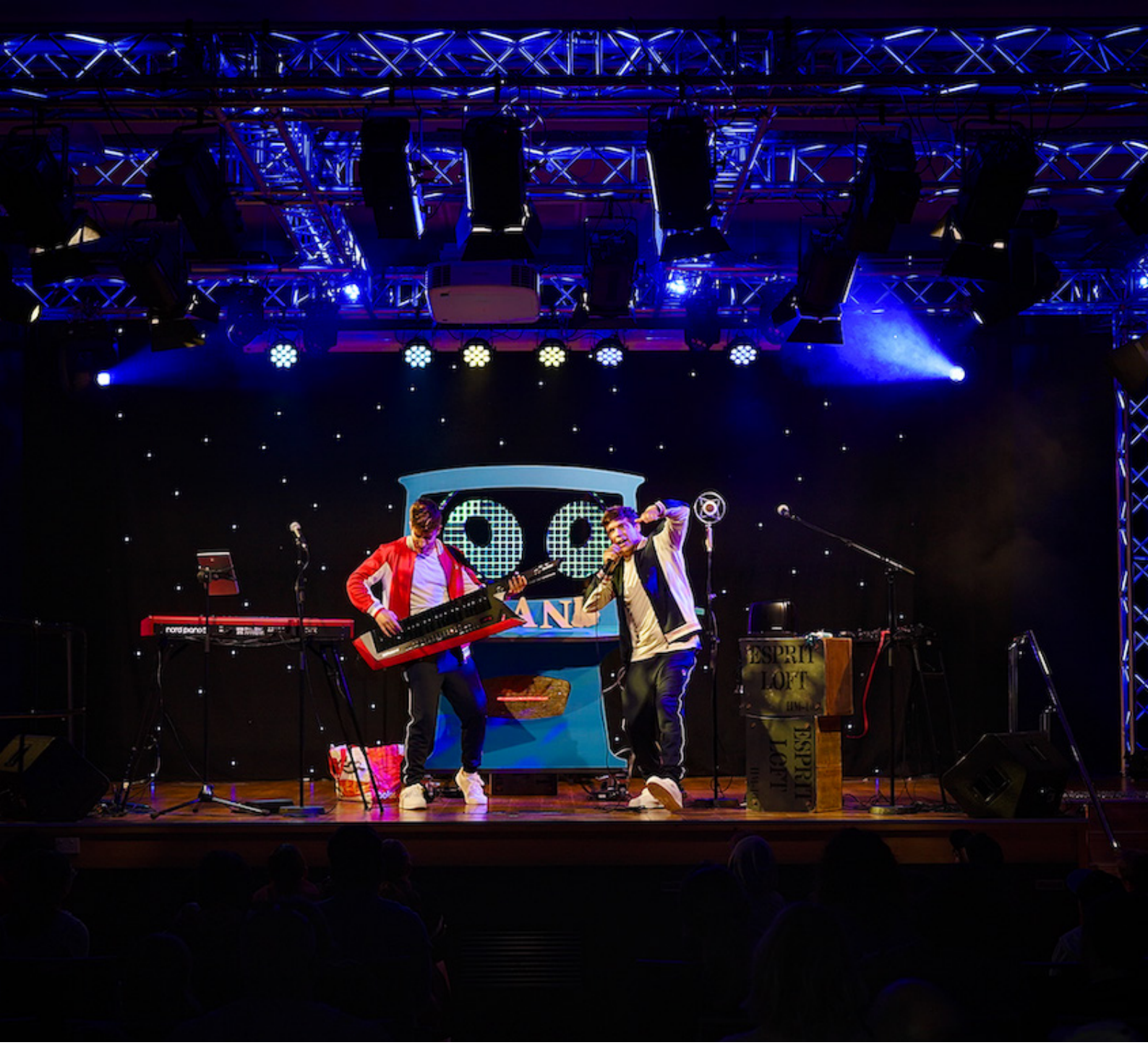

PERMISSION GRANTED

LEARNING RESOURCE

Created by Tom Thum and Tnee Dyer
in collaboration with QPAC's Creative Learning Team.

Qpac QUEENSLAND PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE
Queensland Government

Program Introduction

Permission Granted is an alternative/parallel approach to music education. We believe that music begins in the heart and mind and should therefore be explored and cultivated in the body and as a group. A fire needs a healthy amount of kindling and bark before you throw on the big logs. Young minds need to see, hear and feel the power of music before they will be inclined to set out on their own path of musical discovery.

