

Concerto for Turntables and Orchestra, Mvt 5 by Gabriel Prokofiev

PRIMARY CLASSROOM LESSON PLAN

For:

- Key Stage 2 in England and Wales
- Second Level, P5-P7 in Scotland
- Key Stage 1/Key Stage 2 in Northern Ireland

Written by Rachel Leach

Background

The composer: Gabriel Prokofiev (b. 1975)

- English composer, producer and DJ
- His grandfather was famous Russian composer Sergei Prokofiev
- Is interested in orchestral music but also modern types of music like Hip-Hop and Garage

The music: Concerto for Turntables and Orchestra, movement 5

- Written in 2006
- The DJ controls recorded sounds from the orchestra to create a 'battle of sounds'
- First performed at the Proms in 2011 and has since been played all over the world

Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- listen and reflect on a piece of orchestral music
- invent their own musical motifs and structure them into a piece
- perform as an ensemble
- learn musical language appropriate to the task

Curriculum checklist

- play and perform in ensemble contexts, using voices and playing musical instruments

- improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the interrelated dimensions of music
- listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory

Glossary of music terms used

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Cadenza | a moment of showing off for one player |
| Concerto | a piece with a prominent solo role for one player |
| Groove | a modern word for 'ostinato' |
| Juggle | a DJ term for alternating between ideas |
| Orchestrate | choose which instruments take which roles |
| Ostinato | a repeating pattern |
| Pitched percussion | percussion instruments that can play different pitches – xylophones, glockenspiels, chime bars etc. |
| Unpitched percussion | percussion instruments that can only make a limited number of sounds – drums, shakers woodblocks, tambourine etc. |

Resources required

- Classroom percussion instruments and any other instruments that your children might be learning
- Writing materials
- You do not need turntables or a DJ to complete these tasks! They are best achieved using a wide range of more traditional instruments and instruments made from found objects around the classroom

This scheme of work is plotted out over six lessons. Feel free to adapt it to suit your children and the resources you have available.

The six lessons at a glance

Lesson 1:

- Activities: Listen and describe a piece of music
Watch the orchestral performance and discuss
Use the music as stimulus for writing
- Curriculum link: Listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory
Appreciate and understand a wide range of high-quality live and recorded music drawn from different traditions and from great composers and musicians
Develop an understanding of the history of music

Lesson 2:

- Activities: Create new instruments from non-musical objects
Invent an ostinato
- Curriculum link: Listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory
Improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the interrelated dimensions of music
Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression

Lesson 3:

- Activities: Orchestrate ostinatos with traditional instruments
Create musical conversations
- Curriculum link: Listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory
Appreciate and understand a wide range of high-quality live and recorded music drawn from different traditions and from great composers and musicians

Lesson 4:

- Activities: Learn to play a 'groove'
Juggle between grooves to create a new piece
- Curriculum link: Improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the interrelated dimensions of music

Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression

Lesson 5:

Activities: Structure ideas together to make one piece

Curriculum link: Listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory
Improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the interrelated dimensions of music
Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using their voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression

Lesson 6:

Activities: Create short cadenzas
Perform in front of an audience

Curriculum link: Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression
Improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the interrelated dimensions of music

LESSON 1

Watching and listening

1. Prepare your class

Explain to your class that you are going to begin a 6-week music project focusing on a fantastic piece of music by a composer called Gabriel Prokofiev and watch the introductory film with Gabriel and Clara Amfo.

2. Have a discussion about what you have just watched. Ask the following questions:

- Did you like the piece?
- Did you like the combination of DJ with turntables and orchestra?
- What did you think of DJ Mr Switch?

3. Explain to your class that DJ Mr Switch is one of the absolute best DJs in the world - he has won the World Championships four times! Tell them also that when this piece was first performed in 2011, no one had ever seen anything like it before. It was a world first and everyone was very excited about it.

4. Watch the full orchestral performance again and ask your children to imagine that they are the first people in the world to see and hear this music. Afterwards write on the board their thoughts.

5. Listening task

Give out paper and writing materials. As you watch and listen again, ask your children to write a newspaper report about what they are seeing and hearing, imagining that they are the first reporters to discover this new type of music. Remind them that a newspaper report doesn't have to be long – one paragraph is enough – and prompt them to include:

- A sentence about DJ Mr Switch
- A sentence about the orchestra
- A comment on the music or the composer (Gabriel Prokofiev)
- An invented quote from an audience member

6. Finally, when this is achieved, ask your 'reporters' to read some of their reports aloud to the class. If you have time, ask your children to fill up the rest of their page with a quick sketch of either the orchestra, DJ Mr Switch or the concert hall (e.g. audience faces etc.).

