



INDEPENDENT STUDENT LEARNING ACTIVITY
FOR GRADES 2–12

Musical Composition

through the art of

Bertram Brooker

**VISUALIZE MUSIC
THROUGH DRAWING**

TEACHER INTRODUCTION

Using Bertram Brooker’s art as a starting point, this independent activity will examine how one could convey the musical qualities of a specific piece of music through art. It has been written to complement the Art Canada Institute online art book *Bertram Brooker: Life & Work* by James King and adapted from the Teacher Resource Guide titled “Learn about Musical Composition through the art of Bertram Brooker.” For additional learning materials, please see the Art Canada Institute collection of [Teacher Resource Guides](#).

In this activity, students will explore Brooker’s painting *Alleluiah*, 1929, and analyze the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel’s *Messiah*, 1741. They will be tasked with creating a visual response to the music and will engage in a critical discussion, comparing and contrasting their visual interpretations with those of Brooker.

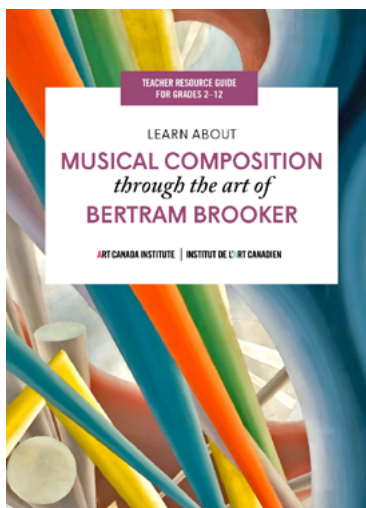
Please note that it is suggested that you prepare a supplementary activity for your students with the purpose of introducing George Frideric Handel (1685–1759) and his work. This can be shared through a synchronous class, an asynchronous video posted to your digital space, or an additional handout.

Within this activity, your students will have the opportunity to engage in critical discussion with their peers. Several platforms, such as Jamboard, Parlay, and Flipgrid, may be used to help foster rich dialogue between students throughout this activity.

Students will also be given the opportunity to share their works with their peers at the end of this activity. Applications for creating a communal gallery space include CoSpaces Edu, Google Classroom, and Seesaw.

Curriculum Connections

- Grades 2–12 Music
- Grades 2–12 Visual Arts
- Grades 11–12 Composition and Production



DOWNLOAD GUIDE

ADAPTED FROM

Learn about Musical Composition through the art of Bertram Brooker

Grades 2 to 12

THEMES

- Composition
- The elements of music
- Sound paintings
- Soundscapes
- Visual interpretations



Passionate about music, Brooker sang in choirs throughout his life.



EDUCATION:
Self-taught;
he left school at
age 12 to work

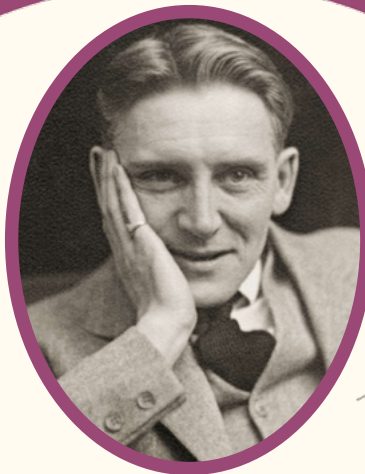


As a teenager Brooker was a keen reader and even saved his lunch money to purchase books.

GET TO KNOW THE ARTIST



BEST KNOWN FOR:
Pursuing many different
creative jobs, and painting
dramatic abstract works



“Great art is essentially useless, in the practical sense. It appeals purely to the spirit.”



A professional writer, Brooker wrote numerous columns, commenting on writers ranging from William Shakespeare to Ernest Hemingway.

BERTRAM BROOKER

As a young man Brooker opened a cinema in Neepawa, Manitoba, and he wrote scripts for films about detective adventures.



BORN: March 31, 1888
DIED: March 22, 1955
PLACE OF BIRTH: Croydon, England
PLACE OF DEATH: Toronto, Ontario



INDEPENDENT STUDENT LEARNING ACTIVITY

VISUALIZE MUSIC THROUGH DRAWING

Artist Bertram Brooker (1888–1955) tried to capture the magical qualities of music in his paintings. Several of his works explore specific pieces of music or attempt to convey an experience of sound.

In this activity, you will be creating a visual response to music and will engage in a critical discussion about this music using the elements of music and proper musical terminology. You will have the opportunity to compare and contrast your visual interpretations of George Frideric Handel's Hallelujah Chorus from *The Messiah* (1741) to those of Brooker.

Materials Needed

- Computer, iPad, etc.
- Paper
- Pencils, pencil crayons, markers, watercolour paints, etc.

