Music to My Ears

Students learn how to read music and play music in a fun hands-on approach.

Curriculum/State Standards
The activities in this project address music artistic perception and creative expression. In artistic perception students read, notate, listen to, analyze, and describe music using the terminology of music. In creative expression students create, perform, and participate in music.

Overview
Students learn the three musical elements: rhythm, melody, harmony. They learn notes then read, write, and perform simple melodic notation. They also read, write, and perform major and minor scales.

Objectives
The students will learn to read, write, and perform melodic notation in the treble clef.
The students will read, write, and perform major and minor scales.
The students will use instruments to perform the rhythmic notation they compose.

Materials
Boomwhackers, Boomwhackers curriculum book, dry erase board with staves, Magnetic Music Staff Easel, egg shakers, staff paper, xylophone, music stand

Readiness Activity
Students begin by listening to “Peter and the Wolf” by Prokofiev. This musical piece, written especially for children, introduces them to the instruments of an orchestra. Specifically, they will be asked to feel the mood and emotion evoked from each of the instruments. The book, Meet the Orchestra by Ann Hayes will then be read aloud and the actual instrument being discussed or a picture of one will be shown. Students will be encouraged to hold and play the actual instrument.

Strategies/Activities
Utilizing a magnetic music staff easel, students will learn the names of the notes, the notes’ count, and it’s location on the staff by placing magnetic disks on the proper place.

Boomwhackers are colored musical tubes tuned to different musical notes. The Boomwhackers will enable students to further learn and practice the notes, beats, and location on the staff. Students are encouraged to explore, play, and listen to the sounds a Boomwhacker makes individually and combined with another tube.

Using Boomwhackers, favorite and familiar children songs, such as “Mary Had a Little Lamb,” “Old Macdonald Had a Farm,” and “London Bridge is Falling Down” will be played by reading notes on a staff. The sheet music will first be projected on a screen for the entire class to see and play. Individual groups of students will then play the same song while remaining students are the audience.

After learning and playing songs, groups of students collaborate to compose and notate at least 5 bars of music. Their compositions will be compiled and bound as a class book for them to keep. They use Boomwhackers and rhythm shakers to compose.
Culminating Activity
At a culmination concert performance for their parents and family, students will play their original compositions as well as the familiar songs they first learned. To share their new knowledge and to stimulate an early interest in music, students have a second concert for kindergarten students. In the weeks following, they will teach kindergarteners how to play a scale on the Boomwhackers.

Evaluation Method
Students will be evaluated on an individual as well as group basis and by teacher observation. A written test to identify the notes on a staff and placing specific notes on the staff will be given. They will maintain a portfolio of their works in progress. The written musical composition should reflect accurate note placement and 4/4 time bars. Students’ written and oral self reflection of their group works and concert performances is also a factor. Effort, improvement, quality of their work, and the performance will be examined as well.