



## **GLOBAL RHYTHMS!**

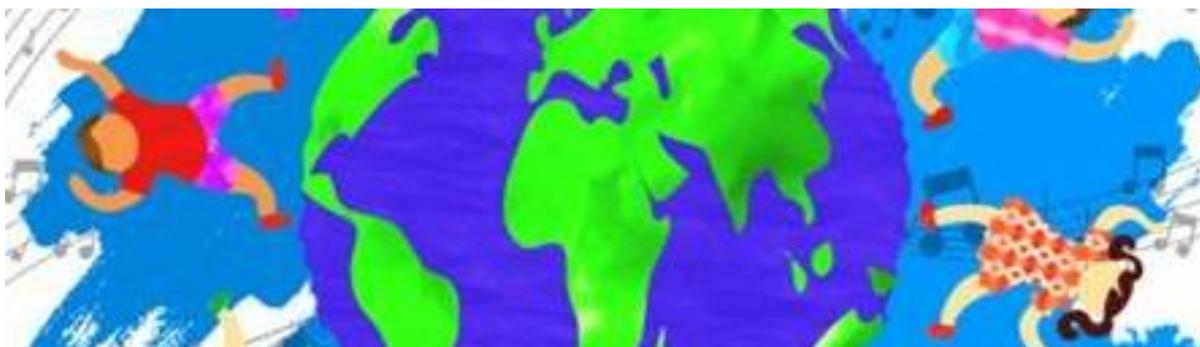
### **UO Schools' Concerts 2019 – Online Resources**

The following resources are outline workshop plans, designed for use in KS2 classrooms. They are intended to last between 45 minutes and one hour, and require no specialist musical equipment. Access to the Internet and/or audio equipment is assumed in some cases. They focus on the theme of “Better Together” in connection with the Ulster Orchestra’s Schools’ concerts being given in November 2019, and also with the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding aspects of the KS2 curriculum.

There are four workshops:

1. Players in Layers
2. Collaboration Creation
3. Empathy Charades
4. Move to the Music

I have attempted to give an easy-to-follow structure, with some links to example pieces of music or films, mostly on YouTube, and suggestions of further expansions you might wish to explore. I hope that you will use these as an inspiration to try your own variations, or invent new workshops based on teamwork and inclusivity.



## Players in Layers

This workshop is in essence a simple game illustrating how the orchestra works in small teams (sections) of musicians playing similar instruments, which all contribute to the whole sound that the audience hears. The orchestra is like a cast sports team. Every player practises their own music individually, and then they rehearse together, before performing in concert.

For this exercise, you will need to split your group into teams of 4-6 participants each.

- **Creating your layers**

Each team will need to create a distinct and memorable rhythm. This can be done by selecting a theme for the workshop, e.g. foods, places, names, sports teams etc.

Once a theme has been decided, each team must choose a word or phrase associated with that theme, and then create a rhythmic pattern to fit that word/phrase:

For example; if the theme is food, a team might choose the phrase “sticky toffee pudding”, and find a memorable rhythm with which to chant this phrase.

Once all teams have selected their word/phrase and created their rhythm, they should share them with the whole group.

- **Building combinations**

Now comes the moment to try to create a piece of rhythmic, spoken music using the layers.

Try starting with one layer, and then gradually adding a second, third more layers to it. It doesn't matter which order they come in, and the resulting effect might well be quite complex.

Participants should be encouraged to speak very clearly, but not shout. It's all about the consonants!

Once the participants have got the basic idea, try layering the different rhythms up in a different order. Some will complement others better than others, and some may end up being very similar to each other. There is no wrong answer here. It's all about pairing creativity with following instruction, just the way a symphony orchestra works.

*NB. You can choose to create new patterns at any time, especially if there is a lot of repetition, or if the phrases chosen are hard to remember.*

- **The Conductor has the final say...**

The last phase of this workshop gives individual participants control over the layered texture as it unfolds.

Select a single participant to be “the conductor”.

They will have four simple gestured commands to use:

1. **“Start”** – point a finger at a team to start their rhythm. They must continue until otherwise instructed.
2. **“Stop”** – point at a team while holding a finger to the lips. They must then wait until restarted.
3. **“Louder”** – point at a team while raising the other hand towards the ceiling. Team must get louder.
4. **“Quieter”** – point at a team while lowering the other hand toward the floor. Team must get quieter.

