Music Listening - Emotion Detectives
Grades CD–3

Objectives:

1. Students will identify compositional techniques used to achieve unity, variety, and tension and release in music to evoke an emotional response from the listener.
2. Students will identify changes in dynamics, tempo, and rhythm.
3. Students will determine the intent of changes in meter, tonality, and harmony in a variety of musical compositions to create tension and emotional response.
4. Students will evaluate and critique key literary elements that enhance and deepen meaning within and across texts.

Materials:

- *What Do You Do With a Problem?* by Kobi Yamada read aloud (online read aloud here)
- Audio system
- Open space for movement (optional)
- Access to the following music selections:
    - "Happy" – Pharrell Williams (instrumental section)
    - "You've Got a Friend in Me" – Randy Newman (*Toy Story*)
    - "Let It Go" – *Frozen* (instrumental introduction)
    - "The Carnival of the Animals: Aquarium" – Camille Saint-Saëns
    - "Flight of the Bumblebee" – Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov
    - "Clair de Lune" – Claude Debussy

Directions:

- Begin by telling students they will soon attend the Gaillard Center performance of *What Do You Do With a Problem?* based on the book by Kobi Yamada.
- Read *What Do You Do With a Problem?* aloud.
- Pause occasionally to ask students to think about the character's emotions.
- Discussion prompts may include:
    - "How do you think the character feels in this moment?"
    - "How might an actor show that feeling with their face or body?"
    - "What might their posture or movement look like if they feel worried?"

- Explain that the story follows a child who has a problem that feels confusing and overwhelming at first. The character tries to ignore the problem, but eventually learns that facing it can lead to courage, growth, and new possibilities.
- Tell students that when they watch the performance *What Do You Do With a Problem?*, they will notice how music and movement work together to show emotions and tell a story.
- Discuss the idea that music can make us feel different emotions.
- Ask students:
    - Have you ever heard a song that made you feel happy?
    - Can music make you feel calm or excited?
- Explain that composers and musicians use tempo (speed), dynamics (loud or soft sounds), and instruments to create emotions in music.

Activity directions:

- Tell students that they will now become "emotion detectives." Their job is to listen carefully to different pieces of music and decide what emotion the music might express.
- Play short clips (30–45 seconds) of each piece.
- After each selection, ask students questions such as:
    - Does this music make you feel happy, calm, worried, or excited, or another emotion?
    - Is the music fast or slow?
    - Is the music loud or soft?
    - What instruments do you hear?
- Examples:
    - "Happy" – Pharrell Williams
        - Students may notice upbeat rhythms and a fast tempo that create an energetic, joyful feeling.
    - "Aquarium" from "Carnival of the Animals" – Saint-Saëns
        - Students may describe calm or dreamy feelings created by soft sounds and flowing melodies.
    - "Flight of the Bumblebee" – Rimsky-Korsakov
        - Students may hear excitement or nervous energy due to the very fast tempo.
- Optional extension:
    - Invite students to move their bodies to match the emotion they hear in the music to connect movement and emotion to what they hear.
    - Encourage them to think about:

        - How their body moves when music feels excited
        - How movement changes when music feels calm or peaceful
- Ask students to share their ideas:
    - Which piece of music made you feel the happiest?
    - Which music felt calm or peaceful?
    - Did anyone hear a different emotion than their classmates?
- Explain that music can make different listeners feel different emotions, and there is no single correct answer.

Conclusion:

- Tell students that when they come to the Gaillard Center for the performance, notice how the dancers in Inlet Dance Theatre connect music, emotion, and movement.
- Similarly, explain that composers often create music to help tell stories and express emotions.
- Say, When you are watching, listen closely to the music and notice:
    - how the music changes during different moments of the story
    - how the dancers' movements match the emotions in the music.

SC College and Career Ready Standards:

- GM.R AM.6.2 – I can identify compositional techniques used to achieve unity, variety, tension and release in music to evoke an emotional response from the listener.
- GM.R AH.6.1 – I can determine the intent of changes in meter, tonality and harmony in a variety of musical compositions to create tension and emotional response.
- GM.R NM.6.1 – I can identify changes in dynamics, tempo and rhythm.
- ELA.AOR.1 - Evaluate and critique key literary elements that enhance and deepen meaning within and across texts.