Attainment's

What's Cool About MUSIC



Stuart Stotts • Joni Nygard

What's Cool About Music

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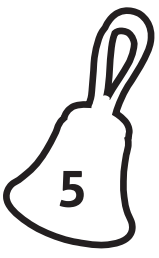
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Unit 1

THE BIG PICTURE OF MUSIC







Music for Everyone

What is cool about music? You probably love music and listen to it every day. Why do you like it so much?

We love how music sounds, but mostly we love how it makes us feel. Music can be scary, sad, wild, happy, or relaxing. It matches or changes our moods.







People in every part of the world play music. Music changes from place to place. Different countries and cultures have different kinds. They use different instruments, different languages, and different rhythms. Sometimes music from different places gets mixed together, and a new kind of music begins.







People listen to music in cars, in their homes, in bed, in concerts, and almost everywhere they go.





Not everyone likes the same kind of music. Sometimes the music others like makes you want to cover your ears.

No matter where it comes from, music expresses feelings. Listening to and playing music is one of the best parts of life.







What Is Music?

Music is organized sound. Sound is vibration. When air molecules vibrate, your ears feel the vibrating air. Your brain calls that "sound" and "music." You can also feel music's vibration in your body.

Music starts with a beat. A beat is steady. The rhythm goes over the beat. Rhythm helps give the music its feeling.







The melody is the tune. It's the part you can whistle or hum or sing. Tunes go up and down, and that is called pitch. Other notes that go with the tune are called harmony.

Music can be fast or slow, loud or soft. (Sometimes it's too loud.) People make music with lots of instruments, or just one. You can hear a whole orchestra, or a big choir, or one little flute playing solo all by itself. It's all music, vibrating through the air, right to your ears.
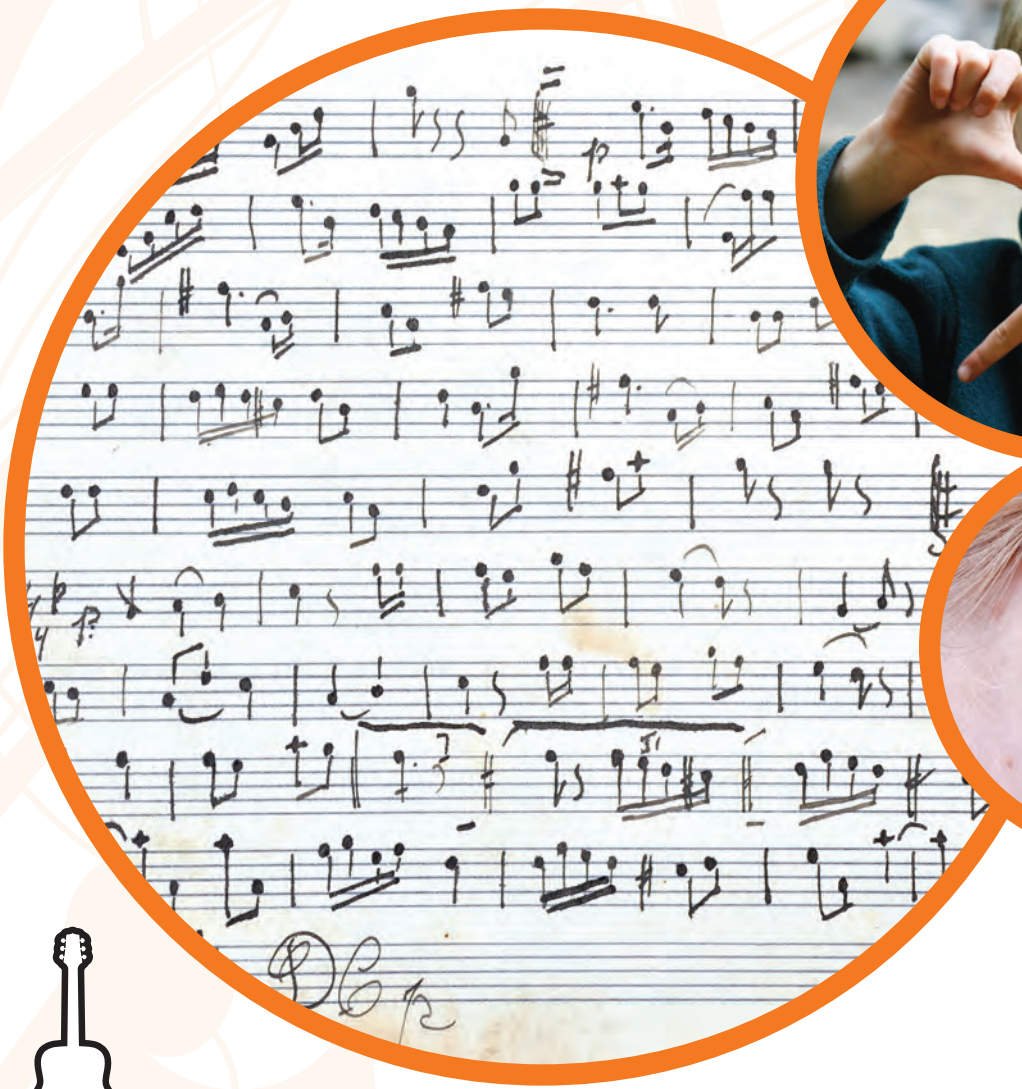