LESSON 2

New Sounds

1. **Warm-up.** Begin with your class sitting in a large circle. Pass a clap around the circle and then some more unusual sounds, like a tongue-click, quick tapping fingers on the opposite palm, a 'whoosh' etc.
2. **Next, take an ordinary object like a half-full plastic water bottle.** Challenge each child in turn to make a new sound using just the bottle and their body as it moves around the circle (e.g. they could tap it, scratch their fingernails along the side, shake it, drop it etc.).
3. **Explain** that they have made new musical sounds out of the water bottle just as Gabriel Prokofiev made new sounds with his turntables. **Explain further** that anything can make new musical sounds and anything can be a musical instrument.
4. **Split your class into two groups** (or 4 or 6 – you need an even number of groups for later in this project). Label these groups A & B. Ask each group to create new musical instruments and sounds from objects in the classroom.

You can control this (e.g. put a selection of objects in the middle of the room for everyone to choose from), give each group specific rules (e.g. group 1 must choose wooden objects, group 2 fabric etc.), or just let the children be free to select whatever they like as long as it is safe and they can make a sound on it.

5. **When this is achieved,** ask each group to invent a repeating rhythmic pattern to play with on their new instrument. The 'technical' term for this is an 'ostinato'. Here's a simple method for creating ostinatos:
 - Ask a simple question, such as 'what did you have for breakfast?' and answer with a full sentence
 - Play a steady pulse on a drum or woodblock
 - Say the sentence out loud, fitting it to the pulse and repeating it over and over again
 - Move the sentence onto body percussion by clapping every syllable

At this point you have created an **ostinato**.

6. **Finish the lesson** by listening to each group's new sound and their ostinato. Make sure everything is carefully written down for later. (At this level, the best way to write down the

ostinato is just to remember the words. The words will help the children to remember their rhythms.)

LESSON 3

Old sounds, new ostinatos

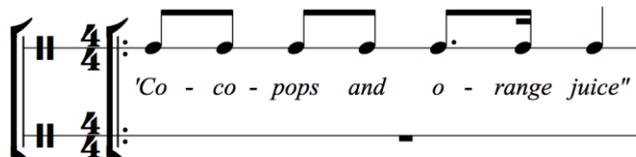
1. **Warm up.** Begin in a circle again and, after a quick warm-up, talk through what you made last lesson. Make sure that your two groups are sitting together and ask each group to remember their new ostinato and say it out loud together. Encourage the rest of the class to say it back. Try this again with each group clapping rather than saying the words. So, you have done this:

- Group A say their ostinato words in rhythm: Group B copies.
Switch over
- Group A clap their ostinatos: Group B copies
Switch over

It will be useful at this point to write the ostinatos on the board for everyone to see.

2. **Ask each group to get their objects out** and practise their ostinato on these new 'instruments' just as they did during the last lesson. Again, hear each one and encourage the class to clap (or play) them back.
3. **Ask Group A to teach their ostinato to Group B.** The children in Group B must choose 'real' instruments to play the ostinato on. Encourage them to choose instruments with a similar sound to the 'new' sounds Group A have used – e.g. if the new sound is made from pencils tapping together, choose claves or a woodblock.
4. **Challenge the groups** to make a short musical conversation that goes from 'new' instruments to old instruments using the same ostinato, like this:

'New' instruments:



'Co - co - pops and o - range juice"

'Old' instruments:



'Co - co - pops and o - range juice"

The image shows two musical staves in 4/4 time. The first staff, labeled 'New' instruments, has a melody of quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The second staff, labeled 'Old' instruments', has a melody of quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. Both staves have the lyrics 'Co - co - pops and o - range juice' written below them.

5. **Switch over** so that the Group A learn and interpret Group B's work and make a short musical conversation. So now you have this:

- Group A 'new' instruments & Group B 'old' instruments:
Conversation using Group A ostinato
... and vice versa

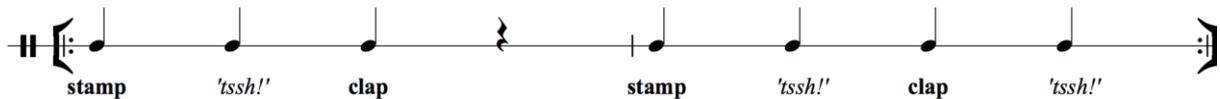
This is exactly how Gabriel Prokofiev's piece starts. The DJ (new instrument) plays an ostinato, the orchestra (old instruments) copy. Then they have a musical conversation.

- 6. Finish this session** by carefully writing down what you have done and who played which instrument.

