

# *How I See Music*

## CLASSROOM KIT | 2026–2027



# *How I See Music*

## **CLASSROOM KIT | 2026–2027**

The *How I See Music* classroom kit complements the in-class workshop led by Festival Napa Valley Education staff. The optional pre-visit lessons and extension activities give teachers simple ways to introduce the orchestra, practice deep listening, and connect music with visual art.

### **Kit Contents**

- About *How I See Music*
- Pre-visit mini lessons and extensions
- Family Handout

### **About *How I See Music***

*How I See Music* began in 2020 as a free, interactive arts education program from Festival Napa Valley, which champions the power of music to enrich the human experience and create a thriving, healthy, and engaged community. During the 2026–27 school year, the program will serve more than 1,200 participants, including every third-grade student at a non-charter school in Napa Valley Unified School District (NVUSD).

The workshop explores creativity, abstraction, sensory awareness, emotional responses, and personal interpretation through music and visual art. Participants practice deep listening and create original small-format paintings in response to an orchestral composition. The 2026–27 selection is Claude Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*.

### **About the Composer and Composition**

Claude Debussy (1862–1918) was a French composer known for exploring new sounds and colors in orchestral music. He completed *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* in 1894, inspired by a poem by French poet Stéphane Mallarmé about a faun, a mythical nature spirit from classical mythology. Rather than retell the poem as a straightforward story, the music suggests its mood and images through changing orchestral sounds.

Listen for the opening flute melody and notice how other instruments enter and change the color and feeling of the music. Students may imagine different colors, shapes, scenes, or feelings; there is no single correct interpretation.

Additional background and listening notes: [Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra](#)

### **Experience the Artwork: Exhibition and Performance**

A selection of artwork created during *How I See Music* will be featured as large-scale projections on the onstage LED screens during a full-orchestra performance of the composition explored in the classroom. The performance will take place on July 25, 2027, at Charles Krug during Festival Napa Valley's Summer Season.

Festival Napa Valley Education staff will review the artwork and select works based on creativity, varied interpretations of the music, and representation across participating classrooms. Staff will notify the classroom teachers whose students' work is selected. These teachers and students will be invited to attend the July 25 concert as complimentary guests of the Festival.

An admission-free exhibition of artwork from the 2026 iteration of *How I See Music* will be presented in the rotunda at CIA at Copia throughout July and August, 2027.

# Make the Most of *How I See Music*

The pre-visit mini lessons are optional, take about 15 minutes each, and require minimal preparation and materials. They introduce students to the orchestra and give them a chance to practice listening before the workshop. The visiting educator will introduce all essential concepts during the workshop, regardless of whether students complete the mini lessons.

## Key Terms

- Abstract — An idea, quality, or feeling that does not have a physical form. Joy and beauty are abstract ideas.
- Concrete — Something with physical form that can be seen or touched. A chair or a tree is concrete.
- Orchestra — A group of musicians who play different instruments and perform together.
- Orchestral composition — A piece of music written for an orchestra.
- Deep listening — A focused approach to listening, developed by American composer Pauline Oliveros, that invites listeners to take an active role in what they hear and notice sounds, patterns, and changes. Learn more: [Deep Listening](#).

## After the Workshop: Extension Activities

Try one or more of these short activities to revisit the workshop's ideas:

- Practice deep listening with a piece of music. Ask students what sounds they notice, what colors or shapes come to mind, and whether the music brings up a feeling or image. There are no right or wrong responses.
- Listen to the same selection more than once. Ask what students noticed the second time that they missed at first.
- Invite students to write a sentence or short story inspired by a piece of music.
- Choose a work of visual art and ask students to select music that they think pairs with it. Discuss how different people might make different choices.
- Explore more about orchestral instruments and music with [Classics for Kids](#).

## Suggested Books

- How to Build an Orchestra by Mary Auld (London Symphony Orchestra)
- A Child's Introduction to the Orchestra by Robert Levine
- They All Saw a Cat by Brendan Wenzel
- Can You Hear? by William Lach

## Resources

- [How I See Music](#)
- [Deep Listening](#)
- [Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun — background](#)
- [Kennedy Center Guide to the Orchestra](#)

# Pre-Visit Mini Lesson 1

## WHAT IS AN ORCHESTRA? | PART 1 OF 2 | ABOUT 15 MINUTES

### Purpose

Introduce students to the orchestra and its instrument families. This lesson is optional and can be completed without any art materials.

