



**BALL STATE
UNIVERSITY**

SENSORY FRIENDLY CONCERTS FOR YOUR SCHOOL



Why is this important?

- Promote acceptance of diverse ways of experiencing a concert
- Enjoying live music and an emotional connection to live music
- Finding connection through emotional learning



What is a Sensory Friendly Concert?

- A live concert put on specifically for people with diverse sensory needs
 - Sound – accommodations for loud noises
 - Visual – lighting
 - Touch – movement and expression needs
- Welcoming environment for our community members/students with disabilities
 - Now more than ever, in-person interaction for mental and emotional health of all students and especially those with disabilities
- Understanding and inclusive of diverse sensory needs
 - Restroom needs
 - Accessibility needs
 - Do health needs warrant virtual access?

Why is this important to us?

- Amy Hourigan (the mastermind!)
- Douglas Droste (orchestra)
- Caroline Hand (band)

Why is this important to students?

Setting up the event - Relationship Building

- If not already established, start a conversation to begin a relationship with your special education department and teachers
 - They likely have knowledge of Sensory Friendly events
 - Gauge their interest in bringing their students to a Sensory Friendly Concert
 - Get their input and ideas about such a concert

Setting up the event - Programming

- You don't need to alter planned programming for this concert!
- Loud piece?
 - Before the piece begins, encourage audience members to hold their ears if needed
 - Give advance notice so students can bring their ear protection
 - Provide ear protection if needed
- Program length
 - Shorter movements or pieces are optimal
 - Long piece? You'll be surprised the attention that live music elicits!
 - Consider length of the ENTIRE concert in programming – 30 minutes is a good maximum
- Filling gaps
 - Intersperse solo and ensemble pieces with full ensemble pieces
 - Intersperse pieces with instrument demonstrations
- Pieces with a story will help coordinate with visual media



Setting up the event - Scheduling

- Schedule the date
 - What works for special education classes and your ensemble?
 - What is the best time of day?
- Schedule the facility
 - Is it accessible?
 - Gym, auditorium, concert hall, classroom, etc.
 - Will you go to them, or will they come to you?



Setting up the event - Invitations

- Who will join you for the concert?
 - Special education classes from your school
 - Special education classes from the entire district
 - Reverse Inclusion
 - Invite other students and people from the community so that they can experience the inclusion of people with disabilities in a way that's friendly to the people with disabilities
 - Families of your students
 - Families of students in special education
 - Other community groups
- Communicate any COVID protocols associated with your school/venue

Preparing for the needs of the audience

- Get help and input from the special education teachers who will bring students to your concert!
 - What are their students' needs?
 - Are there virtual learners who will need access to a live stream or video?

Preparing for the needs of the audience - Transportation

- Can students simply walk from their classrooms?
 - Are the paths and the entry ways accessible?
- Schedule district bus transportation to the venue
 - Are buses accessible
 - When are buses available? This can influence event scheduling
- Provide a parking map or guide for buses and other guests
- Arrange transportation for your students to the facility if it is off campus

Preparing for the needs of the audience – Pre-visit stories

- Ways to help your audience understand what to expect of the event
 - You could prepare the special education teacher with what to expect so they can pass that information to their students in the way they know it will be best received
 - Your students can visit special education classes to describe what the concert will be like

Preparing for the needs of the audience – Pre-visit stories

- You and your students can prepare visual materials that help students in special education classes know what to expect
- Content to consider
 - How will performance space be accessed?
 - Who is around to help?
 - What is the seating like?
 - What is the lighting like?
 - What will they see?
 - What will they hear?
 - What are the expectations for behavior?
 - Instruct teachers on emergency evacuation plans
 - What COVID mitigation measures are in place?



Preparing for the needs of the audience – Pre-visit stories

- The following slides show an example of a pre-visit story from a recent Ball State Sensory Friendly Concert





I will visit
Ball State University
on
Thursday, October 28.

The concert starts at
11:00am.



I may take a bus
to get to
Ball State University.



