

BETH SUSSMAN

Music Workshops

MEET THE ARTIST:

Beth Sussman received her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from The Juilliard School by the age of 21 where she was granted a full scholarship. She was awarded the Charles Petschek Prize in Piano for three consecutive years while at Juilliard, and the Maro Ajemian Prize upon graduation. While a student, she was selected to perform as soloist with The Juilliard Symphony at Lincoln Center. Her studies at Juilliard began at age 11 at the Pre-College Division where she majored in both piano and composition. Performing highlights include a European tour with the Iris Trio and solo recitals at The Orange County Performing Arts Center, The Ravinia Festival (summer home of the Chicago Symphony), and The Chautauqua Music Festival. She has also given live recitals on radio stations across the country and performed for mayors, ambassadors and movie stars.

She is currently a teaching artist at the Los Angeles Music Center, where she was a Lead Artist for the 2008 summer Institute for Educators. She is also a master teaching artist at the Orange County Performing Arts Center. She gives performances and presents workshops and residencies which introduce schoolchildren to classical music. Her goal is to diminish the "aura of sanctity" that classical music seems to have, and to bring it down to earth for all to enjoy.

She released a CD of Gershwin's piano music in 2000 and a television pilot loosely based on her life was executive produced by Kelsey Grammer for Paramount Pictures Television.

ABOUT THE WORKSHOPS:

These exciting and highly interactive workshops, entitled **Classical Connections** use classical music, as well as movement and literature, as a gateway to concepts required by the California standards. Beth makes connections with these concepts in numerous ways reaching students with various learning styles including kinetic, linguistic, musical, bodily-kinetic, spatial/visual, intrapersonal and logical/mathematical. Each concept is presented in **two sessions** allowing for review and an expansion of skills using a variety of activities. At each session, Beth plays some of the world's greatest classical music and teaches musical vocabulary. The children are asked to respond to the music or partake in activities throughout each session. The musical selections are short and age appropriate, however, they become more complex as the sessions progress and as the students' musical language, taste and verbal expression become more sophisticated. (Composers include Brahms, Schumann, Bartok, Mozart, Beethoven and many others).



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The concepts (with sample activity or activities) are as follows:

Listening Skills - Students learn how to become active listeners as they have to guess well known melodies which are somehow disguised.

Steady Beat - This gateway to improved reading skills is explored through echo clapping, marching to various classical pieces, and "performing" a book that has a steady beat.

Comparing/Contrasting - The students use a Venn diagram and descriptive vocabulary (both musical and non-musical) to compare and contrast two pieces by Robert Schumann

Recycling - Students learn how composers "recycle" tunes through the use of Theme and Variations. They are also asked to create their own variations on a famous tune.

Main Idea - Students learn the concept of main idea through a Rondo by Kabalevsky (a rondo has a main theme that alternates with other themes). They also hear Gnomes from Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition (without knowing the title first) and are asked to come up with what they think is the main idea of the piece.

Mapping/Symbols - Students learn how a musical score is like a map and learn musical symbols. Together, the class writes a "Journey in Sound" using symbols and sounds that they create. They rehearse and then perform their creation.

Author's Intent -

Students will learn the concept of author's purpose through the prism of classical music. Together we will look at a piece of music's title, dynamic markings, and tempo to help decode what the composer's intent was as we relate this to decoding the author's intent in literature. The art of interpretation is also explored.



BEFORE THE WORKSHOP:

- Please have the students wear nametags for the workshop. It saves time if they are made beforehand!
- Review the importance of listening and observing. Ask the students what it means to be a good listener. What does it mean to be a good observer? Why is it important in daily life? Why is it important when the artist is here?
- Review students' knowledge and ideas about music, underscoring the idea that it is both personal and universal. Discuss that everyone's ideas will be both different and related. Discuss the importance of being able to express oneself through music and to enjoy a wide variety of styles.
- Ask students what music they know about, or have heard. The workshops will focus on classical music, so it would be helpful to assess the students' prior knowledge about this musical category.

AFTER THE WORKSHOP:

- Review the major points presented in the workshops. What were the most important ideas? What parts of the workshop did the students like best? What did they learn? What did they learn about themselves?
- Practice the activities and skills they learned with the artist so students can attain more ability and enjoyment with music.
- Review songs they learned and practice them often.
- Perhaps build a music center within the classroom that features the music, instruments and other artifacts connected to a specific culture. It is a good idea to have a tape/CD player and headphones so students can listen to the music. Have a few questions that direct their attention to listen for different things (e.g. types of instruments, mood of the music, melody, rhythm, texture of sounds, etc.)