

The Harmony of the Air

Weiwuying Teaching Artist : YANG yu-chiao

Weiwuying Theater Arts and Education Project :
EDEN Engagement

Partner : International Teaching Artist Collaborative (ITAC)



About

Weiwuying's Theater Arts and Education Project launched in 2020. Together with teaching artists and school teachers, we offer 13 weeks of Stage Reading and 3 weeks of Performance Appreciation each semester. Stage Reading course using scripts and lessons as the medium, teaching artists work with schoolteachers to design a structure that suits the students, and then the teaching artists go to the schools to teach. The lessons include vocal exercises, discussions on issues, use of the body in artistic expression, and experiencing the senses. The aim is to get students to open up their senses and experience in depth the process and fun of creating a play. Finally, the students put on a stage reading at the end of the semester.

In 2024, the special initiative "EDEN Engagement" is built on the framework of the "Stage Reading Course", and the students will perform as a choir for the first time in Weiwuying's "Theater Arts and Education Project" launched in 2020. This time the project especially partners with the International Teaching Artist Collaborative (ITAC).

Two schools that focus on local environmental issues were invited: Hou-Zhuang Elementary School and Ren-wu Elementary School. About 30 fifth-grade students from each school participated in 13-week workshops led by YANG Yu-chiao, the teaching artist recommended by Weiwuying. Students from the two schools took interdisciplinary courses in natural science, literature, physical development, and sound exploration related to air pollution and water resources. Kaohsiung has become the "Root City" with the longest duration since the launch of the EDEN Engagement.

Through the integration of artistic and cultural experiences, students gradually achieve in-depth learning of environmental sustainability issues, and step onto the international stage of Taiwan to speak for the future of the Earth.



Duration : 2024/3/4-2024/6/14

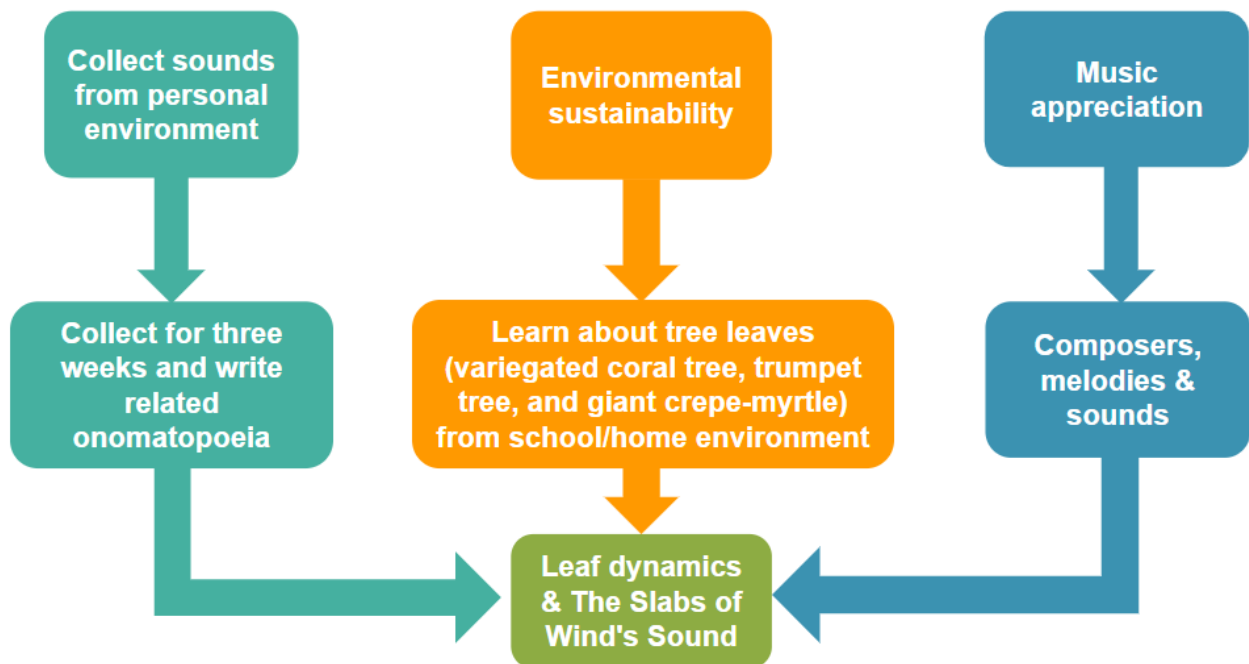
Lesson Time : 13weeks, 2 hours/week

Teaching Artist : YANG Yu-Chiao

Teaching Assistant : Joyce CHEN

Schools : Ren-Wu Elementary School, Hou-Zhaung Elementary School

Learning Objectives



- Teach students about the relationship between their living environments, the natural ecology, and environmental sustainability.
- Enhance students' music literacy and have them perform two choral pieces at the Weiwuying Opera House: EDEN Engagement's theme song "Seeds of Hope" and a piece chosen by themselves: "Happy Paradise."
- Get students to create art from sounds and materials in their living environments.

