Pearson

Creative Content

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Number one classical crossover soprano and music in schools champion

Music as a Window to the World

There's so much more to music than scales and notation. Music is imagination. It's identity. It offers a sense of belonging.

Music has the power to bring children and young people together, to build confidence and help every student feel heard - but this only happens when it is treated as something for everyone, not just for confident singers or those who already love it. By making music a shared language within every classroom, teachers can create experiences that are inclusive, engaging, and meaningful for all students. When approached this way, music becomes not just a subject, but a way for every student to participate, express themselves, and connect with others.

Let music spark emotion

In one of my classical music workshops, I sang Hushabye Mountain and asked the children to close their eyes and simply listen. I told them to imagine what the music might be saying to them, and afterwards, I asked what they saw or felt. The responses were so moving.

> "Walking on the beach with my dog."
>
> "I was thinking about my mum."
>
> "I saw a rainbow."

There was no right answer. just real feelings and beautiful, individual responses.

Tip: You can do something similar with your students and give them space to imagine freely and make the music theirs. Try asking them about their memories related to music, too, and the kind of beats they like, and for many, introducing them to classical music for the first time.

I've seen secondary school students really open up and be moved by classical music. When they listen closely, they notice the different tones, rhythms, and textures, and this can spark real feelings and personal connections. Many are surprised by how deeply the music affects them, and by giving them the space to reflect on what they hear, they begin to express their own emotions through discussion or creative responses.

Let culture take the lead

Music gives children the chance to share something from their lives. This might be a song played at weddings, a song their family sings, or music they've grown up hearing. It can also help young people think about instruments they may be keen to learn, or a genre they have never explored before.

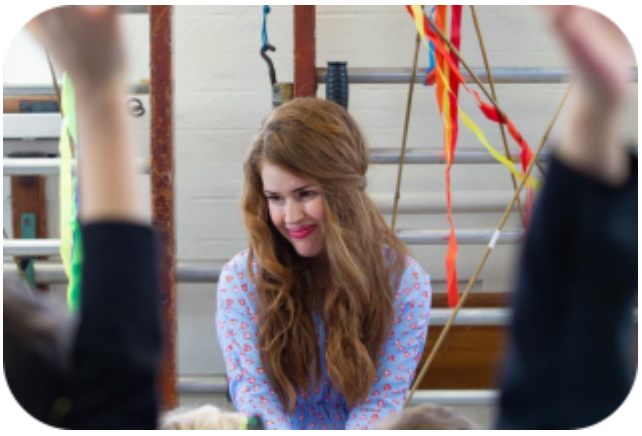
When students are invited to bring in songs that are part of their lives, it creates space for pride and conversation. These moments help children and young people feel seen and valued.

Tip: This can be simple. Try a song of the week from a different culture, or a short listening session where students explain the meaning behind a family favourite, a score from a film or a current tune that is taking over TikTok. It builds understanding, one song at a time.

Explore music beyond the familiar

Many young people stick to what they know when it comes to music. But opening up the listening experience can lead to real discovery.

Tip: You could explore how different genres are linked. For example, compare a piece of classical music to a grime beat or show how gospel has influenced pop. Try re-scoring a scene from a story or film using instruments from another culture. These activities help students see connections across musical styles, understand how culture shapes sound, and develop their creativity by experimenting with new approaches.



Let children and young people explore, experiment and take creative risks. When they're curious, they engage more deeply. It can also break down barriers, especially in those awkward teenage years.

Make music accessible for every student

Not all students will want to perform or play a traditional instrument. Some may not speak confidently in class or may have specific learning needs. But that doesn't mean they can't connect to music.

Tip: There are many different ways to get children involved:

- Using body percussion or everyday objects to create rhythms.
- Exploring music apps and loop tools to build short pieces.
- Using symbols, shapes or colours instead of written notation.
- Creating soundscapes or joining in through call-and-response.

The important thing is offering variety. Every child should feel there's a way in for them.

Bring music to life in the classroom

Sometimes, the most memorable experiences come when children and young people meet real musicians. Inviting a choir, a percussionist or a singer into schools can bring energy and inspiration that recordings alone can't offer. Inviting artists from different cultures into schools offers students a real insight - perhaps a gospel choir, an African drummer, or a folk musician can really open up the flow of conversation. A Q&A with an artist or musician always seems to go down really well.

Tip: To find artists for this, check community boards, local noticeboards, or social media for musicians in your area. Ask parents who play an instrument, or keep an eye out for local bands who might be interested in inspiring young students.

Live workshops give students the chance to join in, ask questions, and feel part of something bigger. Even a short performance or virtual session can open their eyes to what music can bring to their lives.

These kinds of opportunities often stay with students long after the lesson is over.

Final reflection

Modernising music in schools isn't about replacing old with new. It's about making space for more voices, more stories, and more ways to take part.

A looped beat on an iPad, a lullaby from home, or a melody played with friends can be just as meaningful as a full orchestra. What matters is the connection.

Music supports emotional wellbeing, self-expression and confidence. It allows children to process feelings, celebrate who they are, and connect with others in a different way.

Music can be a mirror. Let every child and young person see themselves reflected in it.

For more information on Joanne, please visit: joannaforest.com

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