



Kentucky Learning Goals and Academic Expectations

- 1.13 Students make sense of ideas and communicate ideas with the visual arts.
- 2.22 Students create works of art and make presentations to convey a point of view.
- 2.23 Students analyze their own and others' artistic products and performances using accepted standards
- 2.24 Students have knowledge of major works of art, music, and literature and appreciate creativity and the contributions of the arts and humanities.
- 4.1 Students effectively use interpersonal skills.
- 4.2 Students use productive team membership skills.
- 5.2 Students use creative thinking skills to develop or invent novel, constructive ideas or products



Maurice Ravel (March 7, 1875 - December 28, 1937)

Maurice Ravel was born in France of a Swiss father and a Basque (a region in France and Spain) mother. He lived most of his life in Paris, studying at the Paris Conservatory where his most influential teacher was Gabriel Fauré.

Along with the famous French composer, Claude Debussy, Ravel

was an important composer of impressionistic music. He often used dance rhythms, unusual chords, and modes in his music.

Ravel is said to have written some of his best music when he was in his thirties. *Ma mere l'oye* comes from this period. As an adult, Ravel carried forward much of his

good imagination from childhood.

Illustrations (pictures) of French fairy tales inspired him to write *Ma mere l'oye* (Mother Goose Suite), originally a suite of five pieces as a piano duet.

The Story of Beauty and the Beast

Once upon a time, in a faraway land, a young prince lived in a shining castle. Although he had everything his heart desired, the prince was spoiled, selfish, and unkind. But then, one winter's night, an old beggar woman came to the castle and offered him a single rose in return for shelter from the bitter cold. Repulsed by her haggard appearance, the Prince sneered at the gift and turned the old woman away. But she warned him not to be deceived by appearances, for beauty is to be found within. And when he dismissed her again, the old woman's ugliness melted away to reveal a beautiful enchantress.

The Prince tried to apologize, but it was too late, for she had seen that there was no love in his heart. As punishment, she transformed him into a hideous beast and placed a powerful spell on the castle and all who lived there. She

also gave the Beast a magic mirror, through which he may see the world outside his castle. The rose she had offered was truly an enchanted rose, which would bloom for many years. If he could learn to love another and earn their love in return before the last petal fell, the spell would be broken. If not, he would be doomed to remain a beast for all time.

Meanwhile in the nearby village, a beautiful young girl feels lonely and misunderstood, because she seems to be the only one to read and care about books. She daydreams about getting out, getting a better life, meeting a prince. Her father goes off to compete at an inventors' fair but gets lost in the woods and ends up a prisoner at the Beast's castle. Beauty, the girl, goes looking for him, finds him there and pleads to let her father go, in return for her staying there with the Beast.

The Beast treats her well; all her wishes are met by magic. He visits her every evening for supper and gradually Beauty grows to look forwards to these meetings. At the end of each visit the Beast asks Beauty to be his wife, which she refuses, although agreeing never to leave the palace. Beauty sees in the magic mirror that her father is desperately missing her and asks that she might return to visit him. The Beast agrees on the condition that she return in seven days, lest he die.

Her sisters entice her to stay beyond the allotted week, and she returns belatedly to the castle, finding the Beast lying near death from distress at her failure to return. She begs him to live, so that he may be her husband, and by this act the Beast is transformed into a handsome prince.

The Music of The Conversation of Beauty and the Beast

Ravel arranged *Ma mere l'oye* (Mother Goose Suite) for orchestra in 1911. In *The Conversation of Beauty and the Beast*, Ravel masterfully uses the instruments to help us picture the story in our minds. Beauty is portrayed first, by a charming waltz theme and then the Beast by a descending passage in the contrabassoon. As they learn to love each other, both themes are skillfully intertwined. Finally, there is a beautiful harp glissando and a shimmering melody played by a solo violin. The music acquires an ethereal quality as the enchantment is broken and the Beast is transformed back into a prince.

When Ravel wrote *Ma mere l'oye* (Mother Goose Suite) as a piano duet for the children of some friends, it was too difficult for them to perform at first; so some other young girls, an 11-year old and a 14-year old, gave the first performance in 1910.

