

EXPRESS YOURSELF

KEY STAGE 2 TEACHERS' RESOURCES

ANGRY & CALM

Music can express a huge range of emotions, and can connect directly with our feelings without using words. Sometimes music can enhance our mood, and other times, it can change it completely. The London Philharmonic Orchestra's Express Yourself series of three short films for Key Stage 2, explores contrasting musical moods, to channel feelings both positive and more difficult.

This resource accompanies **episode 2: Angry and Calm**. In the film, YolanDa Brown presents an exploration of Arvo Pärt's *Passacaglia*, through which we focus on anger. We then hear Claude Debussy's gorgeously calm *Sarabande*. Of course, all music is subjective and you or your children may feel very different emotions from the ones we've presented, when you listen to the music. Our explorations are all totally up for interpretation, and we encourage discussions in class about the different emotions the music evokes.

Watch the video at lpo.org.uk/ExpressYourself

ANGRY

Arvo Pärt – *Passacaglia* for two solo violins, vibraphone and string orchestra

Arvo Pärt (pronounced 'Pairt') was born in Estonia in 1935 and grew up with little musical contact from outside of the Soviet Union. He therefore created a musical movement all of his own which is described as 'holy' or 'spiritual' minimalism and wrote one of the world's most performed pieces – '[Spiegel Im Spiegel](#)' which you might have heard in a film or on TV, or on meditation, mindfulness or yoga apps! Pärt's music is often made up of very simple ideas that repeat in clever ways. 'Passacaglia' is a musical term for a piece with one idea that repeats round and around while other ideas change above and below. The word 'passacaglia' is actually made up of two Spanish words: 'pasar' meaning to walk and 'calle' meaning street. In our film we imagine someone angrily walking down the street!



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Move

Watch our exploration of Pärt's *Passacaglia* and have a go at walking along with the music. The challenge is to walk in time with the violin's pulse but also show the shifting emotions ranging from slightly annoyed to very angry. You will need a big space for this activity and perhaps even a route to follow to avoid collisions! Or your children could walk on the spot.

Write

If you don't have space to walk around, or prefer a seated activity, ask your children to imagine they are walking along to the music and make a list of the emotions they hear. Continuing the walking theme, ask your children to write down what they are passing on their imaginary walk, what they are seeing, smelling, hearing and why they are so angry!

Compose!

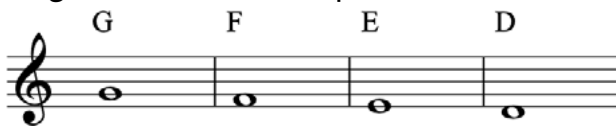
This activity uses classroom percussion to compose music inspired by Pärt's *Passacaglia*. Before you start, make sure your children are clear on the rules you establish for using instruments (e.g. instruments/beaters on the floor when people are talking, a signal for silence, treating instruments respectfully).

1. Start by introducing the ideas in Pärt's *Passacaglia*. The piece often features just two musical ideas:

The spiky, stabbing pulse (the walking footsteps):



Longer notes that fall in pitch:



Demonstrate these two ideas and explore, with your children, which instruments or body percussion sounds can best play or represent them. Tuned instruments such as xylophones could represent the falling longer notes, while the footsteps could work on tuned or untuned instruments (drums, scrapers etc).

2. Split your class into smaller groups and ask each team to make a piece using short, spiky sounds and long, falling sounds. To make sure the music is the same every time, your composers need to decide how many spiky sounds to play in row and how many long sounds. Encourage them to write their ideas down at this stage to avoid confusion later on.
3. Bring the class back together and hear each piece one by one. Give gentle feedback – did they follow the 'rules', is the music 'neat', is it the same each time?
4. Now ask each group to choose an emotion that they remember from Arvo Pärt's piece (i.e. angry, annoyed, quite happy) and check that each group has chosen a different emotion from the others. Their final challenge is to adapt their music to make it reflect their chosen emotion. Demonstrate how to do this without changing the actual content of their music or creating new material, just thinking about the following:
 - Speed – fast, slow or medium
 - Volume – loud or quiet
 - Length of notes – spiky/smooth, short/long

- Bring the class back together and hear each piece once more. Finally, ask your children to make one big piece by placing their group pieces into an order. It might help to think about the emotions they are describing – do they want to move from happy to sad or vice versa?