About the Work / Experience

At a time when screen addiction is reducing face to face connection, there has never been a better time to equip young minds with the creative tools to express themselves and the courage to do so. We want kids to be able to kick a beat around a bus stop as easily as they could kick a ball around the backyard. The cheat codes to turn sound into music are embedded into this performance and kids will leave the theatre stomping, singing, clapping, and beatboxing all the way home.

Creatives / Artists

Composer & Performer - Tom Thum

Amassing over half a billion combined plays, Tom Thum's pedigree in the world of beat boxing is unrivalled. After witnessing a Tom Thum show, you'd swear there's a symphony orchestra, jazz band, techno DJ, 80s synth pop group and collection of exotic world instruments all residing somewhere in his throat. Propelled internet stardom with his 2013 TEDx performance at the Sydney Opera House, Tom's 15-minute live beat-box endoscopy showcase quickly became the highest-viewed TEDx video of all time, with over 75+ million views and counting.

As an ever-evolving artist, Tom's finger is constantly on the pulse for new creations that are more often than not, bordering the unimaginable.

Composer & Performer - Tnee Dyer

Antony "Tnee" Dyer is a performer, jazz pianist, musical director, educator and video producer whose career has been shaped by years on stage leading bands, collaborating with artists and crafting live experiences that connect deeply with audiences. Grounded in improvisation and ensemble work, his jazz background informs a sharp instinct for timing, structure and emotional flow.

Alongside his performing career, Tnee is a creative producer and co-founder of Raw Mint, a video production company specialising in cinematic, story-driven content. He brings a performer's sensibility to the screen, translating musicality into visuals through pacing, rhythm and narrative clarity.

Executive Producer - Nigel Lavender

Nigel Lavender is best-known in Australia for his tenure (2008-18) as Executive Director of Queensland Music Festival, but his career journey in the UK and Australia has encompassed Producing, Venue management, Touring, Board membership and facilitation, Funding administration and Peer Assessment, Strategic Planning, Arts & Disability, Arts & Mental Health, and Arts in Education.

Nigel founded Momentum Arts in 2019; recent projects include development of *Permission Granted,* Executive Producer for *SWEET CHARITY* (QPAC), and design and delivery of the *FESTIVAL OF CARE* at Queensland Children's Hospital, Brisbane. Nigel has been Chair of Queensland's State Performing Arts Awards, the Matilda's, since June 2025.

Director & Dramaturg - Jason Klarwein

Jason Klarwein is one of Australia's most respected theatre artists — an actor, director, producer and arts leader whose work bridges performance, creation and community engagement. He has built a rich career working with major companies including Queensland Theatre, Sydney Theatre Company, Belvoir, Bell Shakespeare, La Boîte and Black Swan Theatre, and has appeared on stage in demanding roles such as *Macbeth* and *Once in Royal David's City*.

Jason's versatility extends to screen, with credits in television series including *Sea Patrol, Cybergirl* and the award-winning *Devil's Playground*, as well as roles in film. He has been recognised with Matilda Awards and a Helpmann Award nomination for Best Actor.

Key Themes & Concepts

Informed by the work of social psychologist, Jonathan Haidt, we believe that equipping young minds with basic musical building blocks is one of the few activities (outside of sports) compelling enough to offer an alternative to devices, video games and social media. Haidt speaks of the urgency to pull children away from a 'phone-based childhood' and back to a 'play-based childhood'. By pulling kids out of their mobile phones and into microphones, the *Permission Granted* concept is designed to equip young minds with the basic musical tools to enjoy making music individually and as a group.

This performance encourages music –making and invites young people to be creative.

Permission Granted – Curriculum Alignment & Educational Rationale

Permission Granted is designed to align with the Queensland and Australian Curriculum across The Arts (Music, Drama and Dance), English, Mathematics, Science, and Health and Wellbeing. It is particularly aligned to the **Australian Curriculum v9.0**, with strong connections across Music, Mathematics and Science through embodied, experiential learning.

The work uses beatboxing, rhythm, improvisation and storytelling to explore pattern, frequency, sound and language in accessible and engaging ways. Students are invited to experience music physically and collaboratively, supporting both conceptual understanding and creative expression.

Target Audience & Delivery

This production is designed for two key school cohorts:

- **Years 4 - 6**
- **Years 7– 8**

Educational Rationale

Permission Granted is grounded in the belief that music is best understood through experience before abstraction. Students learn through doing, listening, moving and creating together.

The approach prioritises:

- embodied learning (thinking through the body)
- collaborative creativity
- active listening and shared attention
- discovery-based learning over instruction-first models.

This aligns with contemporary educational thinking around attention, engagement and play-based learning, particularly in relation to the importance of real-world, social and embodied experiences in contrast to increasingly digital learning environments.

