

Listening Fun

By Dan Fee

Kimberley Denis and Denise Gagné Editors

Listening Fun provides Active Listening Activities for Grade 1-6 students using scarves, tennis balls and movement.

- * introduction with many helpful suggestions for teachers
- * teacher's guide with student reproducibles, lesson plans and movement instructions
- * lesson plans with objectives, assessment strategies and alignment to national standards
- * reproducible biographies of the composers that are represented in this kit
- * movement activities using scarves and tennis balls
- * guides-at-a-glance for use to avoid holding long written out sheets when teaching
- * PowerPoint disk with composer biographies and lesson information
- * QuickTime movies of all routines
- * CD of all music used within this guide

Teachers are permitted to reproduce the pages in this kit for the use of students in one school. Copying for other teachers or any other copying is prohibited.

Themes & Variations

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Each movement routine comes with:

- a lesson plan detailing how to approach teaching the specific concept addressed in the music
- an expanded movement guide giving step by step instructions on how to perform each move
- a one page Guide-at-a-Glance with timings for quick reference in class
- a biography of the composer and information about the piece

There are two additional disks included with this collection that give teachers the following:

- a QuickTime movie of the routine
- a CD recording of the piece used
- a PowerPoint presentation highlighting major concepts

Introduction

Welcome to LISTENING FUN! I hope your students have as much FUN with these movement activities using scarves and tennis balls as mine have. I began using scarves and tennis balls with my students several years ago when I felt the need to “spice up” my listening activities. Like you, I had my students move to classical music, respond through discussion, writing, and drawing, lay on the floor and imagine, use flashlights, parachutes and instruments, and show the steady beat every way imaginable! But I knew there must be more and different (even better?) ways to respond to classical music.

The first time I used tennis balls was magic! I remember it being in the middle of a long, Wisconsin winter. I had just been given a box of nearly 100 used tennis balls from my principal, a tennis player, thinking I might somehow use them in class. The movement ideas came quickly and unexpectedly as I was listening to a movement from Carmina Burana/Orff. I scribbled notes as fast as I could. The children responded really well with smiles all around. They eagerly shared the routine with their classroom teacher at the end of music class. They asked to do it “next time” (again and again!) I knew I had stumbled on something significant. The scarves were a natural pre-cursor to tennis balls. I’ve found that younger students, second and third graders, struggle when using tennis balls (especially catching!) but are very successful with scarves.

In choosing the music for this publication, I tried to always pick “significant” classical music that kids ought to be exposed to. Our time with children is too short to spend using music they may never hear again. As a dear music teacher friend of mine says, “We must give them that which they will get nowhere else.” I believe this and try to practice it when choosing music for the classroom. Additionally, it is my hope that some of the activities used in this volume might coincide with a listening unit you already teach. For example, several movements from *Pictures at an Exhibition* by Modest Mussorgsky are included.

Each activity is intended to teach music concepts in addition to simply expressing the music through movement, which is certainly justified in itself! Again, our time with the children is so short and precious, why not teach or reinforce a few concepts along the way? You will find music concepts italicized in the directions so they are easy to identify. A lesson plan teaching one concept is also included with each movement routine. You’ll also find short biographies of the composers represented in the book. These are specifically written to be more at the students’ interest level instead of yours!

In order to teach and use the ten routines with your students, I’ve created “full-blown” directions and a “Guide-at-a-Glance” for each activity. The full-blown version, with all its specifics, should be useful when you’re teaching the activity to yourself before using it with children. I’m hoping that the “Guide-at-a-Glance” will be a good resource after you “know” the activity and are leading the class. You will see me glancing at “Guide-at-a-Glance” in the video.

Each activity is supported and enhanced by the videos. There is a “with directions” and “without directions” video of each routine. I’m hoping that one or the other, or both, will be useful for you and your students. The videos have been included on the PowerPoint disk as QuickTime videos so they are really easy to open on your computer (much quicker than inserting a DVD) and you can easily project these with a computer/projector or on a Smartboard. If you do not have QuickTime it is a free download for PC or Mac.

It should be possible to teach a complete movement activity in a 30-minute class. I tried each of these routines with all of my third, fourth and fifth graders in two schools. Each classroom learned a different activity and each was able to “perform” it by the end of 30 minutes. If you decide to include one of these activities in a school concert or program, you will certainly want to perfect and memorize it, just like a song. That will take more time, obviously. But for typical music class instruction, one period should be sufficient.

Please feel free to adapt these activities to your specific needs. You may have space limitations or student limitations requiring changes. My physically handicapped children participated with just a few adaptations. You may have different (and better!) ideas for certain movements. Go ahead! Most of the routines can be done in rows, circles, lines, etc. When that's not possible, I tried to indicate it in the preliminary instructions.

