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Project Title: Teaching *musical representation* in the Primary music classroom

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Teaching musical representation in the Primary music classroom



Purpose of the project

1. **Clarify and deepen** Primary music teacher's understanding of *musical representation*
2. **Analyze** Western Classical Animal-inspired works that demonstrated *musical representation*
3. **Propose and invigorate** more informed and meaningful lesson ideas in Primary music teachers when teaching *musical representation*

Clarifying and deepening understanding of *musical representation*

What is *musical representation*?

Suggest and/or illustrate through the medium of music, the sonic and non-sonic characteristics of an object, being or event.

How is *musical representation* achieved?

Listener and Composer interaction:

- **The listener** makes attempts to recognise the *musical representation* by using his/her imagination and other non-verbal aids
- **The composer** taps on (familiar) characteristics (may be sonic or non-sonic) of the object to convey through music

Types of *musical representations*:

1. **Achieved using sonic characteristics:** Representing the sound produced by the object in Music (also known as 'musical imitation')
2. **Achieved using non-sonic characteristics:** Representing the movement of the object in music

Type 1

Type 2

A common misconception:
Literal imitation
VS 'Musical imitation'

Literal imitation: Use of the literal sounds.

Musical imitation: Closely simulating the sound in question according to the boundaries of music.

Did you know a non-sonic characteristics like 'motion' could be represented in music?

Using the motion or surface movement of the object to represent in music.

Challenging 'sound to sound' resemblance:

Is 'sound' the only thing that can be *musically represented*?

Music philosophers note how non-sonic characteristics of objects may be *musically represented* too...

What non-sonic qualities can be represented in the music?

Have you ever wondered... 🤔

What is it about the musical work *Flight of the Bumblebee* which makes us recognise that a bumblebee is in flight?

Analysis of *Flight of the Bumblebee*

Musical elements analysed: Melody, Rhythm, Articulation, Dynamics, Tempo, Timbre



Looking at the Melody
Continuous ascending and descending semi-quaver runs representing the multi-directional movement of the bee.

Looking at the Rhythm
Semi-quavers emphasizes the swiftness of the bee in flight!



Looking at the Dynamics
Dynamic swells represent how the bee is hover closer or further away from a flower.



Looking at the Timbre
Use of the flute, clarinet and violins in playing the solo/main melodies represent the bee's light bodyweight.



Invigorating and proposing teaching ideas

Teaching idea 1: Making use of *non-verbal aids*

Example: Showing students videos of real-life animals moving can help them make more informed connections between the music and the animal's movement

Teaching idea 2: Recognising *musical representation* in different contexts

Engaging students in exploring and suggesting different contexts in which the animal can move in to recognise different *musical representations* using movement.

Getting students to think of how the object would sound like in different contexts to recognise different ways of 'musical imitation'.

Teaching idea 3: Building aural recognition of *musical representations*

By combining the previous two teaching ideas, teacher will let students listen to different musical works demonstrating either *musical representation* type 1 or 2.

Student will be taught to identify various musical elements which helped to convey the sonic or non-sonic characteristics of the object based on the *musical representation* (as demonstrated in the music analysis).

Limitations and Considerations

Further research to be done to analyse how musical representation may be achieved using moods