

The magazine for primary music teachers, by primary music teachers

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Dr Liz Stafford reviews Aurora Orchestra's new resource

Aurora and the Magical Toy Box

There are two things that I look for when exploring new teaching resources - practicality and pedagogy. Aurora Orchestra's new classroom music programme has the former in spades! I was astonished at how well-thought out the user-experience is, with the platform constructed to make a time-poor teacher's life easier. It is incredibly easy to navigate, and allows you the opportunity to build and save your own programmes and playlists, or switch from planning into 'lesson mode' where all the resources you need are displayed in an uncluttered format, in order. No need to search around for things, no frustration looking for resources that you can't find, just everything at your fingertips exactly where you need it. For this alone they deserve hearty congratulations!

The resource provides separate 10 week programmes of learning for Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, based around a performance of 'The Magical Toy Box' with music from Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker and an original story by Kate Wakeling. These are mapped to the National and Model Music Curriculums (England). These schemes include high quality, engaging resources, and demonstrate clear progression of skills throughout. There is also a scheme of work for SEND, which is presented in a flexible format that allows the teacher to select the different strands of learning most suitable for their learners' particular needs. I really like this approach, which in my view shows full understanding of the real meaning of inclusion.

The one aspect I was a little wary of was the decision not to include composition as part of the main lesson, but as an additional extension activity. Composing is a statutory requirement, and relegating it to an add-on activity, particularly when presented as an either/or against notation, which is not a statutory requirement in KS1 could encourage teachers to miss this out altogether. This would be a shame as composing is an important part of an holistic music education, so I hope that the teachers who use this resource do make the time for the extension activities as well.

What makes this resource particularly interesting is that teachers can either use the provided videos to teach the lesson for them, or can toggle to the 'I'll lead this' option where they can teach the lesson live themselves. Not only that, but this is an option for each individual section of the lesson, so the teacher can choose to lead some activities but not others. The flexibility that this brings, and therefore the multiple different types of teachers it caters for, is a real selling point.

Overall this is a great new resource that could be used by schools to supplement their music curriculum. You can find out more at <https://learning.auroraorchestra.com/>



Bring Aurora Orchestra into your classroom!

Aurora's new classroom music programme supports teaching in Early Years, Key Stage 1 and SEND settings, with a term's worth of inspiring music activities produced by our award-winning creative team and players. Mapped against the national curriculum and supported with free CPD, the programme supports all teachers – whether non-specialists or experts – in delivering high-quality music education.

- Meet orchestral instruments
- Explore the elements of music
- Sing and create music
- Use classroom instruments
- Incorporate music as part of free-flow time
- Prepare your own Magical Toy Box performance

We are able to offer bespoke packages for Music Education Hubs or groups of schools. For further information please contact Rebecca Barnett, Learning Director, at rebecca@auroraorchestra.com.

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Visit **learning.auroraorchestra.com** to find out more