

Suggested activities to accompany

Ethel Smyth's *Overture to The Boatswain's Mate*

An introduction to Ethel Smyth's music

- **Activity:** Start by introducing Ethel Smyth, emphasizing her role as a pioneering female composer. Discuss the historical context in which she composed and her connection to the suffrage movement.
- **Activity Option:** Listen to the *Overture to The Bosun's Mate* with the class. Pause the music at different points to discuss what they hear (e.g., instrumentation, mood changes, rhythm, and dynamics). Ask the students what the music might convey in terms of emotions or scenes (e.g., energetic, dramatic, playful).

Musical Exploration

- **Activity:** Play different parts of the overture, and have students identify instruments they recognize. If possible, provide pictures or videos of the instruments.
- **Discussion:** What instruments stand out in the overture? How do different instruments make the piece feel different?
- **Hands-On Activity:** If you have access to classroom instruments (like tambourines, xylophones, drums, or simple percussion), let students experiment with creating their own "overture" using those instruments.

Dance and Movement

Objective: This helps students connect the music with physical expression and understand the dramatic energy in the piece.

- **Activity:** Encourage students to create a short dance or movement sequence to match the rhythm and mood of the overture. For younger students, you could simplify this by asking them to move their bodies to the beats or to act out the story of *The Bosun's Mate* (even if they don't know the plot, they can respond to the dramatic music).

Exploration of music connected to emotion

- **Activity:** After listening to the overture, ask students how the music made them feel. Did it make them feel excited, nervous, happy, or something else? You can talk about how composers use dynamics (loud/soft), tempo (fast/slow), and instrumentation (strings, brass, percussion) to convey these emotions.
- **Discussion:** What parts of the overture felt calm, and which parts were energetic or dramatic? Ask students to draw or write about the emotions they felt.

A link to Ethel Smyth's Overture to The Boatswain's Mate

<https://youtu.be/jXDlk63uGkQ?si=Oao65kvKJGcXLX2Y>