

Color the Music

A collaboration of art and music for adults living with dementia and their care partners

Program Summary and Goals

Artists, writers, and musicians have inspired each other throughout history, and this inspiration continues in the twenty-first century. The National Philharmonic, in residence at the Music Center at Strathmore, invites you to participate in a new collaboration with Mather, an 80+-year-old organization dedicated to creating Ways to Age WellSM.

Research demonstrates that abilities related to creativity in the present moment, sensory enjoyment, and emotional connection all remain long into dementia progression. We believe that the arts are key to tapping into these long-lasting strengths!

Join the National Philharmonic and Mather for a series of dementia-friendly virtual concerts paired with Creative Explorations to try either during or after enjoying the concert. Each Creative Exploration will be outlined with accessibility and wellbeing in mind. This engagement plan will be a useful tool for Program Coordinators, Art Therapists, Teaching Artists, Caregivers, or Family and Friends to help facilitate connection and expression inspired by music.

We believe that connecting with and responding to music through other forms of creative expression supports wellness. Feelings of autonomy, affiliation, and achievement are key ingredients for sustaining wellbeing even as we face cognitive impairment. Here are some tips for cultivating autonomy, affiliation, and achievement through each concert's creative exploration:

Autonomy: Support feelings of autonomy by honoring each artist's choices about what they would like to create, or what material or color they would like to use. Listen to, and honor, the personal connections participants make between the music and their own experiences. Remember, there is no wrong way to make art!

Affiliation: Support feelings of connection during this activity by assisting artists in sharing their work with each other at the end of the group. Invite each artist to give their work a title and share something they like about their piece.

Achievement: The marks we make upon the world (and upon paper) matter! Celebrate participants' sense of pride and accomplishment by noting what was learned during the concert, and treating the beautiful artwork made with dignity by matting each piece and displaying professionally with artist's names and titles.



Guide for Professional Program Facilitators, Care Partners, or Family Members

CONCERT SUMMARY

This concert features Western Classical Music, linked between the Romantic period and 20th Century/Modernism. Contrast is present in the rumbling sounds below the melody above, the strings contrasting the winds and brass. The compositional style of Debussy is impressionistic in nature, the sounds and gestures often creating sweeping pastel sounds/colors rather than more direct/primary color sounds, as well providing a more rounded sound rather than very articulated.

This concert also features 20th Century/Modernism. Holst's inspiration is based on the concept of astrology, which Holst was fascinated with. "These pieces were suggested by the astrological significance of the planets; for instance, Mercury is the symbol of mind." Each movement brings the planet to life as a character, and then their characters stand in steep contrast to the surrounding movements, for instance following the intensity of Mars, Venus has a more gentle, peaceful character.

MUSICAL SELECTIONS & PERFORMERS

[Concert #2: Debussy and Holst's *The Planets* in collaboration with NASA Goddard](#)

Performers: *National Philharmonic Orchestra & members of the National Philharmonic Choral*

Claude Debussy, *La Mer* (23') Song List

1. De l'aube à midi sur la mer
2. Jeux de vagues
3. Dialogue du vent et de la mer

Gustav Holst, *The Planets* (51') Song List

1. Mars, the Bringer of War
2. Venus, the Bringer of Peace
3. Mercury, the Winged Messenger
4. Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity
5. Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age
6. Uranus, the Magician
7. Neptune, the Mystic



Concert 2 Creative Exploration: Abstract Planets!



MATERIALS:

- **Names and Images of Planets for artists to choose from**
- **Round Yupo Paper** – a synthetic plastic paper (*available on Amazon, Dick Blick Art Supplies, Jerry's Artarama*) *If unavailable, you can also cut regular watercolor paper into circles.*
- **Liquid Watercolor** (*Blick Liquid Watercolor, S&S Worldwide Color Splash!, Dr. Ph Martin's Radiant Concentrated Watercolor Set, Liquitex Acrylic Inks*) – *or simply create your own by making wet puddles in your watercolor palette and providing ink droppers*)
- **Paper towels**
- **Brushes**
- **Optional – glitter, markers, pencils, pastels, etc.**

SET UP: This activity is intended to occur after the concert.

- Prepare each artist's workspace with round yupo paper (or watercolor paper.) You may want to tape the paper to the table. Have watercolors, brushes, etc. ready to be distributed once they have selected their planetary inspiration and desired colors.