Scarves

Scarves ALWAYS also means ribbons or streamers. For the sake of consistency and simplicity in the directions, I've used the word scarves. If you already have ribbons or streamers, each activity should work well with them. If you don't have scarves, here are some suggestions to get them or make them.

1. Visit your school's physical education teacher. Many have them.
2. Visit your classroom teachers. You may be surprised who has them. In one of my schools, I don't have scarves. I always borrow from a first grade teacher! Most of the scarves in the videos were borrowed!
3. Make them by cutting up old sheer curtains. Ask for parents to donate their old sheer curtains. If you are fortunate, you may get some donated that are made of fabric that doesn't fray. If so, you just cut them up and use them. If the fabric frays, ask for parent volunteers to serge the edges.
4. Search for chiffon at a fabric store.
5. Streamers can be made by tying long, narrow cloth strips to plastic bracelets or plastic shower curtain hooks, both of which are very inexpensive.
6. Denise Gagné has made streamers by tying flagging tape to recorder cleaning rods, or taping the flagging tape to craft sticks.
7. Other teachers have made streamers by cutting cheap, plastic solid-color table cloths into long, narrow strips. While I'm sure this works, I'd caution about the "noise" the moving plastic streamers may make.

Tennis Balls

If you're wondering about how to obtain or afford enough tennis balls for all of your students, I suggest some creativity. As mentioned above, I have well over 100 tennis balls at one of my schools because the principal is a tennis player. He'd been saving his used, slightly worn tennis balls for a long time, knowing that a teacher might want them. I'll bet there's a tennis player at your school who would happily save tennis balls for you! At my other school, I have more than enough tennis balls given to me by the custodian after a visit to the school's roof! It seems lots of tennis balls end up there from kids using them on the playground. I've also accidentally found tennis balls just outside tennis courts. Obviously, they were the result of many too-robust serves! Additionally, you could ask the tennis coach at your local school or gym to save them for you. I'll bet that with a little effort and creativity, you will have lots of free tennis balls!

Teaching with Scarves and Tennis Balls

If you're facing the children, I suggest doing the movements with your OPPOSITE hand. Directions indicating use of the right hand will be your left hand. It's that whole "mirror thing." I suppose some may not agree with this approach (and may even have research to support it!) but I'm just sharing what worked best for me. In some of these activities, right/left doesn't matter much. In others, it's crucial. Just remember that they're mimicking you.

I found that my students were more successful with the movements if I did them a bit early. Because they're copying your movements, that visual cue of the movement, immediately before they do it, will help remind them about what to do with their scarf or tennis ball.

Because sooner or later a child will drop a tennis ball, you will want to have a strategy for responding to that. I suggest just letting them go get it. Since it's all happening in the classroom and not on the concert stage, it's not a big concern. I wouldn't recommend the policy of "you're out" if you drop your tennis ball since that child will not be participating or learning for the rest of the activity. Being "out" is also not a great self-esteem booster!

Reminding the children to catch with two hands will greatly help them catch the ball. I've intentionally included many movements which do not require bouncing/catching a tennis ball for that very reason. In fact, two of the tennis ball routines do not involve any bouncing or catching.

While teaching these activities with my own students, I've changed the order of instruction and have yet to find a "best" way of delivery. Feel free to teach the movements in small sections without the music playing. Then go back and add the music. Challenge the children to ultimately perform the movement activity without needing you to call out instructions. I would suggest letting the class listen to the entire selection first, before learning the movements. This will give them a frame of reference later on, a "concept of the whole." This is also a good time for the teacher to introduce some of the movements silently. Once I even taught the entire lesson (30 minutes) without saying a word. I believe it was April Fools' Day! If you want to live on the edge, give this a try.

Typically, I first taught all or most of a tennis ball activity without using any tennis balls. Adding the tennis balls after knowing all the movements is very natural and smooth and will result in fewer dropped tennis balls. The very first time you use tennis balls, it's fun to not even let the kids know you'll be using them. Don't even say the words "tennis balls." Then when you suddenly start leading them with a tennis ball in your hand, it's a fun surprise! I also found it best to teach the scarf routines without using scarves until all the movements have been taught.

Let me introduce you to two of my favorite words, rest position! This indicates that the tennis ball or scarf is held still and quiet on your shoulder (or another place you choose) while you're giving directions to the students. The students may want to bounce or generally "play with" their tennis balls while learning the sections of the routine. A few "rest position" reminders from you should do the trick.

I need to thank the wonderful folks at Themes and Variations for their expertise, support and flexibility with this publication, my first such venture. I want to especially thank Denise Gagné. This book would never have been made without her initial suggestion. I'd also like to thank D. Kern Holoman for editing the titles of the works.

