

Expressions in Motion: A Study of Dalcroze Eurhythmics in the Context of Aaron Copland's "Appalachian Spring"

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INTRODUCTION

I suppose the roots of my interest in the subjects of movement, music, and children go way back to a certain frame of mind I had in childhood. I was a bit shy and reserved and I suppose I decided that a little girl was better off being demure than boisterous and active. I had little experience with physical movement. I was disinclined towards sports and physically active games. I was also awkward and a bit clumsy and without much stamina probably because of a penchant for quietly reading books and dreaming up stories instead of engaging in physical activity. Although my favorite sedentary activities proved beneficial in many academic areas, I had noticeable trouble in certain others. I loved music, especially singing, but I found executing rhythms beyond the very simple, rather troublesome. And moving to the rhythm left me quite befuddled. Math was, in general, a very difficult subject for me, especially in the areas of estimation and measurement.

I was well into my twenties before I began to venture into the world of physical activity with aerobic exercises, some ballroom dancing, and swimming. Always tending toward introspection, I took note of the changes that occurred with this increase in physical activity. Of course, there was an increase in physical coordination, but most interesting to me was how tasks that had been very tedious and difficult just a few months before became much easier. I found problems involving estimation and measurement were much less of a challenge. Putting together a balanced and well-designed bulletin board, for instance, which had been a very aggravating and time-consuming task, was now much easier and less stressful. Complicated rhythms were now much easier to execute and my feet actually seemed to be connected to my brain most of the time. I was glad this phenomenon had occurred at a time in my life when it could be observed with an adult mind. I have not become a dancer or a professional athlete, but I have maintained a healthy interest in the connection between physical activity and brain function. It has also given me a desire to help my students build brain-body connections early in life.

THE STUDENTS

When I began teaching, I was under the naïve impression that I was the unusual one and that my little students, ages four through seven, would readily respond bodily to music with ease and delight. I have found that, with many of my students, that is not the case. Even by the age of four, many children seem very reluctant and mistrustful when asked by an adult to respond to music with their bodies. An explanation might possibly be found by considering what the small child is being asked to do in the educational and

societal environment. The prime directive from the school system and society at large is to learn to sit still, absorb and follow directions, control any emotional outburst and to bring in line the satisfaction of bodily needs with the prescribed schedule of the system. Learning to control is a very large part of the young child's curriculum such as learning to control scissors to cut on the line, staying in the lines when coloring, learning to focus on what the teacher is saying and not be distracted, learning to attend to and thus begin to understand the squiggles on the printed page. It is my belief that such a learning environment, necessary though it is, tends to inhibit the young child from embracing a fundamental physical expression of musical attributes.

UNIT GOALS

“To those who can become as open minded as children . . . dance has a tremendous power. It is a spiritual touchstone” (Graham 30). One of the goals of this unit is to help children recover some of their birthright of open-mindedness and freedom. I hope to provide a safe environment and proper vehicles within the school setting to help my students respond to music on a primal, fundamental, and emotional level through gesture and movement to discover that “spiritual touchstone.”

Another goal of the unit will be to give the children a foundation to help them become better listeners. As they engage in the physical expression of phrase, dynamics, pitch and rhythm they will build an internal vocabulary for good listening skills for the future. “We respond to music on a primal level . . . for on that level we are firmly grounded . . . whatever the music may be, we experience basic reactions such as tension and release . . . its pushing forward or hanging back, its length, its speed . . . and a thousand other psychologically based reflections of our physical life of movement and gesture . . . That is fundamentally the way we all hear music” (Copland 14).

AN OVERVIEW OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF EMILE JACQUES-DALCROZE

One approach to teaching music that meshes well with my goals for my young students is the system of music teaching developed by Emile Jacques-Dalcroze. His experiments in music teaching led to this important conclusion: “. . . that musical sensations of a rhythmic nature call for the muscular and nervous response of the whole organism” (Pennington 21).

Dalcroze, born of Swiss parents in 1865, studied at the Paris Conservatory and in Vienna. Soon after completing his studies, he was appointed Professor of Harmony, College and Composition at the Geneva Conservatory. He was a music teacher at the turn of the century with very radical ideas. He was appalled at how imperfectly developed were his students' sense of rhythm and ability to recognize pitches. Dalcroze began devising ear training and movement-rhythm classes for students. He also worked with children's classes. He understood the importance of beginning young. His rationale

for this training sounds very much like the links I will be trying to establish with my young students. “Should it not be possible . . . to establish more direct communication between the feeling and understanding, between sensations which inform the mind and those which recreate sensorial means of expression?” (Mead 1).