Using these gestures, the “conductor” can create and alter the performance however they wish. The teams must not only remember and sustain their individual rhythms, but they must also pay close attention to the gestures of the conductor.

- **Further Expansion**

This workshop can be developed further by adding sounds other than the chanted rhythms. If you have access to simple percussion instruments, you can use those in whatever combinations you choose. I would recommend using different “families” of instruments in each team; e.g. one team uses metal instruments, another uses shakers, and another might use drums. I would also encourage any instrumentalists that you have in your group to use their own instruments, and again I might group them in families; strings, brass, flutes, guitars etc.

If you have neither instrumentalists or access to simple percussion instruments, you might consider using “body percussion”; the making of sounds using our own bodies, such as clapping, stamping, tapping thighs, rubbing palms etc. Vocalisations can also add to the effect; one team saying “oh oh oh” to their rhythm, while another uses “cha cha cha cha”, can be a very effective way to create intricate and exciting layers textures.

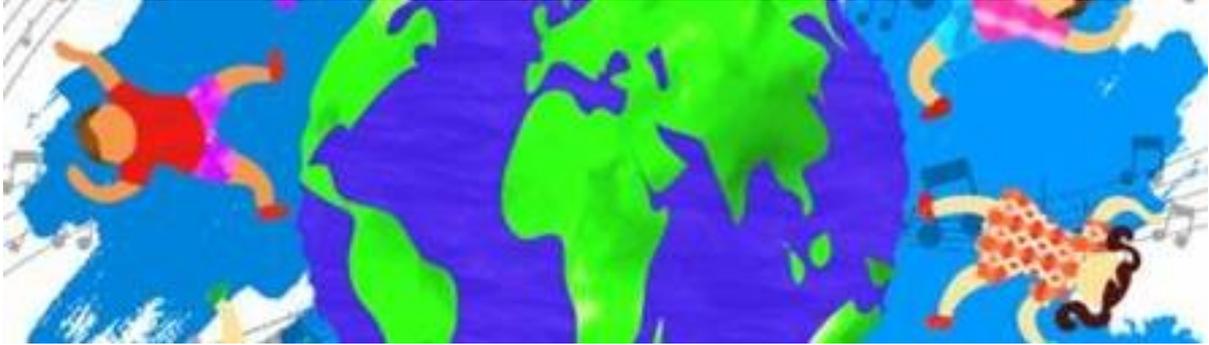
The thing to remember at all times is that there is NO WRONG ANSWER. The beauty of this exercise is that it is impossible to make a mistake! Some layers might work better than others in combination, but they can always be altered. The aim is for each individual to do their own part within a small team, and then combine with other small teams to create a colourful and fascinating overall effect while following general instruction from a conductor. This is in essence exactly how a symphony orchestra works!

### **At Our Concerts**

If you attended one of the Ulster Orchestra's 2019 Schools' Concerts, do you remember the "layers" contained within the orchestra? Can you name the 4 orchestral sections (wind, brass, strings and percussion)?

Can you remember the instruments that make up the layers of each section?

- WIND – Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets, Bassoons
- BRASS – Trumpets, Trombones, French Horns, Tuba
- STRINGS – Violins, Violas, Cellos, Double Basses
- PERCUSSION – Bass Drum, Marimba, Triangle, Cymbals, Timpani, Glockenspiel, Xylophone, Tambourine, Maracas, Castanets etc. etc. etc.



## Collaboration Creation

In the Ulster Orchestra, we believe that everyone has a creative side to their personality. We are a group of individuals, who all see the world differently, but come together to paint musical pictures as a group. There are players who like to paint, players who like to sing, players who knit, and even players who make musical instruments. Together, all of our creative talents bring us together to form an orchestra. This workshop encourages individuality of expression with a common goal; creating a single piece of art with many individual voices.

- **Introduction**

The musical element of this exercise is focused on listening. By listening we can interpret emotions, and develop empathy, and yet maintain our individual creative voices.

The aim is to create a display of artwork with a common theme, inspired by a piece of orchestral music.

- **The music**

For this workshop, you should choose a single piece of music with a distinct thematic inspiration. Some good examples are:

1. "Vltava" by Bedrich Smetana:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3G4NKzmfC-Q>
2. "The Witches Sabbath" by Hector Berlioz:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5n7qfRNzS3s>
3. "Storm" by Benjamin Britten:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvuaASKU1A>
4. "The Fairy Garden" by Maurice Ravel:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oocluOpt0AY>



For this workshop plan, these four examples will be used, but almost any piece of music will do.

