

Arparla presents:

The Power of Blue

Is it just a simple story?

The script:

This story explores how music, represented by the colour Blue, can impact a person that is suffering. Music attempts to 'heal' Davide, where music is represented by the character Misses Blue (Maria) and various blue props. Different styles and characters of music, and the blue props, transform Davide from a sad, sick state to contentment and joy.

Cast:

Misses Blue: Maria, harpist

Maestro Blue: Davide, violin

General educational/pedagogical aims:

This project contains many educational suggestions that are not explicit, but are contingent on the emotional and physical experience of the show. These include:

- showing how music can represent different moods/emotions, demonstrated/represented by the characteristics of the different props.
- reinforcing the connection between music and a narrative: how music can tell a story.
- experiencing the power of music in everyday banalities but also acknowledging and accepting the profound human emotions that music arouses.

Strategies:

The concept of **The Power of Blue** describes and engages the audience within an arch of positive tension beginning from a low level of energy and leading to a higher one. The structure, approach, music and *lazzi* are all inspired by a Renaissance vision of the world. Different expressive strategies are used to support this process including:

- The use of a colour as the protagonist, augmenting the quantity of a colour throughout the story and employing it to directly represent human characteristics and emotions (Blue).
- The use of different musical excerpts/pieces to underline specific "Affects" in a story.
- The use of theatrical strategies to emphasise a narrative, and engaging and inviting live audience's participation.
- The use of historical forms of communication like *Commedia dell'Arte*, and Renaissance/Baroque music as simple-but-effective expressive strategies to deliver meaningful messages.

Misses Blue (Maria) leads Davide through a journey, a process of different moods (affects) that describe the human condition, in order to finally become Maestro Blue. The story is structured in a way that mirrors the four personality types (humours) of the Renaissance temperaments: Melancholic, Choleric, Phlegmatic, Sanguine.

The show allows audience **interaction** and **participation** in a **gradual** and **guided** way. The audience is drawn into the story from a condition of the listener. When encouraged to trust the performers, they are invited to join in: clapping, accompanying the musical action, and finally dancing and singing. The final part of the story expresses the 'togetherness of the performers and audience', joy and personal engagement. The show embraces spontaneous initiative from the audience to clap and dance along the music, as well as any spontaneous applause during the performance.

Beneficiaries:

This project is principally addressed to children from 3 to 6 years old, but can be realised in many different environments like family meetings, children assemblies, retirement houses, public animation, also including multi-lingual gatherings, due to the simple and symbolical use of music and non-verbal theatrical action, typical of *Commedia dell'Arte* and mime.

Educational specifics:

All of the music is improvised based upon historical themes and following Renaissance/Baroque aesthetics. The complete show follows the canons of Classical rhetoric to give structure for an effective performance.

- **Exordium:** presentation of the performers
 - Maria's introduction:

- the affect correlates between the gesture and music
- B-flat major is a tender, endearing key
- major and minor as an expressive strategy to express love
- use of the octave to represent higher lofty feelings
- improvisation
- Ciaccona – Renaissance/Baroque bass
 - Two butterflies are clipped on to Davide's shoes and a replacing the blue hat with a carnivalesque blue wig endorses the climax of Davide's engagement and healing process. The butterflies prompt his feet to fly, acoustically described by fluctuating and undulating sounds from Davide's violin, and the wig thrusts him to dance a wild Ciaccona. In the Renaissance and Baroque times, the Ciaccona was considered a mad dance due to its displaced rhythmic pattern. It is generally in D major, a lively and joyous key. The audience may follow the rhythm of the dance, and children may begin dancing.
 - Butterflies sound
 - D major as a lively and festive key
 - Crazy dance with a displaced rhythm
 - possible audience interaction
- **Peroratio**: final engagement of the audience
 - Gigue – Baroque dance, improvised after Corelli's Gigue from Sonata III, Op. 5 in C major
 - A long blue scarf is the final opportunity to involve the audience to participate in a group dance, starting from the adults/teachers/educators that can reassure and inspire the children. A Gigue often was used in the Baroque time as the final movement in a Sonata, due to its engaging and irresistible rhythm. The dance can be a free-style or choreographed depending on the audience. The improvisation is based on an original theme by Corelli in C major but is then transposed to G major. C and G major are generally positive and illustrious keys.
 - Use of the Gigue as a strategical final dance
 - C/G major as positive and resolute keys
 - group engagement (free-style or choreographed)
 - improvisation
 - La Bergamasca – Renaissance/Baroque theme/dance
 - The last participative musical piece is based on La Bergamasca (in C Major). It closes the musical circle that starts and ends with the key of C major. In this piece, the audience is invited to sing along with a small refrain in the local language thanking Misses Blue. The piece, in a dual structure, allows an instrumental proposition of the musical phrase and then an answer from the public. The specific structure of this piece, ABCB, lets Maria and Davide improvise differently in the A and C sections, while the audience response is always the same thing in the B section.
 - simple and effective structure
 - singing as the final audience engagement
 - return to C major
 - improvisation
 - Trying out the instruments
 - This part can be considered as the natural dissipation of the show. The audience is invited, if wished, to see the instruments close up and to try them out with Maria and Davide's supervision. The physical separation between the audience and performers distance is now removed. Music helps to open doors and to create human connections. After this free time, the show is finished and the audience naturally disperses.
 - see and try out the instruments
 - personal engagement
 - music as a strategy to create unity
 - develop personal curiosity
 - confront personal attitudes to the instruments and to the production of the sound

Music is one of the disciplines that stimulate simultaneously the majority of the areas of the brain. In connection with physical activities, it helps to create harmony, beauty, co-ordination, structure, attention, concentration, interaction, memory, energy, and sense to our gestures.

Invest in Music.

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Maria Christina Cleary – harp
Davide Monti – violin

www.arparla.it