Besides a system of teaching ear training, he also developed a system of studying rhythm and movement that he later named Eurhythmics. The final aspect of Dalcroze’s approach is improvisation. He felt that improvisations would give the students opportunities to express what they feel, hear, and understand about music.

In each of these areas of musical activities, solfege, eurhythmics, and improvisation, Dalcroze developed a systematic progression of exercises, describing how and why they should be used at different levels of development.

Many of Dalcroze’s exercises seem so sensible today that it is difficult to believe that it could ever have seemed otherwise. However, in the early twentieth century, common sense in this area had a tough “row to hoe” before being accepted as common wisdom. Fellow musicians, fearful that their craft was being endangered by his ideas, assured everyone that he was wrong. The natural conclusion drawn from his theories was that anyone with proper training could become a musician. The popular conception was that musicians were musically instinctive and no amount of training could improve on the gift. But Dalcroze continued to perfect his methods, founded schools, trained teachers, and demonstrated that his principals went beyond the training of musicians and were applicable to many related arts, such as dancing and acting. His ideas grew in a manner that was vital and constantly developing. They were based not on pure theory but on actual field experiences with students.

In 1910 he was invited to Dresden, Germany where he directed a school for the study of rhythm. It was extremely successful. Students came from all over the world to study. However, when World War I started Dalcroze protested against the war tactics of Germany. He was exiled from Germany and his work was suppressed. Undaunted, he went back to Geneva, where he continued his experiments and developed his theories while traveling about with a small group of students to give demonstrations, and always carefully noting his experiences.

In France, Dalcroze’s theories were shown to be applicable to the theatre as he worked with the training school for the Paris Opera and directed group movement and pantomime for the Theatre du Vieux Colombier founded by Jacques Copeau, one of the most successful experimental theatres in Europe in the 1920s.

Dalcroze’s principles proved they were applicable to dance as well. It has been said, “Dalcroze is one of the very few serious contributors to the progress of the age-old art of the dance” (Pennington 40).

EURYTHMICS

Dalcroze believed the ears were the agents to appreciate and understand sound, but rhythm required the education of the entire nervous system. He developed exercises for the teaching of movement and rhythm and he called his progressive exercises eurhythmics. He referred to eurhythmics as the technique of moving plastic. He felt that his exercises had the potential of fusing together psychic and physical elements to allow an individual the full expression of human emotion. “The aim of eurhythmics is to develop mind and feeling in everything connected with art and life. Its study is all the more indispensable to the musician since music without rhythm is lifeless, whereas rhythm and movement are essential in every form of art . . .” (Dalcroze 102).

Dalcroze’s exercises for adults and teenagers are a series of studies of the body going from one state to another. Examples of these include: moving from complete relaxation to various stages of the body being erect, the effects of breathing on various parts of the body, the study of balance and the shifting of the center of gravity, and the transfer of weight during different movements. He felt that a fully developed and flexible body was important to being a whole and complete person. “To live life fully both mind and body must be free . . . the steady pursuit of an idea, and also the slow, elastic and measured development of a movement give evidence of the free possession of a . . . mind which knows how to skirt obstacles and choose out new paths, always with a clear perception of a goal to be reached” (102).

Dalcroze understood that music training, which included rhythm and movement, needed to start with the very young child. He observed that children in schools were taught to play the works of such composers as Beethoven and Bach before they had a proper understanding of the music. “. . . before their minds and ears are open to an understanding of these works, before their bodies have developed the power of being moved by them” (Dalcroze 50).

He felt there were two important tasks of the ear. One was hearing rhythms separately and in association and the second was hearing sounds one at a time and in combination. He felt these should not be studied simultaneously and that children especially had trouble apprehending the rhythm and melody at the same time. He started with the study of rhythm because sound exists outside of us but rhythm is an innate part of our being. Also, “the ears are the agents to appreciate and understand sound but rhythm requires the education of the entire nervous system” (Dalcroze 107).

Dalcroze devised, in his very insightful and thoughtful manner, a set of progressive eurhythmic activities for the very young child. He realized, although the goals should remain the same, children needed an approach suitable to their development. He began by examining the natural rhythmic movement of children in their walking and breathing and started having the children walk, conduct, and swing their arms or gesture with their arms to the beat of the music as they sang. “He saw in this movement the importance of a

well-functioning and integrated sensory, muscular and nervous system which could then free the imagination and spirit for an expressive musical performance” (Mead 4).

