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# Looking Beyond Curriculum: Music in the Singapore Educational System

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**LOOKING BEYOND CURRICULUM  
MUSIC IN THE SINGAPORE  
EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

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UHON 499  
MAY 1990**

## INTRODUCTION

Music has been a diversified educational subject since the time of the Greeks. Realization of its continual influence in the curriculum is manifested through the courses of study of schools and universities throughout the history of Western Europe. The place accorded to music and arts in the curriculum is well expressed by John Dewey: "This enhancement of the qualities which make any ordinary experience appealing, appropriate - capable of full assimilation - and enjoyable, constitutes the prime function of literature, music, drawing, painting..... They are not luxuries of education, but emphatic expressions of that which makes any education worthwhile."<sup>1</sup>

Music is everywhere and has definitely permeated the child's world. Music of all kinds is easily accessible to the child through various media such as radio and television. Music education in schools seeks to broaden the musical contact beyond what the child ordinarily encounters in the home or community. Primarily, music education concerns the processes through which musical knowledge, skills and insights are acquired. However, more importantly, music functions as a unifying force in bringing about a total and

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<sup>1</sup>Dewey, John. Democracy and Education, p.278.

complete education for the young.

Realizing the significant impact music could have on education, music was made a compulsory non-examination subject in 1968 in the Singapore school system. Since its inception music education had grown over the years as music educators experimented with various methodologies to improve the standard of musical learning among the students. "The Active Approach to Music Making" (Kodaly-based), first implemented in Singapore primary schools in 1982 aims at providing music literacy to students. In the past few years, this sequential and progressive music curriculum has done much in elevating music literacy. However, "The Active Approach to Music Making" methodology has the tendency to over-emphasize the psychomotor and cognitive domains in music education. It is undeniable that the rigidity and the limitations of the program have to a certain extent stifled the creativity of music teachers and students alike. Thus, it will be appropriate to consider alternative programs which will compliment the existing curriculum program in the hope of further enriching the musical knowledge of the students through exposure to creativity and the affective domain in music education.

The primary purpose of this thesis is to look beyond curriculum music to explore various materials available and appropriate for the development of music programs which will enhance music learning in a

different dimension. Besides, this paper will serve as a form of guideline for teachers who are enthusiastic to experience and incorporate varied musical ideas in their teaching. The study is organized under the following categories: I. Philosophical Concepts and Goals in Music Education; II. Creative Musical Activities for a Meaningful Music Education. The source of data for this thesis were obtained by: a) discussion with the Assistant Director of the School of Music, Dr. Robert Weiss; b) an examination and study of professional literature on the subject including music texts, and research papers; c) observation of music lessons in the elementary school.

## I. PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTS AND GOALS IN MUSIC EDUCATION

Music, an art which is capable of utmost enjoyment by man, is as old as civilization itself. It was said to have had held a position of importance throughout the ages of history. Today, it continues to be part and puzzle of our modern society.

Experiencing music is part of being human as it is an outlet for expression of feelings. Indeed, we need music and young children should be prepared for the life-long association with music they will encounter in their everyday lives. It is therefore imperative that music educators explore various avenues which will provide children with the experiences to enjoy music and make it an essential part of their lives. Before considering the strategies that will help foster this ideal, it is necessary to consider the domains which embody the music content.

The three domains involved in the acquiring of music contents are psychomotor, cognitive and affective. The Psychomotor domain is concerned with the learning of musical skills while the cognitive domain has to do with the learning of musical concepts which include the elements of music. It is undeniable that musical skills and cognitive contents are vital to music learning. It is, however, the affective components such as appreciations, feelings, attitudes,

meanings and values that help the individual to become sensitive to the power and beauty of music. Thus, it is appropriate to consider the values of music as an expressive art, the affective contents of music and their implication in music education.

Much has been said about music being a "useless art" as it is impossible to see immediate and inherent values attached to it. However, we must not underestimate the transcending and tranquilizing qualities of music which provide individuals the unique aesthetic experience. Music, as in all arts, transcends words and institutional meanings to give individuals the utmost means of personal expression. In no other fields of study can emotion find ultimate expression but in the arts. Many states of feeling are aroused by music and "they have many characteristics of predictable intensity."<sup>2</sup> These feeling states serve to arouse appreciation and enjoyment. As a result of my reading, I would like to define appreciation in music as the perception of a condition, state of feeling or emotion.

Music is indeed a means by which an individual understands his personal feelings and emotions better and it provides individuals with avenues to objectify personal feelings and values. The feeling of beauty,

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<sup>2</sup>Sunderman, Lloyd Frederick. School Music Teaching  
p.11.

so central to music, enriches life and stimulates a desire for wholesome living and experience. Music is said to have calmed many a troubled soul and given hope to the despairing. Many people have found solace in the arts. Music definitely helps to provide "special opportunities for continual individual enrichment, relaxation, appreciation and aesthetic experience throughout life."<sup>3</sup>

The intrinsic values that may accrue from the study of music itself continue to be a pervasive influence in our lives. These values provide a unique way of knowing and finding oneself through aesthetic experience. Music can increase the individual's ability to control the availability of the aesthetic component through singing, performing, listening and creating. It is important that through the active and direct experience with these activities, music can stimulate the individual's imagination and create responsiveness within the lives of individual persons.