Learning Goals

1. I can use proper musical terminology when discussing the music I hear.
2. I can analyze a piece of music using proper musical terminology.
3. I express my preferences related to music using proper musical terminology and the elements of music.
4. I can work co-operatively and collaboratively with my peers.

Success Criteria

1. My artwork is creative and carefully produced using available tools.
2. My written response is clear and well edited.
3. I am respectful when discussing the music and artworks I am shown, and use appropriate language in my responses.
4. I identify how the elements of music (melody, dynamics, rhythm, pitch, texture, form, expressive controls and/or timbre) are used in a specific piece.
5. I am respectful and use appropriate language in my responses on the discussion board.

LEARNING PLAN

Step 1: 5 min

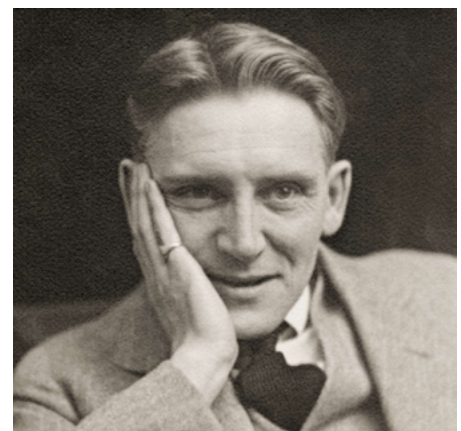
Watch the Art Canada Institute learning video on Bertram Brooker.

<https://vimeo.com/45680021>

Think about what you found interesting about artist Bertram Brooker. Post your thoughts on the collaborative discussion board or share directly with your teacher using the preferred method of communication. Treat this space as you would a class discussion. Write clearly, structuring your thoughts carefully and paying attention to proper writing conventions.

Step 2: 5 min

Find a quiet space where you can freely listen to music and sketch. When you are ready, listen to [Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUZEtVbJT5c) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUZEtVbJT5c>). Feel free to close your eyes as you listen. Allow your mind to visualize what you are hearing.



Portrait of Bertram Brooker, date unknown, photographer unknown. Bertram Brooker fonds, University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections, Winnipeg (PC 16:1:13). Photo credit: University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections.

Step 3: 25 min

Listen to [Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah](#) again. This time, as you listen, sketch what appears in your imagination as the music plays. You can use whatever materials (pencil, pencil crayons, markers, watercolour paints, etc.) you have readily at home to create your visual response. There are no wrong answers. Draw what your mind sees.

Step 4: 10 min

Your teacher may have shared information regarding Handel's life and work. Please review this material, following your teacher's instructions.

Step 5: 5 min

Look at Bertram Brooker's painting *Alleluiah*, 1929. In responding to Hallelujah Chorus, Brooker has created a composition that places abstract forms in a space that evokes a landscape.

- What do you see when you examine his interpretation of this piece of music?
- What does it remind you of?
- How does Brooker's visual interpretation of the music differ from your own response?

Post your thoughts on the collaborative discussion board or share them directly with your teacher using the preferred method of communication.



Bertram Brooker, *Alleluiah*, 1929, oil on canvas, 122.2 x 121.9 cm. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (15812). Photo credit: National Gallery of Canada.

Step 6: 20 min

Return to your visual response. Is there anything you would like to add/change? Finalize your design. When finished, write a reflection describing your work using the guiding questions below.

- What did you draw and why?
- How does the song make you feel? What makes you say that?
- What is the song about? What is the story of the song?
- How do the musicians create a certain mood/atmosphere?
- Medium: What materials did you use to create your visual response? Why did you pick this medium?
- Timbre: What instruments are used in this piece and what do they sound like? Use descriptive language.
- Texture: Does this piece have a thick or thin texture? Does it change throughout the piece? What makes you say that?
- Dynamics: What dynamics are heard in this piece (piano, forte, crescendo, decrescendo, etc.)? What makes you say that?
- Tempo: What is the tempo of this piece (allegro, largo, andante, presto, etc.)? What makes you say that?
- Form: What is the form of this piece? Describe it using musical language (binary, ternary, rondo, verse, chorus, bridge).



The Royal Choral Society, from the United Kingdom, performing Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's *Messiah*, in 2012.

Write clearly, structuring your thoughts carefully and paying attention to proper writing conventions. Be sure to edit your work before you submit it.

Step 7: 5 min

Post an image of your visual response and written statement to the collaborative gallery space that your teacher has created for this assignment.

Step 8: 5 min

Take time to explore the collaborative gallery space. Review at least two other artworks and provide your peers with two stars (something they have captured well) and a wish (something you wish you had seen in their work) as feedback.