A close-up of a logo

Description automatically generatedCurricular Materials for “Kaleidoscope of Sound”

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Lesson 3: Orchestral Texture

Objectives: Students will identify instrument families of the orchestra, and individual instruments, first by sight and then by sound.

Materials: Images of orchestral instrument families, Images or video clips of individual instruments (harp and horn will be mentioned specifically at our program, but all families are featured). Sound system, projector, screen, computer or internet device. Link to [“Les Preludes”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jb2bkVQwtBs) by Franz List

PMEA Standard:

6d: Students identify the sounds of a variety of instruments, including many orchestra and band instruments and instruments from various cultures, as well as children’s voices and male and female adult voices.

Procedures:

Full Orchestral Sound: With image muted, play the first loud section of [“Les Preludes”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jb2bkVQwtBs) by Franz Liszt (2:35). Ask for suggestions of how many instruments are being heard. Then watch the video and allow them to speculate further.

Orchestral organization: Looking at a poster or an online image, point out the instrument families and who sits where. Assess their understanding of the families, making note of the homogeneous nature of string and brass instruments and the relative diversity in the woodwind family.

Individual instrument voices: Try this educational page of the [Louisville Symphony Orchestra](https://louisvilleorchestra.org/the-amazing-instruments-of-the-orchestra/). Play a few examples of individual instruments and discuss the different mechanics & timbres. With the video muted, try quizzing them for assessment.

Orchestral texture as envisioned by a composer: Go back to Les Preludes, starting at the beginning. Observe how the string family and woodwind family are in conversation and how the brass family enters at the climax. As the music quiets down, make note of individual instrument sections.

Assessment Challenge: See if students can remember how Franz Liszt composed “Les Preludes”. Which family started the quiet section and which family answered? (etc)