QUESTIONS TO USE WITH MUSIC APPRECIATION LESSONS

Throughout each lesson it is important to get your students to talk/share/question. Using open-ended questions eliminates “yes”, “no” and one-word answers. The inquiry-based model of questioning provides students with the opportunity to think and speak while they are making connections to the music and composers by:

• applying their knowledge [*application]
• analyzing relationships among pieces of information (i.e. compare and contrast) [*analysis]
• evaluating what they hear, and [*evaluation]
• using their creativity and imagination to produce something unique [*synthesis]

*The higher 4 out of 6 levels of thinking and questioning from Bloom’s Taxonomy

The following questions are samples of the type of questions we encourage you to ask. Only use the ones you feel are appropriate. You are encouraged to make up your own and write them down to share with the other docents.

1. Start of the lesson:
Use questions that connect to their lives.
• What type of music have you been listening to lately (or during the last month)?
• What experiences have you had with live music?
• When you have a chance to listen to music, what groups or singers do you like?
2. Play 30-60 seconds of one of the pieces to be played during the lesson or by the teacher during the ensuing month.
   • What did you hear? What instruments in particular produced the sound you heard? Did any of the instruments stand out to you?
   • How did the music make you feel? Why?
   • What did you think about as you listened to this music? (listening being the key concept of the lesson)
   • Do any stories come to mind from your listening? Who would like to share their story? (brief)
   Possibly do a 1-2 minute quick-write to match one of the above questions.

3. During the lesson
   • After listening to the music, ask “If you were writing the script for a movie using this music, what might the movie be about?”
   • Have you heard this music before and if so, where?
   • What do/did you like most about this music? Least?
   • How does this music compare to the music of the composer we heard last month? Is it similar or different? How?
   • Where in the world do you think this music came from? Why?
   • Does this music remind you of anything in your life?
   • What have you learned by listening to this music today?
   • If the composer of this music came to visit your classroom, and heard you play the type of music you enjoy most, what do you think the composer might say?
   • What patterns did you notice in the music?
   • In this piece of music you are about to hear the composer has written sections that are different (or similar) in some way from each other. Why do you think the composer did this?
   • What word best describes this music? Why did you choose that word?
   • If the composer were to write a different ending to this piece, how might it sound?
   • Do you think the title the composer chose for this piece of music a good one or a poor one? Explain your answer.
   • Would you recommend this piece of music to a friend? To your parents? Why?
4. **Talking about the composer(s)**
   - Composer are like visual artists, but instead of using a paint brush, crayons, chalk, clay or other art mediums, a composer's written music is their art. What do you think this composer's music is about? (i.e. their life; the life of someone else; a place; a thought, etc.)
   - What pictures in your mind did the music paint?
   - After listening to this composer's works, how might you describe this composer just by listening to his/her music?
   - How did this composer's music make you feel? (Explore their ideas. There are no right or wrong answers.)
   - Can you think if a story that might go with this music?
   - What aspect of the composer's life most interests you?
   - To be a successful composer, what do you think this person had to do? Was it easy? Why/Why not?
   - Do you think your favorite pop singer or group was influenced by classical music? If yes, why? If not, what do you think his/her influences might be?

5. **End of lesson.**
   - [Ask your students to be prepared to tell you at your next session together what music they heard throughout the month that most pleased them or that they enjoyed listening to the most]
   - What did you learn today that you didn’t know before we started the lesson? (about the music; the composer; their own thoughts and feelings as they listened to the music)