

EXPRESSION IN MUSIC—WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART'S *GRAN PARTITA*

CURRICULUM

CLASS NOTES®

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INTRODUCTION

The following lessons and activities are designed to support awareness and build competency of several foundational music skills and concepts in the Class Notes Video Expression in Music—Mozart’s *Gran Partita*. Built around the core concepts of Create, Perform, Respond and Connect, the suggested order of lessons aims to establish comprehension of key terms and sequentially build on the concepts presented. Use them in this order or feel free to mix and match, according to your needs.

The following lessons and activities were created around the following ideas:

- Melody
- Phrasing
- Expressive elements
- Expressive intent of composer
- Personal emotional response to music and music making

Activities were created with a range of grade and skill levels in mind. Again, adjust and modify to meet the unique needs of your classroom.

Finally, get in touch with your thoughts, feedback, ideas or requests for modifications or additional resources.

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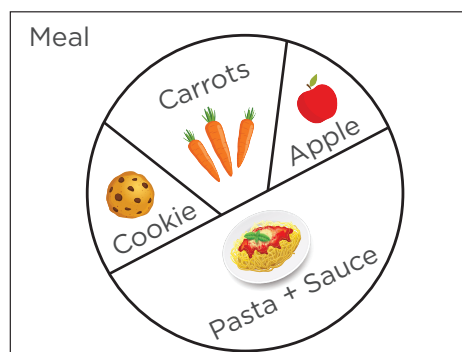
LESSON/ACTIVITIES

CREATE a melody

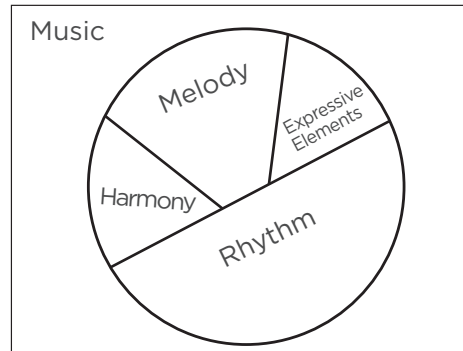
Context: This lesson is best suited to early elementary students. Certain activities can be easily modified to accommodate higher or lower ages and skill ranges. Please contact Katie Condon at kcondon@mpr.org for suggestions and ideas for adjustments.

- Discuss and define melody.

Explain that music is one thing, but it’s made of many parts. Make a comparison to a meal. Ask your students about a meal (for example, today’s school lunch or a favorite holiday meal). Ask about the different parts—maybe there was a main dish, some side dishes, a dessert or treat and something to drink. Put it all together and you have a meal. Reinforce with a visual:



Tell students that music works in somewhat the same way. There are different parts to it, but together, the parts make up a single piece of music. Reinforce and clarify with a side-by-side visual comparison.



Explain that some of the main parts of music include melody, rhythm, harmony and expressive elements (such as dynamics and articulation). Some of these terms might be familiar; others may be new vocabulary. Decide which elements (melody, rhythm, etc.) are essential for your purposes. This is a good image/concept to go back to in subsequent lessons that address various elements of music.

Tell students that today (or over the course of several lessons) they will explore *melody*. If it's a term they can't define, talk or review a bit. Melody is a tune you can sing. It can go high and low.

- Demonstrate melody in a few ways.

Begin by saying "I am going to play 'Happy Birthday' on my hand drum (lap) or drum (snare drum)." Play the rhythm of the words on an unpitched instrument. Almost immediately, they will notice something is off. Point out that this version is missing something: the melody. Remind them that melodies go high and low, then sing the tune with them, tracing the movement of the melodic line in the air as you sing.

- › Explore high and low sounds with the slide whistle.

Tell students that the first step in creating a melody is noticing high and low sounds or pitches, and being able to notice when a pitch moves from high to low, from low to high, or when it stays in the same place.



Explain that you are going to test their melody-listening skills. Take out a slide whistle and explain that this instrument makes high and low sounds. Tell them to take out their high and low checkers (their thumbs) and show thumbs up when the sound/pitch moves higher, and thumbs down when it does lower (demonstrate/model as you explain). Use "high" and "low" instead of "up" and "down" so as to not confuse with volume/dynamic level. Start simply and get more difficult. After a few simple low-to-high and high-to-low examples, keep students engaged by mixing it up and doing some more unexpected things: change directions suddenly mid-slide, move higher in small increments, slide around really fast, etc.