When he began working with children, he was amazed at the differences in the temperament of the children in his classes. He also noted that the movements of each child differed accordingly. He found it sad that there were so few “normal “children in his classes. So many children had what the doctors called arhythm caused by, it was thought, “a lack of coordination between the cerebral driving machinery and the practical motor forces” (Dalcroze 103). He set up a full set of lessons to help alleviate the problem. He believed these exercises would “. . . harmonize and coordinate (our impulses) in accordance with the laws that control the relation between time, space, and dynamic force” (103).

He saw that children fell into two categories concerning rhythm; some had trouble producing enough movements and some had trouble regulating their movements. For the first he developed exercises to “stimulate their nervous sensibilities and increase the number of movements” (Dalcroze 54). For the second group, he devised ways for them to experience meter. He felt that meter came through reasoning and that its study would help develop their powers of self-control. He believed that “every lesson should be given to the child . . . first to awaken spontaneity of mind and body . . . and second, to bring order into the child’s spontaneous bodily manifestations” (Dalcroze 107).

Dalcroze believed that childhood is a time of spontaneity and improvisation. Children’s natural movements are spasmodic, staccato movements with very little connection between ideas and gestures. His advice to educators who teach the basics of rhythm included these ideas: children should be provided opportunity for a full range of experience with movement; children should be allowed to decide which movements to make so that they can discover for themselves their “most significant motor powers” (Dalcroze 85). A child should be taught “to make rapid connections between certain movements, to order them exactly and grade them according to his fancy” (Dalcroze 85). Movements should be large and kept simple and devised in such a way as to lead to the next phase of learning.

Dalcroze had a strong conviction that children are made to grow up too soon, that they are not allowed to experience their childhood fully. He felt that this tendency of education keeps the child from fully realizing his potential and robs him of experiencing the full joy of life. He felt that it is very important that educators “. . . allow the child to develop all the qualities of his age, to procure for him all the innocent joys which should keep alive his freshness and curiosity. If these joys are complete their memory will cast fragrance over his whole life” (Dalcroze 83).

THE LESSONS

“All initial learning is through the senses. Thus, an approach which integrates the kinesthetic, tactile, aural and visual senses, as does the Dalcroze approach, becomes a

strong and viable catalyst for learning” (Mead introduction). I am interested in creating for my students an opportunity to improvise an experience in music and movement which can be solidified into a performance. The students will be led through a series of directed eurhythmic activities. These activities will allow the children, through gesture and movement, an experience in time (when something happens), space (where something happens), and energy (how forceful something is). The first exercises will be carefully devised and directed by the teacher becoming more improvisational as they progress. The music used in the exercises will become progressively more intricate beginning with simple melodies and rhythms of early children’s songs and culminating with orchestral pieces with distinct sections of mood, rhythm, and phrasing suitable for small children.

Before any activities begin, the environment must be created for the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being of the children. Physical boundaries need to be set. Concepts of shared and individual space need to be discussed. Rules need to be set up concerning touching and otherwise interfering with other classmates during activities, when it is appropriate to talk and when it is not. It needs to be demonstrated how to make appropriate and constructive comments about another student’s work. The physical place for the activities needs to be properly arranged, boundaries designated, and obstacles removed which would impede movement or cause bodily injury.

The students will, with the guidance of the teacher, create a movement presentation. They will make such decisions as to what colors would fit the mood of certain segments; what gestures will be used to express certain phrases; will rhythm be expressed by instruments or simply by the body? It is hoped, through these improvisational exercises, the children will learn to “enjoy music through listening, enhanced with perception and understanding . . . want to express musical ideas of their own, (develop) better powers of concentration . . . have a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction concerning their experience” (Mead 15).

The following lessons are sample lessons that can be used to develop the children’s sensibilities to all aspects of music, to help develop the “inner ear,” to allow them to experience the melodies and rhythms with their entire nervous systems. Obviously, if small children are to improvise a movement presentation to a sophisticated work such as Aaron Copland’s “Appalachian Spring,” they must have many progressive lessons to help prepare them for such an undertaking. Because of the use of Copland’s ballet piece “Appalachian Spring” in the final lessons I am including some background on this composer and this composition.