Thanks are also due to the administration of the Fond du Lac Area Children's Chorale, specifically Amy Redeker, Will Jewson, Kris McLain and Bridget Bestor and its members who are featured on the videos. These young musicians learned all ten activities and were video-taped twenty times in less than six hours! The only re-takes were due to mistakes I made in leading them! I also want to thank Nicole Petroff who student taught at my schools in the fall of 2008 while I was dry-running these activities with all of my third through fifth graders. She provided much technical help at that time, and later when the videos needed to be transferred to DVD form. Emergency technical assistance was also provided by Deb and Pete Micolichek, to whom I'm very grateful. More than anyone, I want to thank the third, fourth and fifth grade students at Evans Elementary School and Parkside Elementary School in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin for their enthusiasm and response when we all learned these routines together during November of 2008. Without them, I wouldn't have had the reason or desire to create such activities.

I hope you and your students enjoy these activities as much as mine have and that they are able to experience fun while listening and moving to classical music. After spending one music class learning one activity, an autistic third grade boy left the following note on my desk, "Dear Mr. Fee, I like what we did today. Can we do the same things next week?" I believe that says it all!

Dan Fee

LESSON PLAN #1

“In the Hall of the Mountain King,” from *Peer Gynt* Suite No. 1, op. 46 by Edvard Grieg

CONCEPT

Teaching awareness of the ways to vary a rhythm pattern, melody or theme.

OBJECTIVE

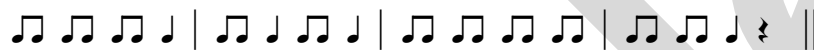
The student will be able to recognize a repeated melody and describe how the composer used tempo and dynamics to provide variety while repeating the melody.

NATIONAL STANDARDS

6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music

PROCEDURE

1. Write the following rhythm on the board and have the students read and clap it.



2. Have pairs of students think of as many ways as they can to vary the performance of this rhythm. (Think~Pair~Share) Make a list of all the ideas on the board. Ideas might include the following:

- change the dynamics
 - try different dynamics for different parts of the rhythm eg. some parts soft, some loud
 - start the pattern softly, and gradually crescendo until it is loud at the end
 - start the pattern softly, crescendo, and then decrescendo, ending as softly as you started
- change the tempo
 - try a gradual accelerando
 - try an accelerando then a ritardando
- change the timbre of the body percussion used (or use found sounds)
 - try patting the ♪♪ and clapping the ♪
 - clap all the ♪♪ and stamp on the ♪
 - play the ♪♪ on the edge of a bucket, and the ♪ in the center
 - try clapping the entire rhythm the first time, then patting the entire rhythm
- create a melody or sing a melody using that rhythm
- create a melody on barred instruments using that rhythm

3. Divide the class into 9 or 18 groups and have them create some kind of composition using the rhythm pattern given. When the groups have finished, hold a group practice. Allow groups some time to revise the composition, then perform all compositions in order. If you've used 9 groups, have each group do their piece twice. If you've used 18 groups, each group will perform once. Following the performance, discuss the different ways that each group used the very same rhythm pattern.

4. Teach this melody by rote, using a syllable such as loo or lai and then teach the words. Use a speaking voice for the words, “eyes, ears, mouth, nose.”

Head and shoul- ders knees and toes, knees and toes, knees and toes.

Head and shoul - ders knees and toes, ___ eyes, ___ ears, ___ mouth, nose.

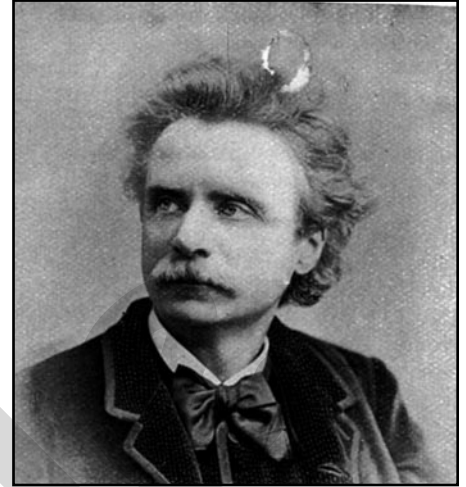
BIOGRAPHY: Edvard GRIEG

Born: June 15, 1843 in Bergen, Norway

Died: September 4, 1907 in Bergen, Norway

Romantic Period

Edvard Grieg began composing during a time in Norway's history when the Norwegian people were struggling to become an independent nation. Grieg was intensely proud of his country. Because of this he wrote music which aurally depicted the countryside of Norway, and often contained native folk melodies which were easily identifiable by the Norwegian people. This style of composition, known as nationalism, helped the Norwegian people find their own identity as a nation, and made Grieg both a national hero and one of Norway's most loved composers.