The effect of music upon the individual has been overwhelming. It is said to be due to the power of the creative expression through music. According to Russel N. Squire, "the creative outlet which music provides for man, transporting him into a transcending realm where he can speak the unspeakable .... gives to the

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<sup>3</sup>Goodman, A. Harold. Music Education - Perspective and Perception, p.142.



human being an objective extension of his power of insight and an increase in the number of ways in which he can interpretively communicate his reactions."<sup>4</sup>

Creativity can be found in various forms such as improvising and composing. The individual expresses whatever musical ideas or feelings he/she has in creativity. Indeed, creativity is necessary for self-fulfillment and enjoyment. In addition, it develops one's feelings and encourages the individual to be self-expressive. This will indirectly prove to be beneficial in developing 'a thinking and creative society.'

Throughout the ages, music has played a significant role in the life of the community. In its earliest existence, in primitive time, music was a medium in conveying group emotions. It had aroused the people to sing, dance and perform individually or as a group on musical instruments. Music also has the power of preserving the culture of a particular group as it gives the cultural identity associated with it. For example, upon listening to a "Peking opera" one would associate it with the Chinese.

Extrinsic values of music that accrue to individuals are essentially outside the aesthetic realm and they are the results of individual's participation in

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<sup>4</sup>Squire, Russel N. Introduction to Music Education  
p.31.

the production of music. These values are manifested in different aspects of daily life. Through participation in music activities such as the choir or band, children can learn moral and spiritual values that cannot be gained directly in the classroom. It is through performance in music that the individual develops a feeling of responsibility for sharing experience with others. Besides, the music performance also encourages self-confidence and helps students to recognize their own values.

Music has the power to provide immediate experience to the individual whether listening, performing or creating. It is therefore vital that children experience music as an integral component of life and as a means of self-expression. To have feelings and to be able to respond make us human and such qualities will sustain us through life. Hence, it is important that the music education program in the school provides children with the opportunities for self-enrichment, to develop their self-expressiveness and responses as well as their creative faculty.

## II. CREATIVE MUSICAL ACTIVITIES FOR A MEANINGFUL MUSIC EDUCATION

Children's musical development is dependent upon their active involvement, whether in listening, creating, singing or performing music. It is vital that the music program in the school promotes musical growth in children by providing opportunities that will refine and deepen the individual's perception of music. This guide is an attempt to explore various musical activities which will involve children's active participation, thereby encouraging appreciation and response to music. The various creative musical activities will be categorized and discussed under the following categories:

- A. Instrumental Activities
- B. Listening and Playing Activities
- C. Choral Activities

### A. Instrumental Activities

Participation in instrumental ensemble playing helps to develop performing skills. Furthermore, it promotes self-expression and creativity as well as enables the students to gain enjoyment from playing in a group while simultaneously cultivating social values through interaction with one another.

There are various forms of instrumental activi-

ties such as the brass band, string ensemble and percussion ensemble. However, for the purpose of this paper, only the percussion ensemble and mixed instrumental ensemble will be discussed. The rationale for this being that these two ensembles make use of readily available classroom instruments.

### 1. Percussion Ensemble

It is a mistake to relegate percussion instruments to the function of mere time-beating. Percussion instruments, as with other instruments of the orchestra, can possess and communicate aesthetic qualities. The introduction of the percussion ensemble in the school will enhance the school music program and provide the students with opportunities for creativity and self-expression.

The percussion ensemble utilizes all the standard percussion instruments which includes the pitched and non-pitched instruments. There is no limitation on the type of percussion instruments that can be used to make up a percussion ensemble. However, in order to have an effective and balanced ensemble, it is necessary to consider the instrumentation as to the type of melody percussion and rhythm percussion used. The percussion instruments considered in this section will be those that are commonly used and easily available in the school context.

Below is a list of percussion instruments which

are most likely to make up the percussion ensemble in the elementary school.

Pitched Percussion

xylphone  
glockenspiel  
marimba  
piano

Non-pitched Percussion

triangle  
tambourine  
castanets  
cymbals  
hand-drums  
rhythm sticks

a) The Non-pitched Percussion Instruments

It is important and worthwhile to make sure that the students master the correct technique of holding and playing the instruments. Loose wrists and loose finger joints are required for playing all the instruments. Fingers should do most of the work, followed by the wrists and arms least of all except in exceptional cases such as playing the cymbals. Various non-pitched percussion instruments which are commonly used in the classroom are introduced below.

i) Tambourine

The tambourine is a Spanish instrument. It appears in two forms: with or without the skin head stretched over a wooden loop in which are inserted pairs of small metal plates known as "jingles".

Holding and playing the tambourine:

1. Hold the tambourine using the left hand.
2. It is played by striking the center of the head

with the tips of the fingers of the right hand and with a loose wrist movement.

3. For very quiet playing, gently tap on the edge with finger tips.
4. The roll on the tambourine is obtained by shaking the left hand with rapid half rotary movements of the wrist.

#### ii) Castanets

Each pair of castanets consists of two hollowed-out pieces of hard-wood which are threaded together at one end with cord which is passed round the fingers.

Holding and playing the castanets:

1. The castanet is played by clicking the two pieces of wood with the fingers
2. The castanets with holder is held in the right hand which should be parallel to the ground and the instrument is played with short, downward movements from the wrist.

