

# ANCHORAGE MUSEUM

## MUSIC: THEME, MOOD, AND TONE

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**Tlingit dancers, singer, and drummer, Romig Junior High gymnasium; print date  
Nov 70**

Paper, nk  
Anchorage Museum, B2014.002.741

## UNIT AT A GLANCE

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Students will explore concepts of conveying mood and emotion through aural media. Afterwards, students will have the opportunity to engage in telling their own story. Students can write their own short stories or take pre-existing stories and add music and sound effects to them.

## STANDARDS

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### Alaska Arts Standards

- MU:PR4-6a Explain how understanding the structure and elements of music used in music selected for performance
- MU: PR6-6 Perform music with technical accuracy to convey the creator's intent
- MU: RE7b-6 Describe how the elements of music, expressive qualities and context (personal, cultural, social), relate to the structure of musical pieces
- MU: RE8-5 Demonstrate and explain expressive qualities (dynamics, tempo, timbre, articulation) and how they support creators'/performers' expressive intent
- MU: RE9-5 Evaluate musical works and performances, applying established criteria, and explain appropriateness to the context, citing evidence from the elements of music
- MU:RE9-6 Apply teacher-provided criteria to evaluate musical works or performances
- MU: CO10-6 a. Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, responding to music
- MU: CO10-6 c. Present the final version of a personal composition or arrangement, using craftsmanship and originality to demonstrate an effective beginning, middle and ending, and convey expressive intent

## MATERIALS

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### Close-Looking

- Untitled* [Tlingit dancers, singer, and drummer, Romig Junior High gymnasium; print date Nov 70], Anchorage Museum; B2014.002.741
- Dancing at whaling feast, Point Hope, Alaska* [1967], Anchorage Museum; B2013.066.124
- Untitled* (young boy dancing indoors, women and male drummers seated behind, Barrow), Anchorage Museum; B2016.006.1869

### Music

- Orff instruments or instruments from home
- Collection of short children's stories
- Writing utensils

## KEY TERMS

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<i>theme</i>	a repeated idea found throughout a composition
<i>mood</i>	the overall feeling of a composition
<i>tone</i>	the artist's attitude toward a composition through its structure
<i>score</i>	the sum of a musical piece, either in written or oral form
<i>yuraq</i>	Central Alaskan Yup'ik for 's/he is dancing in the Yup'ik way
<i>agnguaq</i>	Central Alaskan Yup'ik term for 's/he is dancing in a non-Alaska Native style'

## CLOSE-LOOKING

### TIME FRAME

Approximately 40 minutes

### MATERIALS

*Untitled* [Tlingit dancers, singer, and drummer, Romig Junior High gymnasium; print date Nov 70], Anchorage Museum; B2014.002.741

*Dancing at whaling feast, Point Hope, Alaska* [1967], Anchorage Museum; B2013.066.124

*Untitled* (young boy dancing indoors, women and male drummers seated behind, Barrow), Anchorage Museum; B2016.006.1869

### DIRECTIONS

1. Begin by looking closely at provided photographs. Use the questions below to guide discussion.

[30 min.]

**CLOSE-LOOKING:** Look closely, quietly at the objects for a few minutes.

**OBSERVE:** Share your observations about each photograph.



***Untitled* [Tlingit dancers, singer, and drummer, Romig Junior High gymnasium; print date Nov 70], Anchorage Museum; B2014.002.741**

**ASK:** *What do you notice about this image?*

*Describe the objects and people that you see in this image.*

*What might the people in the image be doing?*

*Why do you think this picture was taken?*

*What does this remind you of?*

*What more can you find?*



***Dancing at whaling feast, Point Hope, Alaska, [1967], Anchorage Museum; B2013.066.124***

**ASK:** *What do you notice about this image?*

*Describe what you see in this image.*

*What might you feel if you were in this image?*

*In what time of year do you think this image is set?*

*What does this remind you of?*

*What more can you find?*



***Untitled* (young boy dancing indoors, women and male drummers seated behind, Barrow), Anchorage Museum; B2016.006.1869**

**ASK:** *What do you notice about this image?*

*What sounds might you hear if you were in this image?*

*How might you describe the various objects in the image?*

*What can the objects in the photo tell us about where this photo was taken?*

*What does this remind you of?*

*What more can you find?*

**DISCUSS:** Use the [20 Questions Deck](#) for more group discussion questions about the photographs.

2. As a class, discuss how music and rhythm influence the atmosphere of a performance. Invite students to share their favorite moments from media and what

components come into play that make the moments memorable.

