Unit Plan: “Eine Kleine Nachtmusik”  
(First Movement Abridged)  
By: W. A Mozart  
Arranged by: Merle J. Isaac
Basic Information:

Title: Eine Kleine Nachtmusik: First Movement (Abridged)
Composer: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Arranger: Merle J. Isaac
Grade: medium
Style: Classical Period
Key: G Major
Meter: 4/4
Tempo Indications: Allegro, quarter note = 120
Performance Time: 4:00
Instrumentation: String Orchestra, Piano accompaniment
Score: Full
Concert Pitch: Yes
Range Concerns: 1st Violins will be shifting on the E string.
Unusual Requirements: Tremelos (2nd violin/violas), Divide sections (2nd violin/violas).
Program Notes:

This work by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, was originally titled “Serenade No. 13 for Strings in G Major”, but is now more commonly known as “Eine Kleine Nachtmusik” or as translated from German, “a little night music.” Completed in 1787, the piece was written for two violins, viola, cello, and optional bass. It is now most often performed by string orchestras.

Although, the reason for the work’s composition is not known, it has been suggested that the piece was done on commission in a set of serenades. At the time of its composition, Mozart was performing as a freelance musician in Vienna. He was also working on many compositions, including the second act to the later famous opera, Don Giovanni. It has also been hypothesized that “Eine Kleine Nachtmusik” was inspired by his happiness in recent marriage (1782) to Constanze Weber. The work itself is upbeat and enjoyable for both players and audience alike.
Historical Information: The Work

Not much is know about why “Eine Kleine Nachtmusik” was written. Originally, the serenade was titled, “Serenade No. 13 for strings in G Major”, but is known as “Eine Kleine Nachmusik” or “a little night music”. Historians believe that this was Mozart’s way of saying he had written a little serenade, not that he was specifically trying to give it a title. We are aware that the work was composed in August of 1787, during the same time Mozart was working on the second act of Don Giovanni, one of his operatic masterpieces. The work is written in four movements: Allegro, Romanze (Andante), Menuetto (Allegretto), and Rondo (Allegro). The original instrumentation for the work is two violins, viola, cello, and optional bass. It is now most commonly played by string orchestra.

This particular arrangement by Merle J. Isaac, the exposition and recapitulation sections remain relatively untouched. Isaac provides some fingerings and writes out rhythmic figures such as sixteenth note triplets to avoid difficult ornamentations such as turns and trills.

The Composer

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born January 27, 1756 and died December 5, 1791. In the early years of his life, Mozart performed the piano as a child prodigy, along with his sister, Nannerl, at the urging of his father, and fellow musician, Leopold Mozart. From these early experiences, it was clear that Mozart possessed a talent for music. He would soon make performing and composing the focus of his life.
After resigning from his long held position in the Salzburg Court, Mozart and his father Leopold, decided to travel in search of a new position. The two Mozarts toured Augsburg, Mannheim, Paris, and Munich. They eventually settled in Vienna, Austria.

During the composition of “Eine Kleine Nachtmusik”, Mozart was 31 years old and living in Vienna. He had just recently been married Constanze Webber (in 1782). In that same decade, around 1783, Mozart met Joseph Haydn and the two composers became friends. Both were writing string quartets at the time, and Mozart himself wrote 6 quartets dedicated to Haydn. Serenade No. 13 for strings in G Major, or “Eine Kleine Nachtmusik” is not one of those quartets, however, Haydn did act as Mozart’s mentor during the time of it’s composition. Therefore, it is possible that some of the inspiration for this serenade came from Haydn.

The Arranger

This work is arranged by the well-known, Merle J. Isaac. Isaac who was born on October 12, 1898 and died on March 11, 1996. After graduating from Vandercook College of Music in 1932, he began teaching orchestra at the high school level. Mr. Isaac realized that there was very little good literature out there for lower-level orchestras. He spent the next 35 years of his life teaching, and arranging. Throughout his career, Merle J. Isaac arranged over 300 works, as well as created his own string method book. Mr. Isaac was not only a strong teacher, and arranger, but an advocate for music and instrumental music retention. For example: he became aware that the tendency for melodic lines to be given to the violins was shrinking the enthusiasm of students playing viola, cello, or bass.
Therefore, he wrote his method books and some arrangements in a way that gave these more harmony driven instruments the melody. After retirement Isaac became clinician and guest conductor, as well as the recipient of the 1993 lifetime achievement award given by the National String Teachers Association.