- **First Impressions**

Allow some time to simply listen to the chosen music (or just an extract from it, if it is a longer piece). Without telling them what the piece is about, encourage the participants to close their eyes and imagine the scene that they believe the music is depicting.

Once it is finished, explore the thoughts of the group. Discussion should focus on the way the music makes each listener feel, and what pictures it conjures up, if any. Ask the participants if it paints a picture in their minds of a particular scene.

- **The Theme**

Once discussion has finished, the name and imagery of the piece of music should be divulged. This informs the group of the display they are about to create. For the examples given these are:

1. A River
2. A Ghoulish Dance at Hallowe'en
3. An Ocean Tempest
4. A Magical Garden

The participants are to create elements of a collaborative artwork inspired by the music itself

- **Creating the Art**

While playing the music again in the background, every participant has the opportunity to draw/paint/collage an element of the scene as described by the music. Examples are:

1. Places visited by the river on its journey from spring to ocean.
2. Characters participating in the Witches Sabbath celebrations.
3. Things that happen at sea during a storm.
4. Flowers/trees, and characters that inhabit the fairy garden.

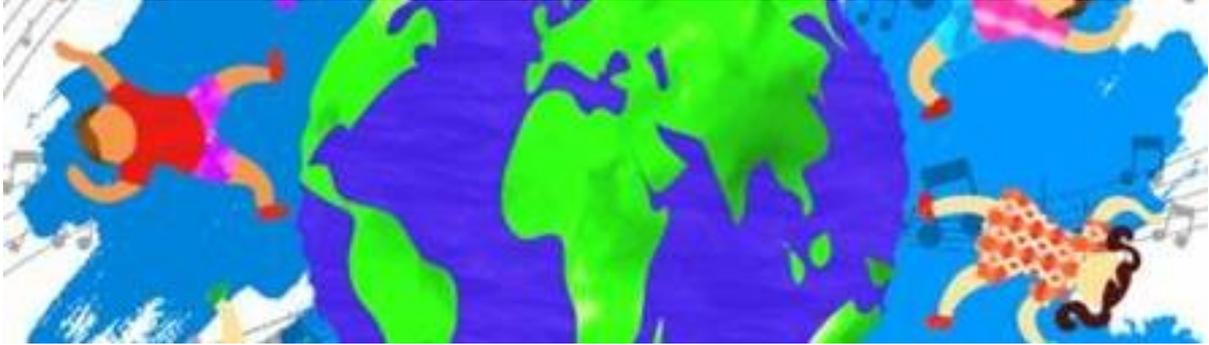
Again there are no wrong answers. The intention is to allow individuals to create their own interpretations of imagery inspired by the music.

- **Display**

The final stage in the process is to display the collaborative piece of art. This can happen at anytime to suit the timescale of your group, but the end result will be a large display of individual work displayed as a single installation, all inspired by a single piece of music. The whole will most certainly be greater than the sum of its parts!

- **At Our Concerts**

If you have attended one of the Ulster Orchestra's Schools' Concerts in November 2019, try to remember what images and scenes the music conjured up while you were listening. Many different countries and cultures were portrayed such as an American country dance or an Eastern European gypsy song. Listen again to some of the pieces the orchestra performed (listed at the end of this document) and let them inspire more artwork.



## Empathy Charades

This is more of an exercise than a workshop, but is designed to help participants express, realise and interpret emotions, as well as give them an opportunity to compose and perform their own short soundscapes.

Absolutely any story will do, although it should not be too long, perhaps only a couple of minutes. I suggest using traditional fairy tales, Aesop's fables, or popular stories local to your own area. It might also be fun to use entirely unfamiliar tales. Using any available instruments, sounds made using their bodies, their voices, or indeed anything that comes to hand, the class will bring the story to life with music and sound effects.

There are three ways to try this activity, each with slightly different challenges. I would repeat the process a number of times during a workshop, using small teams of 4-6 performers each time. You could try the three different exercises with the same story, or you could stick with one exercise and change the story. The idea is that it can be either meticulously planned, or spontaneously chaotic. The reality is that it will most likely be both!