Aaron Copland

Aaron Copland was a thoroughly American composer, born of Russian Immigrant parents and raised in Brooklyn, N.Y. in the early 19th century. His father, Harris, and his mother, Sarah, raised their five children upstairs over the family’s dry goods store. The parents were loving but very busy and the children, including Aaron, the youngest, were

expected to help out in the family business. Although Sarah Copland sang and played the piano in her early years and saw to it that the children had some music lessons, most of the family and extended family were practical, hard working folks who had little understanding or interest in the musical world young Aaron embraced. Despite the reservations of many family members, he enjoyed the support of his family throughout his life.

In 1921 Copland traveled to Europe to spend a year studying abroad. His year ended up extending into three; the time spent there an extremely influential period of his life and career. He intended to spend a summer semester in Fontainebleau, a new conservatory for young American musicians. However, on the trip over he met the artist Marcel Duchamp, who suggested that instead of Fontainebleau he should go right to Paris. He took the advice and it turned out to be very fortuitous indeed. Copland arrived in Europe between the 1st and 2nd World Wars, a very exciting time for the arts. The borders were open again and musicians and other artists traveled freely. There were a tremendous variety of styles intermingling. He began studying advanced composition with Nadia Boulanger, an astounding musician and teacher. Her teaching and required regimen pushed him deeper into his own compositional capacities. Besides her regular arduous teaching schedule, Boulanger hosted informal classes in her home once a week. During these sessions scores were discussed, music was performed, and sometimes a book was reviewed. These sessions were attended by many of the prominent active composers including Stravinsky, Milhaud, Poulenc, Ravel, Villa-Lobos, and Saint-Saens. Copland's compositional skills as well as his world-view were broadened considerably by these encounters.

Copland returned to America in 1924, determined to devote himself entirely to composing, a very daring decision financially. Although he achieved some critical acclaim, it was not until he was in his 40s that he became well known as a prominent American composer. Throughout his long career, Copland exhibited a very real generosity of spirit toward younger composers. Even though he was only 25 himself when he returned from Europe he started befriending and sponsoring younger composers, giving them useful advice and aid and sometimes personal and emotional support as well by acting as a sounding board for personal problems. Over the years Copland is said to have helped several hundred young composers even though he took few as actual students. He was a very positive influence in their lives.

As an adult, Copland was a genuinely self-effacing, tactful and reserved individual in social interactions. His composing, however, expressed an incredible range of emotions. He considered composing a way of showing self-expression and self-discovery. Copland was a very affable man who loved people and group interactions. He had friends of many ethnic backgrounds and in many countries. As does American culture, Copland's music reflects these influences. William Schuman, a longtime friend and colleague, writes in his introduction to Copland's book, *What to Listen for in Music*, "Copland has created a body of works that speaks to his countrymen in identifiable terms

and this identification is a national commonality . . . Copland's art evokes a response based on our shared experience and gives us a sense of belonging.”

During his long and prodigious career Copland produced compositions in almost every area of music including opera, ballet, orchestral music, symphonic band, chamber music, keyboard pieces, and chorales.

APPALACIAN SPRING AND MARTHA GRAHM

It is difficult to give any important information about Copland's ballet suite, *Appalachian Spring*, without some discussion of Martha Graham, the choreographer for whom he composed the work.

Martha Graham (1894-1991) grew up in Pennsylvania, near Pittsburg. As the daughter of a physician she absorbed much information about the human body and how it moves and how that movement affects those in motion and those observing the motion.

In 1908 she and her mother and two sisters moved to Santa Barbara, California and in 1916 she started studying dance with Ruth Denis and Ted Shaw. She soon was teaching the classes herself. It is from these two mentors that she developed a deep love of ancient cultures and American folk and vernacular styles. She began to feel that American dance would come to be defined by the rhythms of African Americans and Native Americans penetrated by the freshness of thinking in this young American culture.

In 1926 Graham founded her own school in New York City and with it a dedicated ensemble of initially female dancers. They utilized her newly developed “Graham technique” which involved innovative gestures in kneeling and sitting positions, which have come to characterize her dance style.

The years between the late 20s and the late 40s were very productive and her success grew gradually until she had a firm, if not huge, enthusiastic following. During these years she utilized some works of modern American composers. It was through this process that she became aware of the work of Aaron Copland. In 1931 she choreographed Copland's “Piano Variations.”