Tell students that we can draw a line that moves from high to low or low to high in different ways to get different slide whistle melodies. We can follow the line from left to right with the slide whistle, or even our voices. Demonstrate with a few contrasting examples. (See below.) After modeling, ask for a student volunteer to come up and draw a line on the board. Before playing the student's melody on your slide whistle, ask the entire class to vocalize the movement of the line. Extend, expand or integrate additional knowledge by asking the line drawer to assign a tempo marking and/or dynamics.

- › Continue exploring melody with step bells and staircase songs.

After several rounds of slide whistle melodies, ask students how they might play a familiar tune or melody on the slide whistle—something like “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.” If you feel comfortable, you might even try to play “Twinkle” on the slide whistle, and your students will probably hear quite quickly that it is difficult to be exact and precise.

Tell students that the slide whistle works well for when you slide from high to low or low to high, but many melodies move in steps. In fact, melodies are often built using a musical staircase. (Additionally introduce the term *scale*, if appropriate for your classroom.)

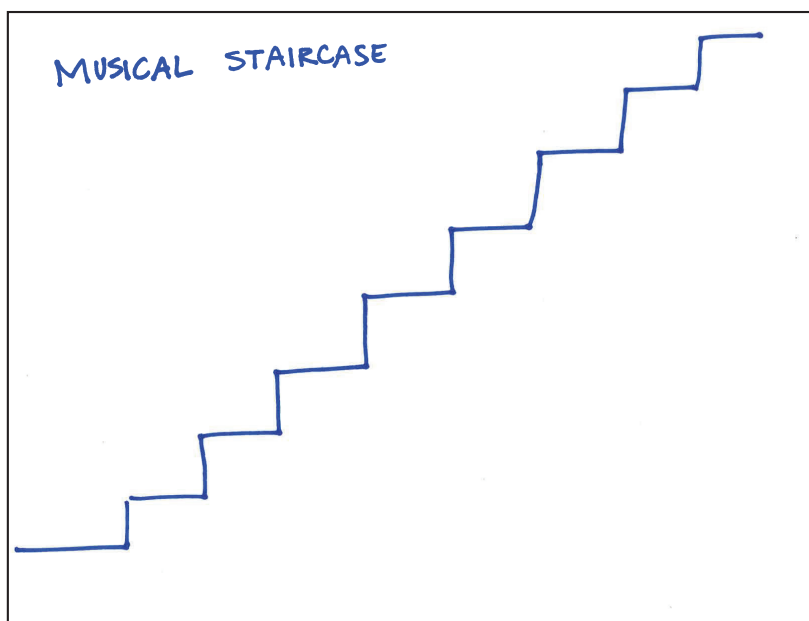
If you have a set of staircase bells, use them to demonstrate. Ask students to pretend their hands are feet and to take a step up every time they hear a higher step. Play all the way up in steps, then down. Vary tempo, add pauses, and change direction to keep your listeners engaged. Explain that composers who write music can pick how a melody moves around by stepping or skipping around the staircase. Demonstrate a few examples that have different kinds of melodic motion, including a few that hop on the same note a few times (“Jingle Bells” is a good one for this.)



If you do not have step bells, the activity is easily adapted by playing a classroom glockenspiel or a piano from middle C up an octave and back. Draw a simple staircase on the board to visually represent the upward and downward movement, and trace the melodic movement as you sing or play melodies.

Reinforce the concept by singing a staircase song, such as “Ebenezer Sneezzer.” Or simply sing “I am walking up the staircase” on an ascending scale and “I am walking down the staircase” on the descent.

If students have experience with Kodály patterns and solfège, make the connection with solfège terminology by playing a sol-mi pattern and singing the names accordingly. If students have not had exposure to this terminology, introducing the musical staircase can be a good introduction to the idea that each step has a name, and introducing solfège terms and symbols in an appropriate sequence.



- › Integrate listening and visual art to strengthen concept awareness.

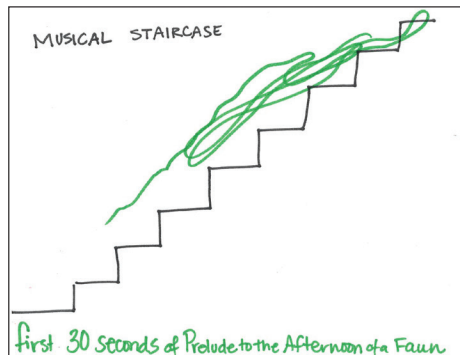
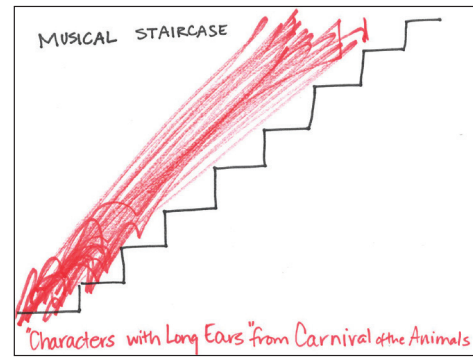
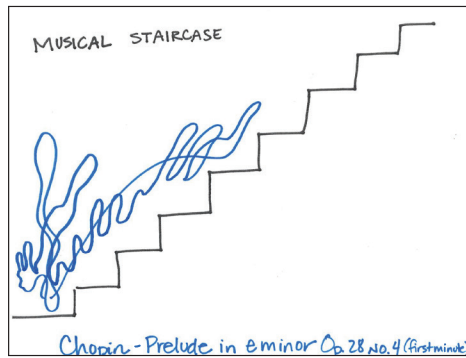
Ask students to draw their own staircases, or provide them with a template (based on the image above).

