The Impressionist period was distinctive because composers were focused on creating an impression through building atmospheres, pictures, and sound worlds with music. Composers Debussy and Ravel were at the forefront of this ground-breaking musical style. There’s an atmosphere of adventure as Quaver experiments with unusual ways of playing instruments and tries new scales and unique chords. He explores new orchestral sounds, envisions music with the help of Repairman’s strange hat, and muses on Monet. It’s all quite strange – but wonderful!

**LESSON OBJECTIVES**

Students will learn:

- The Impressionist period sound, which was atmospheric, subtle, and sometimes dissonant.
- The composers and artists of the Impressionist period believed music and art could create atmospheres and ‘impressions’.
- The historic figures and fashions of the Impressionist period.
- The ground-breaking ways Impressionist composers used instruments and scales.
- The pioneers of the Impressionist period: Debussy and Ravel.

**Vocabulary**

- Impressions
- Atmospheres
- Whole Tone Scale
- Soundscapes
**MUSIC STANDARDS IN LESSON**

1: Singing alone and with others*  
2: Playing instruments  
3: Improvising melodies*  
4: Composing and arranging music  
6: Listening to, analyzing, and describing music  
7: Evaluating music and music performance  
8: Understanding the relationship between music and the other arts  
9: Understanding music in relation to history, style, and culture

Complete details at QuaverMusic.com

**Key Scenes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Visual impressions of music</th>
<th>Impressionist music was meant to paint a picture or an atmosphere in the mind of the listener. Unlike the Romantic period, the music was less about raw emotion.</th>
<th>6, 9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Newscast on What Was the World Like in the Impressionist Period?</td>
<td>By looking at life in the Impressionist period, students gain a greater understanding of the culture of that time.</td>
<td>8, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>New ways to play traditional instruments</td>
<td>Impressionist composers experimented with timbre and sound by stretching instruments to the limits of their range.</td>
<td>6, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Stepping along the whole tone scale</td>
<td>Impressionist composers used new kinds of scales, the most popular being the whole tone scale, which has a dreamy quality to it.</td>
<td>6, 7, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Song: Atmospheres and Worlds of Sound</td>
<td>This song, based on Debussy’s Claire de Lune, encapsulates the Impressionist period.</td>
<td>6, 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** LESSON INTRO Introducing the episode**

Ask the students if they have ever been to a concert or party where someone has said, “What a great atmosphere!” What was meant by that? Have they ever been in a house where the atmosphere was scary? Perhaps it gave them an impression that someone was there.

Take some clay and ask what would happen if you pressed a coin into the clay. Make an impression of both sides and show them to students.

Invite students to try other objects such as keys to make impressions in the clay.

This episode is about music impressions – compositions created to impress a picture, mood, or atmosphere upon the mind of the listener.
Making an Impression

Purpose: Sound imagination and sound worlds
Talk with students about these four different occurrences in nature. Direct them in dividing each into a series of smaller events.
1. A thunderstorm passing
2. A shark hunting and catching a fish
3. A tornado growing and spinning
4. A woodpecker flying from tree to tree
Split students into groups and secretly give each a different scenario. Ask each group to create a short series of sounds that gives an impression of their scene using available instruments or other found sounds. Have each group perform its impression of the occurrence and allow others to comment on the sounds used in the piece.

Picture This

Purpose: Responding to music with art
Distribute a blank sheet of paper and crayons to each student. Instruct them to draw a picture of what comes to mind as they listen to Debussy's Clair de Lune (Track 1). Take a few minutes to have students talk about the feelings the music evoked and its influence on their pictures. Round up this activity by explaining that Debussy's piece translated into English, is entitled By the Light of the Moon. See if any of their pictures reflect this imagery.

Mimic Me

Purpose: Responding to Impressionist music physically
Listen to To the Summit (Track 2), a recent interpretation inspired by Ravel's Bolero. This piece has a clearly repeated melody and rhythm. Ask students to stand and face a partner. One student will choose movements to fit the music which the other must try to mirror. Point out that slow, steady movements work best. When the melody repeats, chime a bell (or equivalent) to indicate that the partners should switch roles.

Discussion Points

- Name two famous Impressionist composers.
  
  Debussy and Ravel
- What was the piece that the Quaver Symphony Orchestra played?
  La Mer or The Sea
- In what way did Impressionist composers experiment with instruments?
  They explored new techniques to play them
- What was the name of the Impressionist artist in the episode?
  Monet

What is a Music Period?