**Related History**

In 1787, the year of “Eine Kleine Nachtmusik” completion, the Austro-Turkish War began, and would continue until 1792 (after Mozart’s death). The war itself was a conflict between the Ottoman and Austrian empires over land. The Austrian public was not in support of the war, which was launched by Joseph II, the Holy Roman Emperor. The biggest threat for the Ottoman Empire (Turks) was not the losses in land from Austria, but Austria’s new ally, the Russian Empire, led by Catherine the Great. During this war, the Ottoman Empire was also involved in the Russo-Turkish War (1787-1792) in which they were attempting to regain some Russian territory that had been lost in a previous war (1768-1774).

The Austro-Turkish war became a large economic burden for the people of Austria, making things like food significantly more expensive. These added expenses had a significant impact on the thriving musical culture of Vienna, causing things like the closure of opera companies and limiting of concert performances. This directly related to the life of Mozart, making it hard for him to maintain a living via commissions of the aristocracy.
During this same time period (1780’s) Austria had also sided with Great Britain in the American Revolution. This meant sending more men over to assist in Britain’s efforts. The soldiers sent over to North America were called “Pandours”. These Pandours were Croatian-Austrian frontier soldiers who mostly used guerilla warfare tactics, and were often employed to raid enemy lines for food and other supplies.
Formal Analysis: Sonata Form (Exposition, Development, Recapitulation, Codetta)

Exposition: m. 1-27

1. Main Theme: m. 1-10, key of G major, composed of 4 bar and 6 bar phrase, forte, staccato, aggressive style.
2. Sub-theme 1: m. 11-17, 4 bar phrases, contrasting style: piano, legato, some staccato.
3. Sub-theme 2: m. 18-27, (one continuous phrase), style: dynamic building from piano to forte
   a. m. 21, key change: D Major (dominant of current key of G)
   b. m. 27, tonicizes on V chord of D (A)

Development: m. 28-55

1. Secondary Theme in D Major: m. 28-34, 2 bar phrases, piano, legato, some staccato contrast.
2. Sub-theme: m. 35-55, 2 ½ bar phrases, dynamic changes between forte and piano throughout.
   a. Cadence: D Major chord

Recapitulation: m. 56-106

1. Recap Exposition Main Theme: m. 56-65, in key of G Major
   a. Recap Sub-theme 1: m. 66-72
   b. Recap Sub-theme 2: m. 73-80, STAYS IN G MAJOR
2. Recap Development Secondary Theme: m. 81-87 (remains in G Major)
a. Recap Sub-theme 1: m. 88-95

b. Recap Sub-theme 2: m. 96-106

Codetta: m. 107-117 (end)

a. Stays within key of G Major.

b. Ends on a I chord in G Major.

Errata: No errata were found in this score.
Performance Notes:

On rhythms and articulation:

The rhythms of the melody in this piece give us the opportunity to teach many new concepts such as triplet-sixteenth rhythms, sixteenth-eighth rhythms, dotted eighth-sixteenths, and syncopations. However, when teaching a piece as famous as this we should stress to students that the rhythms written on the page may be slightly different from those heard on recordings. This abridge version has some rhythmic modifications that make the piece easier to read, but may make it slightly different from what we are used to hearing. An example is the triplet-sixteenths, which are written as an ornamentation in original scores of this piece. Another teachable moment (and possible issues) in this arrangement, are the changes in articulation from staccato to legato. It is important to the character of the piece that the students understand when and how to articulate these sections differently.

Rushing:

The differing stylistic sections of the piece can lead to the players want to change tempos. It’s important to keep consistency of tempo, especially in the cello and bass sections. They provide the eighth note subdivision for the majority of the piece. This can be helpful, especially when the violins and violas start dealing with the triplet sixteenth rhythms and ties. However, it’s important to stress that the cello bass part still needs to follow the baton, and the dynamic markings. Otherwise, there could be tempo and balance problems in the ensemble as a whole.
On the period and style:

The original work was written during the height of the Classical period and demands a certain type of playing from the performer. Even at the middle school level we can start introducing the lighter, clearer, classical style of playing to students. We should introduce the concept of classical playing by talking about adjustments in bow weight and distribution that should occur while playing this in this style. An example would be staccato passages in the work, these notes should not be played by starting on the string and applying pressure (crunch noise), but by starting slightly elevated and getting a small bounce, while still putting weight into the string. Understanding the method of playing this piece may help students to get a better feel for the musicality of the work.
Glossary of Terms:

**Allegro**: Fast tempo; it was used in the 18th century as a tempo marking as well as an indication of character or mood.