Writing & Reading Music

People used to learn music by hearing it from each other and remembering it. That's how we learn songs like "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." This is called "learning by ear."
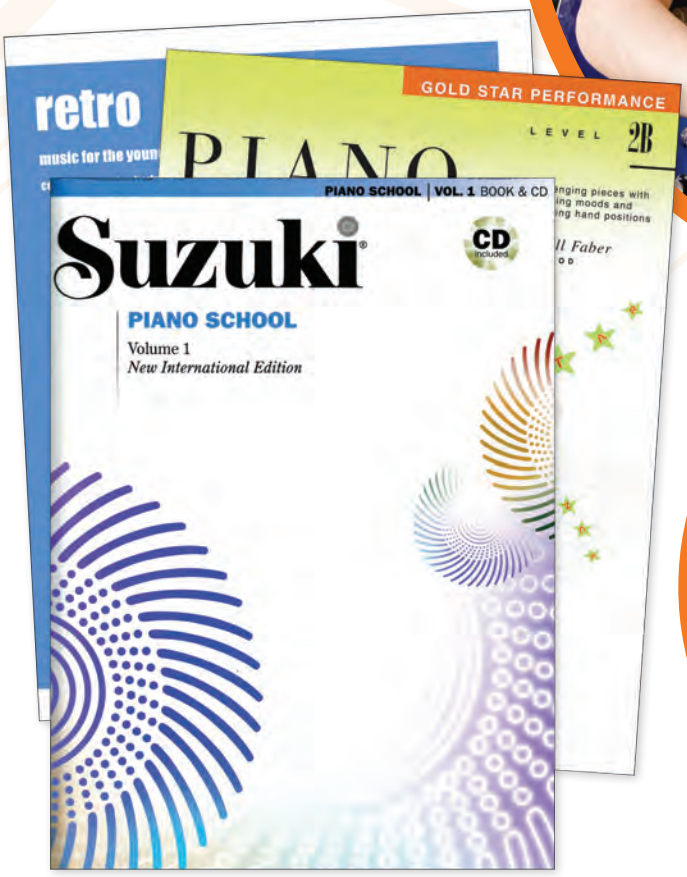
A few hundred years ago, composers began to write down music. They used notes and lines to show other people how the music should sound.













Many people now learn to read music. They buy sheet music to play songs or tunes. But some musicians only play and learn "by ear."



Computers can help to write music. They take what is played on a musical keyboard and write it out on the screen. Music can be printed from a computer. This is much easier than writing it all by hand.

No matter how you learn it, music is passed from person to person, from place to place, from time to time.



Lessons

Children and adults can learn to play piano. I take lessons at my teacher's house, but other students go to a studio or conservatory. I use books, sheet music, and recordings to help me learn.