#### iii) Triangle

The triangle as its name indicates is shaped as an equilateral triangle. One of the angles of the triangle is left open, otherwise the instrument would not ring. The triangle is suspended by a string which is about six inches in length.

Holding and playing the triangle:

1. The string which hooked the triangle should be

held across the palm of the left hand so that the triangle hangs about a quarter of an inch below the first finger.

2. The triangle is struck in the lower right or left corner of the closed end with a gentle flick using the tip of the metal beater. The hand must not touch the triangle when it is played, otherwise the tone will be deadened.
3. The fingers of the hand holding the triangle are used to stop the sound produced.
4. The trill is executed inside the lower right corner, alternating between the right side and bottom

#### iv)Cymbals

The cymbals consists of two slightly concave circular plates, equal in size and each with a central saucer-shaped depression. A strap runs through a hole in the center of each cymbal and the two ends of the strap are tied on the inside, Cymbals are available in sizes ranging from approximately 10 to 24 inches.

Holding and playing the cymbals:

1. The cymbal should be held with the thumb on top of the strap and clasp tightly by clenching the fist.
2. Cymbal playing depends on the way in which the cymbals are brought apart as well as the way in which they are brought together:-
  - a)starting the cymbals far apart and bringing them together in a forceful manner creates an unmusi-

cal crash.

b) A good tone is produced by starting with the cymbals fairly close together, striking them in an arc-like manner and bringing them apart.

v) Rhythm Sticks

Rhythm sticks are made from rods of from 3/8" to 5/8" in diameter. They are usually 12" in length. It is played by holding a stick in each hand and striking them together.

vi) Hand-drums

There are many kinds and sizes of drums. These include the tom-tom, bongo and conga drums. The player uses finger tips, the heel of the hand to strike off-center or in the center of the drum-head to produce the sound.

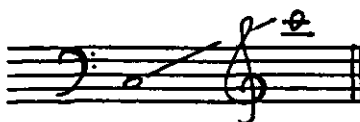
b) The Pitched Percussion Instruments

The most commonly used pitched percussion are the glockenspiel, xylophone and marimba. These instruments contain the keyboard on which sound is produced by striking with mallets.

Instrument

Range

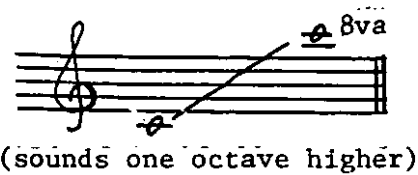
Marimba



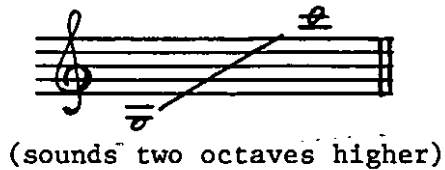
(sounds as written)



Xylophone



Glockenspiel



i) Holding the mallets :

1. Open hand with the palm facing up.
2. Place the mallet diagonally across the open hand from the base of the little finger across the palm to the first joint of the index finger.
3. Rest the thumb (pointing towards the head of the mallet) on the mallet shaft, approximately one-third of the distance from the grip end of the mallet.
4. Close fingers gently around the mallet shaft.
5. Roll hand over so that the back of the hand is up.

ii) Standing position:

1. Always stand about 6 to 10 inches away from the instrument.
2. Position your feet (without crossing) on the floor facing the middle of the instrument.

iii) Striking the bar:

1. Strike the bar in the center with a quick down-up snap of the wrist.
2. The bars may be struck on the ends of the accidentals to minimize movement.

3. When playing a succession of notes on the same bar, the left mallet should be in front of the right.

4. The roll is executed by a series of alternating single strokes using both mallets.

iv) Glockenspiel

The glockenspiel consists of steel bars of different sizes. It is played with a variety of mallets or beaters:

soft rubber knobs	- quiet effect
medium/hard rubber ends	- normal volume
plastic beater	- forte(loud) passages & brilliant tonal effects
brass mallets	- general playing & brilliant tonal effects

v) Xylophone

The wooden bars of the modern xylophone are mounted on a frame with legs to support it. Underneath each bar is a hollow metal tube which acts as resonators. The tone quality of xylophone can be somewhat altered by the following choice of mallets:

plastic mallets	- typical xylophone sound
hard rubber mallets	- less bite to the sound, good for general use

vi) Marimba

Very closely related to the xylophone is the marimba. The marimba's bars are also made of wood

but the resonators are larger than the xylophones. Its tone varies from mellow and organ-like in the lower register to sharp and brilliant in the upper register.

The marimba is usually played with the following soft mallets:

Yarn-covered beaters with soft core

- characteristic tone

Hard rubber mallets - very effective in upper

register, similar to the

xylophone sound

Below is an example of a piece of music for percussion ensemble.

Michael White

**Allegro marcato**      **Changing Meters**      ①

The musical score consists of seven staves for different percussion instruments. The top staff is for Triangle, followed by Bongos (2 heads), Wood Blocks, Snare Drum, Tom-Toms (3 heads), Tambourine/Gong, and Xylophones I-IV. The score is marked 'Allegro marcato' and 'Changing Meters'. A circled '1' indicates a change in meter. The music features various dynamic markings including *f*, *ff*, and *p cresc.*.

