

MUSICAL MAX

Musical Max

by Robert Kraus, illustrated by Jose Aruego and Ariane Dewey (Simon & Schuster)

Themes: Music

Grade Level: PreK-1

Running Time: 8 minutes, animated

Summary

This is the story of a young hippo named Max who happens to be very musically inclined. Max could play any instrument-- and did Max love to practice!

Max liked to practice so much that his blowing, plinking, and banging annoyed his father and drove the neighbors to distraction. The only person not bothered by Max's unrelenting practicing was his doting mother.

In time, Max decides to give up practicing. He simply decides he's not in the mood any longer. Much to their surprise, Max's father, and the neighbors, discover that they miss Max's practicing.

The story ends with Max resuming his instrument playing and the delighted neighborhood joining in-- with Max as conductor.

Objectives

- Children will learn about different musical instruments
- Children will learn to distinguish between the sounds the instruments make
- Children will sharpen their listening skills

Before Viewing Activities

Share the book *Musical Max* with children.

Then ask:

Of all the musical instruments Max plays in the story, which instrument is your favorite? Do you ever take someone for granted and then that someone goes away or stops doing what he/she used to do? Tell about it. Try a simple listening exercise in the classroom. Have children listen carefully to all the sounds they hear in the classroom. Later, have children describe the different sounds they heard. Then have children close their eyes and listen carefully for sounds once more. After children identify the sounds they heard, ask: Was it harder or easier to hear sounds with your eyes opened or closed? Later, take an outdoor listening walk and have children identify the different sounds they hear.

Talk with children about the different instruments of the orchestra. If possible, provide illustrations or posters that show each of the instruments. See how many of the instruments children can identify. Later, play some orchestral recordings for children in the classroom.

After Viewing Activities

Invite a musician to the classroom. Have your visitor bring his/her instrument along and share some music with children. Encourage children to ask questions of the visitor. After the musician has left, play some recording of musical pieces that highlight the instrument the musician played.

Provide children with rhythm band instruments that they can use to explore sound. Tap out simple sequences of rhythms and see if children can imitate them with their instruments. Later, include creative movement with your instrument experiments. Have one half of the group play instruments while the other half of the group move to the music. Then switch groups, having the musicians try some creative movement, and the movers becoming musicians!

Play a variety of musical pieces. See if children can identify the instruments that are the sources of the music. As children talk about the instruments, encourage them to also describe the way the sound coming from the instrument makes them feel. Later, ask: If a flute could turn into an animal would it turn into a bird or an elephant? Why do you think so? Continue this line of questioning to help children think about the characteristics of the sounds produced by the instruments.

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