



Breathe for Schools

Music and Your Mind with Maggie's

For pupils in P6-S6

Available for 1 week from 12.30pm on Monday 29 March

FREE – register your school now

Overview

Listening to music is one of the easiest ways to enhance our well-being, so this season Scottish Ensemble are running free, uplifting, one-hour sessions that use music alongside mindfulness techniques and tools for finding calm, to let you take a moment and breathe. The first of these sessions is available from 12.30pm on Monday 29 March until 5pm on Monday 5 April and has been designed for pupils in P6-S6 to tackle the types of stresses and emotions that they might be encountering just now. It is an ideal aid for a PSD class or for working with groups who are experiencing increased anxiety at this time. If your pupils have been enjoying our Sound Space events then this is the perfect next step.

Scottish Ensemble has been working with the charity [Maggie's](#) for several years now, supporting and contributing to their brilliant work with people with cancer and their families by bringing live music into their centres. *Breathe* will combine our trademark music for strings with reflections from Maggie's Lead Psychologist, Lesley Howells on how we can all use music in our daily lives to help us feel better.

With the recent increased pressure on the mental health of people of all ages, but especially young people, it's important to take some time out for ourselves. This special performance will help your pupils to find new ways of listening and give them a taste of how to channel music in sweeping away daily pressures.

Structure and Lesson Plan

Structure

When the performance begins, the first thing you will hear is a piece of music by Philip Glass. This gives us a chance to settle into the sound of a string orchestra and to enjoy the music without any preparation for the listener.

Then our workshop leader and psychologist Lesley will explain the workshop and the three musical listening exercises we are going to share.

Lesley will settle the listeners for our first *pausing with listening* experience. We will find calm and focus our minds with simple breathing exercises and grow our awareness of sounds around us to prepare us for listening. Then the music will start, and we have an opportunity to listen deeply.

At the end of the piece, Lesley will have a discussion with our musicians about what they felt or imagined as they were playing the piece. After this, there will be an opportunity to pause the video and have a similar discussion with your class. We've found a huge array of responses from memories, to images and colours, to purely emotional responses in previous workshops, and it has proved an amazing way to connect with music and with ourselves.

This experience is then repeated for two more musical *listen and reflect* exercises with contrasting pieces, before we finish with a final uplifting piece to send your class off with a spring in their step.

How to use it

We're giving you as much information up front as we can in order to allow teachers to construct a lesson plan that suits their needs. Broadly, there are two ways to interact with this offer.

1. You can follow along with your class as detailed in the previous section.
2. You can use this performance as an introduction on which you can build your own sessions. While everything is better with live music, there is nothing to stop you using any music and a similar preparation for deeper listening to promote discussion and improved well-being. We'd recommend music without words, as an obvious narrative obstructs the mind in finding its own meaning, but there is much scope through which to explore this.

Learning outcomes

The main outcomes of this workshop are: improved well-being; emotional literacy; improved concentration; and verbal communication skills.

Music

It is not important that you listen to the music beforehand, in fact in many ways this exercise is most effective when people are hearing the pieces for the first time. However, it is always useful to have access to the titles of the music being performed.

Intro	Philip Glass, <i>Echorus</i>
Listening Exercise 1	Peter Gregson, <i>Primary Colours</i>
Listening Exercise 2	Johann S. Bach, <i>Goldberg Variations No. 15</i>
Listening Exercise 3	Ralph Vaughan Williams, <i>The Lark Ascending (Extract)</i>
Outro	Danish Traditional (arr. Danish String Quartet), <i>The Peat Dance</i>

Best Experience

Computer

You'll need a computer or tablet device (such as an iPad) connected to the internet and able to access YouTube. It is worth checking your school doesn't have a block on the YouTube site beforehand.

If the WiFi in your room is not great, one possibility is to try connecting an ethernet cable to your laptop if your room has an ethernet port.

Loudspeakers

Like any recorded experience the quality of sound is affected by your choice of loudspeakers. In the main, laptop and tablet speakers aren't great, so if you do have access to external speakers, we'd recommend attaching those.

The size of speakers and volume of playback are dictated by the choice of room and number of people watching. If it is two young people a laptop may suffice, if it is a whole school in your hall you might need large PA speakers.

Screen

Similar to loudspeakers, the screen size is dictated by the choice of room and number of people watching. If only two young people are watching, a laptop may suffice. If it is a whole school in your hall you might need a projector and screen.

Set your YouTube resolution

You should set your YouTube resolution to the highest you can without causing buffering (a pause of the playback while the computer loads the video). The maximum quality will be the same no matter what you are watching on YouTube, so you can trial it by watching other videos.

You change the resolution by the settings button in the bottom right which looks like this:



Then select quality, and then select the highest number that works for your internet connection. 1080 represents full HD which we'd recommend if your internet is fast enough.

Assistance for Deaf Pupils

We will have a BSL supported performance of this performance available. Please contact duncan.sutherland@scottishensemble.co.uk who can provide details of how to access this.

Supported by:

Creative Scotland | Glasgow City Council | DC Thomson Charitable Trust | Hugh Fraser Foundation | McGlashan Charitable Trust