

...and music

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Overall objective

Give students the opportunity to discover the role music plays in their lives and in those of others to make them aware of the enriching experience it provides people. Indeed, music influences our emotions, sensibility, curiosity, learning, autonomy and a host of other aspects of our existence.

Target audience

Students from 8 to 14

Content areas

Languages and literature
Personal development
Arts and cultures

Materials required

The film ... *and music* (74 min 11 s)

Summary

These lessons (*see note 1*) afford students an opportunity to discover the unique role of music in everyone's lives, particularly their own. They will come to realize that learning music contributes to their development and education and that it can enhance a variety of academic subjects. The introductory activity and two suggested activities that follow will enable students to access the world of music from several angles, allowing them to increase their awareness of music, open up more to different tastes in music and gauge the effect of music on their personal development (creativity, curiosity, autonomy, relational intelligence).

Introductory activity ...and music

Approximate duration: 45 minutes

Begin the activity by presenting the film's poster and title. Using the following questions as a guide, ask your students to tell you what the poster and title suggest to them:

- *What does the image make you think of? What do you feel when you look at it? What sounds and melodies do you hear in your mind when you look at it? What do you think the poster is trying to suggest?*
- *Which instruments shown on the poster do you recognize? Can you name any other instruments?*
- *What connection can you make between the poster and the title of the film?*

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- *Why do you think the director decided to put suspension points in front of the title? What do you feel the phrase "Melodies of childhood" adds to the title?*
- *What have you learned about music either directly or through other subjects at school? At home? Elsewhere? With whom did you learn these things?*
- *What role does music play in your life?*

Next, ask your students to divide up into groups. Give each team one of the quotes in Appendix I. Each team member should give his or her interpretation of it, then jot down a sentence that defines what music means to them.

Back together in a single group, recap the discussions. Give a brief presentation on the director, Michel Lam, and a synopsis of his documentary *...and music*. Read the following quote by the director to your students. In talking about his film, he describes what music means to him: "Music is an inexhaustible source of beauty, comfort and pleasure." Ask the class to comment briefly on the sentence.

Continue the introductory activity by explaining that the film is a story about childhood and music. It describes the experiences of three children of different ages – Alexis, Rachel and Anne-Catherine – as they learn music in class and at various times in their school life over an entire academic year.

Watch the first few minutes of the documentary *... and music* (first 6 min 6 s) with your students to acquaint them with the three children in the film. Next, get their initial impressions using the following questions as a guide:

- *What can you deduce from these initial images? From these initial sounds? Why do you think the director chose these sounds and images as the starting point of his film? How do they convey the overall back-to-school mood? What do you think about the director's choices? If you were a filmmaker, what images and music would you choose to describe going back to school?*

Explain to your students that, over the course of the week, they will be using the observation checklist in Appendix I to look at the role music plays in their lives.

End the introductory activity by listening to the official school song available on the school's Web site.

ACTIVITY 1: Music in our lives and in the lives of others

Approximate duration: 75 minutes

Before starting this activity, tell your students to join their teammates to discuss the checklist they filled out during the week and compare their observations. Next, gather back into one large group and ask a representative from each team to summarize the outcomes of their observations. Get them to compare their various music choices, the times when they listen to their favourite music and when they hear music, sounds or noise. Also have them compare the emotions they feel when they hear them.

Step 1: Distribute the chart in Appendix III: "The Daily Routine of Alexis, Rachel and Anne-Catherine." Explain to your students that they will be using the chart to note, on an individual basis, what catches their attention as they watch Alexis, Rachel and Anne-Catherine on the

screen: image, statement, music, emotion and distinctive quality. Let them know that they can discuss their impressions with their teammates after viewing the film.

Step 2: Continue watching the film (6 min 6 s - 44 min) and inform the students that they will see the conclusion during a subsequent activity.

Step 3: Ask your students to join their teammates to discuss the way each of them perceived the experiences of the three students in the film. You can lead the discussion using the following questions as a guide:

- *Are the details that caught the attention of your teammates when watching the film (images, statements, emotions, music, distinctive qualities) similar to or different from the ones you noted? Which are similar? Which are different?*
- *What is similar or different in the daily routine of Alexis, Rachel or Anne-Catherine compared with your own?*
- *What do you think the director wanted to show about childhood? School? How did he show it?*

End by listening once again to the official school song. Ask the students to choose a photo or image from a magazine during the week that would go well with this music.