Listen to a variety of melodies (using the tracks on the [Expression in Music—Mozart’s Gran Partita Lesson Plan Audio](#) playlist or curate your own collection). Encourage students to move around the staircase along with the movement of the melody. Suggest short, poking motions for short, staccato sounds. Smooth, legato sounds might call for gracefully tracing a finger on the paper.

Extend by using markers, crayons, finger paints or other art supplies to move around the staircase with the melody. Modify the activity by using a set of markers with different colors representing different instruments or timbres. Emphasize physical movement along *with* the melody line. At times this may feel almost awkward or slow, but it is a great way to encourage controlled kinesthetic movement that aligns with awareness of a musical concept.

Technical accuracy is not important, especially since the staircase template only covers the span of an octave. The general idea is to understand the general concept of movement and direction of a melody.

Here are several completed examples:



Audio for all three of these pieces of music can be found by scrolling down the [Expression in Music—Mozart's *Gran Partita* Lesson Plan Audio](#) playlist.

- › Improvise melodies on classroom instruments such as the slide whistle, piano or glockenspiel.

If the term is new, explain or review that to *improvise* means to create music without planning or rehearsal, but rather as an expression of what you feel in the moment. Ask for a volunteer to improvise a melody on a classroom instrument. Start by demonstrating a few contrast examples. After each short demonstration, take note of a few key characteristics. For example, you might say “Did you notice that melody had a few giant leaps—from really high to really low?” or “I bet you noticed that melody went back and forth between two steps over and over again.” After you have established the practice of making observations, ask students to comment on your demonstrations or on others’ improvisations in order to secure comprehension and encourage engaged listening.

LEARNING CHECKLIST

- I can define and identify a melody.
- I can recognize and respond to high and low pitches through movement, singing and playing instruments.
- I can improvise a melody on a classroom instrument.

KEY WORDS melody, improvise, pitch

PERFORM rhythmic movement in response to the legato melody and phrasing.

Context: This Dalcroze-inspired activity is a great centering activity for students of almost any age. Try using your voice as little as possible and giving directives through physical gesture, eye contact, and non-verbal cues.

- Form a circle. Find a prop. A tennis ball works really well, or you could use a ribbon, streamer or scarf.

Put on a piece of recorded music, then take the prop and just move it in the space around yourself to the music. After an indeterminate amount of time, pass the prop to the student next to you. By being the first to demonstrate, you will have had the opportunity to model appropriate use. Each student will simply move the prop on to the next person when they feel ready. If a turn seems to take too long, make a gesture from the student with the prop to the next in the circle. Having the ball as a point of focus makes it a lot less scary and intimidating than just asking them to dance or move *without* a prop.

Incorporate this into your routines, doing the activity on a consistent and regular basis. Once the habit is established, try extending the exercise by moving to big macrobeats or smaller subdivisions. Students sometimes do that through instinct, but I like to call their awareness to it. Depending on age/skill level, incorporate classroom vocabulary. For example, say, “Find the whole note pulse” (or the eighth note pulse, etc.).

Use the audio track of Mozart’s *Gran Partita*, found on the [Expression in Music—Mozart’s Gran Partita Lesson Plan Audio](#) playlist.

With older, more advanced groups, you might briefly talk about the idea of a *phrase*, or a musical idea. Encourage students to pass as one phrase and another begins. In Mozart’s *Gran Partita*, threads of melody overlap. The oboe, clarinet and bass horn melodies are great examples of melodic phrases that overlap, or take over for one another, like a conversation.

Here are a handful of additional selections if the activity becomes a regular part of your routine. Each example features a different instrument playing the primary melody.