**Classical Period**: The period or style that has its tentative beginnings in Italy in the early 18th century and extends through the early 19th century. Classical music succeeds the Baroque period and precedes the Romantic, in both cases with sizable chronological overlaps. The basic components of the new style of the early 18th century were homophonic texture and simpler, more “natural” melody.

**Codetta**: In sonata form, a brief coda concluding the exposition.

**Crescendo**: Performance marks, increasing loudness.

**Development**: Structural alteration of musical material, as opposed to the exposition or statement of material; may affect the perimeter of the theme. Typical examples would include significant modification of pitch contour or rhythm.

**Diminuendo**: Becoming softer.

**Divisi**: (Divided): Part should be divided between inside and outside players.

**Exposition**: In sonata form, the first major section, incorporating at least one important modulation to the dominant or other secondary key and presenting the principal thematic material.

**Forte**: Loud.

**Mezzo Piano**: Moderately quiet.

**Piano**: Quiet.

**Recapitulation**: A restatement of the material in the Exposition.
**Sforzando:** Forced or accented in relation to current dynamic.

**Sonata Form:** Open modulatory plan of binary form, in which an initial modulation from
the tonic to a new key is answered by a complementary modulation from the new key back
to the tonic.

**Tremelo:** Quick and continuous re-iteration of a single pitch. On stringed instruments
this results in a rapid up and down motion of the bow on the string.
Concepts/Skills:

Rhythm:

- Tied rhythm
- Syncopation (basic knowledge)
- Dotted eighth-sixteenth, triplet sixteenths

Notes:

- Violins: Shifting on the E string (3rd and 4th position)
- Viola: Shifting on A string (2nd and 3rd position)
- Cello: Shifting to half position, forward extensions, 2nd position
- Bass: Shifting to half position, 2nd and 3rd positions
- All instruments: Accidentals (G#, C#)
  - m. 39–D# for viola, cello, bass
  - m. 53–A# for violin, cello, bass
  - discuss enharmonics to identify fingerings of accidentals

Style:

- Staccato (everyone)
  - m. 14–contrasting staccato with legato style
- Tremelo
  - m. 9–viola
  - m. 20–violins
- Double/triple stops
  - m.1-triple stops in viola, violins
  - m.5- double stops in 2nd violins

- Divided Parts
  - m.24- violins
Objectives for Students:

1. Students will play correct rhythms.
   - m. 18 - triplet-sixteenth figure in 1st and 2nd violins.

2. Students will play correct notes.
   - Accidentals in all parts (m. 26-33)

3. Students will understand and successfully execute shifts.
   - Shifting on the E string for violins (m. 21-28, 35-56)

4. Students will understand elements of sonata form.
   - Exposition - m. 1-27
   - Development - m. 28-55
   - Recapitulation - m. 56-106
   - Codetta - m. 107-117

5. Students will recognize playing characteristics of the classical period.
   - Stylistic changes: staccato, legato.
   - Lighter bowing style, speed, weight.
Strategies and Activities:

**Rhythm Exercise** (see attached sheet, Exercise 1)

Objective: Students will comprehend difficult rhythms by breaking them down into subdivisions.

1. Set a tempo.

2. Have the bass section start tapping the quarter notes, after 4 measures, cellos follow with eighth notes. Viola's join in with sixteenth notes.

3. Violins start at m. 1-10 and tap the rhythm written.

4. Have each section take turns tapping their own rhythm while the other sections cover the quarter, eighths, and sixteenths.

5. Now have them play open strings doing the same thing: the quarter notes on the open G, eighths on open D, sixteenth on open A and actual rhythms on E string (adjust accordingly when viola/cello are playing their actual rhythms).

*Suggested sections to work via this procedure: m. 1-10, m. 11-28, m. 35-43

**Musicality/Note Accuracy Exercise**

Objective: Students will play in small chamber ensembles to improve intonation, and musicality.