⑧

Xylo. I-II

Xylo. III-IV

⑨

*sf*

*sf*

②



②

*p sub. cresc.* *ff*

*p sub. cresc.* *ff*

Detailed description: This system contains two systems of staves. The upper system has five staves, with the top staff marked with a circled '2'. The lower system has two staves, with the top staff marked with a circled '2'. The lower system includes dynamic markings: 'p sub. cresc.' and 'ff'.

③



*p*

*p*

*f* *f* *f* *f*

*mf* *mf* *mf* *mf*

*mf* *f* *f* *f*

*f* *f* *f* *f*

Detailed description: This system contains two systems of staves. The upper system has five staves, with the top staff marked with a circled '3'. The lower system has two staves, with the top staff marked with a circled '3'. The lower system includes dynamic markings: 'p', 'f', and 'mf'.

⑩

Musical score system 10, consisting of seven staves. The first staff is a treble clef with a circled '10' above it. The second and third staves are bass clefs. The fourth, fifth, and sixth staves are also bass clefs. The seventh staff is a treble clef. The music is in 2/4 time. Dynamics include *p* (piano) and *sf* (sforzando). The system contains three measures of music.

⑪

Musical score system 11, consisting of seven staves. The first staff is a treble clef with a circled '11' above it. The second and third staves are bass clefs. The fourth, fifth, and sixth staves are also bass clefs. The seventh staff is a treble clef. The music is in 2/4 time. Dynamics include *sf* (sforzando). The system contains four measures of music.

## 2. Instrumental Ensembles

The instrumental ensembles discussed in this section will focus on ensembles which utilize melodic instruments such as the recorders and pianicas as well as the rhythmic instruments. In particular, the following two types of instrumental ensembles will be considered:

- a) recorder ensemble
- b) mixed instrumental ensemble

### a) Recorder Ensemble

The recorder, the main instrument taught in the curriculum music program, can be utilized effectively to provide ensemble playing experience for the students. The instruments used for the recorder ensemble are either recorders alone or recorders with percussion instruments. Pitched percussion instruments such as the xylophones and glockenspiel can be effectively used for the melodic line or for harmonic purposes. Non-pitched rhythmic percussion instruments also serve to enhance the music by giving the music character and spirit. Well-used percussion instruments will definitely add variety and color to the recorder ensemble. The following pages are an example of a piece of music utilizing the recorders and percussion instruments.

Dance Of The Natives

Music: American Tune

The musical score is arranged in three systems. The first system includes Recorder I/II, Marimba, and Snare/Bass Drum. The second system includes Recorder I/II, Marimba, and Snare/Bass Drum. The third system includes Recorder I/II, Glockenspiel/Xylophone, Marimba, Tambourine, Snare/Bass Drum, and Piano. The score is in 2/4 time with a key signature of one flat. Dynamics include *mp*, *p*, *mf*, and *mf*. The Snare and Bass Drum parts feature a consistent rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.



Recorder I  
II

Glockenspiel  
Xylophone

Marimba

Tambourine

Snare Drum  
Bass Drum

Piano

This system contains the first six staves of the score. The Recorder I and II staves are in the treble clef. The Glockenspiel and Xylophone staves are also in the treble clef. The Marimba staff is in the bass clef. The Tambourine staff is a single line with rhythmic notation. The Snare Drum and Bass Drum staves are grouped together with rhythmic notation. The Piano staff consists of two staves, with the upper staff in the treble clef and the lower staff in the bass clef.

Recorder I  
II

Glockenspiel  
Xylophone

Marimba

Tambourine

Snare Drum  
Bass Drum

Piano

This system contains the next six staves of the score. The Recorder I and II staves are in the treble clef and include a dynamic marking of *mp*. The Glockenspiel and Xylophone staves are also in the treble clef and include a dynamic marking of *mp*. The Marimba staff is in the bass clef and includes a dynamic marking of *p*. The Tambourine staff is a single line with rhythmic notation and includes a dynamic marking of *p*. The Snare Drum and Bass Drum staves are grouped together with rhythmic notation and include a dynamic marking of *p*. The Piano staff consists of two staves, with the upper staff in the treble clef and the lower staff in the bass clef, and includes a dynamic marking of *mp*.

Recorder I  
Recorder II

Glockenspiel  
Xylophone

Marimba

Tambourine

Snare Drum  
Bass Drum

Piano

1. 2. | 3.

1. 2. | 3.

1. 2. | 3.

1. 2. | 3.

*p* *dim.*

Recorder I  
Recorder II

Glockenspiel  
Xylophone

Marimba

Tambourine

Snare Drum  
Bass Drum

Piano

*pp rit.*

## b) Mixed Instrumental Ensemble

The mixed instrumental ensemble is like a "miniature orchestra". Through the mixed instrumental ensemble pupils can enjoy ensemble music making using musical instruments taught in the school curriculum and extra-curricular music program. The basic instruments included in this type of ensemble are recorders, pianicas, organs and percussion instruments, although other instruments may be used. The following pages consist of an arrangement for mixed instrumental ensemble.

