetan Buddhists: turquoise, like the blue of the sea and sky, represents the spiritual heights Buddhists strive to reach and red coral is associated with concepts of success and good health.

### *Activity 2:*

- Listen to the ney and the gyaling again and draw the patterns, colours, or shapes you hear in each.
- Look back at your picture for Klezmer music – what similarities and differences are there in your drawings?
- Why do you think music is often used in religious rituals?
- What emotions did you feel when listening to these musical instruments?

### LESSON 3: Music and Ritual in Everyday Life

#### **Objectives:**

- To learn about the 'rituals' and codes of behaviour involved in listening to different types of music.
- To understand how music can play an important role in the rituals of everyday life.
- To think about ways we can include music in our own lives.

#### **Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes (for First and Second Level):**

- I have listened to a range of music and can respond by discussing my thoughts and feelings. I can give and accept constructive comment on my own and others' work. (EXA 1-19a/EXA 2-19a)
- I can use my voice, musical instruments and music technology to discover and enjoy playing with sound, rhythm, pitch and dynamics. (EXA 1-17a)
- I can use my voice, musical instruments and music technology to experiment with sounds, pitch, melody, rhythm, timbre and dynamics. (EXA 2-17a)
- Inspired by a range of stimuli, and working on my own and/or with others, I can express and communicate my ideas, thoughts and feelings through musical activities. (EXA 1-18a/EXA 2-18a)
- I have experienced the energy and excitement of presenting/performing for audiences and being part of an audience for other people's presentations/performances. (EXA 1-01a/EXA 2-01a)

#### *Case Study 1: Rituals as an Audience*

- What instruments do you think of when we talk about classical music? Flute, oboe, violin, cello, trumpet etc.? Show a picture of Western orchestra and see how many instruments the children can identify.
- These are often used in classical music in Europe, but there are other classical musics around the world which use different instruments such as in India.
- Show pictures of instruments used in Hindustani (or North Indian) classical music (sarangi, tabla) and play example. Listen out for the tabla (sounds like a drum) and try to clap along.
- Show picture from Hindustani classical music performance. You can see that the musicians are on a stage with the audience sitting down in silence and in the dark – just like in classical music concerts in the UK. Why do you think the audience is sitting like this? Every type of music has rituals and customs associated with it – these aren't always religious, but can be ways of being polite.
- What kind of music can we normally sing along to or dance to during a concert (jazz, pop etc.)? Use pictures as clues.
- When much classical music was written, codes of behaviour would have meant that dancing to this music was mostly frowned upon – the wealthy audiences would sit and listen, unless it was specifically dance music.
- Wouldn't it be nice to dance along to classical music too? Ask your parents to play some classical music at home and see if you can dance along – make your own ritual!

### Activity 1:

- Play piece by Georg Philipp Telemann.
- All hold hands and try to walk in a circle in time with the music – feel the ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ beats in your body.
- In smaller groups, can you make up extra dance moves to the piece?

### Case Study 2: Music Rituals in Everyday Life

- Where do you encounter music in your everyday life? Do you listen to it while in the car? What does the music of your favourite television shows sound like? Do you play an instrument?
- Often, traditional music in Scotland was about everyday life, such as songs about household tasks and the landscapes people lived in. Sometimes, bagpipers even played their instruments to tell people the time of day – there were no alarm clocks then! Play bagpipe tune and ask if they would like to be woken up to this sound?
- Show pictures of instruments used in traditional Scottish music (tin whistle, guitar, fiddle) and ask children to identify them.
- Listen to the song ‘Wild Mountain Thyme’ and follow the lyrics at the same time:

O the summer time has come  
And the trees are sweetly bloomin'  
The wild mountain thyme  
Grows around the bloomin' heather  
Will ye go, lassie, go?

And we'll all go together  
To pull wild mountain thyme  
All around the bloomin' heather  
Will ye go, lassie, go?

I will build my love a bower  
By yon cool crystal fountain  
And 'round it I will pile  
All the flowers o' the mountain  
Will ye go, lassie, go?

- Are there any words you don't understand? What are the themes in this song?

### Activity 2:

- If such songs were to be written now, what would the subject be? Could you use a piece of well-known music to make up your own song describing your life? (Group or paired activity)
- Think about these prompts:

- what does your morning routine look like?
- what is your favourite food and why?
- where is your favourite place to be and why?
- Try incorporating music into an activity you do every day, like listening to music when you brush your teeth or singing when you get home from school. Music is great for special occasions and formal rituals, but it can also be a fun everyday ritual!