Historians classify music (and other forms of art) by bracketing years of stylistic similarity. Although opinions differ, these are the most commonly recognized designations:

- Renaissance (1450-1600)
- Baroque (1600-1750)
- Classical (1750-1820)
- Romantic (1820-1910)
- Impressionist (1870-1910)

Materials Needed

- Paper
- Crayons
- Percussion instruments or Orff instruments

CLASS ACTIVITIES
**Sonic Postcard**  
**Purpose:** Creating sound journeys
Divide students into groups of three or four. Have a selection of percussion instruments available, and if possible, other tuned instruments. Ask each group to imagine they are visiting a country or a special place that they must describe with music. They can have a narrative, but wherever there is a descriptive word, they must use sound instead. Make sure the groups cannot overhear each other’s discussion and rehearsal. Each group then performs its sonic postcard, and other groups must guess where they have been.

**VIDEO REPLAY**

**Atmospheres and Worlds of Sound**  
**Purpose:** Listening to a song that reviews the Impressionist period
View again the performance of Atmospheres and Worlds of Sound (Track 3). Invite students to sing along with Kate from the house band. There is a backing track available if students want to sing on their own.

**WEB ACTIVITIES**

**QSynth**  
Students can experiment with sound just as Impressionist composers did. Although the original Impressionists used acoustic instrument sounds, students can use QuaverMusic.com to experiment with electronic sounds. Then, these created sounds or melodies can be saved and played like an “instrument” in QComposer.

**PhoneBox / Time Venues**  
Go back in time and explore the life and music of Claude Debussy. Learn more about the Impressionist period and listen to some of Debussy’s music from this amazing, experimental era. Students can play the matching or puzzle games while they listen to some famous Impressionist pieces.
Sonic Detectives
Purpose: Finding unusual sounds wherever they are
Challenge students to find some new and interesting sounds this week in their homes or neighborhoods. Give them an example: hold a ruler flat on a desk so one half sticks out over the edge of the desk. Flip the end of the ruler so it vibrates and makes a funny sound. Charge students with the task of finding other sounds at home, and if possible, bringing them to class.

Great Composers of the Impressionist Period
Purpose: Knowing important facts about Impressionist period composers
Students can learn more about Impressionist composers from the take-home page provided. Consider assigning them to learn the content for a quiz at the start of the next lesson. This document can be added to their other composer pages.

Impressionist Q
Instruct students to number a blank piece of paper from 1-6. Then listen closely to these tracks to identify examples of Impressionist music. After each track, they should mark a Y for Yes, or an N for no. See if the students correctly identify the three Impressionist pieces, and ask them how they came to their conclusions.

- Track 4 Bertle Pop - pop
- Track 5 Bach’s Brandenburg Concerto No.5, 3rd Movement - Baroque, listen for the harpsichord
- Track 6 Debussy’s Le Mer - Impressionist
- Track 7 Debussy’s Pour le Piano, 2nd Movement - Impressionist
- Track 8 Tickle Me - country
- Track 9 Ravel’s Valses Nobles et Sentimentales No. II - Impressionist
Art
Show students paintings by Monet and Renoir. Compare them to realist paintings by Jean-Francois Millet and John Senior Sargent. Discuss how they are different. Ask what similarities they notice between Impressionist art and music.

Social Studies
Debussy was influenced by the Javanese gamelan, which he heard played at an exhibition in Paris. On a world map, find Java which is part of the islands of Indonesia. Listen to Java Journey (Track 10), a piece of music featuring the gamelan. Research Java to learn more about its instruments and culture. Listen also to the second movement of Debussy’s Estampe II (Track 11). Ask students to point out any similarities they hear.
Although 1910 is considered the official end of the Impressionist Period, it didn’t actually end during that year. This is because it branched off into many different musical subcultures after 1900, Avant Garde, Neo-Classical, and even Futurism to name but a few.

**Crazy Chords**  
**Purpose:** Developing three-note chords into more creative chord patterns  
In Unit 1 Episode 15 Chords, students built a three-note chord starting on C. Just as composers in the Impressionist period created new chords, challenge students to develop new chords of their own, following these steps.

1. Play the chord of C.
2. Change the middle note E to either an F or a D and listen to how it changes the sound of the chord.
3. Add an extra fourth note. It can be a black or white note.
4. Play all four notes together as the new chord.
5. Color in the keys of the new chord on the worksheet piano.
6. Experiment with playing the chord pianissimo, fortissimo, and staccato.

Allow students to discuss what impressions their new chord makes.

**VIDEO REPLAY**  
**Whole Tone Scale**  
**Purpose:** Discovering different scales  
Listen again as Quaver steps out the whole tone scale. A whole tone is two half tones put together. A half tone is the nearest note – either black or white – played from the starting note. Using the IWB, ask students to make a whole tone scale by going up and down a keyboard in whole tones. There are only two whole-tone scales in music (see below).

![Whole Tone Scale 1](image1)
![Whole Tone Scale 2](image2)
TEACHER NOTES

Featured Instruments

- Piano
- Guitar
- Cymbals
- Double Bass