I will be entering
Sursa Hall
after I get off the bus.



I will put on my mask
before I go in the
building.



I will go inside the lobby.

It may be a little crowded and noisy.



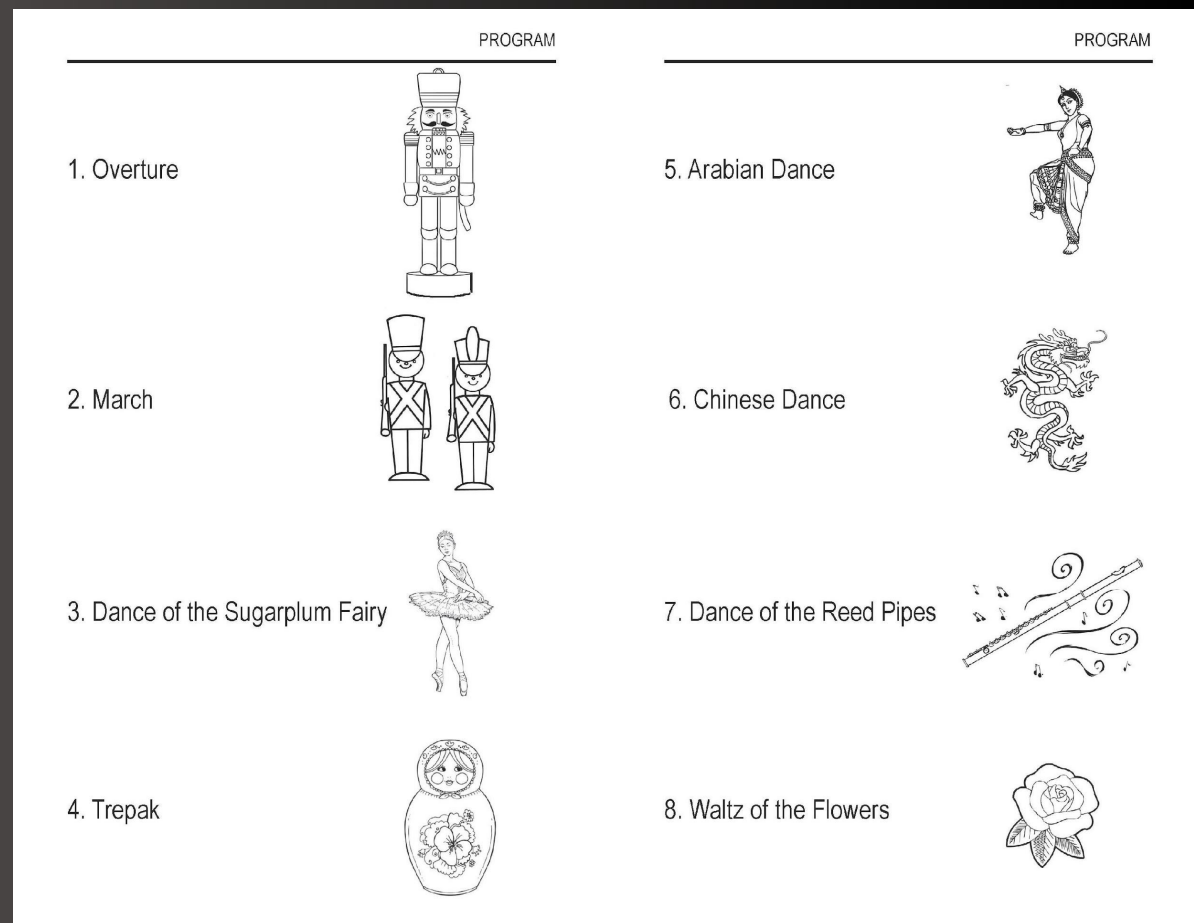
Ball State students will be there to greet me.





I will get a piece of paper
called a program.

The program
shows me the
order of the songs
in the concert.



I will go find my seat.
It feels like velvet!



I will
see and hear
musicians playing
on the stage.