ACTIVITY 2: Music is for life

Approximate duration: 75 minutes

Ask the students to show the members of their team the image or photo they chose during the week to go with the official school song.

Step 1: With the sound off so that your students can notice what music adds to the film images, view the scene in the film where Anne-Catherine plays the piano with two other girls (44 min - 44 min 21 s), followed by the scene where Alexis learns how to skate (44 min - 44 min 23 s). Then show the same four minutes of the film again, this time with the sound on. Ask your students the following questions:

- *Why do you think the director decided to film these two scenes?*
- *What effect did seeing these two scenes with no music have on you? Why?*
- *What does the sound add to each of these scenes?*
- *Why do you think the director used the music played by Anne-Catherine and the other two girls for the scene where Alexis learns how to skate?*
- *What link can you make between the music and the scene?*

Step 2: Tell your students that they will again use the "The Daily Routine of Alexis, Rachel and Anne-Catherine" in Appendix III to note what catches their attention in the second half of the film.

Step 3: Continue watching the film from where you left off before (44 min 23 s - end). Use the following questions as a guide for discussion:

- *What were you able to learn about the tree children from watching the rest of the film? About their relationship with music? About their daily lives? About childhood?*
- *How did the director choose to show the beginning and end of the school year?*
- *Which sequences show us that music can be taught in a number of disciplines (physical education, math, etc.)?*

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- *What role do teachers play in this film? Parents? How did the director choose to show them?*
- *In your opinion, what importance do the performance sequences have in this documentary?*
- *What other moments in the lives of the three young people does Michel Lam show us in his film? (playing in the schoolyard, grooming before the concert, expressing their emotions before the performance). Why do you think Michel Lam decided to film these moments?*

Step 4: Watch the film's beginning (start - 1 min 57 s) and end (1 h 11 min 22 s – 1 h 13 min 2 s) again. Beforehand, ask the class to pay careful attention to the noises, sounds, music, objects and lighting in the sequences filmed by Michel Lam at the beginning and end of his film. Get your students to compare them, using the following questions as a guide:

- *What images do we see at the beginning of the film? What images do we see at the end of the film? How are the images similar or different?*
- *What can be heard at the beginning of the film? (Sound of a bow sliding over the strings of a violin being tuned). And at the end? (Sound of keys, footsteps, a light switch, music, etc.).*
- *What role does lighting play in these images? (Light coming in through the windows at the beginning of the film, room in darkness at the end of the film, etc.). And the objects? (At the beginning of the film: violins on shelves, book of scales, cords and arpeggios, stacked music stands and chairs).*
- *What do you think was the director's intention in showing these objects? Why are the students not in these sequences?*
- *What effect could these images have on viewers?*

The discussion will help students understand that although the documentary is about three individuals it also shows beginnings and conclusions: start and finish of a school year, end of elementary and beginning of secondary school, beginning and continuation of learning, end of classes and lessons and start of playtime, etc.

Closure activity

Suggested duration: 60 minutes

Ask your students to create a work of art based on music of their choice (individually or in teams). Organize an exhibition of the works and tell the students to give them a title. Also ask them to write the following information on a card: the name of the performer or composer who inspired their work and the title of the musical composition.

Check for understanding

At a level appropriate to their age, your students should be able to explain what they derive from music and provide examples. They should also be able to identify musical instruments and name performers, composers and musical compositions they like.

Notes:

1. This guide has been designed for use in highly diverse school settings. You will be able to adapt it to your needs and timeframe.

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2. The poster for the film is provided on the film's official Web site. See the *References* section below.
3. You can add other quotes to those provided in Appendix I. Your students do not need to analyze the quotes at length but simply explain their general understanding of them. To motivate them to come up with their own personal quote, you might suggest this opening: *For me, music is...*
4. The official song of Sacré-Cœur Elementary School in Sherbrooke is available on the school's Web site. See *References* (below) for the URL.

References:

Webography

Official film Web site:

<http://www3.nfb.ca/webextension/and-music/>

Sacré-Cœur Elementary School in Sherbrooke Web site:

<http://www.sacrecoeur.qc.ca/>

Thematic guide by Carrefour Éducation (in French only) – *Intégrer les TIC à l'enseignement de la musique* (integrating ICTs into music instruction):

<http://archive.carrefour-education.qc.ca/guidethem/index.asp?affiche=true&no=151>

Quotes from the Éditions Larousse Web site (in French):

<http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/#recherche/musique>

The Cap Canal TV multimedia Web site *Les couleurs de l'orchestre* (the colours of an orchestra) lets students explore and listen to many symphony orchestra instruments. It also lets them hear and learn about opera and the human voice (in French only):

<http://www.capcanal.com/couleurs/index.htm>

Do ré mi is a Web site created by TFO, Ontario's French-language educational and cultural television network: http://www.tfo.org/profil_de_tfo/sites_tfo/index.cfm?s=17. It introduces students to classical music through a variety of experimental activities (in French only): becoming an orchestra conductor, listening to various instruments via sound clips and learning about great classical composers such as Beethoven, Mozart, etc.