It may take several sessions to go through this activity, so make sure all ideas are written down in between sessions so nothing is forgotten. When your class has composed their piece, make sure it is given a name. Why not perform it to another class, or record it? We would love to see and hear any recordings you make of your class compositions.

CALM

Claude Debussy – *Sarabande*

Claude Debussy (1862–1918) was a French composer. He was an exceptionally talented pianist and entered the Paris Conservatoire at age 10. As he grew up he began to resent the training he was receiving and rarely turned up to class. At just 23 he announced that he was going to write in his own unique style regardless of what anyone else thought and that's exactly what he did! A sarabande is an old-fashioned dance in a slow 3 time. This one was originally written for piano in 1901. Debussy's friend and rival Maurice Ravel orchestrated it, translating the piano piece into a piece for full orchestra, which is what you hear in our film.



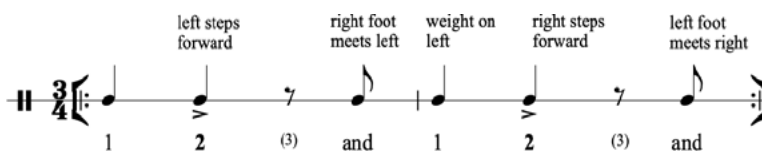
Courtesy of the Royal College of Music, London

Move

Traditionally, a sarabande was a dance in 3 time, with emphasis on the second beat of the bar, rather than the more common first beat. Stand in a circle or spread out in the hall, and begin by teaching your children the rhythm below, which is demonstrated in the film. Encourage them to whisper it to the opening of Debussy's music:



When this is achieved, add in some movement. You could try using the traditional sarabande steps:



Or for a simpler option, stay on the spot but rock forwards on the 2, and back on the 1.

Try keeping this going throughout the piece as you listen to the full performance in the film which starts at 12:29 in our film. You could include gentle arm movements with this too – either led by you or the children taking it in turns.

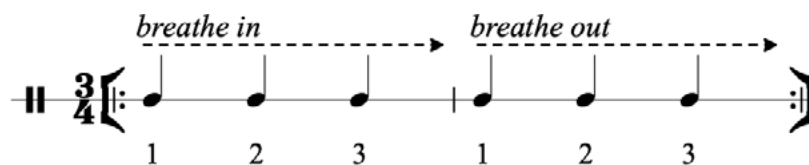
This pattern will fit with the whole of Debussy's piece but he is such a good composer that sometimes the rhythms get a bit 'blurry' and difficult to hear. If your children are struggling, ask them to come up with their own choreography for the middle section of Debussy's piece (from 14:08 onwards in the film). Can they make something magical to express the big climax (sun coming out) from around 16:25?

Breathe (mindful listening)

For this task you might like to be in a big space such as the hall and ask your children to lie down. You could bring in multi-sensory elements to create a calm atmosphere. This could include:

- Making the room dark by turning off lights and closing blinds
- Incorporating floor mats, beanbags and blankets

Before starting the music, count to three slowly and encourage your class to breathe in and out in time with your slow count like this (YolanDa demonstrates this in the film):



Play Debussy's *Sarabande* (12:29 in the film) and encourage your class to close their eyes and keep breathing like this throughout as they listen to the music.

Challenge them to stretch or raise their hands when the music swells and 'the sun comes out' and then settle down again before the end.

After the music, bring the class back together gently and discuss:

- Was it easy or difficult to lie down and simply listen to the whole piece?
- How did they feel while listening? How do they feel now?
- What sounds could they hear?
- Did any of the sounds make them think of any memories or images?

You can explore more calm music for mindful listening in the [LPO's Calm playlist on Spotify](#)

We would love to hear from you with any artwork, writing or music you create.

You can email us at education@lpo.org.uk or connect with us on social media.

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