- **Introduction**

Expressing our feelings is one of the hardest things we have to do, and yet one of the most important things we can learn. This workshop explores a new way to share feelings with a group, and find a way to express them using music.

All you need is some paper and pens.

If you have access to simple percussion equipment, or musical instruments of any kind, they can also be used to great effect, but they are not in any way a necessity.

- **Group Discussion**

Encourage the participants to identify and describe emotions. Talk about how different emotions make them feel, both physically and mentally, and how you might recognise when someone is feeling a certain way; perhaps by the

way they talk, the way they act, or even just by way of a person's body language.

- **Drawing Feelings**

The group should now take some time to each draw a "feeling". There are no wrong answers here; anything goes. Ideally, the participants will be encouraged to draw abstract depictions of a particular feeling; this could be heavy, dark scribbles for anger, or spiky, wavy lines for fear etc. Often, people will draw a picture of something that makes them feel a certain way; a sun for happy, or rain for sad.

The emotion depicted should not be indicated on the drawing.

- **Realising the drawings**

The group should be split up into smaller teams of 4-6 individuals. Each team should be given a picture, either chosen at random, or selected by the workshop leader. It should be one drawn by someone who is not in their team. Importantly, they should not be told what emotion the picture is meant to represent.

They must now find a way of depicting this drawing through sound. If you have instruments, they can use those, or they can choose to use "body percussion" (sounds made using only their bodies, such as stamping, clapping, tapping etc), vocalisations (sound made using their voices such as whispers, clicks, hums, whistles, shouts, growls etc.) or a combination of all three.

Discussion should be encouraged within each team about the volume (loud/quiet), speed (fast/slow), and register (high/low) of the sounds they choose.

- **Performing**

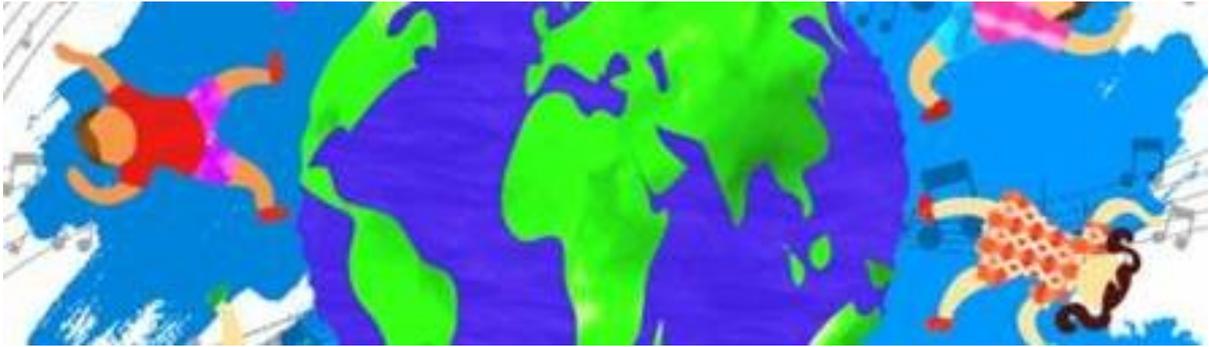
Each team should now perform their sound(s) for the rest of the participants, without showing them what picture they used as their inspiration.

The other teams can try to guess what emotion is depicted by the sounds. After everyone has tried to guess, the picture should be revealed, and the artist responsible can reveal what emotion they were trying to convey.

The whole group can discuss whether or not the musical depiction was an accurate realisation of the picture, and whether or not it succeeded in conveying that emotion.

- **At Our Concerts**

If you attended one of the Ulster Orchestra's Schools' Concerts in November 2019, discuss how the performance made you feel. Was it inspiring or thrilling? Was it maybe overwhelming or even frightening to hear the full orchestra blasting out a huge range of sounds? How did you think your friends and colleagues felt? How did the audience feel as a whole, and how did it feel to be part of that audience? The experience of hearing a live orchestra is meant to evoke contrasting emotions in its audience, and no two people will feel the same way about it.



## Move to the Music

Many of the pieces that the Ulster Orchestra performed in their 2019 Schools' Concerts were written for dancing. Music makes many of us want to move, even if just to sway or clap in time. Rhythm is a powerful and fundamental part of our senses; we all have a heartbeat, after all...

