



*Lesson: Telling Narratives through Music*

**STANDARDS: California**

1.1 Create multiple-paragraph [narrative](#) compositions:

- a. Establish and develop a situation or plot.
- b. Describe the setting.
- c. Present an ending.

3.1 Identify and analyze the characteristics of poetry, drama, fiction, and nonfiction and explain the appropriateness of the literary forms chosen by an author for a specific purpose.

3.2 Identify the main problem or conflict of the plot and explain how it is resolved.

3.3 Contrast the actions, motives (e.g., loyalty, selfishness, conscientiousness), and appearances of characters in a work of fiction and discuss the importance of the contrasts to the plot or theme.

## Literacy: Narration through Music

**Motivation:** What are some ways to tell stories? Ask students to generate a list of ways different types of artists tell stories. Remind them to include visual art, music, dance, and theater. Encourage them to name specific examples of narrative work in any or all of these genres.

**Group Activity:** Watch Alan Gampel's description of *The Firebird*. After hearing his explanation, have students review the main points of the story. Next, listen to the performance. Ask students to journal while listening. Can they hear parts of the story in the music? How does the composer convey the story? Repeat the exercise using *Poisson d'Or* if time permits. Spend some time discussing how and why the stories students generate are similar and different.

**Independent Activity:** If possible, allow students to use computers to play performances of *Flight of the Bumblebee*, *Poisson d'Or*, and *The Minute Waltz*. Encourage students to listen to Gampel's descriptions of the pieces as well. Have students write narratives based on these pieces or other pieces available in the classroom. Remind students of the elements of a narrative (plot, setting, characterization, ending), and make sure they include them all in their writing.