



an introduction to

Rimsky-Korsakov's

Scheherazade
the story of
The Thousand & One Arabian Nights

SCHEHERAZADE LESSON PLAN

Discovering the world of the Arabian Nights fairy tales
through the music of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*

Grades 2, 3, and 4

Content focus:

Music
Visual Arts
Language Arts
History/Social Sciences

Length: 1 or 2 50-minute periods

Materials:

- Because of extensive multimedia sound, this program works best on faster computers (PC: Pentium3 or better, Mac: G4 or better) and with faster connections (56K or better).
- This program requires the Flash plug-in version 6 or higher. Go to <http://www.macromedia.com/shockwave/download/> to download Flash.
- downloadable art, geography, and storytelling activities

Teaching and Learning Process and Procedure:

Music Education:

The most famous of the composer Rimsky-Korsakov's larger works is the symphonic suite *Scheherazade*. As the title makes clear, *Scheherazade* is connected, in the composer's mind, with the collection of Arabian myths, legends and folk tales known as *1001 Arabian Nights*.

The beautiful music will tell the story of *Scheherazade* and will introduce music education concepts. This learning experience is intended to teach first steps in listening to classical music as well as some basic concepts such as the sounds and shapes of instruments, matching the instrumental sounds to characters in the musical story, matching a melodic building block, or motif, to a character in the musical story, and to correctly recall the musical motif of Scheherazade's character. As the children are listening to the music and hearing the story of *Scheherazade*, other music education concepts will be presented as information embedded in small pull down shades which appear at the end of each part of the story. Holistic musical categorizations, based on musical style or mood are important first steps in music learning. Research (Cutietta 1985,1987,1991) suggests that the mind categorizes musical sounds in non elemental and more holistic fashion, and that learning musical elements (pitch, rhythm, harmony, form) might be better taught after a child learns that music is made of color (light/dark), mood (emotional content), energy (strong/sweet), fabric (thin/thick) and flow. All those concepts are illustrated in the pull down shades during the story of *Scheherazade* so that children can think about these ideas while they are listening to the music.

Introduce your class to storytelling and the Arabian Nights, composer Rimsky-Korsakov, Persian miniature art, geography of ancient Persia.

The Art of Scheherazade: Persian Miniatures The Persian Miniature is a small, brightly colored illustration that tells a story. In the 14th Century poetry and literature became very popular in Persia (Scheherazade's country) and there were many important painting schools. Each group of artists had their own style in creating their paintings. The beautiful drawings would illustrate poems or stories, making books more enjoyable and easier to understand.

Storytelling Before printed books and newspapers, storytelling was the way people shared information, traditions, and entertainment. Storytellers traveled from village to village, bringing news and tales. Fairy tales were first told by storytellers and later put into the book forms we know now. The *1001 Arabian Nights* were such stories, meant to entertain but also to teach a lesson about good ways to live life and become a good person. One popular story from the Arabian Nights was the tale of *Scheherazade*. This tale was set to music by the Russian composer, Rimsky-Korsakov.

Geography The character Scheherazade lived in ancient Persia, a land that had been home to people of many different cultures, but finally became Persia in 550 B.C. During 550 B.C., the Persians were led by a famous king, Cyrus the Great. King Cyrus greatly expanded Persian kingdom by conquering many other lands.

About the Composer Rimsky-Korsakov Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908) came from a wealthy family. When he was young he studied the piano and the cello but always wanted to compose music. His family wanted him to join the Russian Navy and he did, but when he was 17 years old, his piano teacher introduced him to a well known composer of the time, Balakirev, who decided to take Nicolai as a pupil because he was so talented. Rimsky-Korsakov continued his studies and became a famous composer and teacher. He is best known for his compositions that paint beautiful pictures in music by using the colors of sound made by each instrument of the orchestra. This is called orchestration, and Rimsky-Korsakov is known as its master.

Process:

Depending upon the number of computers available in the classroom, divide the class into groups accordingly. Each student should be able to get a turn at the computer, listening to the music on the home page as well as playing the Scheherazade music games listening to the music and hearing the story.

Evaluation of a student's learning can be assessed by giving students Quiz A before their exploration of the Scheherazade education module and having them fill out Quiz B at the end of the learning experience, comparing scores on similar items. Additionally, a teacher might choose to have students fill out Quiz B as they find the answers during their exploration of the module (generally answers can be discovered in the Listening-and-Learning dropdown panel; having students fill out Quiz B during the game promotes more careful reading of the music theory material.) Teachers may want to review the Listening-and-Learning dropdown panels with the entire class after all students have explored the game.

If classroom has only one computer, divide class up into four groups, one at the computer, one working with the geography print out, one working with the violin print out, and the last with the story telling game print out.