Most lessons last between 30 minutes and an hour. I use my eyes to read the music, my feet for the pedals, my hands for the keyboard, and of course, my ears to listen. I take lessons because it's fun, but my friend Kayla wants to be a concert pianist. She practices two hours every day. I only practice 30 minutes, when Mom reminds me.
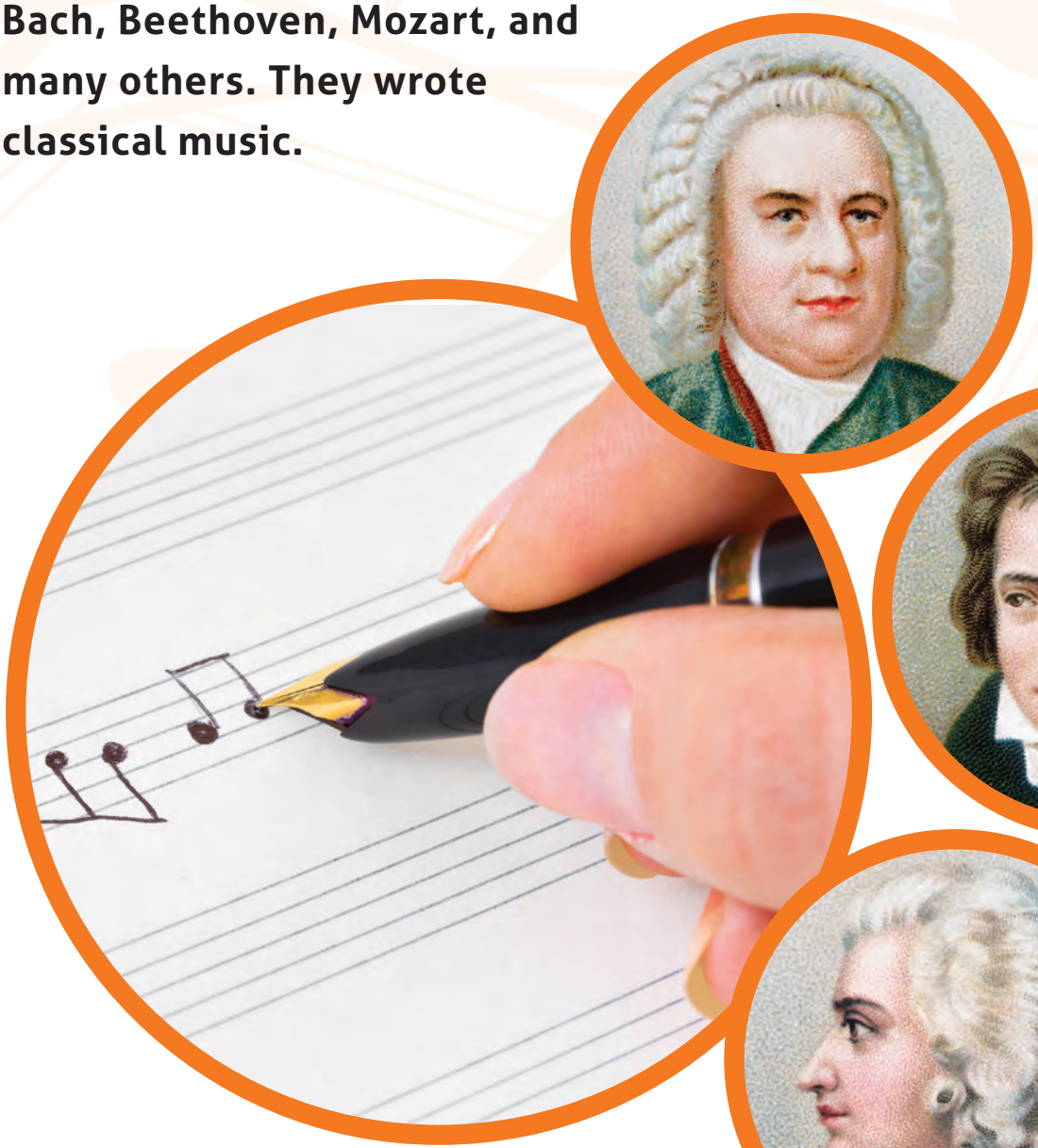






Every spring, all the students who take lessons have a recital. I memorized my songs and played them for the audience. Everybody clapped, and I took a bow. Every year, I get better at the piano, and I enjoy it more.



Composers



Writing music is called composing. Some composers write short songs with simple tunes. Others write long pieces for many instruments or voices. There are famous composers, like Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, and many others. They wrote classical music.







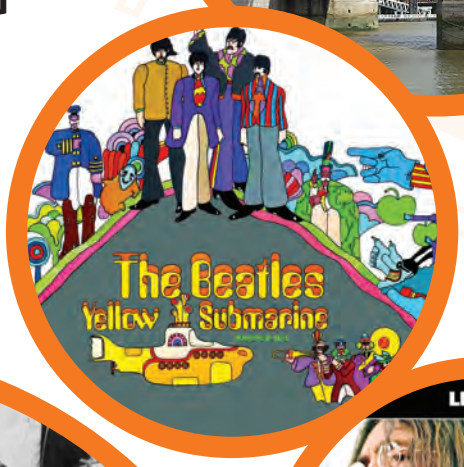
Thelonious Monk and George Gershwin composed jazz pieces. Scott Joplin composed ragtime instrumentals, and Liz Story creates peaceful piano compositions.



