

# ACO MUSIC & ART

## Lesson Three: Music, Art & Emotion

### Additional Notes for teachers, parents and students

Interpreting and perceiving emotion in music and art can be very subjective and will often differ from person to person based on environment, culture, and current mood. There are however some themes and concepts of music and art that are widely accepted as conveying a particular meaning.

### Emotion in Music

The different concepts of music can be used in different ways to convey emotion. Some examples are below (but remember there is no right or wrong!)

Concept	Ways to convey emotion
<b>Duration</b> Long or short sounds	<b>Long sounds</b> - sadness, depression, suspense <b>Short sounds</b> - happiness, excitement, anger
<b>Dynamics</b> Loud or soft sounds	<b>Loud sounds</b> - anger, power, intensity Soft sounds - happiness, relaxation, sadness
<b>Pitch</b> High or low sounds	<b>High sounds</b> - cheerful, excitement, happiness <b>Low sounds</b> - suspense, angry, sadness, boredom
<b>Tone Colour</b> The sound the instrument makes	Playing an instrument a certain way can make different sounds and create a strong impression of an emotion.  For example: plucking a string on a violin creates a different mood and sound, compared to dragging the bow across the strings.

### Emotion in Visual Art

Concept	Ways to convey emotion
<b>Colour</b>	<b>Light / bright colours (e.g. yellow, pink)</b> - happiness, excitement
<b>Texture &amp; Structure</b>	<b>Thick lines and shapes</b> - fullness, confusion, anger <b>Thin lines and shapes</b> - emptiness, sadness  If you leave lots of blank space in your artwork, it could mean <b>emptiness</b> , or <b>sadness</b> .  Lots of space being used could mean <b>confusion, jealousy, anger</b> .

## About the Music

**Dimitri Shostakovich: Chamber Symphony** – Shostakovich is very well known for depicting war in his compositions. This piece was inspired by the devastating scenes of the post-war German city of Dresden. He makes use of clashing, short, loud and accented notes in this excerpt, implying gunfire and the terror that war brings.

**Ralph Vaughn Williams: The Lark Ascending** – This piece depicts the composer's own experiences of the aftermath of World War II, but in a vastly different way. A "lark" is a type of bird, which is imitated by the solo violin. After the war, the hauntingly beautiful song of the Lark is something that is not often heard anymore. In this piece he mourns and laments over the loss of the beautiful song of the Lark.

**Gustav Mahler: Song of the Earth** – This piece was written months before the death of its composer, Mahler. It is an incredibly personal reflection of his life, that is accentuated by the addition of two vocalists, who sing text translated from ancient Chinese poetry. Words are able to very clearly describe emotion.

## About the Art

**Edvard Munch: The Scream** – Edvard Munch was an "Expressionist", meaning he expressed strong feelings through colours and bold brush-strokes in his paintings. This is particularly evident in this painting through his use of very deep, contrasting colours. The warped background and wide-eyed face in the painting evoke unsettling feelings of anxiety and fear, which he had described feeling during the event which inspired this painting.

**Jackson Pollock: Number 1** – Many initial emotions experienced by people viewing this abstract painting for the first time are confusion, and anxiety. Compared to "The Scream", the deeper meaning is not immediately as obvious, which was the goal of the artist. This was also achieved by not giving the painting a name other than just a "number".

**Pablo Picasso: Melancholy Woman** – During the year this was painted, young Picasso had frequently felt depressed and sad, due to the death of a close friend. Also during this time, blue was commonly associated with feelings of depression, evil and death. Many of Picasso's paintings during this period were done using a rich variety of blues to convey his emotions.