

Our Musical Heritage

For 5th-8th grades



Lesson 1 — Musical Form

Objective

Using the music of European composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and American composer John Philip Sousa, students will compare and contrast two musical forms. They will explore the origins and will understand and identify key elements of each musical form.

Suggested Materials

- Fact sheets for two composers: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart & John Philip Sousa (provided)
- Recordings of Mozart's *Magic Flute Overture* & Sousa's *Invincible Eagle* (audio links can be found at <https://bpo.org/music-for-youth-hub/>)
- Musical Form guides (provided)

New York State Arts Standards

MU:Re7.1.5a-8a

MU:Re7.2.5a-8a

MU:Re8.1.5a-8a

New York State English Language Arts & Literacy Standards

Reading, Standard 1

Writing, Standard 2 & 6

Speaking & Listening, Standard 1, 2, & 4

Language, Standard 1, & 2

New York State Social Studies Standards

Standard 1: History of the United States and New York

Standard 2: World History

Procedure

- 1) Form in music refers to the musical architecture or the way the music is structured.
- 2) The opera, *The Magic Flute*, is structured in two acts with an opening, introductory instrumental overture. The overture played before the curtain opens sets the stage for the action and music to follow, and helps the audience to emotionally prepare for the opera. During Mozart's time, the overture did not always reference melodic themes heard in the rest of the opera, but the slow introduction to *The Magic Flute Overture* does contain three chords that are heard at significant points throughout the opera. *The Magic Flute Overture* is in 3-section Sonata form.
 - a) Introduce students to sonata form using the guide below. The exposition first presents two themes; a middle development section varies and develops those themes; and a final recapitulation section re-states the main themes. Guide students in describing the musical elements of each section.
 - i. After the slow introduction, you hear a fast theme that begins quietly and builds in intensity. What instrument(s) introduce the second, contrasting theme in a new key? What musical techniques help introduce the new theme?
 - ii. Can you identify when the Development section of the Overture begins? Mozart develops the main themes through various keys throughout the middle Development section.
 - iii. Can you hear when Mozart restates the main themes from the Exposition with some variation in the Recapitulation section at the end of the Overture?



Lesson 1 — *Musical Form* (continued)

- 3) March music originated in purpose to regulate the functioning of armies in the field by communicating orders, and keeping time during marching and maneuvers, as well to boost morale among ranks. Over time, march music evolved to being performed during ceremonies and as a source of entertainment, even being used to decorate circus acts.
 - a) Marches are typically made up of three common elements: contrasting sections, called strains; several different melodies; and a trio section that repeats variations of the previous strains.
 - b) Introduce students to the form of a march using the guide below. Explain that each letter represents a different section in the piece. Discuss the musical elements that define each unique section of the march. What are some musical characteristics that differentiate the sections? What are common elements that can be found in each section?
 - c) Have students listen to the recording of Sousa's *Invincible Eagle*. Upon the second listening, have students notate the time stamp in which they hear each new section begin. Have them support their claim by providing examples of musical elements they heard that aided them in their conclusion. How did the dynamics change in the Trio section? What instruments played the melody in the second strain? How does the melody contrast with the previous strain?
- 4) Have students select a piece of music they enjoy listening to and determine the musical form. Have them identify when the melody changes, when it repeats, and when any new themes are introduced. Students may notate their findings using time stamps.



Lesson 1 — *Musical Form* (continued)

SONATA FORM



Exposition: includes 2 themes (called subjects) that contrast with each other. The first theme is often called the principal theme, and the second theme is called the subordinate theme. A connecting episode of music is typically heard before the second theme enters, which is contrasted in a different key, melody or rhythm.

Development: The musical material introduced in the Exposition is reworked and extended through different musical techniques, which could include sequencing, imitation, augmentation (lengthening of notes) and diminution (shortening of notes), modulation (change from one key to another), and new rhythms.

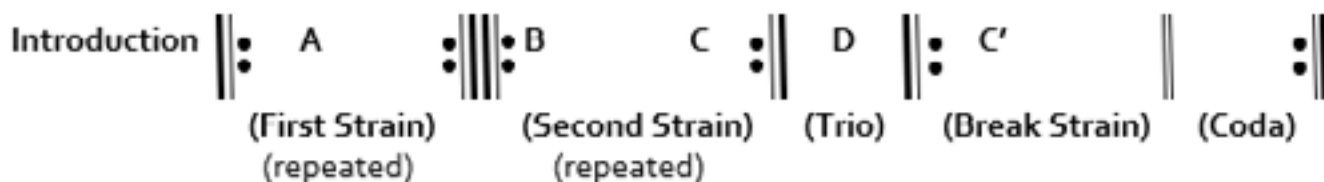
Recapitulation: a repeat of the Exposition with some changes to add variety. The second theme is often in the original key. Composers may add ornamentation (embellishment of the melody) or alter the length of the themes.

