

Quick Tips

Michelle Rollins, Waverley College Junior School

Orff Principles and Techniques Used:

MOVEMENT, BODY PERCUSSION, IMPROVISATION, PLAYING, ARRANGING

Starting from scratch – Music on the move.

Due to a fire at our school during the Christmas holidays, I started 2010 without a classroom, resources, instruments or books. It really made me evaluate my teaching and the way I have always used the resources at hand. I am still without a classroom and any resources that were saved are in storage. These are some of the things that have worked for me as a mobile music teacher.

Think original

There are many alternatives to manufactured instruments. \$2 shops are full of wonderful things that make music (one of the most popular is a wind tube – a flexible plastic tube that produces different harmonics depending on the speed that it is spun. Also known as a whirly). Many of these “instruments” are portable and low-cost.

Stomp Boom Blast! Creating Music with everyday “stuff” by Cathy Blair (Heritage Music Press) contains printed scores (both original and classical) that use collections of unusual sound sources including rulers, drink cans, shakers and bins. These scores are easily adaptable to whatever sounds you have available.

Children love to make their own instruments, both melodic and non-melodic. The Internet is a great source of ideas, with many sites having detailed instructions which are fairly foolproof. Many of these instruments have accompanying video footage which helps children understand the construction and playing processes.

On a larger scale, a class ensemble can combine their efforts and build a more complex instrument. Again, The Internet has many sites which offer instruction for these projects as well as printed resources such as ***Make your own Marimba*** and ***Make Your Own Wacky Instruments*** by John Machin (both available through VOSA).

Think light

For teachers on the move instruments need to be light and portable. Boomwhackers are a great start. These lightweight, tuned and colour-coded plastic tubes can be used to explore melodic, harmonic and rhythmic patterns. There are some great examples of music making with Boomwhackers on YouTube. Check out ‘Christmas Boomwhackers’ for the holiday season or ‘Flight of the Bumblebee’ just for fun. ***Totally Tubular*** by Ellen Foncannon (Whacky Music Inc.) is full of games and activities to get started.

Think other rooms

The kitchen and the sports storeroom have been quite a surprise. Spoons and chopsticks have been useful percussion alternatives for rhythmic composition and performance. Balls, whistles and relay batons have also appeared in our compositions this year.

Think with your feet

Stomping (using the body and ordinary objects to create a physical theatre performance) has always been a popular activity in my music program. Stomping opens up opportunities for composing, arranging, playing and moving. It also helps children internalise a beat and coordinate rhythmic performances as well as being great fun. Stomping can be done by using body percussion and movement alone so it is perfect for a mobile music teacher.

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