

Music Notes



James Walker Elementary

Upcoming Events:

- * 5th grade Singfest
Monday, May 3rd
7:00 pm @ BSHS
- * 4th/5th grade Music Club
performance
7:00 pm @ JWE

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We're fans of good music!

The month of April certainly has been a quick one, but then, time flies when you're having fun!

During the first two weeks of April, we were on the MAP testing schedule, which meant that all grade levels K-6 had their special classes in the afternoon, since testing occurred building wide in the morning.

We were grateful to get back to a regular schedule following MAP testing

The décor in the music room has changed from watches ("Just 'watch' how well JWE students do!") to miniature plastic hand-held fans ("We're fans of good music!"). It is hard to believe, but we only have a few weeks left in the music room this school year.

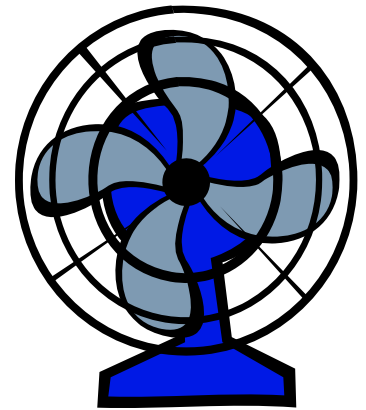
Music Booster News

Earlier this year, you should have received some information on Blue Springs Music Boosters. This is a terrific organization that helps JWE students every year! Music Boosters will accept membership applications all year long, so if you have not yet

May 21st will be the last day we have our ABCD rotation for special classes this year, as the library closes for inventory.

Starting May 24th, we will combine classes from entire grade levels during special class times. We will be doing some special activities with Ms. Hoener, Mr. Shippy, and Mrs. Crosley.

In the meantime, we've been keeping very busy in the music room. Please see the next page to see exactly what your child has been up to in his or her music class.



MUSIC IS COOL!

joined and would like to, there is still time. If you need another copy of the membership form, let me know.

Music Booster meetings are held at Moreland Ridge Middle School on the second Monday of each month at 7:00

pm unless it is a holiday.

Kindergarten News

Following a successful performance on April 8th, kindergarten returned to the music room the following week.

They learned about fast and slow tempos and musical expression through a fun song called "Bop 'til You Drop".

They enjoyed acting out the characters of the story of "The Farmer in the Dell" as they sang that song.

They also learned a song called



"Twister". This song was written by Mrs. Gentry, the music teacher at Thomas Ultican Elementary here in Blue Springs, and is a favorite of JWE students every year. At this time of year, when we review tornado drill procedures, I find it enhances that lesson to sing the "Twister" song in music. (And what kindergarten

wouldn't love a song in which they get to spin around and pretend they are a tornado?) This song teaches them about loud and soft

dynamics, minor key, and A form. Next year in 1st grade, I will begin emphasizing those terms with them. This year they are experiencing them; next year, they will begin naming them.

Another enjoyable activity for kindergarten this month has been a rhythm echoing activity on the drums. All students had the opportunity to play the big drums in the music room.

Last but not least, we enjoyed learning the song "A Tisket, A Tasket". Their favorite part of it is when the scarf gets dropped on someone and they have to run!

"I have included information about books used in 1st and 2nd grade on page 4 of this newsletter."

1st grade news

First grade has been focusing some on high and low sounds this month. We read a story called "Tubby the Tuba", in which we learned that tubas make low sounds and piccolos make high sounds. I have included the information about this book on page 4 of this newsletter.

First grade reviewed their knowledge of the term "phrase" (a musical sen-

tence) with the song "Wishy Washy".

Rhythm reading has been an important part of our class time lately. Not only have we read rhythms with our voices, but we've also played the rhythms on the rhythm flash cards with instruments. In an attempt to keep our rhythm skills fresh, we are reading the same rhythm cards each week with different instruments.

Of course, another important part of music is the pitches of the scale, which 1st grade has been reviewing through use of the song "Do Re Mi" from the movie *The Sound of Music*. In addition to singing the song, we are also playing it on Boomwhackers, and reinforcing our knowledge of steady beat.

Last but not least, we've recalled the term "interlude" in a song called "All Around the Kitchen".

2nd grade news

Second grade learned a new set of terms this month: call and response. The leader sings a solo (the call) and the group answers back (response). The song I chose to teach this was called "Pizza, Pizza Daddy-O" and included motions made up by the students.

Second grade enjoyed playing the xylophones and using the ribbon streamers with the book called "In the

Tall, Tall Grass". This whole book can be sung in a singing voice. I have included the information about it on page 4 of this newsletter.

