



THE COLOUR OF ALL THINGS CONSTANT BY CASSIE KINOSHI

PRIMARY CLASSROOM LESSON PLAN by Andrea Price

[WATCH THE FILM](#) | [LISTEN TO THE AUDIO](#)

For:

- National Curriculum in **ENGLAND** (KS2)
- Curriculum for **WALES**: Expressive Arts (Progression Step 3)
- **SCOTLAND** Curriculum for Excellence (Second Level)
- **NORTHERN IRELAND** Primary Curriculum (KS2)

Background

The composer: CASSIE KINOSHI

- Cassie Kinoshi is a saxophonist, composer and arranger.
- She was nominated for a Mercury Prize in 2019 and in 2018 won an Ivors Academy Award in the *Best Jazz Composition for Large Ensemble* category.
- As a bandleader, Cassie writes for and performs with her ten-piece ensemble *seed*, which features many top London-based improvising musicians.
- She is a composition graduate of the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, where she studied with Andrew Poppy and Stephen Montague.
- She has been commissioned by the London Symphony Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, London Contemporary Orchestra, Manchester Camerata amongst others.

The music: THE COLOUR OF ALL THINGS CONSTANT

- The music is written for choir and orchestra.
- The words come from a poem called Kindness, written by Zimbabwean-born poet Belinda Zhawi. Zhawi describes herself as a

sound-artist, as she often creates musical [accompaniments](#) or soundscapes for her poems.

- The poem describes kindness as a constant amongst chaos. The music cleverly evokes this by creating contrasting moments of busyness and stillness, all centred around one note heard throughout most of the piece - the note G.
- The orchestra is used in very colourful ways – look out for the interesting percussion instruments, listen to the beautiful sound of the harp, and be amazed by the variety of techniques and effects Cassie achieves with the string, woodwind and brass instruments.

Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- Engage with a contemporary work for Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass (SATB) chorus and orchestra
- Make connections between sound and movement, colour, and emotion
- Express themselves through improvised and composed responses to the piece

Resources required:

- Coloured objects (mixed) / coloured fabric
- A large space for moving in response to the music
- Colourful scarves or fabric, ribbons, paper for dancing / twirling to the music
- [Tuned and untuned classroom percussion](#)
- Metallic objects such as keys, wind chimes, or safe metallic objects for sound experiments
- Wooden or hollow objects and shells for sound experiments

Curriculum checklist

National Curriculum in ENGLAND (KS2)

- Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using their voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression.
- Improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the interrelated dimensions of music.
- Listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory.

SCOTLAND Curriculum for Excellence (Second Level)

- Recognise a range of musical styles and identify some of the main instruments in the genre.
- Use voice, instruments and technology to create music, experimenting with timbre.
- Perform on instruments, individually or as part of a group, to communicate the mood and character of a piece of music.

Curriculum for WALES: Expressive Arts (Progression Step 3)

- I can explore and describe how artists and creative work communicate mood, feelings and ideas and the impact they have on an audience.
- I can reflect upon how artists have achieved effects or communicated moods, emotions and ideas in their work.
- I can identify and response creatively to challenges with resilience and flexibility.

NORTHERN IRELAND Primary Curriculum (KS2)

- Work creatively with sound by creating musical stories, pictures, patterns, conversations, and accompaniments.
- Sing and perform with simple instruments from memory, by ear or from notation to develop vocal and instrumental skills.

The lessons at a glance

This scheme of work is plotted out over four lessons. You may wish to adapt it to suit your children and the time/resources you have available.

