

Music From the Start:

A collaboration of the Orff and Suzuki approaches

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Brief Summary of Suzuki

An approach to teaching music inspired by Shinichi Suzuki. The philosophy applies language acquisition to learning music because Suzuki believed that if all children are able to learn their native language, they can also learn music. Major principles of the Suzuki method include listening, parental support, learning with other children, and positive encouragement.

Brief Summary of Orff

An approach to teaching elemental music inspired by Carl Orff. Orff pedagogy focuses on active music making and proclaims the motto “Sing! Say! Dance! Play! Create!” It is through this playful approach that learning becomes meaningful in a more personal way. Students experience musical concepts through imitation, exploration, and expression.

Setting

- “Pre-twinkle Class”: four 3-4 year olds, 1-2 years of experience
- Once a week for 30 minutes, 8 weeks

Activities that include both Suzuki and Orff principles

- “Here we go Riding our Ponies”
 - Teaches students to introduce themselves - Suzuki principle of creating good human beings and Orff principle of creating a cooperative, group environment
 - Pulse
- “Chop Chop”
 - Pulse in the bow hand, the hand responsible for rhythm
 - Incorporating bow hold and opening elbow motions
- Creating dance movements to songs students are learning
 - Singing note names and incorporating steady beat
 - Associating movements with form of the piece
- Stop and Go games
 - Beginning understanding of responses to music
 - Incorporating student posture - balancing stuffed animals
- “Too Many Fairies” and other story books
 - Create movements for each character
 - Exploring vocal patterns, which helps engage inner hearing and be more sensitive to musical elements (high/low, loud/soft)

Practical applications for the classroom

Activities that could be incorporated in general music classrooms:

- Balancing items on shoulders
- Bowing motions
- Incorporating Suzuki rhythms

Activities that could be incorporated in orchestra classrooms:

- Chop Chop
- Stop and Go games
- Creating dance movement to songs students are learning (bass line songs)

Results and take aways

- Combining activities created helped multi-task musical outcomes.
- Combining activities also created more opportunities for disguised repetition.
- Increased singing and vocalization opportunities.
- Helped students be more social and form a more unified group.

In conclusion:

The transition from general music to an instrumental ensemble should not feel like two separate music classes. Instead we can use similar activities to bridge the gap between the mediums to create a smooth transition for our students that will be going into an instrumental ensemble program or are participating in both at the same time. Students should see the benefits that one class can bring to another and be able to make connections between the two.