### Materials

Speaker and classroom device to play [Classics for Kids: The Instruments of the Orchestra, Part 1](#)

### Introduction (5 minutes)

Explain that a Festival Napa Valley educator will visit the class to lead a music and painting workshop. To get ready, students will learn a little about the orchestra.

Ask: *What is an orchestra? What kinds of instruments do you think you might hear in an orchestra?* Invite a few responses.

### Activity (6 minutes)

Play Classics for Kids: The Instruments of the Orchestra, Part 1.

*Teaching tip: Make sure all students can hear the recording and have an opportunity to listen without distractions.*

### Closing (4 minutes)

Ask students:

1. *What are the four instrument families in an orchestra? (Strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion.)*
2. *What did you notice about the sounds different instruments make?*

Close by explaining that during *How I See Music*, students will listen closely to orchestral music and create paintings inspired by what they hear.

# Pre-Visit Mini Lesson 2

## WHAT IS AN ORCHESTRA? | PART 2 OF 2 | ABOUT 15 MINUTES

### Purpose

Continue learning about the orchestra and practice listening closely to the composition students will hear during the workshop.

### Materials

- Speaker and classroom device to play [Classics for Kids: The Instruments of the Orchestra, Part 2](#)
- Any short excerpt of classical music

### Introduction (2 minutes)

Explain that students will continue learning about the orchestra and practice listening closely to music.

Quickly review: What are the four instrument families? What does a conductor help an orchestra do?

### Activity (6 minutes)

Play Classics for Kids: The Instruments of the Orchestra, Part 2.

*Teaching tip: Make sure all students can hear the recording and have an opportunity to listen without distractions.*

### Listening Activity: What Do You Hear? (5 minutes)

Play your music selection. Ask students to listen quietly and notice what they hear.

Invite a few observations:

- *What sounds do you notice?*
- *Does the music change? How?*
- *Does the music bring a color, image, or feeling to mind?*

Explain that people may respond to the same music in different ways. There are no right or wrong answers, and students do not need to have a particular feeling or image in mind.

### Closing (2 minutes)

Ask: *How could you use colors, lines, and shapes to show something you hear in music?* Explain that during the workshop, students will listen to orchestral music and make their own paintings in response. Each painting will be different because everyone listens and responds in their own way.

# In-Class Workshop Lesson Plan

**HOW I SEE MUSIC | 2026–2027**

## Workshop Description

The *How I See Music* Workshop combines focused listening and hands-on artmaking to help third-grade students explore orchestral music and translate what they hear into visual art. Through listening, discussion, and painting, students explore abstraction, sensory awareness, emotions, and personal interpretation. The workshop encourages creative choice, nonverbal expression, and reflection, recognizing that each student may respond to the same piece of music differently.

*Facilitation note: The workshop uses educational practices informed by therapeutic arts settings, including sensory awareness, emotional vocabulary, choice, creative expression, and reflection. It is an arts education workshop, not a clinical music or art therapy session.*

## Essential Question

How can deep listening help us explore what we hear, imagine, and feel in music, and express our responses through visual art?

## Grade Level and Duration

Grade level: 3rd grade

45–50 minutes of active instruction; approximately 60 minutes including preparation and cleanup.

## Concepts

- Live versus recorded performance; the orchestra, audience, and Festival Napa Valley
- Deep listening: noticing sounds, instruments, tempo, dynamics, and musical changes
- Abstract ideas and concrete representations
- Sensory awareness and emotional responses to music
- Translating sound, feelings, and personal associations into visual art
- Creative choice, individual interpretation, and reflection
- Respecting different responses to the same artistic work

## California Standards Correlations

### English Language Arts

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.1.A: Explain the function of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, and their functions in particular sentences.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.1.C: Use abstract nouns (e.g., childhood).
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1: Engage effectively in collaborative discussions, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

### Music

- Responding—Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and Analyze Artistic Work.
- Connecting—Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and Relate Knowledge and Personal Experiences to Make Art.

### Visual Arts Standards

- Creating—Anchor Standard 1: Generate and Conceptualize Artistic Ideas and Work.
- Connecting—Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and Relate Knowledge and Personal Experiences to Make Art.

