

Using Music to Inspire Art



The United States Marine Band: “The President’s Own”

On July 11, 1798, Congress passed legislation that created the United States Marine Corps and the Marine Band, America's oldest professional musical organization. The United States Marine Band has been nicknamed "The President's Own" because of its historic connection to the president of the United States. At its origin, the small band consisted of a Drum Major, a Fife Major and 32 drums and fifes. Since that time, the band has been present at many of the most memorable moments in our nation's history, including every inauguration since the time of Thomas Jefferson, who is credited with giving them the title, "The President's Own."

Make Your Art!

You will need:

- Paper (preferably a heavier art paper) or canvas
- Paint, markers, crayons, colored pencils – your choice
- A space to do art and clothes or a smock that can get dirty (this could be messy!)
- Music of your choice (we used music from The United States Marine Band’s [free audio resources](#) and [YouTube page](#)) or lyrics you can read and respond to with art

Step 1: Tune Your Ears!

Before you listen to any music or get your art supplies in hand, just take some time to first *listen* to the sounds around you. This will get your ears ready to really *hear* your chosen music. Closing your eyes helps. What little noises could you hear?

Step 2: Intentional Listening

Without any other noise or distractions, listen to your chosen music. Close your eyes in a comfortable place and just focus on the music. Listen through the *entire* song once, then a second time. Did you hear anything *new* the second time? What did you *notice* about the music?

Step 3: Making your Art!

Now that your ears are tuned, you’ve listened intently a couple of times, and thought about the music, get your art supplies! Play the music again and start making your art as you listen. Do you *feel* certain colors in the music? Do you *see* something happening? When the song is over, look at your art and share it with someone, explaining what you were making and how the music was guiding your art. If you did this activity with a friend, classmate, or family member, discuss with them how the music made you feel and how it influenced your art.

ALTERNATIVE:

Sometimes you don’t need to hear music to be able to understand and respond to it. Instead of listening and responding with art, pick a song with lyrics and respond to those lyrics with your own art. How do the lyrics make you feel? What are the lyrics *showing* you? Read the lyrics several times and then get artsy!

Share your finished artwork with us at [@WhiteHouseHstry](#) or [education@whha.org](#)