- › *Rhapsody in G Minor*, Op. 79, No. 2, Johannes Brahms
- › This melody alternates back and forth between smooth (legato) and bumpy (staccato) sounds. It jumps around a lot. After the exercise, ask students what they noticed.
- › *Rhapsody in Blue*, George Gershwin
- › The clarinet melody that opens this piece is a great example of a huge slide from low to high, demonstrating the amazing range of the clarinet.
- › *Lassus Trombone*, Henry Fillmore
- › This is another great example of fun melodic slides, taking advantage of the trombone’s unique position as a brass instrument with a slide.
- › Partita for Violin, Solo No. 1 in B minor, BWV 1002—IV. Double (Presto), J.S. Bach
- › This work demonstrates lots of fast movement and numerous changes in direction.

You can find all tracks on the [Expression in Music—Mozart’s Gran Partita Lesson Plan Audio](#) playlist.

LEARNING CHECKLIST

- I can move to music by myself and with others.
- I can respond to various musical elements through listening and movement.

KEY WORDS

melody, phrase

RESPOND and CONNECT through personal reflection and guided discussion.

Context: Listening and responding to music are universal experiences and apply to all ages. The students in *Expression in Music—Mozart’s Gran Partita* range from kindergarten to 10th grade. Recreate the listening experience depicted in the video by playing the same piece and asking the same questions. Move beyond the content of video by facilitating a group discussion based on personal responses. Your approach may vary according to grade level but content and activities are largely the same.

- Begin by facilitating personal reflection regarding the impact and experience of listening to a particular piece of music—in this case, Mozart’s *Gran Partita*. Distribute a template to help guide listening and processing. See PRINT PAGES at the end of this curriculum for a copy of this listening grid.
- For younger, pre-literate students, read the questions aloud and encourage drawing pictures in response to question prompts. If possible, integrate grade level literacy expectations. Encourage single words/adjectives, or full sentences or paragraphs when appropriate. Contact Katie Condon at kcondon@mpr.org for ideas and suggestions for specific accommodations.

After students have articulated their reactions and responses through writing, encourage group sharing. Pose each question to the group and ask for volunteers willing to share their answers. After some sharing, encourage all students to share with a neighbor. This provides an alternative opportunity to share for those who may be hesitant to share in front of the whole group.

Be prepared with some follow-up questions. If a student says that she thinks Mozart is trying to express sadness, ask: “What did you hear in the music that made you think that?” This starts to get at the idea that certain techniques in music (a minor key, a descending melodic line, a slow tempo) might suggest certain emotions.

Here are a handful of additional questions for journaling or group discussion. Designed for older students, these questions dig a little deeper into the listening experience and music as an outlet for emotional expression.

- › Can you think of a time when listening to music helped you process or work through a strong feeling or emotion?
- › What musical elements contributed to the expression or effect of this music?
- › How did it help?
- › Why do you think people create music?

LEARNING CHECKLIST

- I can describe emotions experienced when listening to a musical selection and relate it to personal experiences.
- I can identify the elements used in a musical selection to convey its possible intent.
- I can describe how musical elements contribute to meaning in a musical selection.

KEY WORDS emotion, expression, Mozart

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- 3 MORE PIECES

Like what you heard? Here are a few more that might strike your fancy.

- › For more Mozart, try his Symphony No. 40 in G Minor—I. Molto Allegro.
- › Mozart's *Gran Partita* features a beautiful melody that starts with the oboe. For another beautiful oboe melody, try "Gabriel's Oboe" from the soundtrack to the movie *The Mission*.
- › The *Gran Partita* also has smooth, legato clarinet melody. For a very different kind of clarinet melody, try Libby Larsen's Dancing Solo—V. *Flat Out*.
- › Audio for all of these can be found by scrolling down to the 3 MORE PIECES section of the [Expression in Music—Mozart's *Gran Partita* Lesson Plan Audio](#) playlist.

- HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

The Class Notes video Expression in Music—Mozart's *Gran Partita* is not designed to teach students about Mozart, but a handful of easy-to-understand, easy-to-remember details enhance the viewing experience. Here are five quick facts about Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart:

- › He lived from 1756-1791. He died when he was just 35 years old.
- › He lived in Austria his whole life but traveled a lot for work.
- › He was a child prodigy, which meant he was famous as a child.
- › He began composing his own music when he was around 5 years old.
- › His father was his first teacher.

EXPRESSION IN MUSIC—WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART'S *GRAN PARTITA*

PRINT PAGES

MOZART'S *GRAN PARTITA* LISTENING GRID CUE CARD

<p>What do you think Mozart was trying to express when he wrote this?</p>	
<p>How does this music make you feel?</p>	
<p>What do you want to express through music?</p>	