
IAN JOHNSTONE

*Program Description
& Pre-Concert Material
for
Elementary School Educational Concerts*



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This "Thumb-Nail Sketch" of Ian Johnstone's Elementary School concert is intended to prepare the classroom teacher for, and alert them to, the countless educational opportunities offered by Ian Johnstone's Elementary School concert.

Ian Johnstone's school concerts involve a combination of original songs and a story/song that are blended into a structure that is logical and educationally productive.

Using psychology, philosophy, intuitive skills, body language, ...and of course his music, Ian masterfully weaves together a truly unforgettable learning experience

The concert begins with the students being introduced to "audience etiquette".

With the use of some of Ian's original songs, such as *Always Room for one More*, *Boat Named Roy* and *I Can Fly*, the children are shown how to *be* an audience in a live performance, and how to participate responsibly *without* being disruptive.

The pace and intensity gradually build, and Ian leads into his 15 minute story song about the monster *Abbey-Yo-Yo*. (At this point, the history and physical characteristics of the 5-string banjo are reviewed).

This story describes a little boy, his grandfather, and a community that is plagued by the monster, *Abbey-Yo-Yo*. It is an allegorical tale that demonstrates social, community and personal values, personal courage... and a little bit of magic. At the climax of the story the entire audience participates in helping to solve the problem of the monster (and they live "happily-after-ever").

Following the story of *Abbey Yo-Yo* are more songs from Ian Johnstone's two albums "*Dear Mr. Johnstone...*" and "*Love and Warm Fuzzies...*".

Silly Monkey/Serious Owl again helps the children to learn about involvement and participation, while developing and making use of rhythmic and tonal interval listening skills.

The penultimate song *When Sometimes I Forget* gives an introduction to American Sign Language and the final song, the perennial favourite *You are My Sunshine*, provides a suitable, positive climax to the concert.


These last two songs also provide a suitable calm-down and cool-down for the kids before returning them to their classrooms.

Throughout the concert, the students are shown that learning these and other skills can be entertaining, *exciting* and *fun* !



PRE-CONCERT PREPARATION ACTIVITIES

The following activities are designed to assist teachers in preparing their students for Ian Johnstone's performance, without detracting from the spontaneous excitement generated by that performance or compromising the dramatic impact or integrity.



1. A brief review - picture identification of musical instruments, particularly including the banjo in comparison to the guitar.
 - o How do they *differ*?
 - o How are they *similar*?
2. *Sing* some songs with the children.
3. Use '*echo*' or '*mimic*' technique (children echo exactly what they've just heard) to teach rhythmic patterns (*clapping*) and tonal intervals (*vocal*).
4. Discuss "*audience participation*" with the students.
 - o What *is* participation?
 - o What is just *listening*?
 - o Discuss the concepts of "*passive*" vs "*active*" participation.
5. Discuss the difference between television/movies, tapes/CDs, and "*live*" music.
 - o What are the *advantages* of each medium?
 - o What are the *disadvantages*?
6. Have each student *perform* a song (or a verse) for the entire class.
 - o How does it *feel* to be a performer vs an audience?



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