1. Discuss how this work was originally written for string quartet.

2. Have students break into quartet (or as close to quartets as is possible).

3. Rehearse together, focusing on listening to intonation, dynamic contrast, and style.
4. Have students play different sections of the piece for each other. Get audience feedback from peers.

*Can be used as a form of evaluation or opportunity for mini-private lessons with teacher.

Assignments for Students:

Listening: Mozart Project

1. Listen to another work by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

2. Based on what you've learned in class about the Classical period in music, what elements do you hear in this work?

3. Write one page about these elements and similarities to “Eine Kleine Nachtmusik” that you hear.

Creative: Set a Scene

1. Create a visual representation of a scene that “Eine Kleine Nachtmusik” could be depicting or played during.

2. Include the time of day the scene occurs, the weather, location, and people/animals (if any).

3. Can be completed via visual media (drawing, painting, photography) or written description (descriptive paragraph, poem).
Practice Guide:

Suggested Practice Sections:

1st Violins

- m. 43-56 Emphasis on rhythm, shifts and accidentals.

- m. 107-117 Emphasis on chromatic passage intonation and shifting.

2nd Violins

- m. 28-35 Emphasis on rhythm, accidentals and stylistic contrasts.

- m. 43-53 Emphasis on rhythm and accidentals.

Violas

- m. 35-43 Emphasis on accidentals and shifting.

Cello/Bass

- m. 28-35 Emphasis on shifting and accidentals.

- m. 39-41 Emphasis on shifting and accidentals.

- m. 83-88 Emphasis on chromatic passage intonation.

All: 2 octave G Major and D Major scale (see attached scale sheets).

Practice Logs:

Students are required to turn in a practice log every Friday. This log should be signed by parent/guardian. Format for practice logs can be found on next page. Students will receive a letter grade for this assignment. Please see attached practice log and rubric.
Practice Log

Name: 
Date: 

Monday: 
Tuesday: 
Wednesday: 
Thursday: 
Friday: 
Saturday: 
Sunday: 

Parent/Guardian Signature: ________________________________

Practice Log Rubric

A 5 or more days of practice a week. 
Practicing between 40 minutes and an hour a day.

B 3-4 days of practice a week. 
Practicing between 30 minutes and an hour a day.

C 2-3 days of practice a week. 
Practicing between 20 and 40 minutes a day.

D 1 to zero days of practice a week.
Evaluation of Students: Playing Test

1st Violins: m. 1-10, m. 43-56

2nd Violins: m. 28-35, m. 43-53

Violas: m. 1-10, m. 35-43

Cello/Bass: m. 28-35, m. 83-88

Playing test Rubric

A Well-prepared, accurate rhythms, accurate intonation,
   Accurate dynamic contrast
B Well prepared, some in-accurate rhythms, some in-accurate intonation,
   Lack of dynamic contrast
C majority of rhythms are in-accurate, majority of notes are out of tune,
   No dynamic contrast

*Could be assessed individually, or in chamber/quartet setting.
Recordings:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xH5JL6serq - Manhattan Junior High School
(Merle J. Isaac arrangement)
http://www.classical.com/album/ZAOK+57230
(original)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GT7_Y1pIBb4
(original)

Related Items:

Other Merle J. Isaac Arrangements for String Orchestra:
Allegro in C (medium) – W.A Mozart
Andante and Allegro (medium/easy) – W. A Mozart
Air, Minuet, Rondo (medium) – Henry Purcell
Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 (medium) – J.S Bach
Chaconne (medium) – Durand

Items arranged by Merle J. Isaac for Full Orchestra:
Samson et Delilah Op. 47: Bacchanale (medium/difficult) – Camille Saints-Saens
Barber of Seville (medium) – Gioacchino Rossini
Christmas Oratorio: Gloria and Alleluia (medium/easy) – Camille Saints-Saens

*This is just a few of Merle J. Isaac’s 300 arrangements for string and full orchestra, for a complete list go to Luck’s Music Library website.

Similar Works by other composers:
Ode to Joy (easy) – Beethoven/arr. Elliot Del Borgo
Moldau: Country Wedding (easy) – Smetana/arr. Sandra Dackow
Pictures at an Exhibition (medium) – Mussorsky/arr. Elliot Del Borgo
Fidelio Finale (medium) – Beethoven/arr. Sandra Dackow
Other arrangers for String Orchestra:
Elliot Del Borgo
Sandra Dackow
Richard Meyer

Bibliography:


