

Introduction



In this print, J. M. W. Turner depicts the landscape with linear contour.

[Enlarge](#)

Unlike music and dance, the visual arts function in space, not time. Although some of the terminology is the same, the meanings of the terms are different. By translating the elements of visual arts into musical elements, they can integrate authentically with music activities in a variety of ways.

Visual artists use the concepts of contour and pattern, among others, that may easily relate to the same or similar musical concepts. Note the following comparisons.



The melodic contour of this musical line is easily discernable.

 Enlarge



A more abstract representation of melodic contour.

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The implementation of integrated lessons in visual arts and music should begin with simple, concrete activities that are clear and obvious in their focus.

The following suggested lessons are some possibilities for visual arts integration:

- Students can create abstract drawings to illustrate connected and disconnected musical pitches.
- Each student receives a long, narrow strip of paper as the teacher discusses several types of lines — straight, curved, thick, thin, etc. The

teacher instructs the students to create a line composition, moving from left to right across the strip, using at least three different types of line. The students then interpret their line compositions vocally, either singing or playing on simple instruments (bells, wood blocks, triangles, etc.).

- After listening to a Bach two-part invention, students use different colored lines to show the shape of melodies in the two lines of the inventions. Listen to the following example. Can you tell when the second line enters?



- [Bach - Invention No. 1 in C major, BWV 772](#)
- The teacher plays musical compositions that have been stimulated by artworks — various movements of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* or Gunther Schuller's *The Twittering Machine* — and compares them to prints of the artworks that inspired the compositions, such as "The Hut of Baba Yaga" from *Pictures* or *The Twittering Machine* by Paul Klee.

Teaching Musical Concepts Through Visual Arts

The relationship between music and visual arts is primarily iconographic and interpretive. Because musical concepts are abstract, visual images, icons, or representations help to give students a more concrete understanding of how specific music elements function within the music. And because much of music and visual arts are representational of ideas and emotions, music can serve to help students interpret ideas and create new means of self-expression.

Rhythm

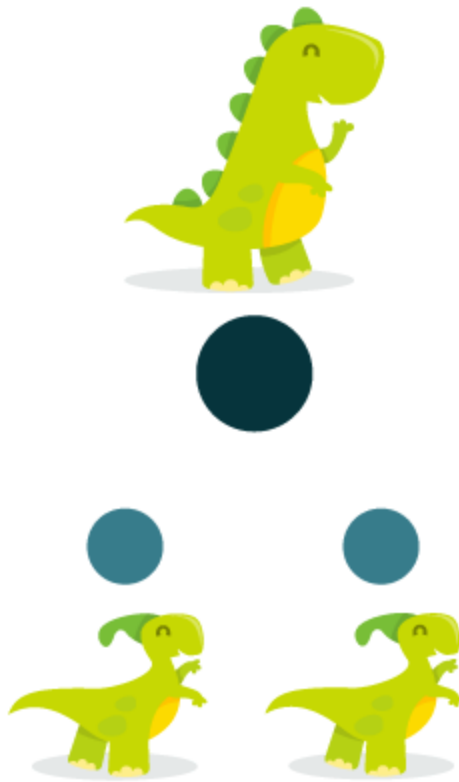
Through visual arts, students can be made aware of beat or pulse by being directed to:

- Visualize beat/pulse through icons
- Notate beat/pulse within a piece of music


The sub-concept then can be reinforced by directing students to:

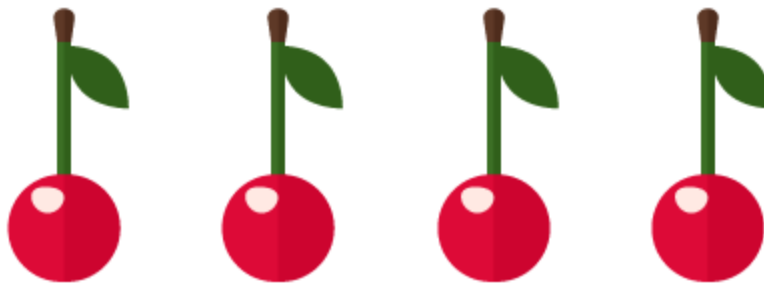
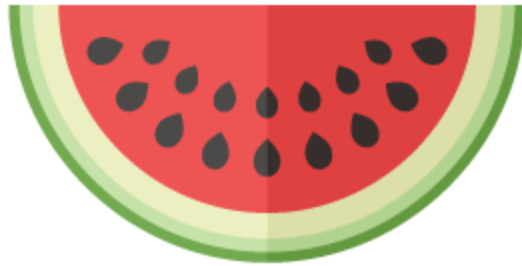
- Listen or feel for the beat/pulse in a music recording or on their wrist
- Chant a song or rhyme emphasizing the beat/pulse
- Respond physically with movement to the beat/pulse in music and nature

Graphics and icons are effective tools in helping students visually experience relative note durations. The graphics can be adjusted to the age level of the student. Note how the placement of these icons can aid students in understanding the relationships between note values.



1 half note = 2 quarter notes

 Enlarge



1 whole note = 4 quarter notes

 Enlarge

Using icons to direct students' attention to a concept is a first step towards music reading. In this classroom, the teacher is using an icon for every beat so that the students can discern each pulse of the music.

Melody

When singing familiar songs, students should be encouraged to move their hands to the melodic contour or draw the shape of the main theme as it occurs. This can also be implemented as a group activity with five or six students holding one piece of a long cord and each student responding to a part of the melodic line, moving the cord up and down with their hands in

relation to the pitches. The cord can also be used to create a melody. As a group of the students decides on how their melodic line should move, the class can respond by singing the contour on a neutral syllable such as loo. Note how this is implemented in the following example.

Melodic contours can be used to compose a piece by supplying the students with several different types of contrasting contours on 5" by 7" cards and encouraging them to mix and match several together. Students can sing or play different combinations of cards. The following graphics are good examples of different types of contours that can create compositions.

Sharpen Students' Perception Aurally and Visually

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To help sharpen students' perception, they should be asked if two pitches are the same or different, or if two melodic fragments are the same or different. Asking students to indicate when a familiar phrase or song returns can extend this percept. Engaging students in echo activities by singing short phrases or visually comparing patterns are effective methods of guiding students towards more refined powers of discrimination.

The concept of high and low is a natural progression from the melodic contour. Young students can identify and demonstrate the movement of high and low more easily than describe the movement. It is also effective to provide several opportunities for students to display their understanding through movement and by using song bells and manipulatives or icons to help make the concept concrete.

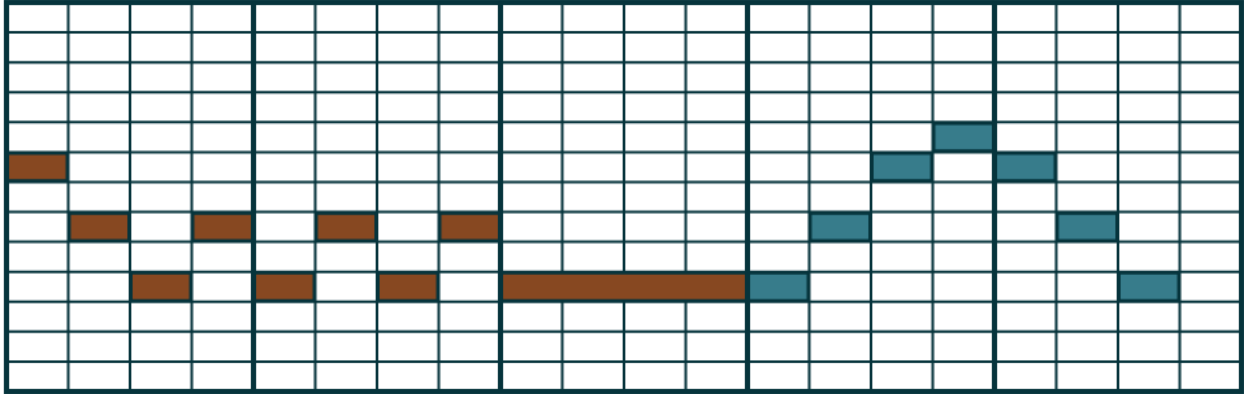


A visual representation of high and low

[Enlarge](#)

After students demonstrate the pitch and melody movement of high and low, these percepts can be refined to distinguish between up—down—same, and skip—step—same movements. Students may more easily discern downward movement first and, with repeated activities, begin to perceive upward movement and when pitches stay the same. Students will also begin to recognize patterns of movement in the form of simple sequences through iconic representations, listening and reading activities.

How would you musically interpret this abstract representation?



Which pitches are the same? Which change?

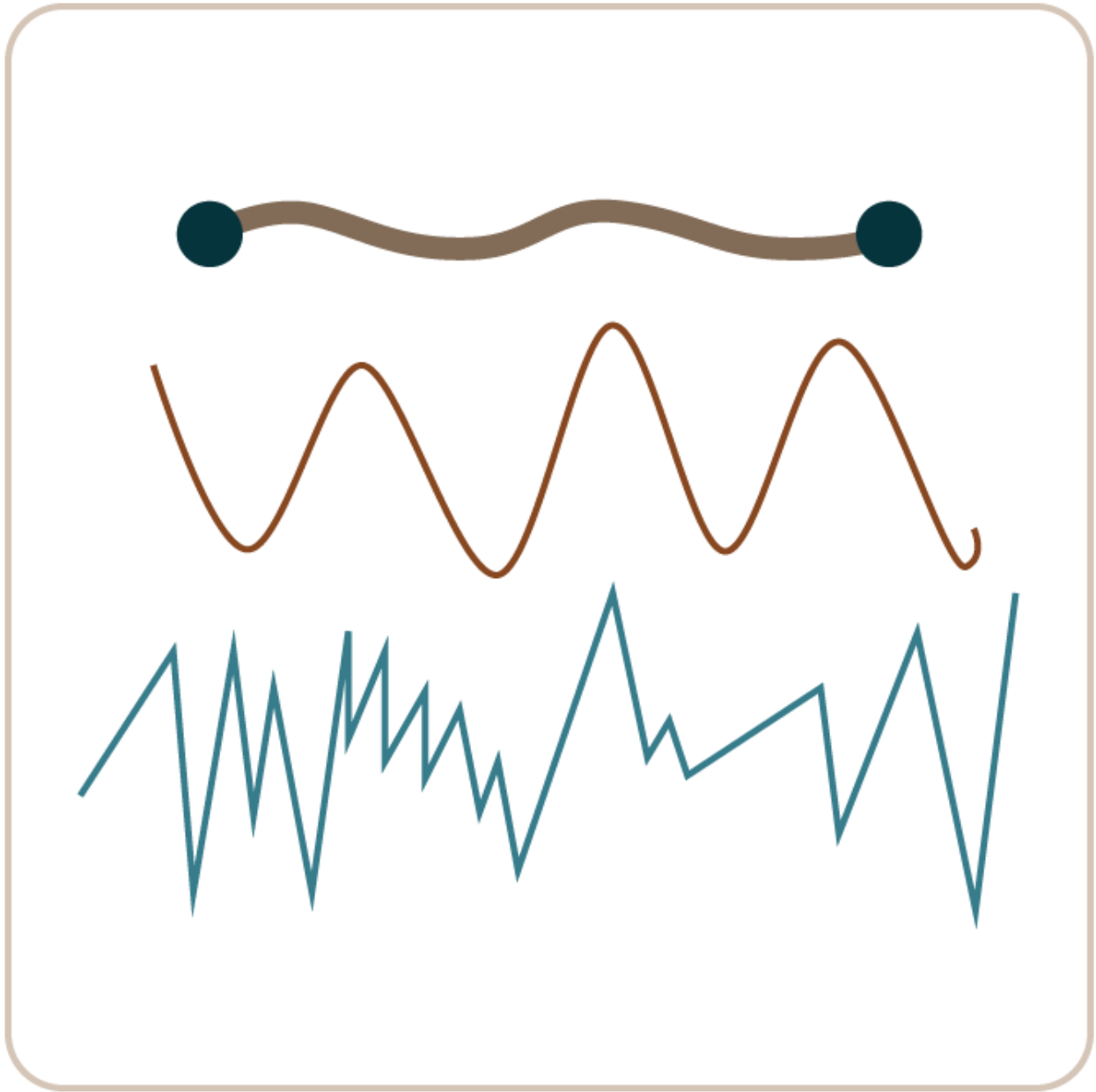
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After students can visually determine movement, kinesthetic activities—such as locomotor or non-locomotor movement—can reinforce and assess the concepts. Singing and listening will also help to support and reinforce the concepts making the melodic movement more tangible.