**The music may
get loud.**

**I can cover my
ears if I need to.**



After each song,
people will clap
for the musicians.



I can leave and go to the lobby with my teacher if I need a quiet place during the concert.



There are
bathrooms close
to the lobby if I
need them.



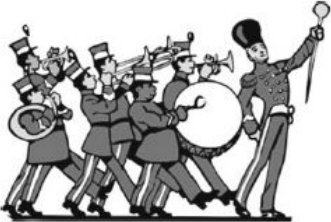
After the concert,
I will leave Sursa
Hall, get back on
the bus, and go
back to school.



Preparing for the needs of your audience - Programs

- Create an accessible program for your concert

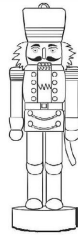
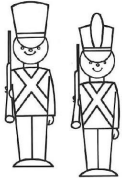
PROGRAM

Leonard Bernstein	Slava!	
Pierre Leemans	March of the Belgian Paratroopers	
Mary Ellen Childs	Zephyrus	

PROGRAM

Kenneth Hesketh	(Danceries) My Lady's Rest	
	Quodling's Delight	

PROGRAM

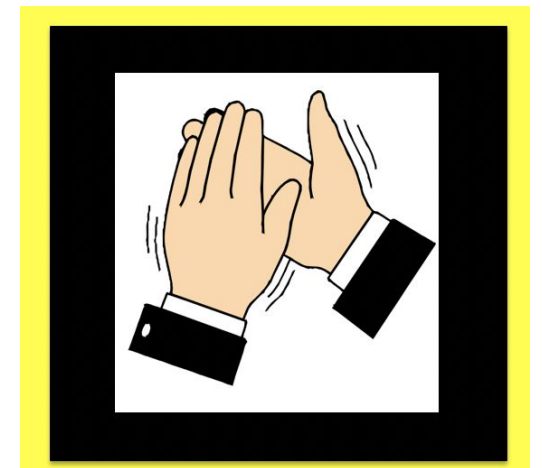
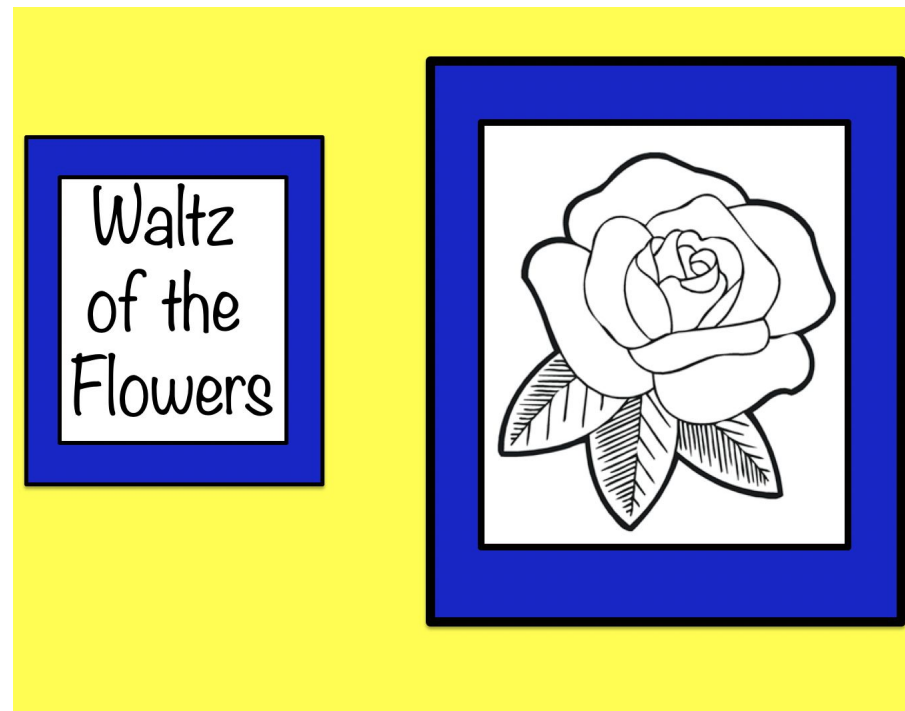
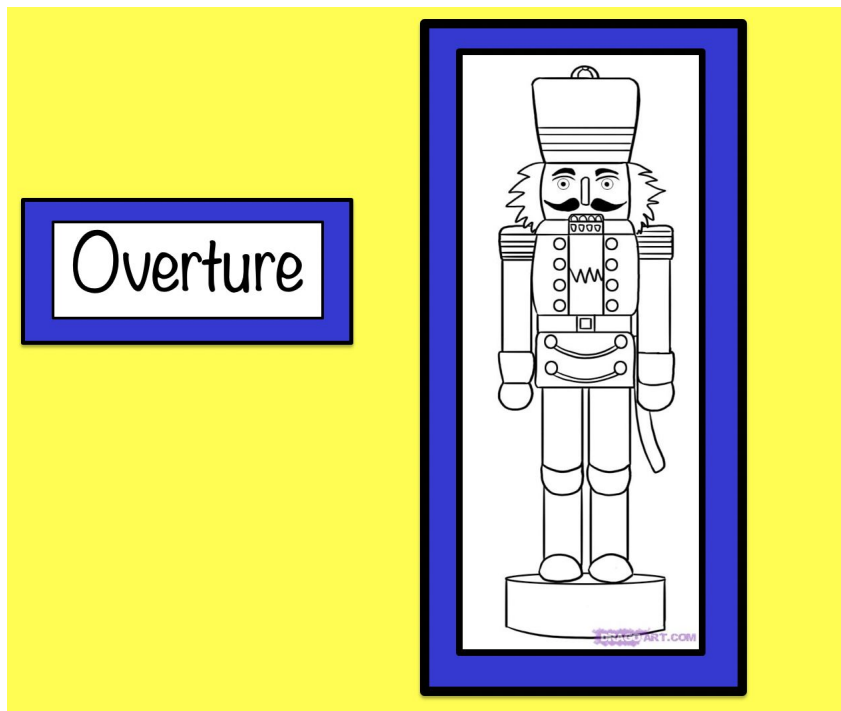
1. Overture	
2. March	
3. Dance of the Sugarplum Fairy	
4. Trepak	

