Lesson Six: Orchestration-Putting it all Together

Empire State Creates: Teaching Artist-Led Activities for Everyone

Project Title: Musical Storytelling
Age(s): 7-8 year-old (2nd-3rd grades)
Time: 40 - 45 minutes
Arts Discipline: Music

ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

Goal(s):
- Orchestration
- Creating a Score
- Performing our composition

Materials:
- Chart paper
- Music Notation Software
- Computer or Smartboard
- Musical Instruments

New Word(s)
- Orchestration: This is the arrangement of a musical composition for performance by an orchestra. It is the distribution of assigned parts to the instruments of an orchestra in a particular piece of music.
- Score: This is the written form of all the separate instrumental parts of a musical composition. It is a complete map or blueprint of the piece.

NYS Arts Learning Standards (select no more than 2 - student audiences only)
- Cr-Creating (standard 2): Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
- Cn-Connecting (standard 10): Relate and synthesize knowledge and personal experiences to inspire and inform artistic work.

STEPS

Step #1
- Using the unfolding of the story as the timeline for our composition, start writing the melodic patterns in the order they appear in the text.
- Keep in mind that music is not just a succession of single patterns one after another. Oftentimes many things will happen at the same time, therefore some patterns must be combined and played at the same time (for example in our story the three brothers are introduced one at the time, but then they all fight together. Also while they are flying, it rains so the music for these should happen also at the same time)
As a class you must also decide how long you want each pattern to last (our mind needs to hear something a few times before moving on to something else). Also the action described in the story will give you clues as to how long or short a pattern should last (ex: the three brothers flying away takes a while so this pattern can repeat a few times.) Remember there are no real rules but it is up to your taste, so try a few versions to see which one feels best.

- If you use chart paper to write your piece, write the patterns as they occur in the story (either alone or stacked at times).
- If you use a Notation Software, you must first create a score where you list all the instruments that will be used during the piece (cf: Companion Video 6, and video 7 of the full score). Then fill it as the story progresses.

**Step #2**

- Once you finish the entire score or chart, take some time to review and make any necessary changes. As you get more experience while writing the piece your taste and skills will change and improve and you might want to revisit your early choices.

**Step #3**

**The Performance**

- Now that you have a final product in hand, the time has come to perform it. Regardless of which way you decide to do it (with a computer or live musicians), you have two basic options you should try:
  1. As support for the reading of the story
  2. As a stand-alone instrumental performance without the text.

- Both ways are great and offer different experiences.
  - In the first case were you able to capture the essence of the story in your music.
  - In the second, without the text, if you have guests, ask them if they could figure out what story your music was trying to tell.

**Step #4**

**Reflection**

- After the performance as a class, have an open discussion and auto-critique of your piece. Ask yourselves some of the following questions:
  1. What did I like about our piece?
  2. What did not work so well?
  3. What different choices could I have made (instruments, melody, rhythm, pattern duration, etc.)?
  4. What surprised you?
  5. Make a list of every new thing you learned during this entire residence.

**Activity Modifications (as needed):**

- Now that you have completed a full musical composition by translating one artistic medium (*ELA, literature, poem*) into another (*Music*), discuss or create another residency on the basis of translating your composition (*Music*) into another artistic medium such as:
  - Developing a *dance* or *ballet* performance for your musical piece.
  - Use *Visual arts* to create drawings or paintings to illustrate the story and your piece.
  - Use *Plastic arts* to create puppetry or masks to enhance or re-tell your story-music.

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