## **Student Learning Objectives**

Students will:

1. Practice deep listening by noticing musical elements, changes, and patterns in an orchestral composition.
2. Explore the difference between abstract ideas and concrete representations.
3. Create an original painting that expresses an individual response to music using color, line, shape, and texture.
4. Reflect on their creative choices and recognize that people can interpret the same music in different ways.

## **Activities at a Glance**

- Introduction and warm-up — 5 minutes
- Abstract vs. concrete discussion — 5 minutes
- Deep listening and discussion — 10 minutes
- Painting with close listening — 20 minutes
- Closing and reflection — 5–10 minutes

## **Materials**

- Watercolor paper, two sheets per student
- Tempera cakes, watercolors, or water-soluble pastels; one set per two students
- Two or three paintbrushes per student in assorted sizes
- Cups of water, one per student
- Paper towels for students and cleanup
- Black markers or Sharpies for labeling artwork, used by the educator as appropriate
- Bluetooth speaker and charger
- Recording of Claude Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*
- A short nature or environmental sound clip for the warm-up
- A few classroom objects, such as a chair or pencil, to demonstrate concrete things

## **Preparation (about 5 minutes)**

1. Prepare paper, water, brushes, paint, and paper towels for students. Keep materials set aside until the painting activity.
2. Queue the nature-sound clip and the workshop composition on a phone or other device. Check that the speaker works and the volume is appropriate.
3. Prepare a way to label artwork according to Festival Napa Valley's collection instructions.

### **1. Introduction and Warm-Up (5 minutes)**

Briefly introduce Festival Napa Valley and the orchestra. Explain that students will practice deep listening and make a painting in response to music. A selection of artwork created in workshops will be projected during a full-orchestra performance at Charles Krug on July 25, 2027.

Explain that deep listening means paying close attention to what is heard and noticing more each time. Play a short nature-sound clip once and ask, "What sounds did you hear?" Play it again and ask, "What else did you notice?"

### **2. Abstract vs. Concrete (5 minutes)**

Explain that some things are concrete and can be seen or touched, such as a chair or a pencil. Other things, such as feelings or ideas, are abstract. Ask: "How could you use a color, line, or shape to show a feeling or something you imagine?" Emphasize that there is no single correct answer.

### 3. Deep Listening and Discussion (10 minutes)

Introduce Claude Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*. Share brief background information about the composer and composition using the classroom kit. Invite students to sit comfortably and listen closely. They may close their eyes if they wish, or keep them open and focus on the music.

Play the selected composition or excerpt. Invite students to notice sounds, instruments, tempo, dynamics, patterns, and changes. After listening, ask:

- *What sounds or changes did you notice?*
- *Did any colors, shapes, images, or feelings come to mind?*
- *What might you want to express in a painting?*

Accept different responses without assigning meaning to them or suggesting that one response is more correct than another.

### 4. Painting with Close Listening (20 minutes)

Play the composition or selected excerpt again as students paint. Invite them to use color, line, shape, texture, and movement to express what they hear, feel, or imagine. Students may respond to the music itself rather than illustrate a recognizable object or scene.

Remind students that their work can look different from everyone else's. Encourage experimentation and personal choice; do not prescribe which colors or shapes should represent particular sounds or feelings. Students may use a second sheet of paper if time and materials allow. Orient paintings horizontally (landscape) to support projection during the performance.

*Facilitation tip: If possible, ask the classroom teacher or an assistant to help distribute materials so students can continue listening. Give instructions in simple steps and offer individual support as needed.*

### 5. Closing and Reflection (5–10 minutes)

Invite students to share one thing they noticed or one choice they made in their painting. Sharing is optional. Ask:

- *What part of the music influenced one of your choices?*
- *What would you like others to notice about your painting?*
- *How might someone else respond differently to the same music?*

If time allows, invite students to view classmates' work and notice similarities and differences without ranking or interpreting others' feelings. Collect artwork and clean up.

### Assessment

Check for understanding and engagement through observation and questions. During reflection, listen for evidence that students noticed musical elements, understand the difference between abstract and concrete ideas, and can describe a personal choice made in their artwork.

# How I See Music

FAMILY HANDOUT | 2026–2027



## About *How I See Music*

Your child has participated in *How I See Music*, a free arts education workshop offered by Festival Napa Valley. During the workshop, your child explored how orchestral music can inspire visual art by creating a painting in response to Claude Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*. Using colors, lines, and shapes, students expressed what they heard, imagined, or felt. The goal was to develop deep listening skills and explore how music can be translated into visual art.

## How Can We Explore Music and Art During Family Time?

Ask your child about their workshop experience: What do they remember about the music? What was it like to turn sounds and feelings into a painting? Consider trying the activity together. Choose any piece of music and invite family members to notice what they hear, imagine, or feel. Share what comes to mind. You might even draw or paint together in response to the music. Try this with different musical genres as well as familiar and unfamiliar songs. Explore how the experiences are similar and different, and how your listening skills develop with practice.

## Where Can We See the Artwork?

A selection of artwork created during *How I See Music* workshops will be projected on the onstage LED screens during a full-orchestra performance of *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* on July 25, 2027, at Charles Krug during Festival Napa Valley's Summer Season. Festival Napa Valley Education staff will select artwork based on creativity, varied interpretations of the music, and representation across participating classrooms. Festival Napa Valley Education staff will notify teachers whose students' artwork is selected and invite them and their students to attend the July 25 concert as complimentary guests. For ticket information and Choose Your Price options, call the Box Office at (707) 346-5052.

You are also invited to visit the *How I See Music* art installation at CIA at Copia in July and August 2027. This admission-free exhibition features artwork created by Napa County students and community members during the 2026 workshops.

## What Other Programs Does Festival Napa Valley Offer?

Festival Napa Valley offers educational and community programs for people of all ages throughout the year.

Visit [festivalnapavalley.org](https://festivalnapavalley.org) to learn more.



# How I See Music

MATERIAL PARA LA FAMILIA | 2026–2027



## Sobre *How I See Music*

Su hijo(a) ha participado en *How I See Music*, un taller gratuito de educación artística ofrecido por el Festival Napa Valley. Durante el taller, su hijo(a) exploró cómo la música orquestal puede inspirar el arte visual, creando una pintura como respuesta a la obra *Preludio a la siesta de un fauno*, de Claude Debussy. Mediante el uso de colores, líneas y formas, los estudiantes expresaron lo que escucharon, imaginaron o sintieron. El objetivo fue desarrollar habilidades de escucha profunda y explorar cómo la música puede transformarse en arte visual.

## ¿Cómo podemos explorar la música y el arte en familia?

Pregúntele a su hijo(a) sobre su experiencia en el taller: ¿Qué recuerda de la música? ¿Cómo fue transformar sonidos y sentimientos en una pintura? ¿Por qué no prueban a realizar la actividad juntos? Elijan cualquier pieza musical e inviten a los miembros de la familia a prestar atención a lo que escuchan, imaginan o sienten. Compartan lo que les venga a la mente. Incluso pueden dibujar o pintar juntos mientras escuchan la música. Prueben esto con diferentes géneros musicales, así como con canciones conocidas y otras nuevas. Explore en qué se parecen y en qué se diferencian sus experiencias, y cómo sus habilidades de escucha se desarrollan con la práctica.

## ¿Dónde podemos ver las obras de arte?

Una selección de las obras creadas durante los talleres de *How I See Music* se proyectará en las pantallas LED del escenario durante la interpretación de *Preludio a la siesta de un fauno* —a cargo de una orquesta completa— el 25 de julio de 2027, en Charles Krug, durante la temporada de verano del Festival Napa Valley. El equipo educativo del Festival Napa Valley seleccionará las obras basándose en la creatividad, la diversidad de interpretaciones de la música y la representación de las distintas aulas participantes. El equipo educativo notificará a los docentes cuyas obras de los estudiantes hayan sido seleccionadas, invitándolos a ellos y a sus alumnos a asistir al concierto del 25 de julio como invitados especiales (sin costo). Para obtener información sobre entradas y las opciones de elige tu precio, comuníquese con la taquilla al (707) 346-5052.

También están invitados a visitar la instalación artística de *How I See Music* en CIA at Copia, durante los meses de julio y agosto de 2027. Esta exposición, de entrada gratuita, presenta obras creadas por estudiantes del condado de Napa y miembros de la comunidad durante los talleres de 2026.

¿Qué otros programas ofrece el Festival Napa Valley? Festival Napa Valley ofrece programas educativos y comunitarios para personas de todas las edades a lo largo del año.

Visite [festivalnapavalley.org](https://festivalnapavalley.org) para obtener más información.