Primary observation of students

(living environment, background, and classroom atmosphere):

- Ren-wu Primary School: Surrounded by factories and traditional industry in this time of the pains of transformation.
 - The living environment and transportation system are designed based on the factories: Students experience a sense of isolation on their way to and from school.
 - Students' tendencies and capacity to express themselves: They have little contact with art and are quite unwilling to speak.
- Hou-zhuang Primary School: Surrounded by factories and traditional industry, middle class, agriculture (irrigation engineering).
 - Lots of diversity: Large differences in student backgrounds.
 - Students' tendencies and capacity to express themselves: Large differences in students' responses to music and willingness to speak.

Lesson plan development and considerations

(students' initial behavior and conditions)

- **Differences compared with Europe, the US, and Japan**
 - Cultural capital: Internalized differences in cultural capital and the possession of external objects related to education, art, science, and history.
 - Differences in Foundational Art Education
 - Degree of initiative in arts participation.
- **Music as a threshold for performance skills**
 - Understanding of what choral singing is
 - Core status of choral singing in Christianity.
 - State of music education in Taiwanese mandatory education.
- **Natural history within basic education**
 - Roots of ecological education and the issue of sustainability.
 - Connection of science and art in the West's traditional Seven Liberal Arts

(grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy).

- **Degree of knowledge of physiology**

- Degree of understanding of the human body's operation.
- Structure of the human body as a metaphor for the world/universe.
- Physiology of human breathing and speech sound production.

- **Education on the natural ecology**

- How plants and animals in nature use sound (birds chirping, wolves howling, whales singing) and space.
- Collection and recording of environmental sounds.

- **Nurturing music literacy**

- Instruction on staff notation, note lengths, time signatures, rests, and music-related terms.
- Teach students the significance behind the selection of songs for the concert and the meaning of each song. Each week, a song to be performed by Joyce DiDONATO at the final concert is introduced.
- Share about how poet Emily DICKINSON and composer Aaron COPLAND (through chord color, melodic line, and weight/force of sound) turned visual aspects of the world into sound: Introduce DICKINSON's botanical specimens, COPLAND's method of composition, 18th-century English garden development history, Eastern gardens, and G. HANDEL's opera *Xerxes*.

Issue incorporation: Environmental sustainability

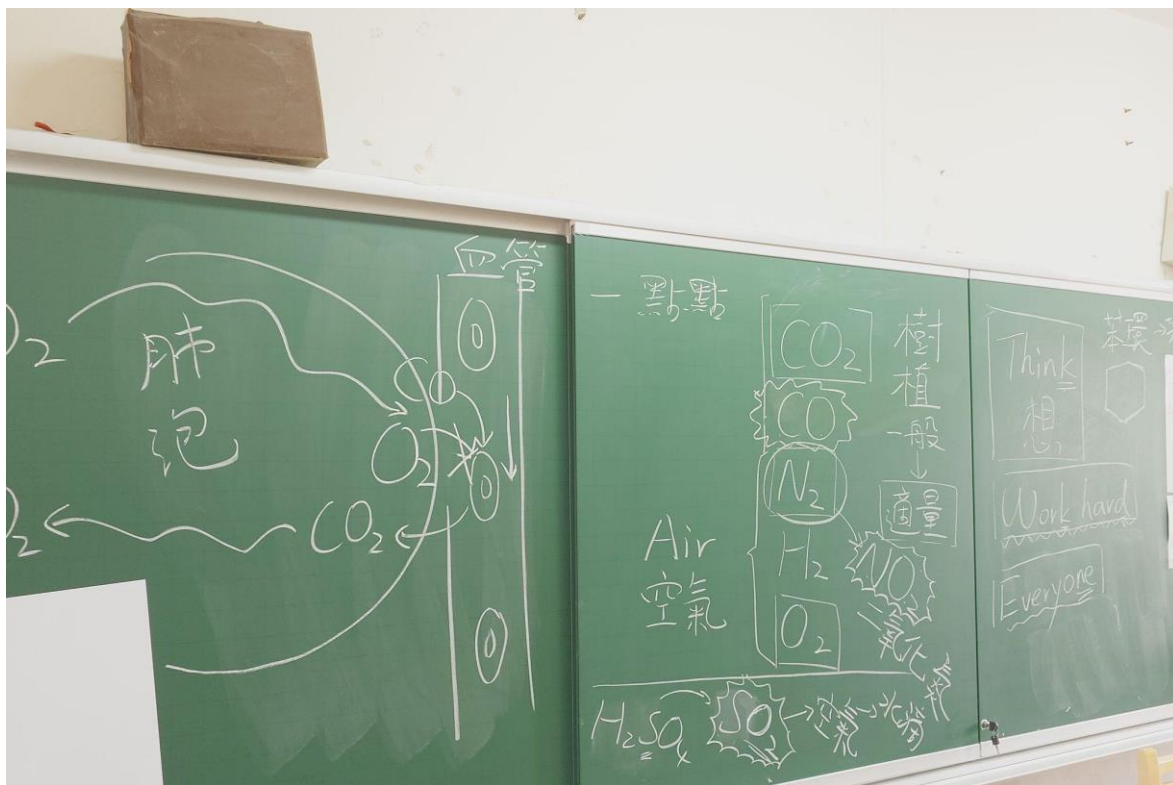
- The danger of air and water pollution (CO₂, nitric oxide, nitric acid, and heavy metals) to the sounds in our environment.
- Through games and discussions, students learn how pollution and noise disrupt the natural cycle of carbon and water.