Permission Granted offers a curriculum-rich, cross-disciplinary arts experience that strengthens students' understanding of music, mathematics and communication through live, participatory performance.

It supports students to see music not only as a subject to be studied, but as a shared human practice built from rhythm, connection and imagination.

Value and Engagement

The themes of *Permission Granted*, self-expression, courage, imagination, and identity are highly accessible to students from Year 4- Year 8 and align with the ACARA V9 curriculum's aim to develop confident, creative, and informed musicians. The integration of narrative and music supports both cognitive and social-emotional learning, increasing engagement and retention.

Professional Practice and Artistic Integrity

The production reflects contemporary professional practice in music and theatre, translated into a format accessible for young audiences. Students gain insight into real-world creative processes, reinforcing the curriculum's focus on authentic learning and artistic quality.

Permission Granted is both an engaging performance and a creatively aligned educational resource. Its clear connection to Australian Curriculum v9.0 content descriptors supports teachers in delivering meaningful learning outcomes while inspiring students to explore music as listeners, creators, and performers.

Curriculum Alignment

Permission Granted aligns with the Music curriculum through its emphasis on active music-making and experiential learning across the four interrelated strands. It may also be an alternative starting point for teachers across a range of subject areas. For example:

Mathematics

The performance embeds mathematical thinking through:

- pattern recognition and repetition
- sequencing and cycles
- counting and rhythm structures
- proportional thinking (beat divisions and layering)
- spatial and temporal awareness

Science

Connections are made through exploration of:

- sound waves, vibration and frequency
- pitch, amplitude and acoustic variation
- cause and effect in sound production
- properties of materials and sound creation

English

Students engage with:

- oral language and performance communication
- expressive voice and rhythm in language
- listening and interpretation of meaning

Health & Wellbeing

The work supports:

- social connection through group participation
- emotional expression through sound and movement
- confidence building in performance and collaboration
- embodied learning and physical engagement musical elements to communicate expressive intent.

Direct Curriculum Links:

The Arts: Music - Content Descriptions V9

Years 4:

AC9AMU4E01 - explore where, why and how music is composed and/or performed across cultures, times, places and/or other contexts

AC9AMU4D01- develop listening skills and skills for manipulating elements of music when singing and playing instruments

Years 5 – 6:

AC9AMU6E01 - Explore and express ideas using sound and musical elements

Link: Students experiment with beatboxing techniques to create, manipulate and combine sounds, exploring rhythm, tempo and dynamics.

AC9AMU6D01 - Develop and present music, communicating ideas to an audience

Link: Students create and perform rhythmic compositions using voice and body percussion, applying structure and expressive intent.

English: Year 5/6

AC9E5LY02 – Use interaction skills to contribute to discussions

Link: Collaborative rhythm-making and group improvisation.

AC9E5LY05 – Use language features to create coherence and add detail

Link: Applying rhythm, rhyme and sound patterning in spoken performance.

AC9E5LY06 – Create spoken and multimodal texts

Link: Developing beat-based vocal compositions and performances.

Mathematics: Year 5/6

AC9M5N03 – Interpret, compare and order fractions

Link: Dividing beats into fractional parts (1⁄2, 1⁄4, 1⁄8) through rhythm construction.

AC9M5A01 – Recognise and describe patterns and relationships

Link: Creating and repeating beat loops and rhythmic sequences.

AC9M5M03 – Solve problems involving the measurement of time

Link: Understanding tempo (beats per minute) and maintaining pulse.

AC9M5ST02 – Interpret and compare data displays

Link: Representing sound levels or rhythm patterns (e.g. “noise-o-metre”).

Science Year 5/6:

AC9S5U02 – Explain how scientific knowledge helps people understand the effect of their actions

Link: Exploring how sound is produced and controlled through vocal techniques.

AC9S5U03 – Investigate how light and sound are produced and travel

Link: Demonstrating sound as vibration through beatboxing.

The Arts: Music Years 7 – 8:

AC9AMU8E01 - Explore and manipulate musical elements and compositional devices

Link: Students refine beatboxing techniques, layering rhythm, texture and dynamics to build complex soundscapes.

AC9AMU8D01 - Practise, refine and present music for audiences

Link: Students structure and perform improvised or composed vocal pieces, demonstrating control, timing and expressive intent.

English (Year 7/8)

AC9E7LY02 – Use interaction skills for collaborative discussions

Link: Group improvisation and performance development.

AC9E7LY05 – Create and deliver spoken and multimodal texts

Link: Beatboxing as performance text combining rhythm and voice.

