



Music in the Schools

Original Program



What's in a note?

Overview, VMF Music in the Schools Program

The Ventura Music Festival (VMF) was founded in 1994 to respond to a City-identified need for a cultural festival in the city's historic downtown core. With \$15,000 in seed money and local volunteers, the founders began bringing world-class music to the community and showcasing Ventura as a popular cultural destination. Today, several thousand concertgoers enjoy VMF concerts throughout the year. Educational outreach and youth engagement have been an integral part of VMF's mission and programs from the outset, with the centerpiece our Music in the Schools program for 3rd - 5th graders. The program was created by VMF Artistic Director Nuvi Mehta, critically acclaimed violinist, conductor and experienced music educator known for his engaging lectures and programs. The interactive, multi-media program meets the California State music curriculum requirements for third, fourth and fifth grades.

In addition to fostering a love of music and enhancing listening, critical thinking and emotional well-being, research shows that children who participate in music programs perform better academically, particularly in the areas of math and science. Mehta presents Music in the Schools in partnership with a second professional musician. The program reaches approximately 4,000 children and youth yearly and is presented in 24 local Ventura and Oxnard elementary schools, Ventura Boys & Girls Clubs, and Casa Pacifica. Title One schools are given priority reservation.

Principals and teachers make room for VMF music education in their busy schedules because the programs fill a gap, meet a need, enhance both creative and academic learning and bring joy to thousands of Ventura children and youth each year.



The *What's in a Note?* Curriculum

More than instruments, harmony or famous music, the *What's in a Note?* programs are about opening children's minds to new experiences through one-on-one interaction and exploration. In the stories of famous composer's trials and tribulations, children find common ground and learn of the values of hard work and perseverance. Through successful first attempts with rhythm, harmony and melody, children are encouraged to explore their own creativity.

What's in a Melody?

This program opens with a live performance of Introduction and Tarantella by Pablo de Sarasate.

The children are asked to define the word melody and find that they know several melodies by heart already including the Star Spangled Banner.

A power-point presentation teaches how melodies are constructed and the characteristics of major and minor. The children next identify the modality of songs.

Children have the opportunity to create their own melodies, choosing notes from a screen at the front of the room. These melodies are written on the screen as they are created, and performed with harmony.

Children are taught the melody of an orchestral composition - a melody that will be hidden within the texture of the piece - and are asked to identify this melody during performance. The orchestral score scrolls across the screen as the composition is performed.

Children learn of Beethoven's most difficult years and how he overcame adversity to write his fifth symphony. The melody, as well as the meanings that have attended this great work, are explained. Children then listen to a portion of this symphony, with instruments appearing on the screen and identified as they are heard.

The program concludes with a demonstration of the power of music, consisting of a movie clip viewed twice, with two different music tracks, eliciting opposite emotional reactions.

What is Harmony?

What is Harmony? and What is Rhythm? follow a similar format to What is a Melody?

What is Harmony? begins with a live performance of a famous piece which can be harmonized in several different ways.

Harmony is taught with a power-point presentation in which the construction of chords and the quality of their emotional content is discussed.

Children are then invited to choose whole-note chords to harmonize sections of the preceding melody which consists of notes of varying duration.

Gershwin's life, his development of harmony and several of his works are discussed, played and compared with works of other cultures.

The program concludes with a performance of An American in Paris with orchestral instruments identified on screen as they appear in the music.

What is Rhythm?


The program opens with a rhythmically complex work: (Gershwin Third Prelude) Rhythm is then explained, utilizing a power-point presentation and the percussion. Meters are explained.

Three pieces are then listed: William Tell Overture, Beethoven's Fifth opening, and the Star Spangled Banner. Next to them is a list of meters. Children choose the works and the meters, listen to the excerpt, and then vote on whether the right meter has been chosen.

Children are coached and then asked to identify the meter of Revueltas' Sensemaya. The children are told the story of Igor Stravinsky's life and hear excerpts of his works, concluding with excerpts from the Rite of Spring. The instruments are projected as they appear in the work.

What kids learned or liked most...

- Thank you for introducing music to all of us - all the keys, notes and chords.
- My favorite part was when you taught us about harmony.
- You and your partner were in sink the hole time.
- I learned that our school are not bad at making songs.
- Thank you for coming to our school. You should play all around so children everywhere can hear your music. You are very good. You assistant was a delightful piano player also.
- I play the piano and some day I'm going to write and play the most famous song in the world.
- I really like the stories and how you let us make our own music. (P.S. I play the guitar)
- I want to play evry inserment ever made. I also want to make an inserment.
- I love being a composer. I hope you are very sicksesful in life.
- My favorite part was when you and your assistant played the can-can.
- You have inspired me.
- Something that amazing me was that Igor Stvayinsky's parents didn't even want him to be a composer. They wanted him to be a lawyer.
- I like your classical music show.
- Thank you for telling us a story about a composer that hated school but loved music.
- You might see me at one of your recidles again.



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