



## FEATURE

### The Art of the Tune

Meets National Core Arts Anchor Standards 3-6, 9 and 10

## OBJECTIVES

- Refine and complete artistic ideas and work (*Cr3*)
- Analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation (*Pr4*)
- Develop and refine artistic work for presentation (*Pr5*)
- Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work (*Pr6*)
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work (*Re9*)
- Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art (*Cn10*)

## MATERIALS

- *Music Alive!* magazines (November 2016)
- Computer or mobile device with Internet access
- *Music Alive!* Worksheet #12: Staff Paper (download at [musicalive.com](http://musicalive.com))
- Notation software/digital audio workstations (optional)

## START

**Have students read** “The Art of the Tune” on pages 10-13, then go over the following highlighted words. [This reinforces comprehension and vocabulary.]

**INVOLUNTARILY** — not done by choice

**PERMUTATIONS** — different forms of something

**NUANCED** — having slight differences

**INDICATE** — to point out

**DISTINCT** — different from something else

## DEVELOP

- **1. Play** “Billie Jean” by Michael Jackson (Hear the Music playlist **track 5** at [musicalive.com](http://musicalive.com)).

### ASK

- **Based on your reading, can you identify this selection?** (“Billie Jean” by Michael Jackson.)
- **In the intro, is the hi-hat playing quarter or eighth notes?** (Steady eighths.)
- **Is the song in a major key or a minor one?** (Minor—F# minor.)
- **Beginning at around 0:21, we hear chordal accents from a synthesizer. On which beats do they fall?** (Beat 1 and the “and” of beat 2.)
- **How many different chords are there in each measure?** (Two.)
- **What type of section comes after the intro?** (Verse.)
- **How many chords are in each measure here?** (One.)
- **What section comes in at 1:27?** (Chorus.)
- **Do you think this song has the same effect on audiences as it did in the 1980s? Why or why not?** (Subjective.)

- **2. Play** “Piano Man” by Billy Joel (Hear the Music playlist **track 6** at [musicalive.com](http://musicalive.com)).

### ASK

- **Based on your reading, can you identify this selection?** (“Piano Man” by Billy Joel.)
- **Would you say that the piano introduction fits within the 3/4 time signature, or free time?** (Free time.)
- **What instrument comes in at around 0:13?** (Harmonica.)
- **Is it still in free time at this point?** (No, it’s in 3/4.)
- **How many different chords does each bar have?** (Only one.)
- **What’s the first section after the intro?** (Verse.)
- **What about the section that comes in at around 1:02?** (A second verse.)
- **And at 1:31?** (Chorus.)
- **Do you think this song has the same effect on audiences as it did in the 1970s? Why or why not?** (Subjective.)

- **3. Play** “When We Were Young” by Adele (Hear the Music playlist **track 7** at [musicalive.com](http://musicalive.com)).

### ASK

- **Based on your reading, can you identify this selection?** (“When We Were Young” by Adele.)
- **What’s the time signature?** (A slow 4/4.)
- **Is the key signature minor or major?** (Minor—C minor.)
- **How often do the chords tend to change?** (Every two beats.)
- **How many measures is the intro?** (Four.)
- **What section comes next?** (Verse.)
- **True or false: A song must always start with an intro, followed by a verse.** (False.)
- **What section begins at 1:24?** (Chorus.)
- **What’s the most prominent instrument on the recording?** (Piano.)
- **Which of these three selections do you think is the best written, and why?** (Subjective.)

## CLOSE

**Pass out copies** of the staff paper worksheet, or have the students go on computers to use notation software or digital audio workstations. Ask students to write and notate short songs based on the steps outlined in the article. After the students have completed their songs, ask some volunteers to present them before the class. Lead the class in a positive critique of how each student went about the songwriting process.

## ASSESS

- **Did the students read the article?**
- **Did they talk about the three listening selections?**
- **Did they compose their songs and present them to the class?**