

CCA's Noteworthy News

January 2010

Here are the musical happenings at CCA during the month of January:

1st Grade: The students can recognize "Eine kleine Nachtmusik" (A Little Night Music) by Mozart and "Nutcracker Suite" by Tchaikovsky. They know that one of the key instruments in "Nutcracker Suite" is the celesta, which was secretly smuggled out of one country into another by Tchaikovsky so that he could be one of the first composers to use this unique instrument in a composition. We have learned some very interesting things about Tchaikovsky. For example, he would get SO nervous before a performance, that he once asked someone to hold onto his goatee in case his head started to roll off! We are reviewing/learning various Elements of Music, such as echoing short rhythms, humming melodies, and identifying whole notes which get 4 beats, half notes which get 2 beats, and quarter notes which get 1 beat. Some of the songs we've been singing include "Yankee Doodle," "On Top of Old Smokey," and "Skip to My Lou."

2nd Grade: We have been listening to "Tocatta & Fugue in D minor" by Johann Sebastian Bach. This melody is often associated with scary movies, but was actually written as sacred music. We've learned about the Erie Canal, and sung the song as well. One of the lines says, "Low bridge, everybody down!" which was something that was often called out when traveling down the canal to avoid bruised heads on the numerous low bridges! We are also beginning to learn "This Land is Your Land." We are learning about the composer of this song, a funny little fellow named Woody Guthrie. Ask your child to tell you a bit about him. We are also singing a song called "Every Good Boy Does Fine" which helps us remember that the notes on the lines of the treble clef are E, G, B, D, and F. It's a catchy tune that your child will probably be singing for days!

3rd Grade: Songs we'll been singing this month include "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" and "My Country 'Tis of Thee." We are studying "Hoedown" from Rodeo, composed by Aaron Copland. The music was written to reflect the American West, and it truly does that, as the kids can attest to. Many children tell me they recognize the song from the Stock Show. Apparently a laser show during the rodeos is choreographed to this melody! We also continue to review various Elements of Music, such as whole, half, and quarter notes and rests, time signature, and the notes on the lines (EGBDF) and spaces (FACE) of the treble clef.

4th Grade: We will be devoting a lot of time to our recorders, now that we are done

practicing "Jingle Bells," which consumed most of our recorder time in class so far this year! We are also reviewing Elements of Music, such as dynamics (words that describe how loud or soft the music is, for example "piano" means soft and "forte" means loud), notation, sharps, flats, and so on. We will begin a study of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's opera "The Magic Flute" later this month.

5th Grade: We are learning/reviewing many Elements of Music, such as whole, half, quarter, and eighth notes and rests, grouped sixteenth notes, sharps, flats, different types of time signature, and so on. We are devoting a lot of time to our recorders. We have also been listening to Beethoven's "Symphony No. 5," as well as "Greensleeves." We'll be singing "Battle Hymn of the Republic" this month, too.

Junior High Music Class: We will be focusing on the Italian terminology Core Knowledge curriculum calls for us to learn. We will learn to recognize and define the terms, as well as identify them within music. I'll allow children to bring in music they enjoy listening to, as long as it is school-appropriate (I'll screen it first just to make sure), and we'll be labeling the parts of music with these Italian terms. It is my hope this will make the learning more real and interesting for the students.

Look for the next Noteworthy News the beginning of February.
Please feel free to contact me anytime.

Warmly,
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