

Aim: How do unexpected dynamic changes create musical movement?

Summary: We analyze dynamic change and contrast in Mozart's Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Materials: colored pencils or markers, staff paper

Time Requirement: three 20-minute sessions

Standards: US 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8; NYC 1, 2, 3

Vocabulary: overture, opera, dynamics, tempo

Unit 4 Overview

Activity 4.1: What is an Overture?



Activity 4.2: Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro* Listening Map

Creative Extension 1: Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro* Dynamics Map

Activity 4.3: Get Things Moving with Dynamic Surprises

Creative Extension 2: Draw Your Own Cartoon Story

Activity 4.1: What is an Overture?

- How do all TV programs—cartoons, news, soap operas—begin?
- Why would you want music at the beginning of a TV program?
- What are some of your favorite TV theme songs, and how does the music connect with the program?
- Play Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro*,  Track 31.
 - What kind of show would this music introduce?
-  Introduce and define the overture and story from Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*.

opera:
a live theater show in which the characters sing what they're saying instead of talking to each other

overture:
instrumental music that acts as the introduction to an opera

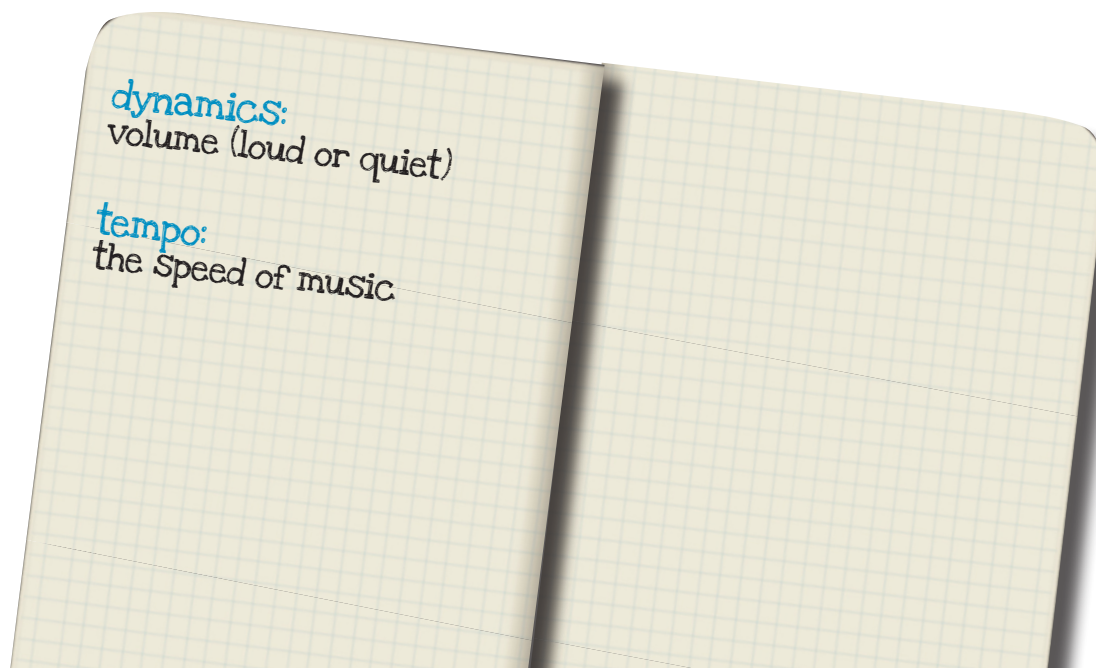
The Marriage of Figaro is an opera that tells a funny story about a whirlwind day filled with confusion, chaos, surprises, tricks, and a happy ending. The Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro* uses slow and fast tempos as well as loud and soft dynamics to represent the different characters of the opera and all the tricks they play on each other.

