

Lesson #1: Canon in D by Johann Pachelbel

About the piece: Written in 1680, this was Pachelbel's most famous piece. It was originally scored for three violins with a bass accompaniment and a gigue. It is thought it was written for Johann Christoph Bach's (the older brother of J.S. Bach) wedding. J.C. Bach was a pupil of Pachelbel's. This piece is one of the most well-loved, played pieces in the world. Click [here](#) for more information.

[Listen to Canon in D](#) – This recording is done with original instruments.

[Another version of Canon in D](#) – This is the Boston Pops Orchestra performing. Listening for the wide variety of instruments.

Dynamics: The dynamics in this piece are fairly constant. Ask your children what they think... (refer to the Dynamics section earlier) The dynamics are confined to a small range in this piece. Your student should notice that it does get softer in the middle, then grows louder again near the end.

Rhythm/Tempo: There is the same rhythm is used over and over in this piece. It is played in "CANON" - three voices play the same part, coming in at different times. See if your children can hear this. Can they hear 8 notes being played over and over? This bass part (the basso continuo) is repeated through the entire piece. The tempo (speed of the beat) is steady and does not change.

Instrumentation: If you are listening to the first link with original instruments, your children should hear all string instruments. There is also a clavichord in this recording. All of these are original Baroque instruments. Most versions of Canon in D are solely strings.

Mood: This is a good time to review/introduce adjectives with your child. What are some good adjectives to describe this piece? Peaceful, tranquil, pleasant, pleasing, soothing, calm, etc...

Lesson 8: Air on the G String by Johann Sebastian Bach

About the piece: The “Air on the G String” is a musical piece for string and piano, arranged by August Wilhelm from the Air of Johann Sebastian Bach’s Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D major. It was written some time between 1717-1723 for Bach's patron, Prince Leopold of Anhalt. Because Wilhelm changed keys of the piece (from D to C) he was able to play the melody on only one string of his violin, the G string.

Listen to [Air on the G String](#)

Another version of [Air on the G String](#) (simply a picture of Bach)

Dynamics: This piece uses a lot of crescendos and diminuendos (growing louder and growing softer). Point this out to your child. This adds to the tension of the piece and gives it a more dramatic feel.

Rhythm/Tempo: Air on the G String is such a simple piece. The rhythms are repeated over and over and give it a very tender and beautiful quality. Listen for the [pizzicato](#) being played by the bass viols (see next activity). The TEMPO of this piece is 34 BPM (Beats Per Minute). Try this [online metronome](#) with your children! Notice the slowest speed is 40 beats per minute, so this Bach piece is SLOW.

Instrumentation: The string family is used in this piece, with the violin being highlighted. Many different arrangements of the Air can be found. It is also popular for the guitar. In this lesson, however, strings exclusively play.

Mood: Bach's original Orchestral Suite (which the Air comes from) is beautiful and flowing. Your child will probably come up with many words and phrases to describe this beauty. This piece is known for its lavish sounding string melody.