LESSON 1:

Activities:	Listening actively to the music
	Playing music and movement games to connect sound and shape
Learning	Notice features of the music and apply musical vocabulary in discussion
intention:	Make connections between sound and colour, movement, and shape

LESSON 2:

- Activities: Selecting appropriate timbres to represent aspects of nature
 Creating musical soundscapes using the selected timbres
- Learning Explore timbre and the connection between sound and nature
- intention: Experiment with [texture](#) and volume through group improvisation

LESSON 3:

- Activities: Writing kindness poems
 Creating a musical accompaniment to the poems
- Learning Improvise [ostinatos](#) using tuned percussion
- intention: Consider texture and volume when accompanying a reader

LESSON 4:

- Activities: Perform the soundscapes and poems
 Revisit the piece and improve on the discussion from Lesson 1
- Learning Perform as part of a group, expressing mood and character
- intention: Reflect on how artists communicate mood, feelings, and ideas

LESSON 1

Connecting music with colour, movement, and shape

Learning intention

- Notice features of the music and apply musical vocabulary in discussion
- Make connections between sound and colour, movement, and shape

1. Prepare your class

Explain to the class that you are going to begin a music project focusing on a brand new piece of music by Cassie Kinoshi, a British composer who has written this piece of music especially for this exciting project! The piece is called “the colour of all things constant”. The piece uses an orchestra and a choir, and has words written by Belinda Zhawi. The poem is called Kindness. Let’s read and explore the poem:

Kindness

– that silent friend who listens

before pulling you away.

A portal the colour of all things constant –

grass, sky, sunshine.

All things good:

trees, rain, ocean.

with nothing but fingertips.

That act of magic, holds us together

Ask the cracked land how kindness sounds
in these times of rains that have not come.

In this drought of empathy,

kindness emerges, crystal clear.

In the solidarity of a protest march,

the gentle touch in a strangers' eyes.

Kindness – a bridge across chasms,

for the land that holds you each day.

Thread of light, winking through chaos.

There are two important themes in this poem. One is kindness, and the other is about nature. Can you find any words in the poem that are related to kindness? Can you find any words in the poem that are related to nature?

Can you make any connections between kindness and nature?

Watch the film and as a class, have a discussion about it. Here are some question prompts:

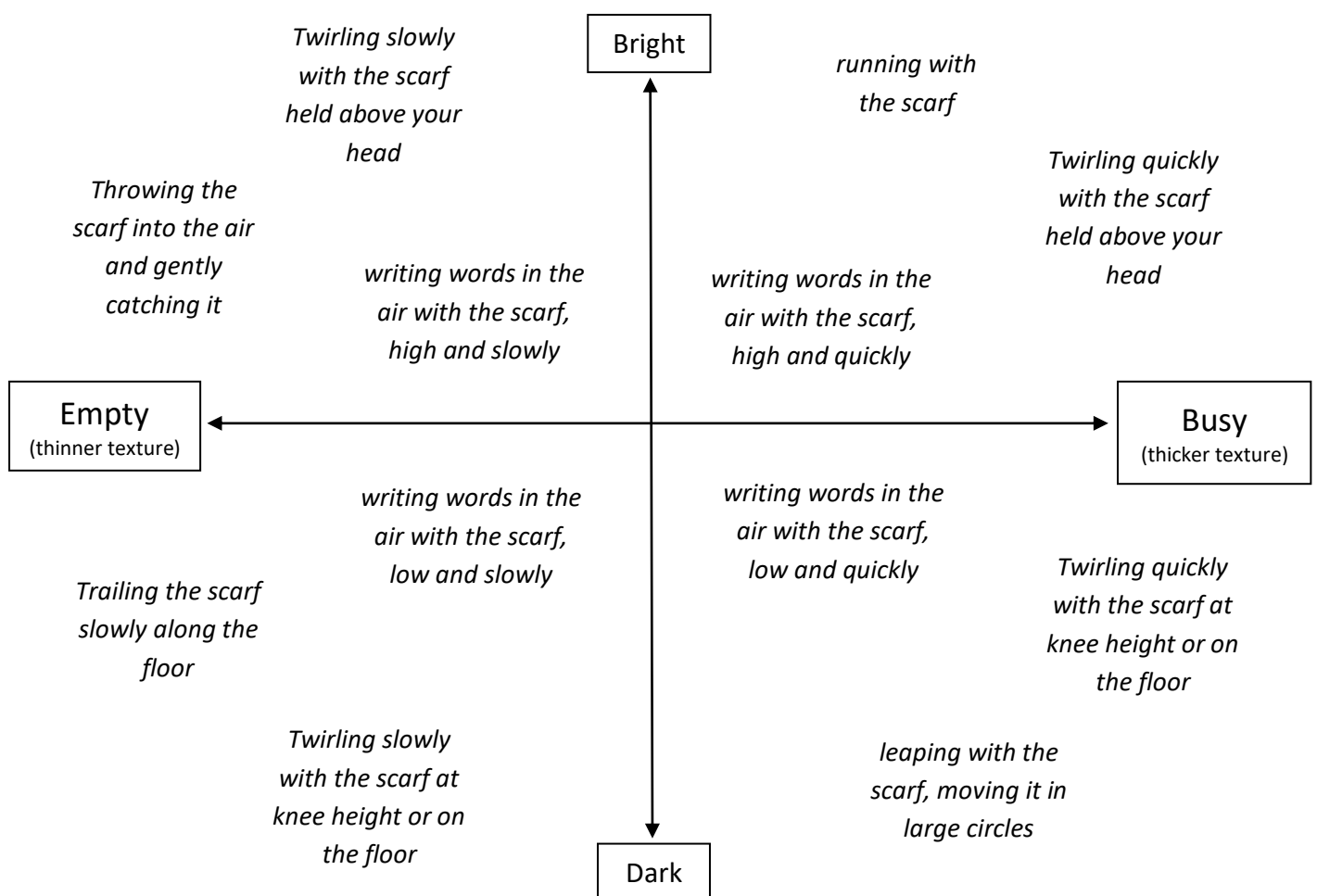
Question prompts:

- a. Do you remember which instruments Cassie can play?
 - b. Do you remember what Cassie enjoys about playing and composing music?
 - c. Do you remember how Cassie goes about writing music?
 - d. What interesting things did you notice about the piece being recorded?
2. **Explain** that you are going to listen to the music, and see if you can find connections between sound, colour, and texture (density). This activity can be done in different ways. Start by listening to small sections of the music, and practise describing how the music feels:

Question prompts:

- a. The music might feel bright when the pitch is high, or in a bright major key. The music might feel dark when the pitch is low, or when the music is in a darker minor key. Can you decide if the music feels bright, dark, or somewhere in between?
 - b. The music might feel busy (you can use the vocabulary word **texture** – which describes how ‘thick’/dense, or ‘thin’/empty the sound is i.e how busy the sound is). Can you decide if the music sounds a) thick or thin, and b) feels busy, empty, or somewhere in between?
3. Now listen to the complete piece of music, and show the brightness and texture (density) of the music by interacting with coloured objects in the room. This activity could be done in a number of different ways:
 - a. Different coloured objects with different sizes, weights, and textures (paper / ribbons / balls / other objects) on tables or on the floor that the children can choose between to touch or hold in response to different parts of the music.
 - b. Differently coloured fabrics that the children can hold in response to different parts of the music, gathering more of the colour when the density feels stronger/texture feels ‘thicker’.

4. **Move into a larger space**, or clear space in the classroom. You are now going to [listen to the music again](#), and see if you can find connections between sound, movement, and shape. Using juggling / dance scarves or ribbons as props, respond to the music with movement. Allow the children to move freely at first and then guide towards some 'agreed' movements. Here are some suggested movements in response to the brightness and texture of the music:



5. **Have a calm moment** at the end of the session, and ask the children to each take turns to be "the silent friend who listens" while another student describes how the music felt.

LESSON 2

Connecting music with colour and nature

Learning intention

- Explore timbre and the connection between sound and nature
- Experiment with texture and volume through group improvisation

1. **Re-visit** and further develop the scarf dancing activity from the previous session. After some time experimenting to the music, ask for a volunteer to act as the director. The director should make choices about texture (busyness) by asking other students to start or stop their chosen movements, using an agreed physical gesture (rather than a verbal response). Explain that this directing skill will be used again later during group work. This activity can be repeated several times to encourage multiple volunteers. A way of extending this activity would be to split into smaller groups and have multiple directors at the same time.