They also learn about coral, forests, elements in the soil, and the relationship between the pH value of water and pollution.

Lesson Plan

Week 1: Getting to Know Each Other through Theater Games and Exploring the Connection Between the Human Body and the World

- Theater Games: Getting to know each other
- Warm-up and breathing exercises
- Voice practice
- The body as a celestial body
- Earth as a body/organism
- Group discussions and presentations: If Earth were a human body, what geographical landscapes would each organ represent? Why do humans sing? Besides humans, what other animals sing? Does the Earth sing?
- Introduction to the Eden Project and mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDONATO



Week 2: Breath and Voice Techniques

- Warm-up and breathing exercises
- How sounds are produced? Vowels and consonants
- Observation and presentation: Observe each other's mouths when pronouncing sounds. What did you notice?
- Brief overview of respiratory physiology
- Group performance: Expressing the breathing of the lungs

Ren-Wu Elementary School

-The impact of air pollution on respiratory physiology

-Air pollution particle diffusion game: Use consonants to represent air particles and vowels to represent clean air. Help students understand the diffusion of air pollution and learn how to hear others' voices within it.

Hou-Zhaung Elementary School

-Water circulation in the body

-Water circulation in the world

-The impact of water pollution on digestive physiology

-Water pollution diffusion game: Use consonants to represent pollution and vowels to represent clean water. Help students understand the diffusion of water pollution and learn how to hear others' voices within it.

Week 3: Understanding Music Score and the Sounds in Space

- Warm-up and breathing exercises
- Basic vocal exercises
- What is sheet music? Understanding various symbols
- Group performance: Expressing symbols on sheet music through body movements
- Understanding musical notes and pitch
- Listening game: Students represent musical notes from low to high. When they hear a sound matching their assigned pitch, they must perform a corresponding action.

- Characteristics of sound in space
- Group discussion: What sounds are present in school and residential environments?
- Homework: Describe the environmental sounds heard around your residence.

Week 4: Reading Music Score and Singing Technique 1

- Warm-up and breathing exercises
- Basic vocal exercises
- Listen and watch the video of "Seeds of Hope," and discuss the lyrics
- Discussion: What is the content of the lyrics of "Seeds of Hope"? How do you interpret these lyrics?
- The whole class read the lyrics, experiencing the natural tones and rhythms of the lyrics
- The whole class sings the first section of the song's melody (measures 26-44). Did you hear your classmates' voices?
- The whole class sings the second section of the main melody (measures 46-62). Did you notice other musical notes?
- Discussion: If the song were a substance in nature, what do you think it would be? Does a song have weight? Force?
- Using sounds and leaves collected from the living environment to create "The Slabs of Wind's Sound."
- Homework: Read the lyrics aloud to become more familiar with the English lyrics

HOU-ZHUANG elementary school

-Discussion: What sounds does water make?

-Introduction to John Cage's "Water Walk" (1960), discussing the various sounds of water featured in the piece.



Week 5: Reading Music Score and Singing Technique 2, and Free Improvisation Workshop 1

- Warm-up and breathing exercises
- Basic vocal exercises
- The whole class singing of the entire "Seeds of Hope," allowing students to listen to their own voices.
- While singing, have students move around the classroom to practice listening to surrounding sounds
- Discussion: Is my voice high or low? How do I know?
- Discussion: Does my environment change when I sing? Why?
- Start dividing vocal parts based on students' vocal characteristics: Soprano, Alto, Bass
- Have the three vocal parts practice singing simple chords
- Discussion: When harmonizing with others, can I hear my own voice? If not, what should I do?
- How do environmental sounds interact with our singing?
- Group discussion and presentation: If I were a tree/stone/fish/bird, how would I respond when hearing someone sing?