AC9E7LA07 – Understand how language features vary for effect

Link: Using rhythm, pacing and sound to engage audiences.

Mathematics (Year 7/8)

AC9M7N04 – Use ratios and rates to solve problems

Link: Tempo as beats per minute; comparing rhythmic speeds.

AC9M7A01 – Use algebraic expressions to represent pattern

Link: Structuring beat sequences (e.g. A–B–A–B forms).

AC9M7ST01 – Analyse and interpret data.

Link: Comparing sound frequencies, patterns or student-created rhythms.

Science (Year 7/8)

AC9S7U04 – Describe the characteristics of waves and how they transfer energy

Link: Pitch (frequency) and volume (amplitude) explored through vocal sound.

AC9S7I02 – Plan and conduct investigations

Link: Experimenting with vocal techniques to test sound variation.

AC9S7I06 – Communicate scientific ideas

Link: Explaining how beatboxing produces different sound effects.

Learning experiences

This performance can be the starting point for a range of arts and curriculum experiences before, and after the performance. Please use the following learning experiences as a starting point, adapting them to suit your classroom context and year level. They are offered as suggestions to help introduce and explore the style of the performance, while allowing for open interpretation and creative flexibility.

Before the performance:

Key questions to consider with students:

What is the difference between sound and music?

How do you turn sound into music?

Can silence be part of music?

Does music always need instruments?

How are maths and music connected?

Can everyday objects become instruments?

How does music make us feel connected?

Can movement become music?

Why do you think the artists named this performance *Permission Granted?*

Activity 1 – Heartbeat Rhythms

Purpose: To start playing with musical ideas and as a warmup in a class.

Pulse, counting, connection.

Step 1:

Students place their hands on their hearts and listen to their heartbeat.

As a class, they recreate heartbeat rhythms using:

- claps
- stomps
- tapping knees

Step 2:

Invite students to imagine different emotional "heartbeats" and perform them musically:

- nervous heartbeat
- excited heartbeat
- calm heartbeat
- frightened heartbeat

Discuss how rhythm and sound can communicate mood and emotion without words.

Activity 2 - Sound Shapes

Purpose: Students play with movement and music as a way to explore geometry, shape properties, and spatial awareness.

Step 1: Students create sounds inspired by geometric shapes.

(* Maths Connections: Students physically embody geometry through music and movement.)

For example,

- Circle: smooth continuous sound
- Triangle: sharp three-beat rhythm
- Spiral: growing crescendo
- Square: steady repeated pulse

Steps:

- Ask students in groups to select a shape and devise sounds and movements that capture their response to the shape.
- They can then present to class.

Activity 3 -Sounds to music

Purpose: To explore and play with sounds and how they can be transformed into music through imagination, voice, body, and everyday sound-making.

Step 1:

Teacher discusses with students what musical instrument or sound best matches each word or mood. There are no "right answers"; the focus is on creative thinking and justification. The teacher provides some examples.

Step 2:

Teacher provides a range of examples and asks students to devise responses.

Rain (e.g. Piano)

Storm /thunder

Wind

Very sunny day

The ocean

Fire

Step 3:

Students select one sound and work on a small rhythm. Coach students to connect emotional meaning, natural phenomena and sound structures building the foundation for rhythm, pattern and musical story-telling. Ask students to share ideas and enjoy with class!

Activity 4 – Beat Box

Purpose: This video is a wonderful introduction to Beat Box and artist Thom Thum.

Please use before or after the performance to extend understanding of this art form.

Video of Beat Box Basics from Tom

Activity 5: Call and Response (extension activity)

Purpose: To foster attention and listening, triggering mirror neurons in the process.

Resources: For teachers new to this activity please watch the video teacher resource: Clap cycles 120 and source a metronome if possible. (See Teacher Resources section)

Step 1:

- Begin by teaching the entire class the three-beat cycle (Clap, Right Hand Chest, Left Hand Chest)
- Encourage the students to listen to the metronome and keep in time with the metronome (tell them not to speed up or slow down).
- Once everyone is comfortable, say let's "stop together on the next clap." This way everyone stops neatly together.