Activity 4.2: Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro* Listening Map







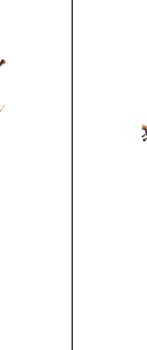
- Locate the Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro* Dynamic Surprises Listening Map (SG46).
 - *What information does this map include?*
- Play 🎧 Track 32, Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro* (excerpt), while looking at the map.
- Play 🎧 Track 33, Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro* (sections), while tracking the sections on the map.
 - *How does Mozart use the orchestra to build excitement in each section?*
- Play 🎧 Track 34, Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro* (with pulses), while tracking pulses on the map and counting the pulses out loud with the narrator.
 - 📖 *How does Mozart play with surprisingly soft and loud dynamics?*
 - *What else do you notice? Write it on your map.*

Creative Extension 1: Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro* Dynamics Map

- Watch 📺 Music Animation Machine, *The Marriage of Figaro*.
- Locate *The Marriage of Figaro* score reduction, available on the Online Community.
 - *What information does this score include?*
- Play 🎧 Track 31, Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro*.
- While the CD plays, practice following the score with your finger.
- Choose two contrasting colored pencils or crayons, and highlight notes, phrases, and sections in the score as surprisingly loud (first color) and surprisingly soft (second color).
- Stop and restart the CD from the beginning as needed to check your work and continue your listening.
- Share and compare work.
 - *How does Mozart use surprisingly soft and loud dynamic changes?*



Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro* Dynamic Surprises Listening Map

| | Section 1 at 0:02 | Section 2 at 0:07 | Section 3 at 0:10 | Section 4 at 0:15 | Section 5 at 0:23 | Section 6 at 0:35 | Section 7 at 0:48 |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| Measures | 1–7 | 8–11 | 12–17 | 18–27 | 28–41 | 42–57 | 58–63 |
| Duration | 5 seconds / 14 pulses | 3 seconds / 8 pulses | 5 seconds / 12 pulses | 8 seconds / 20 pulses | 12 seconds / 28 pulses | 13 seconds / 16+16 pulses | 5 seconds / 12 pulses |
| Surprises (loud and soft , with pulse numbers) | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 |
| Changes (dynamics and energy) | Quiet, quick notes Low and middle range notes | Slower notes in four sets of three Range rising up | Suddenly all very loud Lots of highs and lows, very full, a little softer near the end | First pulse of every four is suddenly loud for four times , while everything else is soft | Lots of loud unison playing The melody falls into two six-measure sections | Suddenly soft with unexpected loud accents then four pulses of quick, soft notes , then the whole 16-note section repeats | Loud, unexpected accents Slower notes in three sets of two + three Range falling down |
| Melody |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I Also Noticed ... | | | | | | | |
| Key: loud surprises = orange soft surprises = blue | | | | | | | |

Activity 4.3: Get Things Moving with Dynamic Surprises

- Use two sources of sudden dynamic change to alter your performance of a well-known song, using voice, percussion, or body percussion.
 - Choose a piece of music that everyone knows and can play or sing (maybe one of the Link Up songs you've already learned).
 - Sing or play the piece.
 - Plan ways to create unexpected dynamic changes using volume and intensity or ensemble size and weight. For example:

Volume and Intensity

Red = forte, blue = piano

Come to play, join sound with sound

Come to sing, we'll shake the ground with song

Ensemble Size and Weight

Orange = tutti, lavender = soloist


Come to play, join sound with sound

Come to sing, we'll shake the ground with song

- Sing or play the altered piece as planned.
 - *How did our dynamic surprises affect the music? Was it an improvement? What other musical surprises would you like to try?*

Creative Extension 2: Draw Your Own Cartoon Story

The Marriage of Figaro tells the funny story of a crazy day in which there are lots of surprises, people trying to trick each other, and a happy ending.

- Play  Track 31, Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro*.
- Think aloud and model making comic-style story panels, as inspired by the music.

Example for Teachers

"My main character is Figaro. As I listen to the music, I ask myself, 'What does the music tell me is happening here? Is this an exciting part? A chase scene? Are characters making friends? Is someone playing a trick?' I decide, then draw that scene while I listen."

Comic-style story panels can include drawings, dialogue, labels, movement marks, sound effects (Pow!), and more. Use one sheet of paper for each panel. Students' panels can be a single, continuous story (related), or individual moments (unrelated).

- Students create their own panels while listening to all seven sections.
- When there is a change in the music, change the story in your picture to match the music.
- Share, and compare and contrast stories and drawings.