1. Group of no more than 4 students sits at the computer and listens to the music and story, each student can play one of the four learning games, and they all can experience the "Listening and Learning about Scheherazade's music" by reading the drop-down scroll, and clicking on the oil jars for further resources
2. Second group (of any number) can work with the printable storytelling activity
3. Third group (of any number) can work with the printable Persian Miniature activity
4. Fourth group (of any number) can work with the printable map of Ancient Persia, comparing it to the map of the modern world and learning to locate Persia as it exists today

Teacher might mention movie soundtracks, and television and radio commercials to heighten awareness of classical music in students' everyday lives. Students can put up their storytelling, art, and geography pages for other students to see.

Answers to Quizzes:

Quiz A is to be given to students prior to their exploration of the Scheherazade education module.

Quiz A Answers:

1. (C – big group of musicians playing different instruments)
2. (C – instrument that has strings which you play with a bow)
3. (C – instrument that you play by blowing air into a mouthpiece)
4. (B – musical tones called pitches)
5. (A – musical sentence)
6. (B – person who writes music)

Quiz B can be filled out by students either during their use of the Scheherazade module (younger children), or directly after (older children).

Quiz B Answers:

1. (B – symphonic suite)
2. (C – violin)
3. (A – sweet and warm)
4. (B – strong)
5. (A – from high to low to high again)
6. (C – angry)
7. (A – musical sentence)
8. (A – tells wonderful stories)
9. (B – Ancient Persia)
10. (C – work of art)

Evaluation/Outcomes:

- Students will be able to identify the shape and sound of the violin
- Students will be able to identify and match the instrument with the character it represents in the musical story of Scheherazade
- Students will be able to match a melodic building block, or motif, to a character in the musical story of Scheherazade
- Students will be able to recall Scheherazade's musical motif
- Students will be able to identify motion and flow in melodic themes
- Students will be able to identify texture and energy in melody
- Students will be able to identify color and mood in melody
- Students will be able to understand the history of storytelling and how it relates to *1001 Arabian Nights* and the story of Scheherazade
- Students will be able to distinguish between elements of the text, e.g., plot, setting, characters as well as comprehend basic plots of this classic fairy tale
- Students will be able to recognize the characteristics of a Persian Miniature
- Students will be able to identify the map of Ancient Persia and compare it to the modern geography of the Middle East

Learning Concepts: *Listening and Learning about Scheherazade's Music*

Perceptual map of music learning

Musical elements

- Perception categorizes music in a holistic fashion
- Non-elemental characteristics of music include motion, flow, texture or fabric, energy, color, and mood
- Melodies (tunes) are made up of musical tones called pitches
- Pitches sound high, low, medium
- Melody is created when pitches are heard in a linear fashion
- Musical phrase is a part of musical form
- Musical phrases are similar to sentences in language arts
- Instruments have their own characteristic sound and shape
- Composers use an instrument sound, and/or a motif to represent a character in a musical story

Learning Objectives:

Listening and Learning about Scheherazade's Music

- To recognize motion and flow in music
- To recognize texture and energy in music
- To recognize color and mood in music
- To understand that melody has shape formed by pitch
- To understand that pitches are notes that move in linear fashion to create melody
- To introduce the role of the composer in creating music

Scheherazade Interactive Games

- To identify the sound and shape of the violin and trombone
- To identify and match the instrumental sound to the character it represents in the musical story
- To match a melodic building block, or motif, to a character in the musical story
- To recall correctly the musical motif of Scheherazade's character

Storytelling Activity (Language Arts)

- To distinguish between the elements of a story (theme, plot, setting, characters)
- To comprehend basic plots of classic fairy tales, myths, folk tales, legends, and fables from around the world
- To identify the main events of a story's plot, causes and influence of each event on future action

Persian Miniature Art Activity (Visual Arts)

- To view and describe art from various cultures
- To explain how artists use their work to share experience or communicate ideas
- To describe how art plays a role in reflecting life

Geography Activity (History/Social Sciences)

- To use map and globe skills to determine the absolute locations of places

CALIFORNIA STANDARDS FOR VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Scheherazade Music Games

California Standards for Visual and Performing Arts

Grade 2

Standard 1.3, 1.4, 1.5

Listen to, Analyze, and Describe music

1. Identify ascending/descending melody
2. Identify visually and aurally individual instruments
3. Identify simple musical forms, i.e. musical phase

Standard 3.0

Historical and Cultural Context

1. Cultural diversity as it related to music, musicians, composers

Standard 4.3

Aesthetic Valuing

1. Identify how musical elements communicate ideas or mood

National Standards for Music Education

#6 Listening to, analyzing, and describing music

#8 Understanding relationships between music, other arts, and disciplines outside the arts

#9 Understanding music in relation to history and culture

Cross Curricular Activities in Language Arts, Visual Arts, History/Social Sciences

Language Arts

Standard 3.0 Grade 2,3,4

Students read and respond to a wide variety of significant works of children's literature. They distinguish between structural features of a story's text and literary terms or elements (theme, plot, setting, characters)

Visual Arts

Standard 3.0 Grade 2,3,4

Students analyze the roles and development of visual arts in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting human diversity as it relates to the visual arts and artists

History/Social Sciences

Students use map and globe skills to determine the absolute locations of places and interpret information available through a map's symbolic representation.