

Peer Gynt Suite No.1, Op. 46

Suggestions of activities for an orchestra learning the piece

Eurhythmics workshops can be a very good support in the work with a youth orchestra. During the workshops they can learn the piece in a different way, get an overview of the structure and what kind of role the different instruments have. They can also work on specific rhythms, character, or phrasing. In addition to the musical aspects, they also start to communicate in another way and learn to know each other better.

(Read more about this in the article *'What the music wants from us'*.)

Always when working with a youth orchestra I start analyzing the piece. How is the structure? What is difficult for the musicians? What do we need to work on?

When I then plan the Eurhythmics workshop the planning is based on the following areas:

- **Learning the piece**
How is the structure?
- **Different voices**
Which instrument is playing where?
- **Show what you hear**
What parts are important to show in movement?
- **Objects**
Which object could be a help for experience the music?
- **Improvisation**
Always include some kind of improvisation within frames.
- **Lesson plan**
Where do I start? In which order will I present the different activities?
I try to start with something easy and not too free, something that the whole group can do together. The group work comes later, as well as the more improvised parts.

Some ideas for working with the Peer Gynt Suite No. 1

In the Hall of the Mountain King

Accelerando + crescendo, different voices

Start working with the last part of the movement:

Start with a traditional "Raketen" – a short Swedish clapping game with clapping and stamping in accelerando, ending with and jump while shouting. (Like a rocket taking off.)

<https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raketen>

Then walk in a circle in a slow tempo. Make an accelerando together. End with a common jump.

Make movements to the rhythm at the end of the piece ('down – up', 'down – up'/ running around) repeat a few times.

Put everything together and move with the music from the start of the accelerando.

Then work with the first part of the movement, and follow different voices/instruments:

Melody – Walk the melody in a sneaky way. Change directions at each new phrase.

Brass note at the end of the phrase – Stand still and try to reach someone at the long note.

The off-beat – walk the beat and follow the off-beat rhythm with hands, like a 'disturbance' towards the others.

Divide the group in three voices.

Move together to the whole movement. Decide from where in the room everybody should start.

Morning Mood/Åses death

Legato, phrasing, rhythm

Object: Chop stick – one each

How long is the tone? Draw a line in the air as long as you can hear the tone played on piano.

To the music:

In circles, Lead and follow with chop sticks: Draw lines with a chop stick, following each other. One person at the time leads the group.

Walk the rhythm and change directions when there is a new phrase.

Walk the rhythm carrying a stick in front of you like something valuable.

In groups of four: Two walk the rhythm together, carrying the treasure. The first phrase away and the second phrase back. At the same time the other two are 'painting the lines'.

Change after two phrases. At the end all four slowly put the treasure down on the floor.

Anitras dance

Valse, Legato /staccato, crescendo

Object: Scarf – one each

Start by experience a Swedish or Norwegian traditional valse in minor, to piano accompaniment – walking the beat, swinging, dancing valse-steps, improvising.... After a while the music can change between legato and staccato. Then dance to Anitras dance.

With scarves: Show the melody line with the scarf. Then make a dialogue in pairs.

In groups of four: two are following the melody as a dialogue with the scarves, and two are doing the valse steps (with scarves). Show the difference between the staccato and the legato. And decide in the group how to end.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union