[10 min.]

## MUSIC IN STORYTELLING

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### TIME FRAME

Approximately 2 class sessions

### MATERIALS

Orff instruments or instruments from home  
Collection of short children's stories  
Writing utensils

### DIRECTIONS

**1.** Discuss with students the ways in which sounds can be used in storytelling. Ask: *what are ways that music and sounds can influence mood and tone in a story?* Prompt students to think of both sounds and stories in their broadest terms. Consider movie and videogame scores, musicals, instrumentals, sound effects, and tone across genres.

[10 min.]

**2.** Share excerpts and examples of interesting sound use from the list provided. Try to explore multiple genres and soundscapes to give a fuller idea to your students.

[5 min.]

**3.** Make a list of moods, themes, and tones that can be conveyed or enhanced with music and sound effects in small groups. Share out these ideas as a class.

[7 min.]

**4.** In small groups, invite students to begin working on their own musical story. They can write their own short story or read out an excerpt from a work that they enjoy. They should make a list of the tones and sounds that help capture the mood of their work. Allow students to take home their stories to work on them further.

[20+ min.]

**5.** Encourage students to share their stories in front of the class. Discuss as a class the ways in which they conveyed their themes and mood using instruments and sound effects. Does this match the intended effects?

[15 min.]

## ASSESSMENT

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Students will be assessed based on participation in class discussion and completion of their composition.

## LEARN MORE

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### **Compositional Elements in Alaska Native Music, Dance, and Storytelling:**

Alaska Native cultures demonstrate a vast array of diversity in conveying tone and mood for audiences. Prior to European contact, music and dance influences followed established methods for composing. Along regions where neighboring groups frequently met or lived alongside one another, Alaska Native peoples would share songs, and invite members of other communities for larger festivals. As Euro-American influences entered Alaska beginning in the late 1700s, many Alaska Native communities experienced a suppression of dancing and singing lasting well into the 1900s. During this time, government and religious institutions banned or limited many styles of singing and dancing, with some communities losing their songs and dances altogether. For other communities, singing and dancing continued in private settings. Additionally, western instruments and styles began taking root in Alaska Native communities. The combination of these two components led to a synthesis of Alaska Native and western traditions.

Similarly, the arrival of Europeans and Americans altered forms of storytelling as literature. In Yup'ik storytelling,

repetition of suffixes for both its rhythmic effect and impact on the story is one tool available to the storyteller to set the tone. These storytelling devices vary between storytellers, story tellings, and story genre. Content matter such as humorous or horrifying events in turn set the mood and also gradually change with each retelling. Similarly, Dena'ina storytellers would tell certain *sukdu* only during the appropriate season, and in certain locations. Telling of *sukdu* in this style did not necessitate a complete storytelling in one sitting. Certain *sukdu* could take a long time to tell, with storytellers sharing short segments of a story between days or even weeks. Euro-American settling of Alaska Natives into permanent villages, school systems, and the introduction of books and recordings changed the ways in which Alaska Native people tell and compose stories.

Today, the influence of western culture is evident in Alaska Native compositions. Stories in Alaska's Indigenous languages are available in written and illustrated forms. Songs and dances in some regions sometimes incorporate western topics like basketball and nursery rhymes in movement and sound, adding to the existing repertoire.

**MULTIMEDIA:**

Byron Nicholai - [Yuraq\(drum dance\) with a mask in Whitehorse](#)

Seattle Symphony - [Gene Tagaban & Swil Kanim: Raven Dance](#)

Anchorage Museum - [K'QAK'ELIGA / LOVE SONG](#)

**READ:**

Canadian Journal for Traditional Music - [Love and Lonesome Songs of the Skeena River](#)

Alaska Public Media - [Tarvarnauramken: The meaning behind the Yupik song that went viral](#)