

What a Wonderful World: Distantly Together



A Distance Learning Approach to a Spring Concert

Suggested Grades: 3-5

Alexandra Robinson

National Core Arts Standards

#5 – Develop and refine artistic work for presentation.

#7 – Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Objectives

- Students will learn and perform music for a showcase.

Materials

- **What a Wonderful World** by Tim Hopgood
- Recording: **What a Wonderful World** by Louis Armstrong



ALEXANDRA ROBINSON

Teaches K-6 general and instrumental music in Santa Rosa, CA. She is an avid clarinet performer in wind ensembles, chamber groups, and orchestras in the Santa Rosa area. Alexandra also keeps busy with her 2 kids.

Suggested Teaching Process:

- Play the song "What a Wonderful World" by Louis Armstrong for students while showing the picture book "What a Wonderful World" by Tim Hopgood.
- Before listening, ask students to think about the meaning of the lyrics.
- After listening to the recording, use the popcorn questioning technique to gather students' ideas about the song's meaning.
- Ask students to identify what they liked or did not like about the song and why.
- Describe the historical significance of the song.
 - What a Wonderful World was explicitly composed for Louis Armstrong because of his ability to bring together people of different races.
 - Armstrong's recording of the song was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1999.
 - The 1964 recording of the song was downloaded over 2 million times in the United States when released digitally in 2014.
 - Many other music artists have recorded the song.

Preparing for a Digital Performance:

- Inform students of the goal of rehearsals. To showcase **What A Wonderful World** using American Sign Language in a digital concert.
- Identify the number of rehearsals students will have to learn the sign language.
- Discuss student learning expectations.
- Teach the sign language and lyrics simultaneously.
- Display the lyrics and bold the words that have corresponding signs.

I suggest watching a recording of the song with American Sign if you are not fluent in ASL.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=isMVH0ccQOY>



- Sing through each verse, ask students to identify the action words.
- Teach the corresponding sign.
- Repeat singing and signing until students have learned the first verse.
- Repeat the process until students can sing all of the verses.
- A fun way to add variety to your rehearsals is to have students sign to the song's recorded version.

Recording and Sharing a Digital Performance:

- There are a couple of options when creating a concert in a distance learning scenario.
 - Students perform American Sign Language to the recorded version of Louis Armstrong singing "What a Wonderful World."
 - If you have the resources and time – students can submit a recording of themselves singing "What A Wonderful World." Mix the recording using music software like GarageBand or Audacity, and then you can have students use ASL and their singing.
 - Record the student performance on Zoom or in Google Meets and then email to video or upload it onto YouTube.

Reference:

Piquant. (2010, November 25). Louis Armstrong - What A Wonderful World (Lyrics). YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3yCcXgbKrE>

Thiele, B., Weiss, G. D., & Hopgood, T. (2014). What a Wonderful World (Illustrated ed.). Henry Holt and Co. (BYR).

We Play-Along. (2018, January 22). Sing "What a Wonderful World" in American Sign Language | ASL Song [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=isMVH0ccQOY>