# Singapura

Music: Van Moring  
Arr: Yeo Siew Cheng

**A**

Recorder I  
Recorder II

Pianica I  
Pianica II

Violin

Accordion

Marimba I

Marimba II

Glockenspiel

Gong

Side Drum  
Bass Drum

Organ

Piano

The score is for a 2/4 time piece in B-flat major. It features a variety of instruments: Recorder (I and II), Pianica (I and II), Violin, Accordion, Marimba (I and II), Glockenspiel, Gong, Side Drum, Bass Drum, Organ, and Piano. The Recorder and Violin parts are marked with a box 'A' at the beginning. Dynamics include *ff* (fortissimo) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The Organ and Piano parts provide harmonic support with chords and arpeggios.

Rec. I  
II

Pia I  
II

Vln

Acc

Mar I

Mar II

Glock

Gong

S.D.

B.D.

Organ

Piano

**B**

*p*

Rec. I  
II

Pia I  
II

Vln

Acc

Mar I

Mar II

Glock

Gong

S.D.

B.D.

Organ

Piano

7

**C**

*mf*

*f*

*mf*

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score, page 28. It features ten staves of music. The top staff is for Recorder (I and II), showing a melodic line with a circled 'C' above it. The second staff is for Piano (I and II), with a '7' above it. The third staff is for Violin. The fourth staff is for Accordion. The fifth and sixth staves are for Maracas (I and II), with a 'mf' dynamic marking. The seventh staff is for Glockenspiel. The eighth, ninth, and tenth staves are for Gong, S.D., and B.D. respectively, showing rhythmic patterns. The eleventh and twelfth staves are for Organ and Piano, with a 'mf' dynamic marking. The score is in a key with one flat and a 2/4 time signature.

Rec. I  
II

Pia I  
II

Vln

Acc

Mar I

Mar II

Glock

Gong

S.D.

B.D.

Organ

Piano

7

3

3

*mf*

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for a large ensemble. The score is written in a single system with ten staves. The instruments are: Recorder (I and II), Flute (I and II), Violin, Accordion, Maracas (I and II), Glockenspiel, Gong, Snare Drum (S.D.) and Bass Drum (B.D.), Organ, and Piano. The music is in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The Recorder and Flute parts have melodic lines with some grace notes. The Flute parts include triplet markings. The Violin part has triplet markings. The Maracas parts have rhythmic patterns with accents and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The Glockenspiel part has a simple melodic line. The Gong, S.D., and B.D. parts are marked with horizontal lines and vertical stems, indicating rhythmic patterns. The Organ and Piano parts provide harmonic support with chords and moving lines.

Rec. I  
II

Pia I  
II

Vln

Acc

Mar I  
II

Glock

Gong

S.D.  
B.D.

Organ

Piano

*tr*

*mf*

D

The musical score is written for a variety of instruments. The Recorder (Rec.) part features a trill (tr) and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The Piano (Pia) part is marked *mf*. The Maracas (Mar) part is marked *mf*. The Organ part is marked *mf*. The Piano part is marked *mf*. The score includes a variety of rhythmic patterns and dynamics.



Rec. I  
II

Pia I  
II

Vln

Acc

Mar I

Mar II

Glock

Gong

S.D.  
B.D.

Organ

Piano

E

Rec I  
II

Pia I  
II

Vln

Acc

Mar I

Mar II

Glock

Gong

S.D.  
B.D.

Organ

Piano

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for a large ensemble. The score is written in a single system with multiple staves. The instruments listed on the left are Recorder (I and II), Piano (I and II), Violin, Accordion, Maracas (I and II), Glockenspiel, Gong, Snare Drum (S.D.) and Big Drum (B.D.), Organ, and Piano. The music is in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a 2/4 time signature. The Recorder parts play sustained chords. The Piano parts play rhythmic patterns with eighth and sixteenth notes. The Violin and Accordion parts play similar rhythmic patterns. The Maracas parts play a steady eighth-note pattern. The Glockenspiel part plays a melodic line. The Gong part plays a simple rhythmic pattern. The Snare and Big Drum parts play a complex rhythmic pattern. The Organ part plays a harmonic accompaniment. The Piano part plays a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes.

## B. Listening

Listening is the basis of every musical activity because music is an aural art. There are various kinds of listening in the music room such as listening to one's own performance or listening to oneself while creating music. The type of listening discussed in this section, however, will focus on listening to compositions of other people. The listening experiences in the music room will help children to develop skills in understanding music. More importantly, however, is that listening to music can provide a source of knowledge about human emotions and feelings as well as evoke personal responses.

It is important to provide opportunities for the children to communicate responses. Communication can be done in the following ways:-

1. Verbalize, discuss and interpret one's personal response and observation<sup>5</sup>
2. Respond through movement and pantomime
3. Perform musical ideas using musical instruments or the voice
4. Create and improvise musical ideas

The school music program should expose the

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<sup>5</sup>Swanson, Bessie. Music in the Education of Children, p.273.

children to good music as young as possible. This is because as the children grow, it is hoped that the listening process will become more meaningful and personal and they can sense the beauty inherent to music. Beside providing experiences in listening to good art music, the music teacher should recognize students' preferences about the music to which they listen. Some contemporary music and popular music could be used for the listening activities in order that the children will establish a useful perspective that includes different kinds of musical composition. Experiences can also be enriched through listening to music of different cultures from all over the world. Indeed, listening activities well planned will definitely guide students in listening experiences best suited to their musical responsiveness at the time.