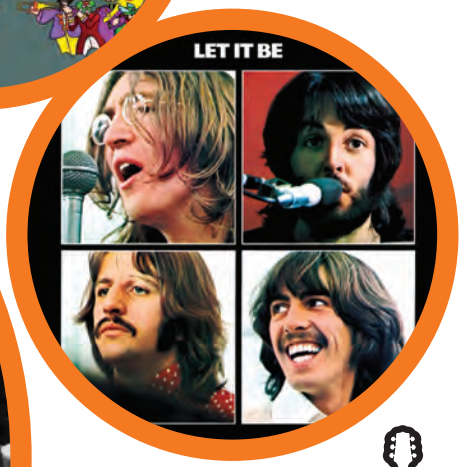
From the Beatles to Madonna, thousands of composers have written popular songs. We don't know who wrote some of the music we hear. Composers of songs like "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" or "London Bridge" have been forgotten, although their songs live on. We call these songs folk music. Still, every song started with someone.











Composer at Work

Sometimes late at night I hear music coming from my neighbor's house. I know that Barbara is composing music again. I like her music, but I'm glad it's not too loud.

I like to visit her when she's working. She has a studio in her basement. Barbara has three keyboards, a computer, and some microphones. She can get hundreds of different sounds from her equipment. Her keyboards can sound like a trumpet, a drum, a violin, or even like a hundred violins. She can also record sounds of the wind, or cars honking, or thunder.







Tonight, she's writing music for a TV commercial. Her music will be played to advertise a sale at a car dealership. She wants the music to sound exciting and inviting. She has to work quickly so that the music can be added to the video in time for a commercial this weekend. Tomorrow she will compose music for a nature program on sea turtles. That music will be slower and more mysterious.



I might turn on my TV this weekend and hear her music in a commercial.



Comprehension Quiz

Directions: Circle the letter of the phrase that finishes the sentence or answers the question.

MUSIC FOR EVERYONE

1. **Mostly we love music because of how it makes us _____.**
   a. feel
   b. think
   c. eat
2. **Music can change our _____.**
   a. mood
   b. clothes
   c. room
3. **Music uses different _____.**
   a. instruments
   b. colors
   c. cars
4. **What music do you like?**
   a. Wild music
   b. Relaxing music
   c. Sad music

WHAT IS MUSIC?

1. **Music is organized _____.**
   a. sound
   b. sports
   c. food
2. **Sound is _____.**
   a. vibration
   b. red
   c. alive
3. **When a tune goes up, it's called _____.**
   a. pitch
   b. soft
   c. beat

WRITING AND READING MUSIC

1. **A long time ago people used to learn music only _____.**
   a. by hearing it
   b. reading it
   c. drawing it
2. **Playing music by hearing it is called _____.**
   a. playing by ear
   b. playing by foot
   c. playing hopscotch
3. **Most very young children learn this song _____.**
   a. Twinkle Twinkle Little Star
   b. Star Spangled Banner
   c. Somewhere Over the Rainbow

LESSONS

1. **Where do some people take piano lessons?**
   a. their teacher's house
   b. hospital
   c. church
2. **When students perform what they've learned, it's called a _____.**
   a. recital
   b. movie
   c. barn dance
3. **When the performance is over, everyone _____.**
   a. claps
   b. cries
   c. eats

COMPOSERS
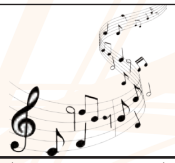
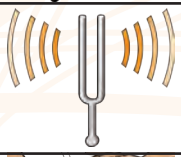
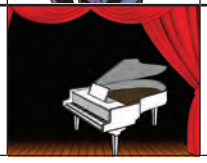
1. **Writing music is called _____.**
   a. composing
   b. driving
   c. running
2. **When no one knows who wrote a song, that song is called a _____.**
   a. folk song
   b. jazz song
   c. important song
3. **Beethoven wrote _____.**
   a. classical music
   b. ragtime
   c. folk songs

COMPOSER AT WORK

1. **Barbara composes using _____.**
   a. a keyboard
   b. a hammer
   c. a spoon
2. **Barbara's studio is in her _____.**
   a. basement
   b. barn
   c. grandmother's house
3. **Music about sea turtles would probably be _____.**
   a. slow
   b. loud
   c. fast

Vocabulary

Unit 1 – The Big Picture of Music

1	music		Organized sound.
2	sound		Vibration in the air that our ears can feel.
3	rhythm		Gives music its feeling.
4	melody		The part of music you can whistle or hum.
5	harmony		Musical notes played with the melody.
6	orchestra		Many instruments playing music together.
7	choir		Many voices singing together.
8	composers		People who write music.
9	musicians		People who play music on instruments.
10	concert		Memorized songs played by musicians for an audience.