

Chinese "Tea" Dance

This activity focuses on listening for high and low sounds in the music, and it will give your legs a workout, too.

WHAT THEY LEARN: Critical listening, instrumentation, distinguishing high and low, auditory discrimination, music of the Nutcracker

WHAT YOU NEED:

- The Nutcracker book (preferred version - Alison Jay)
- [Chinese Dance mp3](#)
- Scarves (optional)
- Arabian Dance mp3 (for the extension)

WHAT TO DO:

- Read the appropriate part of the Nutcracker story, reminding the students that each group of dancers in this part of the story has their own music in the ballet.
- In the Chinese Dance, we will hear the high sounds of the flute and piccolo while the strings play lower. Imagine the dancers leaping and flipping high in the air when the high sounds play. We'll reach high when we hear high sounds, and bounce low when we hear the lower sounds.
- Pass out scarves if desired.
- Have the class stand and then crouch down low so that everyone is balanced on their toes. As the music begins, bounce gently to the beat. Reach up high when the flute first comes in. Then bounce low with the strings. Continue to follow the pattern through the music. At the end of the piece, the interactions of the instruments quickens. Move high and low in two beat intervals.
- Sit down and rest!

EXTENSION:

As the class is resting from the Chinese Dance, play the Arabian Dance. Ask them to describe the sounds they're hearing (smooth, slow, calm, etc.). Compare and contrast the characteristics of the two pieces of music.