1. Sample lesson on 'Listening And Playing Experiences'

Title of Music: Laranjeiras from Saudades do Brazil

by Darius Milhaud

Recording : Adventures of Music

Possible concepts/skills:

Form - ABA

Partwork/harmony - Ostinato Pattern

Melody - Similar phrases

Activities:

a) The following phrase appears eight times in the piece




The students will listen to the recording and identify the number of times the above phrase appears in the music. The teacher should guide the students to discover that the last time the phrase appears, it is slightly varied.

b) The teacher will lead students in the discussion of the music by asking students relevant questions related to the three sections of the piece. The students should realize that the first section is identical to the third section and these sections contain the above phrase

c) Pick a few students to play the above phrase on the bells as it appears in the A section. For the B section, students could create movements in response to the music.

d) Use Orff instruments such as the xylophone to play the following chords as an ostinato pattern to accompany the similar phrases in the A section.



e) The ostinato pattern  can be played on non-pitched percussion or use body percussion for this ostinato pattern to accompany the A section.

## 2. Sample lesson on 'Listening and Creative Experience'

Recording : Viennese Clock by Z. Kodaly

### Concept:

Form - Rondo

Creativity - Improvise rhythmic patterns using body percussion, pitched and non-pitched percussion instruments.

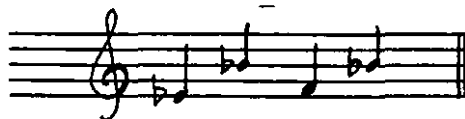
### Activities:

a) The students listen to the recording of "Viennese Clock" and identify the number of times the principal theme or section appears in the music

b) The teacher relates this (the A section) to the A B A form (ternary form) and explains that the number of A section has been increased in the music of the "Viennese Clock" to make a longer composition called Rondo. A Rondo is formed when a principle theme or section (A section) is alternated with two or more contrasting sections.

c) Divide the class into four groups:

i) Group 1 plays the following ostinato pattern on bells and glockenspiels to accompany the A section.



The last time the A section appears only play the pattern four times. This is because the theme is slightly varied.

- ii) Group 2 will create rhythmic patterns using body percussion to accompany the B section
- iii) Group 3 will create rhythmic patterns using tambourines, jingle bells and triangles to accompany the C section.
- iv) Group 4 will create rhythmic patterns using claves, castanets and drums to accompany the D section.

As the music is being played, the different groups will play their respective accompaniments accordingly.

d) The different groups of students will create original compositions of Rondo. The following are suggestions as to how Rondo composition can be created:-

Example i) use the different sonorities of the percussion such as wood and metal for the different sections of the Rondo.

Example ii) use different songs to represent the different sections of the Rondo.

### III. CHORAL ACTIVITIES

The voice is perhaps the oldest means of musical performance. As almost all children are capable of singing, choral performance is an important activity in the school music program. Choral activities appear in different forms in the school music program, such as small madrigal groups and vocal ensemble, with the

choir or chorus group being the most popular activity in the elementary school.

Choral activities provide opportunities for the development of intrinsic and extrinsic values. These activities definitely have the capacity to help the children develop both individually and socially. More importantly, however, choral activities provide children a means of self-expression through singing and responding to the songs. Hence, choral activities should be made available to all students who express an interest in singing regardless of their musical or vocal gifts. The organization of the elementary chorus and musical production will be discussed below.

#### 1. Choir

The elementary school choir exists in almost every school in Singapore. It usually consists of students from primary four, five and six classes. The size of the choir varies from school to school. Some choirs have as many as 100 members while others may be only 25-strong. The question of whether the choir should be select or non-select has always been a controversy. Teachers who are in favor of the select group have argued that exceptional students who are gifted should receive the opportunity for advanced singing experiences. On the other hand, those who are in favor of the non-select group have maintained that music is for all children whether they are talented or



not. Perhaps, having two choirs, (select and non-select) will help to solve the problem.

The selection of materials for the choir is vital to the success of a choir. The nature of music to be experienced is dependent on the type of choir. The repertoire for the select group should include fine art songs in unison as well as in parts while it is possibly best to give more songs in unison to the non-select group. It is important for teachers to bear in mind that music pieces selected should enhance a group's performance and promote musical learning.

The school choir should be given the opportunities to perform in the school assembly or at other school functions. Through the performing activities, the children will experience "the joy and satisfaction that comes from performing music as well as develop increasing awareness of the ideas and feelings expressed through musical performance."<sup>6</sup>

## 2. Musical Production

There are many advantages in having a musical or operetta in the elementary school. Although the presentation of a musical entails a great deal of energy and extra rehearsal time, there are many educationally sound reasons for having it in the school program.

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<sup>6</sup>Holt & Thompson, Developing Competencies to Teach Music in the elementary Classroom, p.6.

sound reasons for having it in the school program. Through the production of a musical, children are given the opportunities to cultivate extrinsic values as well as to develop their creativity.

The nature of the musical to be experienced by children depends very much on the type of chorus group. Some musicals can be very elaborate and involve the whole school's participation while on the other hand, it can be much simpler and only involve the students in the music classes. Below is an example of how a musical can be produced without over-elaboration and fuss.

