

Section 1; Introduction to Musical Notation

Pop Corn!

Materials required

1. Recycled sheets of paper

How to;

Give each child a piece of paper. The “pop corn” is created by everyone holding his/her paper up and flicking a finger against it.

Create a graphic representation of the sounds on the blackboard or flip chart. The crescendo (getting louder - the start of the popping) could be represented by an elongated wedge shape with the open end towards the right, and the reverse for the diminuendo (getting softer - the end of the popping).



Choose one or two students to start off, and add a few students at a time. The middle section is where everyone will be flicking fast and furious. Gradually drop out until only one or two students are left. How realistic can you make it sound? Can you find other objects to give a similar sound? Try this with different students “conducting” (pointing at the “score” and indicating who should play)

Rainstorm

Materials required

1. Chalk board and chalk, or flip chart and markers
2. Enough simple percussion instruments for 1 per student (these can be home made, but should be a variety of shakers, drums, scrapers etc.)
3. Blank paper and markers

How to;

Ask the students to copy what you are doing. Allow 5 – 10 seconds for each element.

Start by rubbing hands together. (wind)

Then tap your index finger in the palm of the other hand. (drizzle)

Then tap two fingers. (rain)

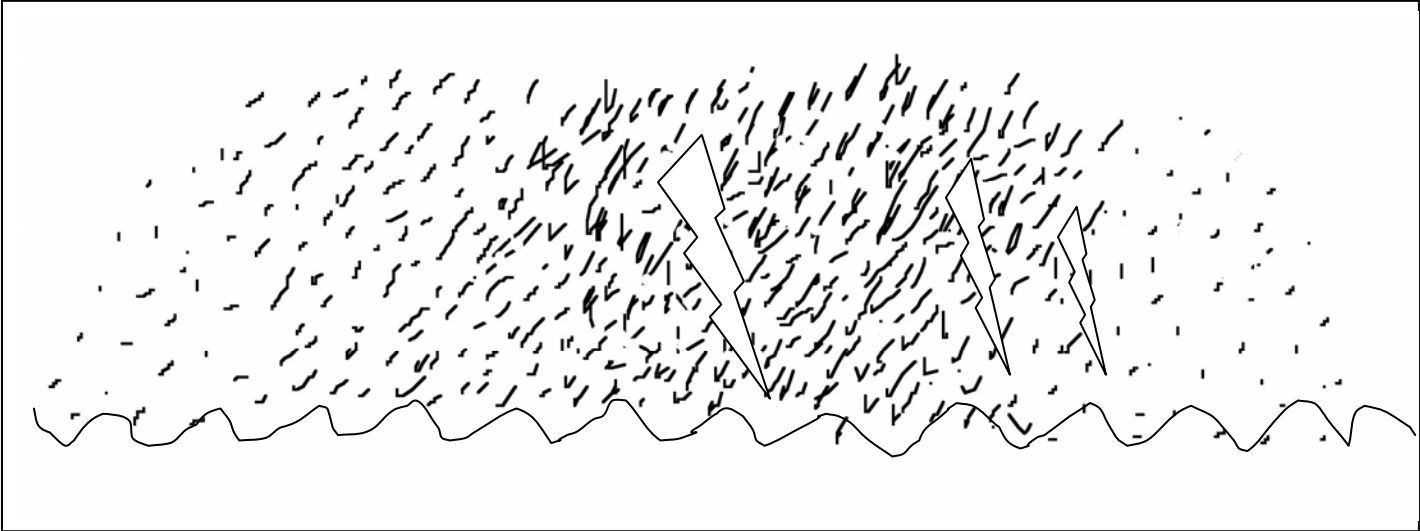
Then tap three fingers, then clap. (downpour)


Then add stamping feet or pounding on desks in short bursts (thunder)

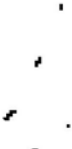
Reverse the process to end with rubbing hands.

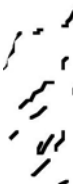
1. The rainstorm can be performed again, but using only pieces of paper, before using instruments. The wind is produced by rubbing the paper on the desk in a circular motion, and raindrops are produced by holding the paper up and flicking it with a finger etc. (you will likely still want to pound on the desks for the thunder)
2. Discuss the role of notation in the performance of music. (*players can remember how a piece was performed, and many players can play together*)
3. Demonstrate a graphic score for the rainstorm on the blackboard. (see below) Perhaps have pages made up with the elements already on them- multiples could be photocopied and the students could mix them up and hang them in a linear form to portray the 'rainstorm'.
4. Discuss the role of a conductor and a composer in music performance.
5. Hand out simple percussion instruments. Divide the students into groups based on the sound of their instrument and how it fits into the rainstorm. (sandpaper blocks for wind, rhythm sticks for drizzle, shakers for rain, drums for thunder, etc)
6. Using agreed upon signals, indicate to each group when they should start and stop playing. You may point to the score on the board, having the students "read" the score and play according to their symbol, or you may conduct and use hand and arm gestures to indicate when each group should play. Some instruments will play throughout (the wind), and some will play only occasionally (thunder).
7. Perform the rainstorm on the percussion instruments.
8. Perform with a different conductor. You may want to rearrange the order of the elements or add dynamics.
9. Discuss the differences in the performances. (Were some elements played longer than others? Was the overall performance longer or shorter?)
10. Can you write a graphic score and perform a soundscape of a Laundromat? Train station? Car engine? Use your imagination to choose a subject.....
11. Divide into groups of 3 or 4 students. Each group then writes and performs a graphic score using a different subject for inspiration.
12. Have the groups trade graphic scores and perform each others soundscape. How is it different from the first group's performance? Can the rest of the class guess the subject?

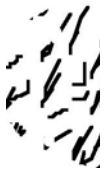
An example of a graphic score for the rainstorm;




 = wind

 = drizzle

 = rain

 = downpour

 = thunder and lightening