Coda (optional): an optional ending typically in the original key the Exposition began with that acts as a strong finish



Lesson 1 — *Musical Form* (continued)

MARCH FORM



Introduction: typically 4, 8 or 16 measures long and sets the mood of the music

First Strain: first melody of the march; typically 8 or 16 measures long; repeated with added counter-melodies, often with dynamic contrast

Second Strain: introduction of a second melody; typically 16 measures long; repeated; often played softer for contrast or by different instruments than the first strain

Trio: featured section of the march; third, main melody emerges; immediate change in the dynamic level from loud to soft; tonal center, or key signature, changes; typically 32 measures long; most contrasting of all the sections

Break Strain: the louder, more intense part of a march, serves as a break between the softer trio sections; fourth melody emerges

Coda: a final return to the Trio theme played much more loudly, which is often the most exciting section of the march

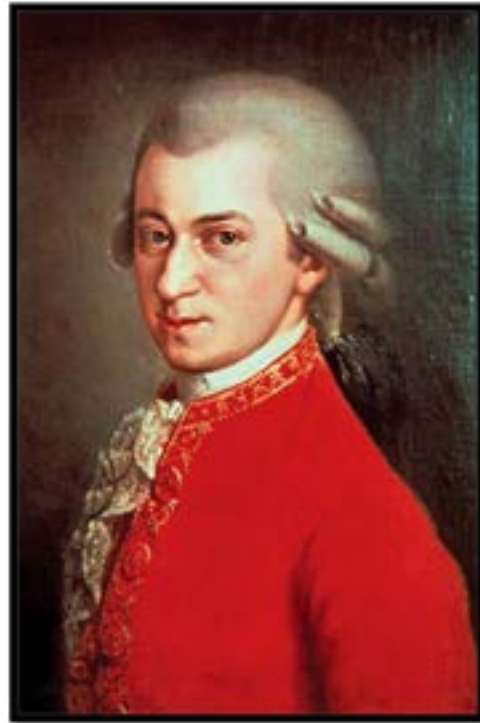
Stinger: the last measure of the march contains a chord played in unison by the entire ensemble; can be compared to an exclamation mark at the end of a sentence



Lesson 1 — *Musical Form* (continued)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

- One of the greatest composers in the history of Western music
- Worked as a composer, conductor, virtuoso pianist, organist and violinist
- Born in Salzburg, Austria
- Scared of the trumpet as a young boy
- Spoke 15 languages
- Composed several famous operas including *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *The Magic Flute*
- If you were to listen to Mozart's entire body of work straight through, it would take 202 hours, or about 8 days
- Died in Vienna in 1791 at the age of 35



The Magic Flute

- Fairytale story about a damsel in distress and the handsome prince who rescues her
- Written in the *Singspiel* style, a form of German-language music drama that includes both singing and spoken dialogue
- Mozart himself conducted the orchestra in the premiere of the opera, just a few months before his death
- The Overture was not completed until two days before the premiere, meaning the orchestra likely had to sight-read it on opening night, not an uncommon practice for the time period
- Most popular of Mozart's operas and the second most performed opera globally



Lesson 1 — *Musical Form* (continued)

John Philip Sousa

- American composer of march music
- Known fondly as “The March King”
- Born in Washington, D.C.
- Studied violin, music theory & composition
- Served as conductor of the United States Marine Band for 12 years
- Aided in the development of the sousaphone
- Organized The Sousa Band which toured in America and around the world
- Wrote over 130 marches
- “The Stars & Stripes Forever” was adopted in 1987 as the national march of the United States
- Died in Reading, Pennsylvania at the age of 77



Invincible Eagle

- Written for the Pan American Exposition World Fair in Buffalo, NY
- Written by John Philip Sousa on a train between Buffalo and New York City
- Premiered in Philadelphia on May 30, 1901
- Sousa believed this march would become his greatest hit
- Sousa considered titling the march “Spirit of Niagara”
- Sousa designated this march as one of his “sunshine” marches, as it conveys the military spirit at its lightest and brightest