Step 2:

- Repeat this process for the 4 beat and then the 5-beat cycle. (View video)
- To do 4 beats: Clap with right hand to the left chest, then left hand on the right chest then right lap and then left lap.
- To do 5 beat: Clap, clap with right hand to the left chest, then left hand to the right chest and then the right lap and the left lap.
- Divide the class into three sections (3, 4, 5)

Maths questions:

- If we all start together, how many beats will it take for all the cycles to link up and clap on the 1 together? The answer: 3x4x5=60 Everyone will clap together on the 61 beat.
- For the group that are counting in cycles of 3's, how many cycles will you count before you finish together? The answer 60/3=20. 20 Cycles and then clap together on the 1st beat of the 61st cycle to finish together. 60/4=15 60/5=12

Step 3:

- Teach them how to count the cycles.
- In 3: 123 223 323 423 523... etc. all the way up to 20
- In 4: 1234 2234 3234 4234 5234.. etc. all the way up to 15
- In 5: 12345 22345 32345 42345 52345 etc. all the way up to 12

Always give a 3 beat count in to start.

(It's very satisfying when everyone claps together on the 61st beat.)

Try also breaking them up into smaller groups.

Post performance:

Activity 1: Rebuilding the Experience

Purpose: To support students entering the world of performance back in the classroom.

Step 1: Students recreate a moment from the performance using:

- body percussion
- movement
- voice
- group sound creation.

Discuss why they selected this moment.

Step 2: Rhythm Mapping

Students visually represent rhythms or moments from the performance.

They may use:

- shapes
- symbols
- grids
- timelines
- Image /freeze frame
- Draw/paint the rhythm

Activity 2: Design Your Own Music Experience

Purpose: Students identify what music form they want to create after the performance, what do they want to trial and experiment with?

Step 1: Students invent their own interactive music experience based on the performance.

They decide:

- rhythms
- movements
- audience participation

Activity 3: Reflection

Students to discuss with a partner or in the whole class:

- What was one of the key messages from the performance?
- How would you describe these artists?
- What was a key/favorite moment?
- What did you learn about sound?
- Can music help us think more clearly?
- What patterns did you notice in the performance?
- How does shared music-making change the way we learn?
- How did the performance change your understanding of music?
- Can music tell a story without words?
- How does rhythm live in our bodies?
- What patterns can we hear in music?
- Can everyday objects become instruments?

Teacher Resources & Further Reading

This program invites students to experience music as a form of collective attention, where thinking, feeling and moving happen together.

In a time where attention is often fragmented, these experiences support students to return to:

- presence
- listening
- shared rhythm
- embodied learning

Music becomes not just something performed, but something lived together.

Extra note on Jonathan Haidt for teachers

Contemporary research into childhood development highlights a growing concern about fragmented attention and reduced opportunities for embodied, social play. As Jonathan Haidt argues, modern childhood has become increasingly shaped by screen-based experiences. In contrast, music-making offers a return to shared attention, physical presence, and collective rhythm, where learning begins in the body, the group, and the moment.

Key thoughts from this writer:

1. **Embodied attention matters**

   Haidt argues that children increasingly experience the world through screens, which reduces:

   - sustained attention
   - physical play
   - social interaction in real time

   Connection to your work:

   Music-making restores body-based attention, listening, moving, and responding in real time.

2. **Play is essential for development**

   He emphasises the importance of:

   - unstructured play
   - risk-taking in safe environments
   - peer interaction without constant adult mediation

   Connection to music:

   Ensemble work, rhythm games, and group sound-making are structured forms of deep play.

3. **Attention is being fragmented**

   A central concern in his work is that constant digital stimulation:

   - reduces deep focus
   - interrupts flow states
   - weakens sustained engagement

   Connection to music:

   Rhythm, pulse and ensemble listening rebuild shared focus and "group attention."

4. **Childhood needs real-world experience**

   He highlights that development depends on:

   - physical movement
   - sensory experience
   - face-to-face social cues

Teacher Resources

The Amazing Generation: https://www.penguin.com.au/books/the-amazing-generation-9780241806586

The Rhythm Diaries: https://gregsheehan.com.au/the-rhythm-diaries

What does sound look like ? https://www.metmuseum.org/perspectives/metkids-create-visualize-sound

Sound science experiments https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivSS0Q8J5LY

How Awe and Science transform science and you More Than a Feeling - Nautilus

Looking at music and listening to art https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/art/watch-listen-read/read/music-art/

Famous paintings about music: https://robertlynnelson.com/5-famous-paintings-inspired-by-music

Clap cycles examples: Video references

Basics to Basses: https://youtu.be/LTwhiALFdL4

Clap Cycles 240: https://youtu.be/8X1bL5idWOI

Clap Cycle 120: https://youtu.be/PKMZL0PfI7E

Acknowledgement & Cultural Considerations

This Learning Resource was created by Tnee Dyer and Thom Thum and QPAC's Creative Learning Program.

Thom and Tnee wish to acknowledge that they stand on the shoulders of the musical greats who have preceded them.