

The Language of Music for Children - Set II

by Nan Grantham

"One does not expect the small child to understand language or to build a vocabulary without having heard words spoken or explained to him." (Richard Ham)

"Musical growth turns upon a progressive and continuously developing realization of what music actually is. Therefore at least a dawning realization should come from the earliest years." (Mabel Sample)

My philosophy of introducing music on the printed page to children is simple: it can be fun! Children learn through repetition. To be fun, the repetition must be done in a variety of ways, and not just drill. "The Language of Music for Young Children" is not intended to be a complete course in music theory. It is, instead, designed to demonstrate supplementary activities and methods to be used in introducing notation to children. Some of these activities may be shared with preschoolers, depending on their background and the setting in which they work and play each day. Generally, they are more appropriate for the child who has had experience with letters and numbers (second or third grader); but the game approach used makes them enjoyable even for the older child who may be taking music lessons but still likes the challenges of puzzles and games. I hope that you can begin this second set of lessons with the *Language of Music for Children*, CGBK-47, set close at hand. Please use them, alter them, add to them, and enjoy them as you and your children grow in the development of the language of music! - Nan Grantham

WEEK 1

Use reproducible page 3 as a review of music symbols. Enlarge it to poster board size with the use of an overhead projector, or fold the instructions and symbols at the top back so the children see only the picture.

*Ask the children to take turns coming forward and putting their fingers on "music friends" in the picture.





**Let the children point out symbols in the picture and tell what it is or what it does.

***Divide the group into two teams and call out rapid-fire "Sale," to which they must respond "phrase" or "slur" or "tie." The team with the first correct response gets a point.

At the conclusion of the activity, let each child have a copy of the page to work individually. Older children can receive extra credit by writing the names of the symbols at the top of the page. It is always a good idea to have music dictionaries or code sheets available for their use.

WEEK 2

Teach "I'm Known to You As . . ." to the children. Have fun with the rhythm and the "cha-cha-cha" feeling. Until they learn the song, sing it to them, letting them echo "a staff," as indicated on the song. The measure with the fermata is recitative-like on the one tone, allowing you to describe the symbol in as few words as possible. Other verses are suggested below. Eventually the children will be able to name the symbols and create their own verses, soloing if they choose to do so.

"whole note"		"a round note with no stem and no middle"
"half note"		"a round note with no middle, but a stem"
"quar-ter note"		"a black note with a stem and insides"
"tre-ble clef"		"curved lines around a pole for high notes" Etc.

As prompters, children may use the reproducible sheet from last week's lesson.

*Young children may simply echo clap as symbols are named. Some may even echo names.

**Sing the first two phrases and clap the symbol name but do not sing it. After clue is given in third phrase, let children name the symbol in last phrase.

***Children select the symbol and sing the description.

WEEK 3

Reproducible page 4 is a versatile page. You may reproduce many copies of it as it is and direct the children to complete all symbols by drawing over the dotted lines and coloring in spaces where there are "x's." You may also use a color-code method, as in asking them to complete the treble clef with a blue marker or the bass clef with a green marker. You may also trace over the staff and reproduce copies of it, or trace over the staff and clef signs and reproduce these, etc. Think through different possibilities and reproduce many copies now for future use. For today's lesson, reproduce copies of the staves and clef signs. Play high and low notes on the piano and let the children place pennies or tokens in the treble clef staff when the notes are high; bass clef staff when the notes are low.

*Use very high and very low notes for young children. Move them closer together only as within their understanding.

**Call out "treble clef staff" or "bass clef staff," and let the children place the coins or tokens high and low on the specific staff. The pianist should work upwards and downwards from Middle C, but children will not work for specific notes.

***For older children, call out the specific location for the coin (as "treble clef, 2nd space") and then play a note higher or lower for a second coin. Do not work for specific intervals yet.

Additional fun can be had if you substitute life savers for coins and let the children eat their own at the end of the lesson.

WEEK 4

Copy reproducible page 4 as is. Have several sets of crayons or felt-tip markers available for the children. Sing "I'm Known to You As . . ." with the children. As a particular symbol is sung about, instruct the children to complete that symbol with a specific color. At the end of the session, display your sheet at the front of the room and let each child come up and check his or her work. Continue to sing the song on "la," as the pianist plays, and let the children play various rhythm instruments.

Additional descriptions:

"flat"	"like a 'b' that has been pinched flat at the bottom"
"fermata"	"called a bird's eye cause it looks like one - means to stay there longer"
"natural"	"looks sorta like a chair, but not a natural one - legs missing"
"sharp"	"like a box, but with sharp points on all sides"
"eighth note"	"has a flag that flaps because it's fast"
"eighth rest"	"looks like a '7' but has a flag"
"neighbors"	"remember those notes that live next door to each other"

And - speaking of remembering - if you have the 1987-88 set of LETTERS, the symbols in the August issue, page 10, (or page 6 in CGBK-47) could be enlarged and made into wonderful inlaid wooden puzzles. I wish I had a friend with skill-saw who would make some for me. You might have that friend! Treat yourself and your children to a set!

* Easy
** Moderate
*** More difficult

Can you find each of these music symbols in the picture below?
 Draw a line to them.



I'M KNOWN TO YOU AS ...

N. Grantham

(children echo)* (children echo)

I'm known to you as a staff (a staff). I'm known to you as a staff (a staff). When

(children echo)

you see me, you see (five lines & four spaces). I'm known to you as a staff (a staff).

*Vs. 1
a staff (a staff)

*Vs. 2
a whole note (whole note)

*Vs. 3
a tre-ble clef (tre-ble clef)

This section contains a large musical staff with various musical symbols, including notes, rests, and clefs, some of which are enclosed in dashed boxes or circles, likely for educational purposes.