This workshop explores how music makes us move. Our reactions to music are very personal, but are influenced by the speed, volume and rhythm of the music we hear.

- **Preparation**

Listen to a variety of music. I have selected a few examples to give a range of styles (don't show the pictures in the links to the participants to avoid informing their movements):



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ajQYANLiug>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cNQFB0TDfY>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BiH3vA7q0jo>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOD2tvNuzig>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sHD-knhS6es>

- **Introduction**

The participants will split into small groups of about 4-6 members each. The intention is for them to write short pieces of music, or soundworlds, for the other participants to dance to.

The process will explore fundamental musical principles of music.

- **Creating the soundworlds**

Each group should discuss the four basic elements of musical composition:

1. **Dynamic;** loud or soft.
2. **Tempo;** speed, fast or slow.

3. **Articulation;** short & spiky, or smooth.

4. **Register;** high or low.

The participants are entirely free to use any instruments or sounds (body percussion/vocalisations) available to them to create a short (60 seconds) piece. Once again there is no wrong answer, but consensus should be reached within each group as to how their piece should go.

They should be able to perform their soundworld; it can be different every time, as long as the agreed qualities are maintained, e.g. fast spiky music in a high register using metal instruments and hand claps.

- **Performing**

In turn, each group should perform their soundworld for the rest of the participants.

All participants should be encouraged to move in whatever way the music inspires them to move. If space is limited, then body movements in one place are perfectly fine, but if you have the luxury of a large space, encourage more movement. Yes, it might be crazy, but it is a great way to encourage listening, response and physical expression, all inspired by music.

Discuss why the music led the participants to move the way they did, again referring to the four basic elements above.

- **Development**

This whole process can be reversed. A single participant (or small group) can decide on a style of movement and perform it for the rest. After seeing this, a number of others can attempt to create a soundworld that matches. Again, it involves thinking about the four basic musical elements, and how to best match the movements with dynamic, tempo, articulation and register.

- **At Our Concerts**

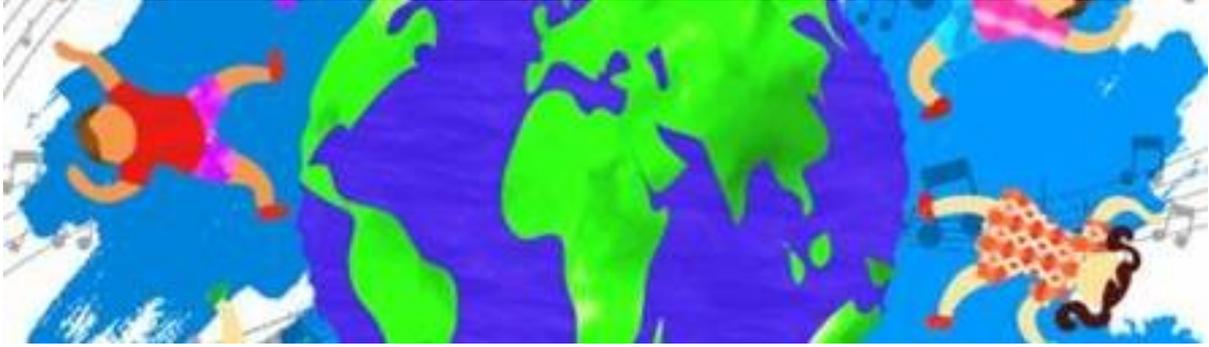
If you have attended one of the Ulster Orchestra's 2019 Schools' Concerts, why don't you revisit some of the pieces we played, and see how they make you move? Line dancing, waltzing, tangoing and Irish dancing are all very different in style, and make us move in different ways, but they all have music in common!

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**Ulster Orchestra Player/Animateur**

**November 2019**



## GLOBAL RHYTHMS!

McGrath & Phillips

Arr. Roy Moore

Benjamin

Tchaikovsky

Ronan Hardiman arr. Moore

Bizet

Perren & Fekaris arr. Malloy

Takemitsu

Burman arr. Pottier

Monti

Copland

Trad.

Offenbach

Sidwell

Strictly come dancing

Jamaican Rumba

Swan Lake Suite: Scene

Lord of the Dance

Carmen: Habanera

I will survive

Waltz

Yamma Yamma

Czardas

Hoe Down

Eightsome Reels

Can-can

Discoature

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