Beethoven’s Symphony No. 8, Movement II

This lesson will allow students to physically experience the rhythmic subdivisions of duple meter, both individually and within an ensemble. Students will listen to an excerpt from Beethoven’s Symphony No. 8 and identify patterns performed by the wind instruments.

Assessment Strategies

In this lesson, students should be able to successfully do the following: while listening to an excerpt of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 8, students will maintain a steady pulse through the following methods: stepping in place, speaking select syllables on separate beats (in groups). Learn more about assessment strategies on page 5.

Learning Standards

This lesson uses Common Core and National Core Arts Anchor Standards. You can find more information about the standards featured in this lesson on page 4.
ABOUT THE COMPOSER*

Ludwig van Beethoven [say: BAY-toe-vun] was born in Bonn, Germany, in 1770. Despite his young age, Beethoven’s talent allowed him to travel for performances and soon he was supporting his entire family.

Beethoven moved to Vienna, Austria, in his early twenties to study with a famous composer named Franz Joseph Haydn. While living there, he also became a very well-known concert pianist. But as he grew older, he began to have trouble hearing and eventually Beethoven was forced to stop playing the piano in public. The loss of his hearing was very difficult for Beethoven, but despite this struggle, he continued to write music.

Today, Beethoven is viewed as one of the greatest musical geniuses to ever live. Even though he is most famous for his nine symphonies, Beethoven also wrote chamber and choral music, piano pieces, string quartets and one opera.

TEACHING STEPS

1. **Set** a metronome to 138 beats per minute (bpm) or supply a pulse at a similar pace, just more than two beats per second.

   If you do not have a metronome, you can access one [here](#) or in many iOS or Android apps.

2. **Ask** the students to stand next to their desks and step in place, once every four pulses.

3. After students become comfortable with this, tell students to double their pace, **stepping** every two pulses.

Check for steadiness along the way. Students should be stepping in sync with each other. If necessary, slow down the tempo temporarily on the metronome.
4. **Pause and explain** that at the time Beethoven was writing his eighth symphony, the metronome was a relatively new invention. Some people think that he may have been parodying the mechanical nature of it within the second movement of this symphony. At the very least he was playing with the idea of a strong mechanical pulse.

5. **Divide** the class into two groups. Using the same pulse, have the class use their voices to accent the pulse in the following arrangement.

   a. The first group says, “CHA” on the first of the four pulses.

   b. Once that is established, the second group says “CHO” on the third of the four pulses.

   c. Once the class is able to hold the pattern steady, add a second syllable to each part. Group one now says “CHA-TA” on the first and second pulses.

   d. Group two now says “CHO-TOE” on the third and fourth pulses.

   **Lead** the groups with visual conducting cues or gestures if they begin to drift off their parts.

6. **Play** the second movement and overlay this vocal pattern on top of the recording for approximately 30 seconds. **Stop** the recording and **ask** the students if they felt that they were synchronized with the music. **Try again** if necessary.

7. **Play** the entire excerpt and **ask** students to listen to the woodwind section and to briefly raise their hand every time they hear a change in the woodwind pattern. After 1:30, **ask** them to just continue listening.

8. **Tell** the student that the second movement of a symphony is usually a slow movement. Beethoven chose to have a more unique and active pulse in this piece. **Discuss** any other observations that the students might have about the music.
LEARNING STANDARDS

Common Core Anchor Standards

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.5**
Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

National Core Arts Anchor Standards

**Anchor Standard 5b** Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.
• Observe students’ ability to maintain a steady beat along with a metronome and with the musical excerpt. Guide students as necessary, and evaluate students’ ability to speak rhythmic syllables along with the music.