We learned about the lines and spaces of the treble staff through the use of the song "Lines and Spaces" and a game called "Line or Space?". We will return to the song "Lines and Spaces" in 3rd grade to try it in 2-part harmony and add instruments to it.



Students also reviewed their knowledge of major and minor keys through singing 2 songs in minor: "Twister" and "Mumble, Grumble". The latter song reviewed loud and soft dynamics, AB form, verse/refrain, and taught us the word "coda" (ending section).

3rd grade news

It's that time of year...time for 3rd grade rhythm composition projects! During the month of April, each 3rd grader has written his or her own rhythm composition and had the opportunity to play it on an instrument. I plan on displaying these in the hallway outside the music room soon. I have had some students request that they would like to take their projects home to show their parents. If you would like a copy of your student's project, please let me know. I plan on keeping the original copies here, so that next year in 4th grade, we can add melo-

dies to our compositions!

When 3rd grade hasn't been busy writing songs and playing instruments, they have been enjoying reviewing the "Twister" song and learning to play Line and Space Twister.

Line and Space Twister is sort of like the board game—with a twist (no pun intended!). Instead of putting hands and feet on colored spots, students



must put their hands and feet on the specified line or space on the music staff. For the next couple of weeks, I have encouraged 3rd grade students to wear appropriate clothing to play Twister (ie, girls wearing skirts will not be able to play Twister).

4th grade news

JWE 4th graders have enjoyed working with both vocal and instrumental music throughout the month of April. In the area of instrumental music, they have learned about and participated in drum circles. In a drum circle, each student has his or her own instrument (mostly drums!) and all students usually play patterns or rhythms of their choice simultaneously. We sometimes incorporate

solos, duets, and trios, and usually work with loud and soft dynamics and fast and slow tempos. Student enjoyed taking turns as the drum circle facilitator in the middle of the circle.

In the area of vocal music, 4th grade is beginning to prepare for 5th grade vocal music. In 5th grade, we will do a great deal more of singing in 2-part harmony. To prepare for this, 4th

grade has learned a fun song called "Pizza", and is in the process of learning another one called "The Old Barn Dance".

Next school year, 5th grade will be the first grade level to perform, with their musical entitled Let's Pass it On" in October. Just this past week, 4th grade has begun learning the theme song for this musical. It won't be long until we're in 5th grade!

"Next school year, 5th grade will be the first grade level to perform..."

5th grade news

JWE that night.

I really appreciate the hard work every single 5th grader has put into learning the music for Singfest. Even those students who indicated that they did not want to attend Singfest gave it their best effort in class.

After Singfest is over, 5th grade may continue to work on a few of the songs; we've not yet learned the instrument part for "Four White

Horses", and we may just get to perform "Dare to Dream" at the awards ceremony on the last day of school.

In the next few weeks, plans for 5th grade music include instruments (possibly drum circle), writing song lyrics, using Music Ace software, and playing rhythm baseball. We'll stay busy up until the end!



Throughout the month of April, 5th grade focused on perfecting the music for Singfest, which will be held on Monday, May 3rd at BSHS. Eighteen of our 5th graders will be representing



James Walker Elementary

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Here are some music books you might want to read: (We have these in the JWE library; see me or Mrs. Wilsher for several more great titles)

Tubby the Tuba by Paul Tripp (if you check this one out from Mid-Continent Public Library, there is a CD that is included)

In the Tall, Tall Grass by Denise Fleming

Auditions for the Youth Symphony of Kansas City are being held May 12th and May 15th. For more information visit www.youthsymphonykc.org

Composer Corner

In April, we finally picked up where we left off with our music listening activities earlier this year. Franz Joseph Haydn's portrait has been posted on the composer corner/birthday bulletin board in the music room for over a month. His birthday was March 31st, and one of his well-known works was called the "Surprise Symphony".

Students in grades K-4 listened to a portion of the "Surprise Symphony", and then we tossed the listening ball around afterward to discuss. (The listening ball is a rubber ball that lights up and makes sounds). Here are some of the students' comments:

"I liked the 'boom' sound at the end."

"The music was calm and soothing at the beginning, but then it got loud at the end."

"There was a pattern in the music; one part repeated."

"It reminds me of my grandma, because she likes to listen to classical music."

"I like the violin."

"I think the drums made the big 'boom' sound at the end."

"This reminds me of SpongeBob."

"The end sounded like a firework."

"It sounded like an explosion."