Ravel Activities - A Musical Conversation

1. With the class, make a list of different conversations people can have. Include things such as question and answer, telling a joke, arguing, interruption, imitation, saying the same thing at the same time, or everyone talking at once.

2. Experiment with the idea of conversation using classroom instruments. Have the students explore one of the conversation styles that were listed. How might a musical question and answer sound? What are different ways to interrupt musically? Encourage the students to think about conversations musically. For example, what happens to the dynamics when someone interrupts? Which instruments would be best suited for an argument? Which instruments would be used for telling a joke?

3. In small groups, have the students improvise some of the conversations from the list. Here are some ideas:

- An argument changes to laughter.
- One person asks a question and everyone in the group

tries to answer at once.

- One person is trying to tell a story, and is interrupted.

Have the groups perform their conversations for the rest of the class. Can the class hear a conversation? Can the class guess what type of conversation they heard? What were some musical elements they heard used in the conversation (loud, soft, fast, slow, pitched or unpitched)?

4. Read the story of *Beauty and the Beast* to the class. Explain to the students that they are going to listen to a piece of music that is a conversation between Beauty and the Beast. Ask the students to then listen to the piece (Track 27) and try to guess who is speaking.

5. After listening to the music, ask the students to describe what musical elements made them think Beauty was speaking and which elements made them think the Beast was speaking. Discuss how Ravel used the clarinet to represent Beauty and the contrabassoon to represent the Beast. (This is a good opportunity to show students pictures of the

clarinet and the contrabassoon).

Feel free to use the instrument library contained in the enclosed CD ROM.

Did the students hear any places in the music where Beauty and the Beast spoke at the same time? Were any other instruments, besides the clarinet and contrabassoon featured? (At the end violin and harp). Ask the students what they thought happened when the new instruments were heard.

6. As an extension, play the music once again and have the student act out, or pantomime, the story of *Beauty and the Beast* as they think it is being told in the music.

Ravel Activities - Art and Orchestration

1. After listening to *The Conversation of Beauty and the Beast* (Track 27), explain to the students that the piece was originally written as a piano duet (duet will need to be defined for the students). The piano duet can be compared to an artist's sketch. Ravel later orchestrated the music. Explain that orchestration is when the music is arranged to be played by instruments of the orchestra.

2. Using white paper and pencil

or black marker, have the students create a black and white drawing of Beauty and the Beast while listening to Ravel's music. Explain to the students that these drawings should be simple, like the original piano duet was. After they have completed their drawings, have the students trade papers with a classmate. The students will then "orchestrate" the drawing by coloring it in using colored pencils, crayons, or colored markers. Explain that the colors will repre-

sent the full orchestra, and should be quite colorful and elaborate.



West Virginia Content Standards and Objectives

Music: Standard 1: Performing (MU.S.1)
Students will: sing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music; and perform on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.

Standard 2: Exploring (MU.S.2)

Students will: read and notate music; listen to, analyze, and describe music; and evaluate music and music performances.

Standard 3: Creating (MU.S.3)

Students will: improvise melodies, variations, and accompaniments; and compose and arrange music within specified guidelines.

Standard 4: Relating (MU.S.4)

Students will: understand relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts; and understand music in relation to history and culture.

Visual Art: Standard 6: Multi-disciplinary Connections (VA.S.6)

Students will: identify characteristics of the visual arts and other disciplines; and analyze by comparing and contrasting connections between disciplines.

Ohio Academic Content Standard Benchmarks

Music: Creative Expression and Communication

By the end of the K-4 program:

- A. Sing and/or play instruments, alone and with others, demonstrating a variety of repertoire, using proper technique, accurate rhythm and pitch and appropriate expressive qualities.
- B. Read, write, improvise and compose melodies and accompaniments.

Analyzing and Responding

By the end of the K-4 program:

- A. Identify and demonstrate elements of music using developmentally appropriate music vocabulary.
- B. Identify the sounds of a variety of instruments including orchestra, band and classroom instruments.
- C. Discuss and evaluate individual and group music performance.

Connection, Relationships and Appl.

By the end of the K-4 program: A. Explain ways that music interrelates with other arts disciplines and with various disciplines outside the arts.

Art: Creative Expression and Communication

By the end of the K-4 program: A. Demonstrate knowledge of visual art materials, tools, techniques and processes by using them expressively and skillfully.