The arts segment of the RÉCIT educational network's national site (in French only) is intended for teachers and contains a wealth of arts-related projects, forums and activities. A section of the site deals with teaching music. <http://recit.csp.qc.ca/indexflash.html>

Appendix I

Quotes about music

"La Musique creuse le ciel" (music digs deep into the sky) – Charles Baudelaire.
(Paris, 1821 – Paris, 1867; in *Fusées*)

"La musique est l'âme de la géométrie" (music is the soul of geometry) – Paul Claudel.
(Villeneuve-sur-Fère, Aisne, 1868 – Paris, 1955; in *Journal*, Gallimard)

"Le virtuose ne sert pas la musique; il s'en sert" (virtuosos do not serve music, they use it) – Jean Cocteau.
(Maisons-Laffite, 1889 – Milly-la-Forêt, 1963; Académie française, 1955; in *Portraits-souvenir*, Grasset)

"La musique, c'est du bruit qui pense" (music is noise that thinks) – Victor Hugo.
(Besançon, 1802 – Paris, 1885; in *Fragments*)

"La musique donne une âme à nos cœurs et des ailes à la pensée" (music gives a soul to our hearts and wings to thought) – Plato.

"De la musique avant toute chose" (music before all else) – Paul Verlaine.
(Metz, 1844 – Paris, 1896; in *Jadis et Naguère*, "Art poétique," Messein)

"La musique est peut-être l'exemple unique de ce qu'aurait pu être – s'il n'y avait pas eu l'invention du langage, la formation des mots, l'analyse des idées – la communication des âmes" (music is perhaps the only example of what might have been the communication of souls – were it not for the invention of language, the formation of words, the analysis of ideas) – Marcel Proust.
(Paris, 1871 – Paris, 1922; in *À la recherche du temps perdu, La Prisonnière*, Gallimard).

Source for French quotes: Larousse Web site
< <http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/#recherche/musique>>.

Appendix II

Observation checklist: Music in my daily life

This checklist will give you a better understanding of the role that music plays in your daily life. It will also help you tell the difference between music you choose to listen to and music you hear even though you may not want to. Begin entering information on the checklist as soon as you listen to or hear music.

	Music I choose to listen to	Music chosen by others
Type of music		
Time (day, time of day)		
Where I am		
What I'm doing		
What I feel		
	Music I listen to by choice	Music chosen by others that I listen to or hear
Type of music		
Time (day, time of day)		
Where I am		
What I'm doing		
What I feel		

	Music I listen to by choice	Music chosen by others that I listen to or hear
Type of music		
Time (day, time of day)		
Where I am		
What I'm doing		
What I feel		

	Music I listen to by choice	Music chosen by others that I listen to or hear
Type of music		
Time (day, time of day)		
Where I am		
What I'm doing		
What I feel		

Appendix III

The daily routine of Alexis, Rachel and Anne-Catherine

In the film *...and Music*, the director shows us the daily routine of Alexis, Rachel and Anne-Catherine through images, music that they perform and short interviews with each of them. This documentary will help you realize that all children have a special relationship with music based on their age, exposure to music, personality and individual experiences.

As you view the film and watch the daily routine of each of the young people in it, use the chart below to jot down what you think is most interesting. For instance, which image of Alexis, Rachel and Anne-Catherine do you like, find amusing, surprising or reminiscent of yourself? Which statement? Which emotion? Which sounds or music? What distinctive quality do you think each child possesses?

Fill in each column of the chart by briefly explaining why you chose each item.

1st viewing	Alexis, age 6, Grade 1	Rachel, age 9, Grade 4	Anne-Catherine, Grade 6
Image			
Statement			
Music			
Emotion			
Distinctive quality			

2nd viewing	Alexis, age 6, Grade 1	Rachel, age 9, Grade 4	Anne-Catherine, Grade 6
Image			
Statement			
Music			
Emotion			
Distinctive quality			