2. **Re-visit the poem** and focus on the words about nature. Ask students to think of colours that would suit the different nature words in the poem.

Here is a suggestion of how the nature words could be categorised into colours:

Green	Blue	Golden
Grass Trees	Rain Ocean Sky	Sunshine Light Crystal Sky

3. **Explain** that you are going to create nature soundscapes using percussion instruments and objects found in nature. Belinda Zhawi often creates soundscapes to go with her poems. You are going to create soundscapes to suit the nature words from Belinda's poem. Teachers could prepare for this session in advance by encouraging students to collect and bring in some objects that link to nature.

Here are some objects that would be effective as part of a nature soundscape when used alongside tuned and un-tuned percussion instruments:

Green group - hollow wooden objects, coconuts, bamboo, rattan/reeds to rustle

Blue group - shakers / rain sticks / ocean drums made using beans/lentils. Shells.

Golden group - metallic objects (keys / metal plant pots etc.)

4. **Divide the class** into three or six groups and assign a colour to each group. Give each group a selection of percussion instruments and 'found sounds', to suit their colour. The groups should experiment with their instruments and 'found sounds', to create a musical soundscape that suits their colour.

Each group should have one student who does not play an instrument (they can swap around), and takes on the role of the director. Remind students that the role of the director is to use an agreed physical gesture to start and stop individuals and the entire group, and to choose a gesture to indicate that students should play in a more or less busy way. The directors could use a scarf to help with giving directions (this may help some children and hinder others).

5. **Bring the class back together** and listen to their soundscape experiments. Ask the rest of the class to listen carefully, watch the directors carefully, and give some feedback. Ask for positive comments, and helpful comments that groups could use to improve their work further.

LESSON 3

Connecting music and poetry

Learning intention

- Improvise ostinatos using tuned percussion
- Consider texture and volume when accompanying a reader

1. Before the lesson.

Students will need to have poems to read alongside their accompaniments for this lesson. They could use existing poems about colours, kindness, and / or nature, or spend some time working on “colour of kindness” poems in advance of the lesson. Here is an example of how a “colour of kindness” poem could be structured:

Blue is the colour of kindness

The soft blue blanket used to swaddle the baby

The bluebells that shelter the bugs and bees

The blue sapphire that my grandma wears

Our fragile blue planet, that so desperately needs our care

Blue is the colour of kindness

2. Get ready for learning by [watching the performance of “the colour of all things constant”](#).

During the performance, think about the experiments on sound that you have done so far. Recap and discuss the themes of kindness, of colour, and of nature found in the words of the poem and expressed in the music.

3. Watch part of the performance again, and this time focus on the instruments and voices you can see and hear. See how many instruments you can name!

4. Watch another part of the performance, and this time focus on the texture (density – i.e. how ‘thick’ or ‘thin’ the sound is) of the music. Pay particular attention to when everyone is playing at the same time, and when only a few people are playing. Discuss how the texture (density) and volume (dynamics) of the orchestra changes when we need to hear the words sung by the choir.

5. Explain that, in this lesson, you are going to create a musical accompaniment to support the reading of a poem. In “the colour of all things constant”, Cassie Kinoshi creates lots of musical colours with the instruments and voices, but she also creates a sense of “all things constant” by using one note, the note G (perhaps G for good!) that can be heard most of the time during the piece!

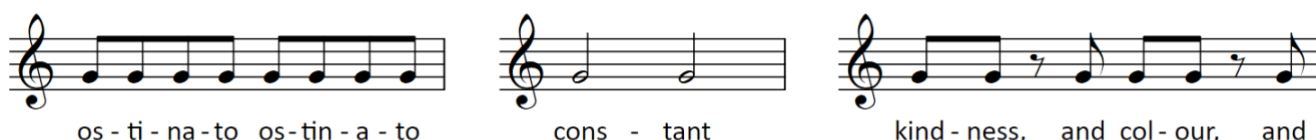
6. **Divide into groups**, and select a poem (or poems) for each group to work with. Each group should create an accompaniment using tuned percussion instruments, and if needed, a selection of un-tuned instruments and 'found sounds' that would suit the theme of the poem. One or two students could read the poem instead of playing an instrument, or more students could take turns to read a line each. The poem should be read over the top of the music. This will help students to project with confidence when speaking out loud.