PowerPoint movies can help students identify melodic lines, phrases, and sequences. The following example can be created from any song and used in the elementary music classroom setting.



[Are You Sleeping?](#)



Basic visual representations for melodic contours

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ПРОЕКТЪ
ПОРТАЛЬНАГО КОРОТА
ВЪ КИЕВѢ.



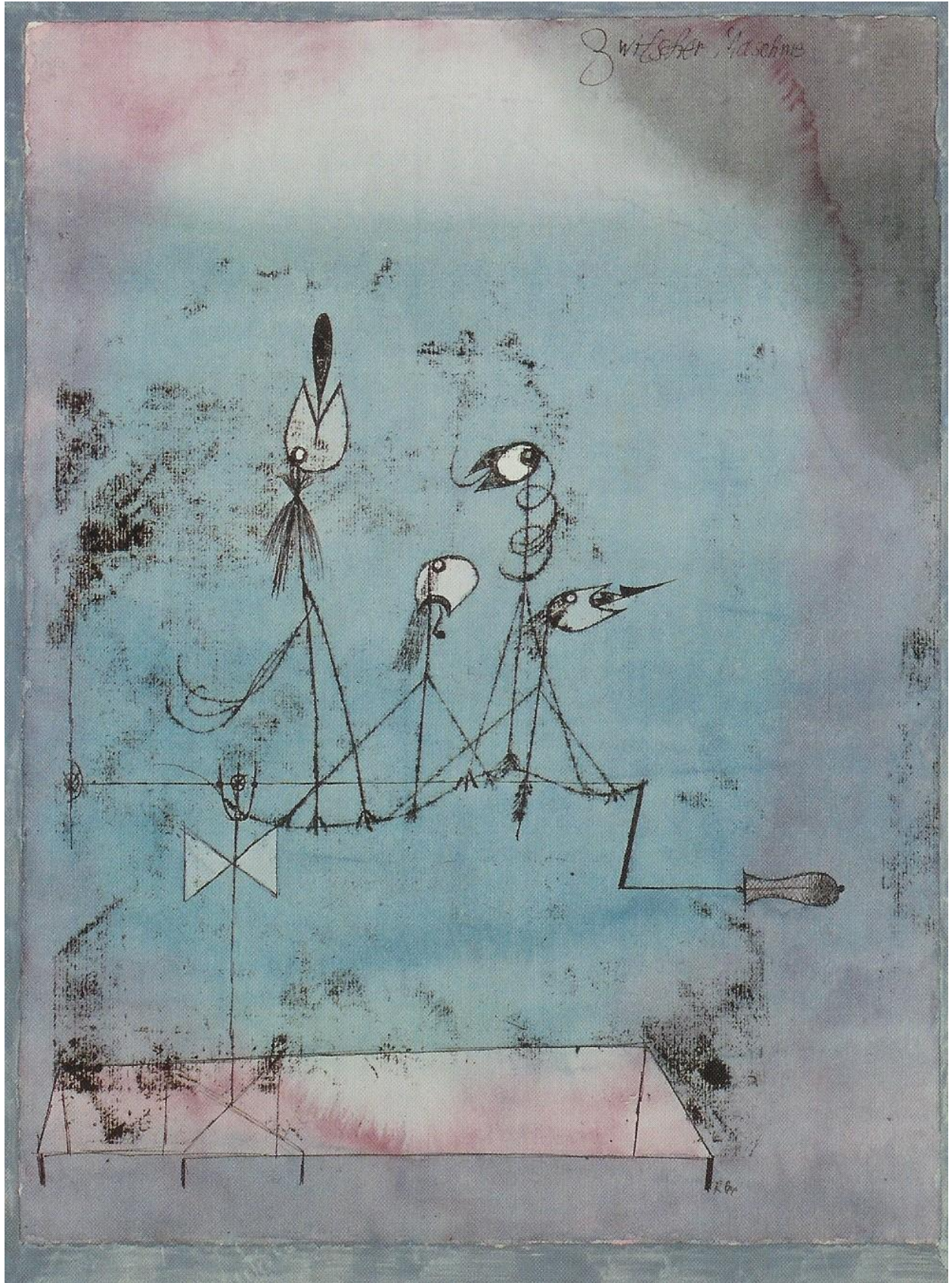
ПРОЕКТЪ

1876

The Great Gate of Kiev by Victor Hartmann – Inspiration for Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*

 **Enlarge**

Zwischen Maschine



The Twittering Machine by Paul Klee – Inspiration for Gunther Schuller's work of the same name

 [Enlarge](#)

Form and Expression

Like the visual arts (painting, sculpture, architecture, etc.), music has a basic structure composed of different elements or parts arranged to make a unified work; this is form. And, as in all the arts, form is achieved by unity and variety through repetition and contrast.

In the example below, Van Gogh demonstrates a sense of unity through the use of energetic strokes and curved lines throughout the work, while variety and contrast are present in the colors of the bright stars against a dark sky. Form in art is similar to that in a musical work in which sections of the piece are tied together (unified) through a melody that reoccurs throughout, contrasted by different melodies, themes, motives, or "tunes". The following examples show a motive from Bizet's opera *Carmen*. Can you tell how many times this unifying melody occurs in the work?



Starry Night by Van Gogh

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Motif from "Habanera" in the opera Carmen by G. Bizet

 Enlarge



[Carmen - Habanera \(Bizet; Anna Caterina Antonacci, The Royal Opera\)](#)