PROCEDURE:

- We will be making art inspired by Holst's *The Planets* and images from the NASA Goddard Center. The colors and patterns in images of the planets can be great inspiration for abstract art! Abstract art inspired by outer space is a great example of the unique intersections of art and science – both fueled by curiosity and wonder!
- Provide each artist with a list of the planets and the sun (and if possible, images of each planet.) Invite the artists to discuss what each planets bring to mind – participants could even learn about what archetypes, emotions, or stories have been associated with planets throughout history.
- Invite participants to select a planet as inspiration and identify what colors they would like to use for their interpretation. Pass out the paint materials & colors each participant would like to use for their planet(s). For example, reds and oranges correlate to the character of Mars, Earth is most frequently associated with blue and green, and Venus might be more pastel in nature. Participants may also prefer to make up a new planet, and this is fine too.
- Invite participants to experiment with liquid watercolor on their round surface by creating puddles of water, dripping liquid watercolor into the water and watching it flow and blend, moving color around the surface with a brush, etc. Experiment! As the water dries on the surface, it will create interesting textures and patterns.
- Experiment with adding other materials (markers, pencil, pastel, etc.) or even sprinkling glitter or salt for texture.
- If multiple artists have been creating, after the paintings dry encourage the group to create a whole solar system based on their planets combined. If a single artist is creating, encourage them to create more planets over time to gradually create an entire solar system!
- There are no wrong ways to make art, so anything goes! Try to cover your surface with color, and you will be amazed at the interesting textures and effects that emerge when it dries!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What planetary characteristics did you choose to depict in your art? Why is that?
- Giving your planet a name, what name would you choose, and why?
- Would you ever want to travel there?
- What is your planet best known for?
- What kind of music or sounds would best fit your planet?
- If you made this artwork alongside someone else compare your work with theirs. What other planets would you like to visit?

TAKE IT EVEN FURTHER:

- Invite participants to describe their planet, give it a name, or even write a poem about their planet, using the following fill-in-the-blank sentences as a guide to fill in about their artwork (or make up your own!):

I am _____

I move _____

I look _____

I turn _____

The stars _____

I dream of _____

- Combine the round paintings into a solar system art installation to share with a wider community, friends, family, etc.

TIPS:

- GO SLOW! Give time for each participant to choose the planet they most identify with.
- Encourage them choose more than one sphere, and to use their imagination to create new planets that might not be listed
- Give each participant a chance to describe their work and share their thoughts and feelings about the project.

SUBMISSION PROCESS TO VIRTUAL GALLERY:

Following each concert, share high resolution photos of artwork (with the artists' consent of course!) via DropBox by the June 1st deadline, and we will include your images in a virtual art exhibit at the culmination of the Color the Music concert series!

Images may be displayed individually or grouped together as a montage.

SUBMISSIONS FROM THIS CONCERT SERIES ARE DUE BY JUNE 1, 2022. Submit artwork via DropBox.

To optimize the appearance of your artistic creations in our Virtual Gallery, please include digital images with a minimum of 500 pixels width or height and video of 1080p or 1920 x 1080 to ensure the best final product. If the image/video quality does not meet these requirements, we may not have the option to display it.

QUESTIONS? Please email Director of Community Engagement Tiffany Richardson (tiffany.richardson@nationalphilharmonic.org) with any questions.

Ideas for Offering Color the Music for Staff/Caregiver Self Care

- Schedule a staff/caregiver Music & Art Self-Care In-Service.
- The power of music and art is that it can bring out so much in us: emotions, energy, or reflection. This activity can be shared with staff or caregivers in a similar way, playing the music for them to create art to, providing the round surface, and inviting them to “play” by dripping different colors and water onto their surface. Moving the watery colors around can also support feelings of *flow* that are essential for relaxation and self-care. This provides a great opportunity to be “in the moment,” letting go of the pressures or worries of the day and simply focusing on the sound of the instruments and the marks that can be made on paper.
- If multiple caregivers are making art alongside each other, invite them each to create a different planet (or the sun!) After art-making, invite the group to arrange their art into a solar system.
- Invite participants to reflect on how we all have a role to play in our own systems in work and life – what are we revolving around? What gives us energy at the center of our universe? What makes our own planets special?
- Share your Staff/Caregiver artwork with NatPhil. Please email Tiffany Richardson (tiffany.richardson@nationalphilharmonic.org) if you have submitted Staff/Caregiver images.