In the 1930s, with her success growing, Graham began commissioning her own scores to gain more control over the product. During this era in her career Graham was exploring the theme of America's past and its various cultures. She felt deeply about her heritage, her American folk roots, and about Appalachia. The score for what would become *Appalachian Spring* was originally commissioned in 1941 and in 1943, after much wrangling over the script, a certain revised version of “House of Victory” was agreed upon. When Graham commissioned a score she typically provided a prospective composer with a detailed script. However, after the composition was submitted she felt free to alter

it during her choreography sessions. This certainly was true of her work with *Appalachian Spring*.

“The House of Victory” never really identified a location or time, however the action indicates a small town in the North, presumably on the frontier just before and during the Civil War. Although Copland admittedly was mistaken in thinking there had been a Shaker settlement in rural Pennsylvania, he clearly thought of “House of Victory” as taking place in a Shaker Community. The Shakers were a Protestant sect related to the Quakers. They immigrated to America from Europe in the late 18th century, living simple, industrious lives in communities that practiced celibacy and held communal property. They were officially known by 1823 as the Society of Believers. Copland used the old Shaker hymn “Simple Gifts” as a prominent theme in his score.

The script that was finally decided upon featured four principle characters: the Mother, a gentle yet strong quintessential figure of Americana womanhood; the Daughter, a valiant pioneer woman; the Citizen, a shy, yet fanatical fighter for civil rights; and the persecuted Fugitive, who represents the slaves of the Civil War. The cast also includes a “feisty” younger sister who represents America of today, two children, and neighbors to round out the Twain-like small town scene.

“House of Victory” eventually settled into eight parts-“Prologue,” “Eden Valley,” “Wedding Day,” “Interlude,” “Fear in the Night,” “Day of Wrath,” “Moment of Crisis,” and “The Lord’s Day.”

In the short “Prologue” the Mother looks out over the land that has become her homestead. In “Eden Valley” the daughter dances a high-spirited solo and then she and the Citizen engage in a courtship dance. “Wedding Day” is divided into two parts separated by spoken text. Part one begins with the Younger Sister running across the stage and dancing exuberantly with the Two Children. The Citizen enters, dances a solo showing his strength and ends as he carries the Daughter across the threshold. In the second part there are two consecutive scenes: a love scene within the house between the Daughter and the Citizen, and a wild and raucous charivari among the townsfolk outside. The “Interlude” is a telescoped depiction of the town’s daily life resembling spring planting. “Fear of Night” is essentially a dance representation of war at any time. The Fugitive enters and dances a dance of distress and hopelessness, the plight of a runaway slave. In “Day of Wrath,” the Citizen dances a wild and violent dance reminiscent of John Brown and Harper’s Ferry demonstrating his feelings toward slavery. While this is going on, the Children act out other abominations of war, such as separation and bewilderment. In “Moments of Crisis,” the dance of the women suggests barely contained hysteria over the events around them, and “The Lord’s Day” suggests the simple faith and consolations of the Sabbath in a small town. It has a double scene of the Daughter and the Citizen outside in a love duet and townspeople inside at a church service standing in orderly rows facing offstage as though looking at a preacher.

Copland's score of *Appalachian Spring* "represents an astonishing absorption of the vernacular . . . It often gives the impression of folk music . . . listeners are often surprised to discover that it uses only one folk tune. One source for this remarkable achievement lies with the culture of the Shakers and their belief 'Tis a Gift to be Simple'" (Pollack 399).

LESSON PLANS

Lesson Plan 1

The children have been previously taught the song, "Clap, Clap, Clap Your Hands." (Due to copyright restrictions, we could not publish this song.) This lesson has several objectives: to practice keeping a steady beat and to designate accent beats, to apprehend the two sections of the song, to improvise an ensemble rhythmic movement activity, to practice starting and stopping a movement activity at the designated time and in the designated space.

When the lesson begins the students are sitting in a circle. The teacher reminds the children that they know this song and lets them listen to "Clap, Clap, Clap Your Hands." While listening, the students will keep the steady beat on the palms of their hands with their fingertips. Accented beats will be marked by hitting the fist in the palm.

Next, there will be a discussion of the two sections of the song. A ball will be brought out and the students will be told that they will pass the ball around the circle during the verse of the song. It will then be discussed how the ball or someone's body could be used to show the movement of the chorus. Students can demonstrate their ideas. The song will be played again with the students passing the ball during the verse. The person holding the ball when the chorus begins will rise and move to the rhythm of the chorus using one of the suggested movements or a newly improvised one. The student may move out of the circle but must have returned to the circle by the end of the chorus. This will be continued for a few rounds according to the time allowed for the entire lesson.