The smaller elements of form (motive and phrases) are brought together into sections, which in turn combine in a variety of ways into the larger form. These can be graphically and visually represented in a variety of ways.

In learning form, students often are asked to demonstrate what they hear and understand through overt behavior such as playing instruments, displaying body movements, or identifying visual representations, such as icons. Students can be encouraged to draw simple shapes such as circles, triangles, and squares to demonstrate the form of a piece as they listen, draw a storyboard as they listen, or create a listening map or call chart. This type of active learning helps the students identify and understand what they perceive through their senses.

Visual representations are particularly effective approaches to making the concept of form more concrete. The students might:

- Illustrate or draw representations of form
- Manipulate shapes or letters while they are listening. For example, a square might represent the opening section of the music, and a circle, the contrasting section
- Visually represent same and different with shapes or pictures
- Become aware of melodic contour as an aid to analyze form by tracing the notes in a melody, like a connect—the—dots drawing

Rondo Form



Rondo form

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Expression

Visual comparisons of dynamics, tempo, and articulation are always effective methods of relaying expressive concepts to students. Note the following comparisons.




Loud

[Enlarge](#)



Soft

 **Enlarge**



Fast

 **Enlarge**



Slow

[↗ Enlarge](#)

This can be extended by having students react to program music by creating a drawing of a scene or scenes. For example, students can draw snow scenes while listening to "Snow is Dancing" from Debussy's *Children's Corner Suite*.