#### Theme musical on "Living in Harmony In Singapore"

The theme musical is based on an idea rather than a story. It consists of various songs related to the theme which are connected by short dialogues. The songs can be taught easily during the normal curriculum music lessons. The theme musical on "Living In Harmony In Singapore" makes use of five songs tied together by short dialogues related to harmonious living.

The stage is empty. Background instrumental music is playing " 我的家園 " (My Homeland) as a student walks onto the stage.

Student : Today, we are going to have a show on songs. We are not using costumes or

scenery for our presentation... We only have songs and a little message for you...

We, the people of Singapore, have come here from afar and made this place our lovely home...

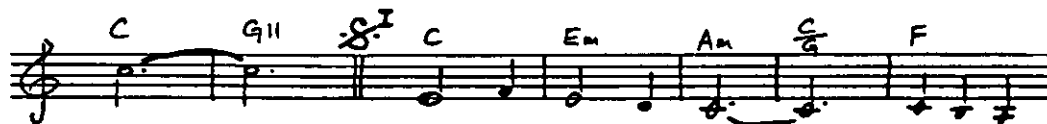
The performers appear from all over the auditorium to take their places on stage while singing the song "我的家园" (My Homeland).

## 我的家园

wo de jia yuan

Lyrics: Ching Kit Yan

Music: Kiang Liang



1. 田边的小路 留下我  
Tian bian de xiao lu liu xia wo



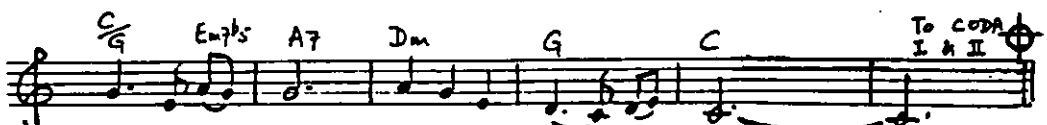
足迹千万 密密的椰林  
zu ji qian wan mi mi de ye lin



陪伴我一起成长 公鸡唱菜花  
pei ban wo yi qi cheng zhang gong ji chang cai hua



香柳丝长 啊 啊 这  
xiang liu si chang a a zhe



美丽地方 就是我的家  
mei li di fang jiu shi wo de jia yuan

C F F G7 C Am

— 经几番 风 雨 历几许 变 幻 看旧貌  
 jing ji fan feng yu li ji xu bian huan kan jiu mao

G C C7 F Fdim C A7

换 新 颜 未 来 取 代 过 去 新 镇 取 代 村 庄  
 huan xin yan wei lai qu dai guo qu xin zhen qu dai cun zhuang

Dm G C Instrumental D.S. al Coda II

看 旧 貌 换 新 颜  
 kan jiu mao huan xin yan

Coda I D.S. al Coda II

Coda II

Fine

2. 泥土的芬芳  
 Ni tu de fen fang  
 在梦里依稀荡漾  
 zai meng li yi xi dang yang  
 时代的惊雷  
 shi dai de jing lei  
 唤醒我辽望前方  
 huan xing wo liao wang qian fang

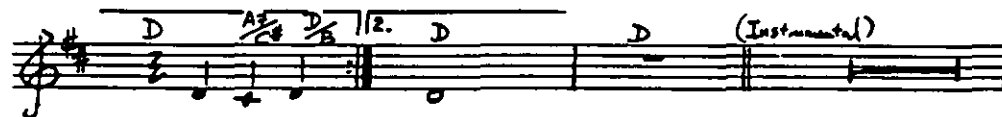
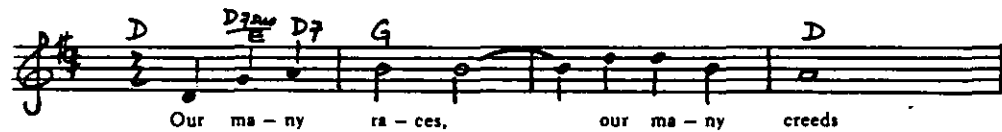
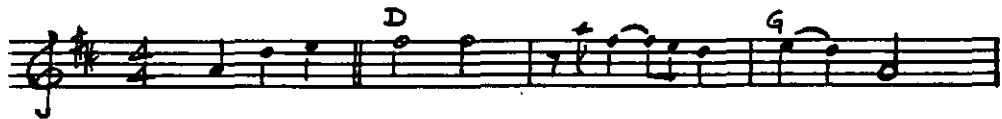
道路宽  
 dan lu kuan  
 楼房亮  
 lou fang liang  
 人兴旺  
 ren xing wang  
 啊啊这美丽地方  
 a a zhe mei li de fang  
 永远是我家  
 yong yuan shi wo de jia

Student : This is our country, a place where many  
races have come to stay.

(The guitar is playing the introduction of the song  
"This Is Our Country" softly in the background.) The  
performers will sing the song "This Is Our Country".

This Is Our Country

Lyrics & Music: M Cheng  
T. Davies



CoDA

shore The sun is shi - ning on her gol - den

shore.

Fine

2. Land of our fathers, given to us  
 All who have served you in love and trust  
 While we are young and life is free  
 We have to learn what others teach
3. This is our future, our liberty  
 We face the challenge for all to see  
 This is our country of Singapore  
 The sun is shining on her golden shore.

