A close-up of a logo

Description automatically generatedCurricular Materials for “Kaleidoscope of Sound”

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Lesson 4: Unique Voices of Composers

Objectives: Students will know what a composer is. Students will listen to works by Hungarian composer Franz Liszt and Mexican-American composer José Luis Elizondo and hear Mr. Elizondo describe the impact Mexican culture has had on his music.

Materials: Small instruments of any kind (pitched or not pitched). White board with blank staff, markers. Sound system, projector, screen, computer or internet device. Link to a [Franz Liszt slide show](https://www.slideserve.com/ulric/franz-liszt). Link to [“Les Preludes”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IywXC0KsEWQ) by Franz List. Link to the first movement of [Estampas Mexicanas](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcZXx4YjLAw) by José Luis Elizondo.

PMEA Standards:

3a.Students improvise “answers” in the same style to given rhythmic and melodic phrases.

6b. Students demonstrate perceptual skills by describing aural examples of music of various styles representing diverse cultures.

9b. Students describe in simple terms how elements of music are used in music examples from various cultures of the world.

Procedures:

Improvising in a large group: Distribute instruments. Play a 4-beat melody or rhythm on your instrument and ask them to respond any way they like, within 4 beats. Try the same game with 3 or 6 beats.

Improvising in small groups: Divide the class into small groups. Determine meter and group order. Count them off and let them improvise in a mini-circle (all at the same time). Then allow the groups to perform/improvise for each other.

Notation: Ask one group improvise again. Ask them to repeat the “improvisation”, attempting to play the same as the last time. Attempt to notate at least one of the students’ “compositions” on the white board. For older students, ask them to read your notation and perform, as best as they can, on the instruments they’re holding. Explain that this is the art of composition.

Meet composers: Show a few slides by Julie Cutchen on slideserve.com about Franz Liszt: <https://www.slideserve.com/ulric/franz-liszt> Watch the video created by José Luis Elizondo for your class on the [WSSO school page](https://www.westshoresymphony.org/educational-concerts).

Listen to [Les Preludes](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jb2bkVQwtBs) and the first movement of [Estampas Mexicanas](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcZXx4YjLAw) (might be best to focus on the music without the video). Guide a discussion about musical moods. Does Elizondo’s music sound more modern? Which piece sounds more serious? Does Estampas Mexicanas sound Mexican? Why/how?