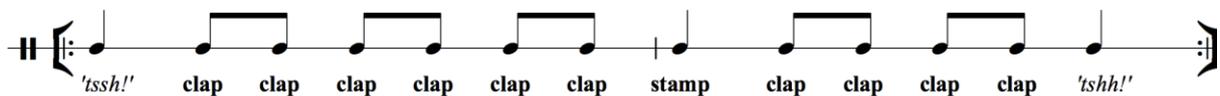
LESSON 4

Two grooves

1. **Warm up.** Begin once again in a circle with Group A on one side and Group B opposite. Teach this 'groove' to Group A. It is borrowed from Gabriel Prokofiev:



Teach this groove to Group B:



2. **Ask each group** to get out the instruments they have been using so far – either the 'new sounds' or the traditional instruments. (A mixture of both would also work well.) Challenge them to orchestrate their new groove (i.e. decide which instruments play which parts).
3. **Bring the groups back together** and hear each groove one by one. Challenge them to move seamlessly from one groove (one group) to another without a gap. They must decide how many repetitions to play before switching. By doing this they are creating another musical conversation.
4. **Next, challenge** your musicians to try switching back and forth after just one repetition of each group – in the DJ world, this is called 'juggling'.
5. **Challenge them to play** both grooves at the same time and listen to the new patterns that emerge from this 'clash'.
6. **Finally,** ask your children to create a structure using all these methods and end the lesson by perfecting it. Make sure you have carefully written down what you have done again.

LESSON 5

Structure

- 1. Warm-up.** Remind your class of the two 'grooves' they learned during the last lesson and try putting your structure back together just using body percussion – keep the instruments silent for now.
- 2. Make a list on the board** of all the sections of music you have created so far. It should look something like this:
 - **Conversation 1:** Group A 'new' instruments, Group B 'real' instruments Group A ostinato
 - **Conversation 2:** Group B 'new' instruments, Group A 'real' instruments Group B ostinato
 - **Juggling between grooves** (last lesson)
- 3. Get out the instruments** and work through all of these sections making sure that everyone knows what they are doing at all points.
- 4. Challenge your children** to come up with an order for these sections. Try out a few suggestions until you have all agreed on the best one and write it up on the board. Finish this lesson by practising your new structure until it is almost perfect.

LESSON 6

Cadenza, and performance

1. **Warm up.** Begin the lesson with a quick focusing warm-up like 'pass-the-clap' and then talk through the piece you made last lesson. Write the structure on the board for reference.
2. **Get the instruments out** and put your piece back together. Work slowly and carefully and make sure that everyone understands what they are doing in each section. Put it back exactly as it was at the end of the last lesson.
3. **Remind your children** that Gabriel Prokofiev's piece is a concerto. A concerto is a type of music that features one musician 'showing-off'. In Gabriel's piece the 'show-off' is DJ Mr Switch and his turntables. Gabriel's concerto features several cadenzas. A cadenza is a short section that the soloist plays completely alone; they usually make up their music on the spot.
4. **Ask your children** to play four beats on their instruments like this:



Aim for neat playing and just four beats!

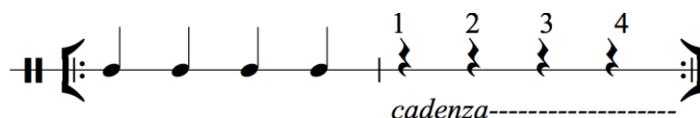
5. **Now ask them to play four beats and rest** for four beats like this:



Aim for complete silence during the rests – encourage your children to count in their heads.

6. **Explain** that the four beats of silence are space for a short cadenza and ask for volunteers to be the 'show-off' cadenza player. This player can do whatever they like during the gap but they must not play for longer than four beats.

You can have as many cadenza players as you like. The rest of the class simply continue paying their four beats in between each cadenza like this:



For cadenza inspiration watch DJ Mr Switch's four beat cadenzas 2'01 into the full piece

7. **Decide where these cadenzas** should be placed in your nearly finished piece. Write this on the board and practise it in full.

8. **Finish this lesson** with a performance of your whole piece on front of an audience.

TAKING IT FURTHER

Cross-curricular activities

- **LISTENING:** Mozart's horn concerto, mvt 3 and Haydn's trumpet concerto, mvt 3 are both featured in BBC Ten Pieces. These are similar (there is a 'show-off' player) but obviously very different to Gabriel's piece (they were both written over 200 years ago!).
- **DJing:** There are many apps available that allow you to try out DJing and scratching on your mobile phone or tablet. Complete this project again using the real technology!
- **ART & MUSIC:** Use your new instruments to make a new piece or invent more new instruments from scratch.

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