Student : Yes, this is our country, we have all come  
to stay. We have a part to play in  
building a nation of peace and love.

The performers sing the song "There's A Part For  
Everyone" with piano accompaniment.

There's A Part For Everyone

Lyrics & Music:  
Gerald Png

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of ten staves of music. The lyrics are: "There's a part for ev'ry-one, in this land where we be-long, there's a part for one and all, to keep the peace we want. Though not all will car-ry arms, to help de-fend our land, we must all do what we can to-ge-ther hand in hand. Put your heart your mind your skill to our de-fence. Put your heart your mind your skill to our de-fence. Put your art your work and will to the de-fence of Sing-a-pore. Put your heart your mind your skill to our de-fence." The guitar chords are indicated above the notes: D, A/B, G/B, D, F; G, D/A, F#7/A#, Bm7, G, D/F#, A7/E, D; D, A7, Bm, F#m; G, D/F#, E7, A7sus, A7; D, A7, Bm, F#m; G, F#m, Bm, Em7, A7sus; A7, G, A7, D; D/F#, G, A7, F#m; Bm, Bm7/A, G, A7, D, A7/A; Bm, D/A, G, A7, G, D/F#, A7/E.

D A7sus D A7  
 We have sai - lors, we have air - men,

Bm F#m G F#m Bm  
 we have sol - diers brave and good men, trained and rea - dy strong and stea - dy,

E7 A7sus A7 D A7/C#  
 help them all to help us all; There's a part for ev' - ry - one in the

Bm F#m G F#m Bm7  
 course we're set u - pon; Work to - ge - ther with a will and we'll

Em7 A7sus A7 G  
 do what must be done Put your heart your mind your skill

A7/G D D/F#  
 to our de - fence Put your heart your mind your skill

A7/G F#m Bm B7 Bm7/A G  
 to our de - fence. Put your art your work and will

A7 D A7/C# Bm D/A G  
 to the de - fence of Sing - a - pore Put your heart your mind your skill

A7 D Bm7  
 to our de - fence. Put

Em7 A7 G  
 heart your mind your skill to our de - fence.

G D/F# A7/E D  
 FINE



Student : We are all different. But... we must try  
to make things work and live in harmony.  
We are going to show you how to live in  
harmony through the songs.

Divide the performers into two groups. One group  
will sing the song "There's Work To Be Done".  
followed by "No Need To Hurry" by the other group.  
The two groups will then sing their respective songs  
as partner songs.

### There's Work To Be Done

The musical score is written on four staves in 4/4 time. The melody is in the treble clef. Chords are indicated by letters above the staff: C, F, G7, and F. The lyrics are written below the notes.

C F  
Hur - ry, hur - ry, hur - ry, hur - ry, come on the run;

G7 C  
Hur - ry, hur - ry, hur - ry, hur - ry, day is be - gun;

C F  
Come a - long and hur - ry now, there's work to be done;

G7 C F C  
When you have fin-ished there'll be time for fun.

No Need To Hurry

The musical score is written in 4/4 time on a single treble clef staff. It consists of four lines of music. The first line has a C chord above the first measure and an F chord above the second measure. The second line has a G7 chord above the first measure and a C chord above the second measure. The third line has a C chord above the first measure and an F chord above the second measure. The fourth line has a G7 chord above the first measure, and C, F, and C chords above the second, third, and fourth measures respectively. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across notes.

C F  
All right, I come now, all right, I come;

G7 C  
No need to hur - ry, no need to run.

C F  
It is too ear - ly, where is the sun?

G7 C F C  
I am so tired that I can - not run.

Student : As we live in harmony, our heart is filled  
 with happiness. We cannot help it but want  
 to sing a song...

### Sing

Words and Music by Joe Raposo

**Guitar:**

La la la la la. La la la la la la. La la la la la la la. —

*(sing echo 2nd time)*  
 Sing! Sing! Sing a song. Sing a song. Sing out loud. Sing out  
 loud. Sing out strong. Sing out strong. Sing of good things. not  
 bad. Sing of hap - py. not sad.

Sing! Sing! Sing a song. Sing a song. Make it  
 sim - ple to last your whole life long. Don't  
 wor - ry that it's not good e - nough. — for an - y - one else to hear.

Sing! Sing a song! —

*(Repeat and fade)*  
 La la la la la. La la la la la la. La la la la la la la. —

## CONCLUSION

Music means something to everyone whether the individual is a five-year old or a grown-up. Throughout history, human beings have found meaning in music. Music has helped mankind to convey feelings of experiences. It has also been used to communicate human's intentions in life such as in preparation for wars or leisure. All these are possible because of the affective dimension of music which provides individuals, of all ages, of all musical abilities to understand and communicate responses and feelings.

Music educators in the school have a responsibility to guide and help children discover this wonderful experience of finding meaning in music. All individuals have the capability to find meaning in music, which is not reserved only for the musically talented. The opportunities given to participate in meaningful musical activities will ultimately help children to discover themselves and find meaning in music.

This study analyzes various meaningful musical activities which are aimed at developing children's responses and appreciation for music. These ideas serve only as a guide to the possible activities

which are only exhaustible by the teacher's creativity. It is hoped that this study will serve to stimulate thought and enthusiasm among music teachers in Singapore to develop music programs that will promote children's involvement in the affective realm of music.

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