His first piano teacher was his mother. At nine years of age, he began composing. When a famous Norwegian violinist and family friend noticed Grieg's talent, he persuaded his parents to send him to the finest music school in Europe, The Leipzig Conservatory in Germany. While there, Grieg battled many health problems and had difficulty accepting the discipline and rules of the conservatory. Still, he graduated with high marks, and began giving concerts all over Europe as a pianist where he befriended other significant composers of the day, including Franz Liszt, Peter Tchaikovsky, and Percy Grainger. On one such concert tour in Denmark, he met and later married his cousin, a singer. They had one child, a daughter, who died when she was only thirteen months old.

Grieg composed in a variety of styles and genres but many consider his most famous work to be the *Piano Concerto in A minor, op. 16*, which he wrote while on vacation in Denmark. Grieg was unable to hear its first performance because of a previously scheduled conducting commitment in Oslo, Norway. However, because other famous composers and performers, such as Percy Grainger, often performed the *Concerto* in their own concerts, Grieg was able to hear many subsequent performances during his lifetime.

Grieg never strayed far from his beloved Norway, returning there each summer to compose. Much of his fame came later in life, while he was living and composing in a little cabin he built overlooking the Norwegian countryside and a beautiful fjord. His dedication to his country was evident in his music, and as a testament to his national popularity, nearly 40,000 people descended upon the small town in which he lived to attend his funeral.

About the Music

Morning, or *Morning Mood*, is one of several pieces Grieg wrote in 1876 for *Peer Gynt*, a play written by a famous Norwegian playwright, Henrik Ibsen who specifically asked Grieg to write music for the play's premiere. *Peer Gynt* tells the story of Peer, a popular figure in Norwegian folklore known for his grand schemes and wanton ways. In the play, Peer wanders the desert, battling trolls and leading an irresponsible life. When he returns home, he finds little left of his former life and country. *Morning* is the first piece in *Peer Gynt Suite No. 1*, and is played when Peer wakes alone in the Arabian desert. The lilting 6/8 meter describes a fresh sunrise, rather than a dry desert, and reflects Peer's happiness with his life and circumstances.

The *Holberg Suite* has been subtitled the *Suite in Olden Style*. It is a suite of five movements based on eighteenth century dance forms. Grieg composed it in 1884 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Danish-Norwegian playwright Ludvig Holberg. While not as famous as *Peer Gynt*, the *Holberg Suite* is its equal musically.

MUSICAL MOVEMENT GUIDE

“In the Hall of the Mountain King,”

from *Peer Gynt* Suite No. 1, op. 46 by Edvard Grieg

MATERIALS

None needed.

FORMATION

Students should sit in a line, facing the teacher.

MOVEMENT

PART ONE

0:00-1:59

Touch the head, shoulders, knees, toes, knees, toes, knees toes.
Touch the head, shoulders, knees, toes, eyes, ears, mouth and nose.

This comprises the movement for most of the routine. As the music gets faster (*accelerando*) and louder (*crescendo*), the movement should get faster. Repeat this seventeen times (the movement will be performed eighteen times in total).

PART TWO

2:00-2:15

Clap hands and throw arms up into the air. Repeat.
Clap seven times.
Clap hands and throw arms up into the air. Repeat.
Clap seven times.
Roll hands over and over in front of the body.
Throw the hands into the air on the final chord.

Alternate Version for Performance: Have your students face you in a line. If you have 18 students, start the movement with just one student. On each repetition of the theme, add one more student. On the 18th repetition, all 18 students would be performing the movements. This requires intense concentration by all the students. It is an excellent way to visually demonstrate that the same theme repeats 18 times, and it is a very visual way to show the increasing intensity.

Tennis Ball Variation: Have the students form a circle. Give each child a tennis ball.

Part One: Have the students bounce and catch the ball seven times, and on the eighth time pass the tennis ball to the person on their right. This pattern will be repeated 18 times.

Part Two:

Tap the ball and throw the arms up into the air (while holding the ball). Repeat.
Tap the ball seven times.
Tap the ball and throw the arms up into the air (while holding the ball). Repeat.
Tap the ball seven times.
Roll the hands over and over in front of the body (while holding the ball).
Toss the balls in the air on the final chord.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- All steps and movements should be done to the beat of the music unless otherwise indicated.
- Concepts taught during this lesson are written in italics throughout the guide.
- Movement is demonstrated on the QuickTime video that is included with the book. It is often much easier to watch the video to learn the movement, than it is to decipher written directions.