



Troika - Teacher Guide

Stage: P4/5

Activity Overview

- In this activity, children will listen to 'Troika', a classical piece of music, which might be familiar to some of them when they hear it.
- The piece was composed by Sergei Prokofiev in 1934 but has been adapted in slightly more recent times (1975!), for its use in the song 'I Believe in Father Christmas' by Greg Lake. This link explains a little more about that <https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/latest/greg-lake-prokofiev-troika-christmas/>
- The associated PDF will guide you through the activity step by step.

Listening Notes

- After listening to the piece, there are a few suggested questions for the children to think about.
- There are of course no right or wrong answers as to how the music makes them feel. Where they give an answer, it might be useful as to ask why it makes them feel like that. Is there anything about the music that makes them feel that way?
- Where asked, 'Does it remind you of anything?', it is likely that some of the children will be reminded of Christmas. This might be because they've heard the piece being played at Christmas time before, or it might be because of the sleigh bells that are used throughout. There may also be other reasons that they will come up with themselves!
- The introduction is strong - reasons for this might include that it is loud, slow, majestic, uses lots of instruments.
- The jingle bell sound is made by a sleigh bell.
- The music ends with the same theme as it began (although it is slightly shorter at the end).
- After the children have listened to the piece of music, look at a musical map of the piece (slide 4). Ask them to raise their hands whenever the music changes. The sleigh theme is split into two parts.

Performance Guidance

- After listening to the themes, we get to play along to the music! For this, there are suggested percussion instrument and body percussion versions that could be used.
- Percussion instrument suggestions are on pages 8-12 of the PDF and body percussion equivalents are on page 13.
- Split the class into four groups to perform this, with each group assigned a part to play.

Choosing Percussion Instruments

- The percussion suggestions are not set in stone! If you want to use percussion instruments, but didn't have enough of the suggested instruments, then they can be substituted with alternatives. It is helpful however, if you can find instruments that are similar where possible.
- Where an egg shaker is suggested, another 'shake' instrument could be used, e.g. a maraca.
- An alternative to the bells might be a tambourine, or another instrument that 'tings' (e.g. triangle).
- An alternative to the tambour might be any other type of drum.
- An alternative to the claves might be any other wooden 'tapping' instrument (e.g. woodblock or two-tone block).

You can see how the performance fits together in the [Troika Percussion video!](#)

Things for the teacher to watch out for when conducting the piece:

- The music is a slower speed during both the introduction and ending.
- The music slows down at the end of the introduction and ending.
- The children should perform the 'brass' and 'snowman' themes twice as slowly as the 'sleigh' theme.

Click [here](#) to see the Troika Percussion Instrument version of the piece for the children to play along with. This slide also moves between the themes, so that it is clear which instrument should be playing and when.

Click [here](#) to see the Troika Body Percussion version of the piece. Again, it moves between the themes, showing which body percussion movement should be used, and when.

We can't wait to see you join in and we hope you will share your class performance of 'Troika' with us on Twitter by tagging **@GlasgowCREATE** and using **#CREATEChristmas**.