- Introduction to the song: A. Copland: "Nature, the Gentlest Mother," from Eight Poems of Emily DICKINSON



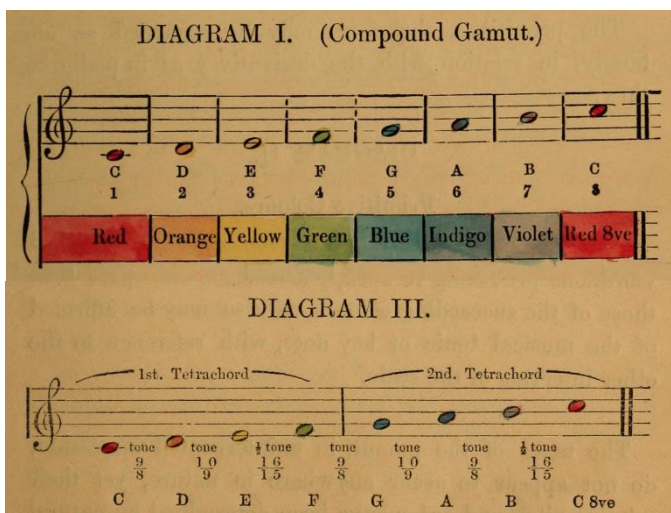
Emily DICKINSON's Herbarium

Week 6: Reading Music Score and Singing Technique 3, and Free Improvisation Workshop 2

- Warm-up and breathing exercises
- Basic vocal exercises
- Listen and watch the video of "Happy Paradise" and discuss the lyrics
- Discussion: What does the lyrics of "Happy Paradise" convey? How do I interpret these lyrics?
- The whole class reading of the lyrics, feeling the tone and rhythm of the lyrics
- The whole class singing the main melody of the song; did you hear your classmates' voices? Did you notice other musical notes?
- Introduction to Call and Response in this song
- Call and Response game
- Discussion: How is the harmony in this song different from "Seeds of Hope"?
- Can I use my body to create rhythm and beats when others are singing?
- Group discussion and presentation: If I were a percussionist, what rhythmic patterns would I use when hearing someone sing?
- Introduction to the song: C. W. Gluck: "Danza degli spettri e delle furie," from Opera Orfeo ed Euridice, Wq. 30

Week 7: Reading Music Score and Singing Technique 4, and Free Improvisation Workshop 3

- Warm-up and breathing exercises
- Basic vocal exercises
- Singing "Happy Paradise" in three vocal parts and practicing the entire song
- Introduction to the relationship between chord colors and the colors of nature
- Group discussion: If various elements of nature are composed of chords, what kind of chords would represent the sun, moon, wind, rain, trees, flowers, and grass?
- Introduction to non-chord tones and dissonance
- Discussion: If consonant and dissonant sounds represent humans and the natural environment, what do they each signify?
- Introduction to the song: G. Mahler: "Ich atmet' einen linden Duft!", from RÜCKERT-Lieder



John Denis Macdonald,
Sound & colour : their relations,
analogies, and harmonies

Week 8: Reading Music Score and Singing Technique 5

- Warm-up and breathing exercises
- Basic vocal exercises
- Repeated practice of "Seeds of Hope" and "Happy Paradise"

- Introduction to emotions and dynamics in music
- Have students listen to emotionally impactful songs, such as Henry Purcell's "Dido's Lament"
- Discussion: What does emotion bring to a song?
- Group discussion and presentation: What emotions do I hold while singing these two songs? What comes to my mind?
- Group discussion and presentation: If a choir is like the whole world, what is the chord like? What is my voice like?
- Introduction to the song: F. Cavalli: "Piante ombrose," from Opera La Calisto

Week 9: Joint Practice Week with Both Schools

- Warm-up and breathing exercises
- Basic vocal exercises
- Theater games: Allowing students from both schools to get to know each other
- Spatial acoustics: Now that the number of people has doubled, what different things do I hear?
- Repeated practice of "Seeds of Hope" and "Happy Paradise"
- Discussion: With unfamiliar faces around me, it feels like I'm standing in a strange natural environment. Where do I begin to explore my surroundings?

Weeks 10-11: Practice and Refinement

- Warm-up and breathing exercises
- Basic vocal exercises
- Practice both songs, adjusting intonation, phrasing, breath timing, and dynamics
- Apply the results of the free improvisation workshops to the singing of the two songs.

Week 12: Run-through (Both Schools, Feat. Taiwanese Soprano)

- Warm-up and breathing exercises
- Basic vocal exercises
- A complete run-through of both songs, confirming all on-and-off stage details and costumes
- Homework: Create a drawing with the theme "If I were a seed of music, what kind of plant would I grow into in this concert?"

Week 13: Conclusion and Comprehensive Discussion

- Each student takes turns sharing their reflections
- Discussion: What can I do about the air pollution issue in my living area?
- Discussion: What is the importance of music for humanity?

