

ACO MUSIC & ART

Lesson Five: Shapes in Music

Additional Notes for teachers, parents and students

String Effects

There are many different ways to make sounds on string instruments. In this lesson we focused on some of the most commonly used by string techniques.

1. **Arco** – using a wooden bow strung with horse hair to vibrate the strings.
2. **Mute** – a device that dampens the vibrations on an instrument, resulting in a softer sound.
3. **Pizzicato** – plucking the string with a finger instead of the bow.
4. **Tremolo** – moving the bow back and forth on the string as fast as possible, making a trembling sound.
5. **Ponticello** – this is an Italian word that means to play on the bridge, which makes an eerie, squeaky sound.
6. **Harmonics** – a high-pitched sound created by putting your fingers on the left hand on the string with a light pressure.

Abstract Art and Music

The word 'abstract' refers to modern art or music which does not represent images of our everyday world. It has colour, lines and shapes or the concepts of music arranged in a seemingly random way, as they are not intended to represent particular objects or living things. Often the artists were influenced by *ideas* rather than an actual thing, and there is usually no right or wrong way to interpret a piece.

Anton Webern (1883-1945) – Webern was a composer who wrote very short pieces with lots of interesting effects. He pushed the boundaries of what people expected instruments to sound like. He arranged these sounds, pitches, and instruments in a very abstract fashion.

Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) - Russian painter Wassily Kandinsky is considered one of the first abstract painters. This means that he painted shapes and lines and colour, rather than realistic pictures. He loved music (he played the piano and cello as a child) and felt a strong connection between painting and listening – he felt that he could “see” music and “hear” colour.