Now the children will choose a partner. They are asked to talk with their partner and discuss what movements they want to use to demonstrate the rhythm of the chorus. At the signal from the teacher the students will stop their discussion and this time stand in a circle next to their partner. During the verse the children will pass the ball on the steady beat as before. When the chorus comes the partners will break away from the circle and perform their improvised movements. They must be back in the circle at the end of the chorus. This activity can be repeated as many times as time allows.

Lesson Plan 2

The students have been learning a song called "The Tale of the Space Mice" from the musical *The Mice From Outer Space*. The song is written in $\frac{3}{4}$ time in an almost

burlesque style. The words are matched to the triplets. The words to the song tell the tale, as told by the space mice, of how they came to crash their spacecraft onto planet earth. The objective of the lesson is to explore movement with $\frac{3}{4}$ meter utilizing both the steady downbeat and triplets. The children have sung the song in previous lessons and so are familiar with the words.

When the lesson begins the children are told they will not be singing the words to the song but will rather be keeping the steady beat. As the song is played the children rock from one foot to the other on the downbeat spreading their arms to indicate the length of the interlude phrases that are not sung. An alternative movement would be to conduct the song using alternate hands on each downbeat. After this exercise attention is drawn to the board where $\frac{3}{4}$ meter is notated with accents. Next the children will clap the triplets with the words as they sing the words. When the children have become fairly proficient in these activities they can be divided into two groups, the first to keep the steady accented beat either on drums or other percussion instruments, or with clapping, and the second to step or clap out triplets.

Lesson Plan 3

The students now discuss the sequence of events that took place to cause the spacecraft to crash. They also improvise how a space mouse might walk and move its body. They are asked how they can show the events in the story without using words. Their thinking can be directed by asking such questions as: How does your space mouse look and move when it is frightened? Were the mice standing or sitting when the ship started to shake? Do you think they wore seatbelts? What did the mice do when they started to crash? Children are divided into groups of three or four to create a pantomime of the story. They are reminded to move like space mice during the pantomime. After the practice session the children stand in a circle. The groups will perform their created pantomimes one at a time in the middle of the circle while the others stay on the edge and sing the song while rocking from one foot to the other (or another appropriate gesture) on the accented beats.

Lesson Plan 4

The object of this lesson is to allow the students to experience and respond to silence in music.

The students are already familiar with the song, "Bingo." The chorus is sung with the simple $\frac{4}{4}$ meter of two quarter notes followed by two eighth notes, which is then followed by a quarter note. This sequence is repeated three times while the letters that spell the name Bingo are sung to the melody.

The second time the chorus is sung, the first letter of Bingo is clapped in rhythm instead of being sung. The next time the first two letters are clapped instead of sung and

so on until all the letters of the name are clapped instead of sung. In this lesson we will build on this activity to allow the children to experience silence in music.

The children are told that this time when the letters are removed there will be silence instead of clapping. Students are asked to put their hands up, palms to the front and push their hands forward in rhythm one time for every letter that has been removed.

When they have mastered this exercise, the students will stand in a circle all facing one direction. While the teacher plays a simple accompaniment in 4/4 meter sequence either on the keyboard or on a percussion instrument the children walk around the circle keeping the beat with their walking and accentuating the first beat of every measure by stomping and saying the number louder than the rest. After they have practiced, the teacher tells them that the next time they hear the rhythm one of the four beats will be missing. On the missing beat they are to raise their hands and gesture as they did with the missing letters in the song, "Bingo." As the children walk the teacher will call out the beat that is to be silent such as "3." The children keep walking verbalizing the counts one, two and four and use the silent hand signal for the third beat. This continues in the same way using different beats singly or in combination within the four beat measure.

This lesson and the ones following are based on *Appalachian Spring*. (see Discography) For clarification of the section to be used, I am including the number reference from the counter on the CD player.

Lesson Plan 5

1:00-3:09

This lesson is designed to help the students gain a vocabulary in discussing the music. First, there is a listening of this portion of *Appalachian Spring* without interruption. A discussion is held afterwards to acquaint the children with attributes of the music. Vocabulary such as "slowly, sustained, gradual, soft, loud, etc." is introduced. Question-What did the music make you think of? The next activity can be built either on a response from the children, or, if none seems appropriate, tell the students it makes some people think of little plants growing up from seeds.

