



ORFF BITES 10

A poem as a starting point

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<https://www.facebook.com/orffNewZealandAotearoa/videos/302615630934941/>

**Gather out of STARDUST
EARTH DUST,
STORMDUST and SPLINTERS OF HAIL,
One handful of DREAMDUST
.....Not for sale!**

Learned in the 1980s from Grace Nash,
American Orff Educator

This poem which can link well with Matariki, lends itself to

- Movement
- Understandings about the parameters of sound (Volume ,Pitch , Duration and Timbre)
- Exploration of sound sources including found sounds melodic and non- melodic instruments
- Groups work and possible performance
- Use of Graphic notation

Possible activities

Movement

- Engage children in movement to explore the meaning of this poem. Begin with using hands and arms only and move to whole body individual exploration. Encourage use of different levels and contrasts in energy.
- Children can work in pairs or groups of three to develop a sequence showing the five kinds of dust and an appropriate ending with a freeze.
- Alternatively, depending on their dance experience, ask each group to choose two contrasting kinds of dust and create a sequence illustrating them.

Sound exploration and composition of sound pictures

- For each kind of dust focus on volume, duration and pitch and consider what kinds of sounds might be appropriate. Avoid discussing instruments at this stage to help children use language to describe the kind of sound they think would be appropriate. Expect children to be able to say why they would choose such sounds. Eg. Stardust might suggest high, short , soft sounds; Stormdust might suggest low, short or long, loud sounds.

- Then focus on possible sound sources for a sound picture. The instrument bit is what they all want to get to! Remember stones (especially for splinters of hail) or sandpaper , plastic bags or newspaper can be really effective as well as instruments. Special effect instruments like thunder makers, space hoses, vibraslaps can be very useful here. Discussion about which instruments create high and low sounds can show some surprising misconceptions especially confusing between high and loud; soft and low.
- Composition can be in pairs but more effective in 3s or 4s with a limited number of sound sources. Each group can focus on one kind of dust and create a sound picture of up to 15 seconds. Children need to be aware that silence will enhance their sound picture, and each one must begin and end with silence.
- If children have had little experience creating sound pictures or time is short, try using a conductor for each group. This person is able to start, stop and direct the group with agreed gestures for long and short sounds, variation in volume and 'continue like this'. They will also control which sound sources play when, and which sounds might overlap.

Graphic Notation

- Refer the children back to the discussion about parameters of sound and encourage them to create symbols which illustrate specific sounds.
Long and short are easy to show
Large symbols suggest loud sounds; small ones, soft sounds
Jagged symbols indicate scratchy or edgy sounds; smooth symbols suggest pure sounds
- Creating graphic notation for a sound picture which a group has created can be a valuable challenge .

One final note. For your own sanity, make sure you have a well practised STOP sign for when children are working in groups.

Have fun!

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Parameters of Sound

- **Volume** **LOUD** and *soft*
- **Pitch** **High** and **Low**
- **Duration** **l - o - n - g** and **short**
- **Timbre** sound quality determined by the source
(scratchy, piercing, nasal.....)