7. Creating an effective accompaniment

Constant sound in music can be created by repeating ideas. A repeated musical idea is called an **ostinato**. Here are some ostinatos that you can practise and combine together to create your accompaniment. Don't forget, an ostinato means that you should play the same idea over and over again. You could combine these ideas in lots of different ways, and create your own ideas using the notes G – A – B – C – D to go with them.

[For guidance on notation, please see here.](#)

Examples using the note G



Examples using the notes G and D



Examples using the notes G - A - B - C - D



Practise playing your music at different **dynamics** (volume). Try playing the music at a loud dynamic and at a quiet dynamic. What dynamic should you play at when the poem is being spoken? What dynamic could you use before and after the poem is spoken?

8. **Bring the class back together** and perform the poems and accompaniments. Ask the rest of the class to listen carefully and give some feedback. Ask for positive comments, and helpful comments that groups could use to improve their work further. Have the groups successfully explored **dynamics**? Could you hear the **note G** used as a constant sound in the accompaniment? Could you hear **ostinatos** being played?

LESSON 4

Connecting music and kindness

Learning intention

- Perform as part of a group, expressing mood and character
- Reflect on how artists communicate mood, feelings, and ideas

1. Explain that this lesson is an opportunity to refine and showcase all of the work you have done on this project. Start by [reading the Kindness poem](#) out loud, and remind students that the purpose of this project is for the students to express themselves, and to reflect on how other people use music to communicate feelings and ideas.

2. Spend a short time recapping and developing the nature soundscapes, with groups working on the feedback they received in the previous lesson and giving more directors the opportunity to shape the music by controlling the texture (density) and dynamics (volume).

3. Perform the soundscapes to each other again and focus solely on kind comments. Encourage students to comment on the role of the director as well as the music.

4. Spend a short time recapping and developing the poem accompaniments, with groups working on the feedback they received in the previous lesson and giving more students an opportunity to have their poems read aloud.

5. Perform the accompanied poems to each other again and focus solely on kind comments. Encourage students to comment on the spoken words as well as the music.

6. Listen to “[the colour of all things constant](#)” one more time and see if students can further improve on their discussions about the music, using appropriate vocabulary to describe instruments, pitch, texture, and dynamics.

7. Watch the [interview with Cassie Kinoshi](#) one more time, and reflect on what it means to be a composer. As this piece has been written especially for this project, you might even decide to make a thank you card for Cassie that could go on display at your school!

TAKING IT FURTHER

Cross-curricular activities

- **LITERACY** – writing poems about kindness, colour, and nature
- **ART & DESIGN** – create wind chimes and ocean drums out of recycled materials and use in the lessons as percussion instruments

GLOSSARY OF MUSICAL TERMS USED

TERM	DEFINITION
Accompaniment	Music that has a supporting role
Dynamics	How loudly or quietly a piece of music should be played
Key signature	Tells you what the key note is and what sharps or flats are in a piece of music – a piece can be in a major or minor key
Major key	Bright-sounding – see here for examples
Minor key	Dark-sounding – see here for examples
Ostinato	Rhythm or melody that constantly repeats
Pitch	How high or low a sound is
Texture	How we combine, mix and layer sounds (how ‘thick’ or ‘thin’ the music is, e.g. how many instruments are playing, how they are being played etc.)
Tuned classroom percussion	Instruments with a defined pitch such as glockenspiel, xylophone, chime bars etc.
Untuned classroom percussion	Instruments without a defined pitch such as claves, castanets, shakers, hand drums etc.