

Japan

Ideas to be used mainly come from the 'Japan' project folder in the music room. Additional material can be seen in 'Creating Music Around the World' by Paul Sturman. All children are expected to consolidate their songwriting skills, use of the pentatonic and ostinati in this topic.

Lesson 1

Learning intention: To listen to music from a different country and to identify and classify the instruments played.

1. Play extract from cassette and ask the children to think about which country it comes from. Ask them why they picked the countries and give credit for good reasons. (If nobody guesses correctly, then perhaps give a few clues.)
2. Explain that they are beginning a topic on the music of Japan and in order to prepare for practical work later in the term, they need to familiarise themselves with the sounds and types of instruments used in traditional Japanese music.
1. In general note books or on rough paper, draw a table with three columns headed 'Japanese Instrument', 'European Instrument' and 'Family'.
2. Explain that they are going to listen to extracts of music and they are to try to fill in the instrumental family, (string, woodwind, percussion etc.) and if they can, the instrument which is the closest European equivalent of the sound they can hear. (Leave column 1 until answers are discussed.
3. Play cassette. Discuss each example after it is played and fill in the Japanese names.
4. Give out text books and read first two pages on Japan and the **Gagaku** orchestra. Note down any new instruments mentioned.
5. Write up lists of instruments in neat with Japanese names where possible. (It may be useful at this stage to list the families together i.e. all the strings first, then woodwind and so on.)
6. If anyone finishes this they can look at keyboard voices and other instruments in the classroom to see which ones may be of use in this topic.

Plenary: Discuss which classroom instruments may be useful next week and encourage any recorder players, flautists or string players to bring their instruments next week.

Japanese Instruments

Japanese Instrument	European Instrument	Family
Koto	Zither	String
Biwa	Guitar/Lute	String
Samisen	Guitar/Banjo	String
Shakuhachi	Flute/Recorder	Woodwind
Ryuteki	Flute	Woodwind
Sho	Mouthorgan	Woodwind
Hichiriki	Oboe	Woodwind
Taiko	Drum	Percussion
Daibyoshi	Drum	Percussion
Kane	Gong	Percussion
Chappa	Cymbals	Percussion

N.B. All Japanese words end with a vowel or an 'n'

Lesson 2

Learning intention: To use and begin to understand the pentatonic scale by performing a song.

Introduction: Remind the children that they are beginning a topic on Japanese music and talk about the families and names of instruments they listened to last week.

Main Content:

1. Teach song melody to the class (this can work well if you do not give them the words as yet as they will then learn them by heart straight away).
2. Give out the instrumental parts as appropriate. If there are recorder players, flautists or violinists in the group then use them for the melody.
3. Rehearse song several times giving children a chance to perform from different parts. Draw attention to the fact that there are only five notes of the scale being used and that this is called the **PENTATONIC SCALE** (C, D, E, G and A).
4. Get the G and C parts to perform with the rest of the class listening, then D, E, and A by themselves.
How far apart/ what interval are C and G from each other?
What about D and A? What about E and A?

Explain that the use of **fifths** and **fourths** gives oriental music its own distinctive sound.

5. Perform and record the song.

Plenary: Listen to recording of the song and ask the class about the **pentatonic scale**, types of instruments used and the use of **4ths** and **5ths** to accompany the piece.

Lesson 3

Learning intention: To compose a song using the pentatonic scale.

Introduction: Split the class into groups of 4 or 5.

Revise the **Pentatonic** scale, use of **4ths** and **5ths** and use of instruments covered last week.

Explain that each group is going to compose a song based on the given words.

Give out song words and ask the children to copy them into general notebooks (Make sure each group has a copy of only one of the verses).

When the words are copied, ask the children to write the number of syllables in each line at the end of each line. Each verse and chorus has the pattern 8, 5, 8, 5, 7(9), 7(9)

Main Content:

1. Discuss syllables and the fact that each syllable will need at least one note. For the chorus, the children may decide they want to set 'hmm sss' to music or they may wish to use percussion to create the sounds (e.g. Cymbal and rainmaker).
2. The song needs to have a melody, at least one **ostinato**-style accompaniment and some rhythmic percussion.
3. Get the groups to decide who is doing which job and what instruments they require. Remind them to use suitably Japanese-sounding instruments.
4. Compose/rehearse in groups. Encourage the group to write down the letter names of the melody above the correct syllable in their note books.

Plenary: Perhaps a few groups could perform the beginnings of their melody or ostinato patterns, but not the whole song as yet. Remind the class they are to perform the whole song next week.

Lesson 4

Learning intention: To perform a song using the pentatonic scale.

Introduction: Remind the children of the elements they need to include in the song: melody, ostinato, rhythm

Main Content:

1. Explain that they now need to rehearse for a performance which must include at least one rendition of the words. They need to decide on an order for performance. (Play - sing – play makes for quite a good performance). Are they going to all sing the song together or nominate one person? Is it possible to play an instrumental part and sing at the same time? If not, then perhaps the melody line could be played whilst others in the group

sing.

2. To encourage the group to sing, it may be an idea to send the groups to rehearse just with the melody instrument so that they all try to sing. They can then come and collect their ostinato and rhythmic instruments after a few minutes singing rehearsal.
3. Perform (and record) the songs.
Ask the listening groups to comment on use of instruments, ensemble, form etc.

Plenary: If time play back recordings and discuss.

(Perhaps assess for Level 3 / 4 composition and performance)

Lesson 5

Learning intention: To record a song in written form

Introduction: Play cassette of last week's recordings and discuss.

Main Content: Either using stave notation or a simpler form, get the groups to write out their songs.

C D E G A G A G
Lotus blue the smooth-faced waters

C D E D C
Softly floating by,

G A G A E D C D
Jasmine petals white as snow-stars

E G E D C
Fallen from the sky.

C C D D E E E E D C
River of whispering reeds, mmm, sss,

C C D D E E E E D C
River of whispering reeds, mmm, sss.

_____ = cymbal with soft beater

Ostinato and rhythmic parts can then be written underneath or words underlined as in the week 2 song. (Different colours can be used to underline words for different rhythmic instruments.) This can look good as display work if a border is drawn and decorated around each set of song words.

Plenary:

Discuss key words from the last few weeks.

Japan

Further ideas:

1. (One Lesson) Use the graphic score on pages 12 and 13 of 'Creating Music Around the World' by Paul Sturman for a class performance of a Kabuki play.
2. (One or Two Lessons) Use the Ritsu scale outlined on page 15 of 'Creating Music Around the World' for an instrumental composition.
3. (Two Lessons) Perform music for a noh play using the outline on the enclosed worksheet. Perhaps each group could attempt a different section and then the class could perform the whole piece, maybe even with some drama or mime.
4. (One Lesson) Comprehension work using the question sheet enclosed.
5. (One or Two Lessons) Use a picture of 'The Great Wave off Kanagawa' by Hokusai (Photocopy included. Coloured version is in 'Japanese graphic Art') to create a sound picture.