Next, the children listen to the music again with their eyes closed and imagine the plants growing up out of the ground. When the music has finished, there should be a short discussion of how one could move to show the plant growing. Use the initial vocabulary to express the qualities of the gestures the children invent.

Now the children find their own space on the floor, lower themselves to a crouched, fetal position and pretend they are little plants inside the seed. They are told to unfold their bodies and start to grow as the music plays. The teacher will guide the children by narrating the activity as the music plays, not allowing them to completely stand up until the music is nearly complete. The movement should go from a crouched position to a full

upright position in a slow, sustained manner. This activity is repeated with no verbal cues but with the teacher doing the activity with the children.

Lesson Plan 6

1:00-3:09

This lesson contains an art lesson, which will help to solidify the attributes of the music explored in the previous lesson.

Sheets of bulletin board paper or a similar paper are taped to the wall, one sheet for each child. The paper should be a little longer than the height of the child. A protective drop cloth is placed on the floor under the paper and pots of paint with the primary colors, water for cleaning brushes and paper towels or rags, and brushes somewhat larger than standard are available. It is best if each child has his/her own supply of paint. This will help avoid breaks in concentration and wrangling over supplies.

The students are instructed not to talk but to listen to the music silently. They are asked to start at the bottom of the paper and very slowly and gradually paint a plant like it would grow from a seed, from the ground up. When they are finished the plant should reach the top of the paper. They are reminded of how they moved their bodies and arms in the last lesson and are told to use some of those motions as they paint. They should remember that plants usually spread out and have more branches and leaves as they grow upward. They are not to stop painting until the music stops. If they finish their plant before the music is completed they are to fill in the background of the picture.

Lesson Plan 7

3:09-4:30

Children are told they will listen to another section of the same piece of music they heard in the last lesson. After listening, a discussion is held concerning the characteristics of the music. Descriptive vocabulary is stressed. Words such as “exciting, rapid, quick,” etc. are written on the board as they come up in discussion. Students listen one more time to the music and this time imagine how they would move to show these discussed characteristics of the music. After the second listening students find an individual spot in the room and wait. This time, as the music is played, they move in their own fashion to express the music. The teacher should not participate so that the students will find their own means of expression and not be tempted to emulate the teacher. When the activity ends, the teacher may pick some students who had interesting and innovative gestures and let them take turns leading the class as they move to the music.

Next, the teacher reminds the class of the growing plants in the previous exercise. Children are asked to close their eyes and imagine their plants standing in a field and to imagine what could be happening around the plants as the music plays. Children’s imaginative ideas should be discussed when the music stops—rabbits jumping, squirrels

scampering, birds flying, foxes slinking, etc. The teacher chooses two or three for development. The students discuss and demonstrate the movements of the different animals.

When the music begins again the children are free to choose one of these animals and become the animal without accompanying sound effects. It is important to remind the children that the animals they are playing are silent and that they may not interfere with other animals. (Bees don't sting rabbits, etc.)

Lesson Plan 8

1:00-3:09

3:09-4:30

The purpose of this lesson is to help the children gradually move from creative dramatics experiences to performance-oriented dramatics. They will discuss using movement activities from the previous lessons with *Appalachian Spring* and creating a small performance suitable to show an audience. This may or may not be a necessary or desirable conclusion for the activities depending upon the age and maturity of the students. Also, the growing plant and animal theme is only a suggestion. Your class may come up with another theme more interesting and suited to them.

A discussion is held on how the class could use some of their movement activities to create a performance to show for an audience. Ask the students a series of questions. What should be the color of the costumes? What should they look like? Where would we place the plants on stage so the animals would have room to move around? What animals should we choose to be in the performance? Who in our class is best to play which animal? Should the animals make noise or be silent? During which part of the music would the animals come on stage and during which part would the plants grow up in the field? Should we have special lights? What color should they be? Is there any time when there should be no light or no movement?

After issues such as these have been discussed, let the children, as much as possible, decide on what gestures they will use to play their plant or animal, and, as much as possible, let them decide which plant or animal they want to be. Since playing animals usually seems more interesting to children than playing plants the performance could be given twice with the actors switching rolls. An alternative to the children being the growing plants onstage is to mount the paintings that were created in lesson 6 on stiff board and have the children bring the pictures onto the stage, one at a time, during the playing of the first section of the music.

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