PROGRAM

5. Arabian Dance	
6. Chinese Dance	
7. Dance of the Reed Pipes	
8. Waltz of the Flowers	

Preparing for the needs of your audience – In-concert media

- Prepare slides to go along with your performance that can provide additional engagement with the music



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Preparing for the needs of your performers

- Educate your performers on what to expect
 - Invite special education teachers in to present this information to your students
 - Extra noise from audience
 - Volunteer or expected interactions with their peers in special education
 - Instrument petting zoo
 - Instrument demonstrations
 - From stage
 - In audience
 - Greeting/welcoming; ushers
 - Speaking from the stage
 - Attire
 - School Clothes (casual, welcoming)
 - Concert attire (formal, “special”)



Executing the Concert

- With proper planning, the concert will run smoothly!
- Have students and other helpers in place to ensure all of your prep work is carried out!
 - Ensuring all media is set up
 - Setting out programs or station ushers/greeters
 - Keep lights up
 - Set up planned interactions
 - Instrument petting zoo
- Verbal preparation from the stage
 - Instrument demos
 - What to expect from each piece

Implications for Inclusion

- Sensory Friendly Concerts could be essentially segregated events
- Our goal should be to create better inclusion (not segregation) in society for people with disabilities
- For some people with disabilities, it is not possible to participate in some aspects of society
 - These concerts are an important way of bringing something to people with disabilities and respective diverse needs so that they can experience live music
- Reverse inclusion can ensure this is an inclusive event for all students
- These concerts can provide an entry point for your students and their parents to interacting with people with disabilities
- These concerts can also provide an entry point for students in special education, their teachers, and their parents into the arts

Participant Testimonials

Questions?

Contact information

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