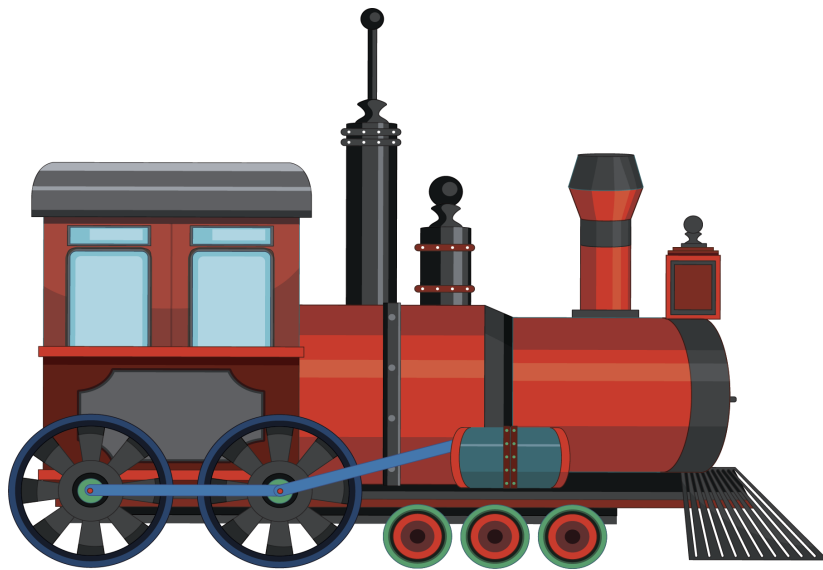
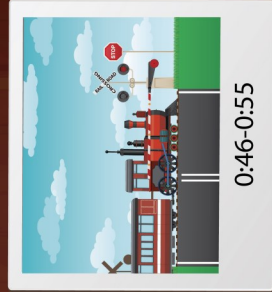
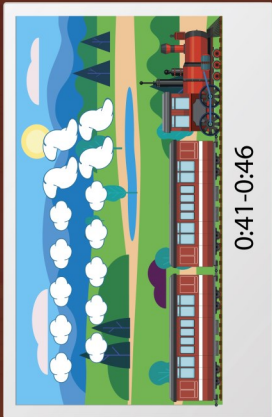
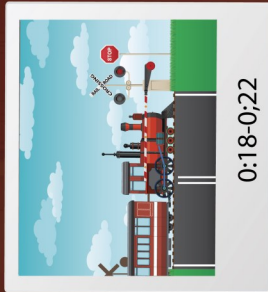
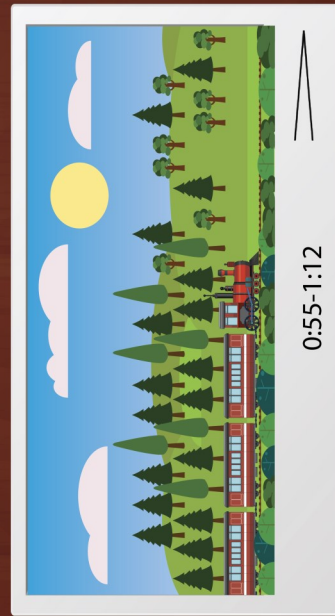
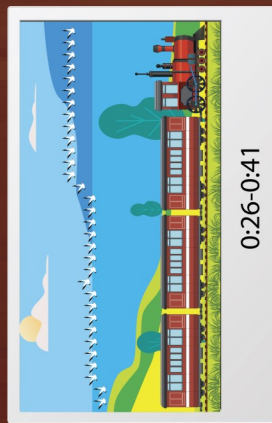


Railroad (Travel Song)

BY MEREDITH MONK



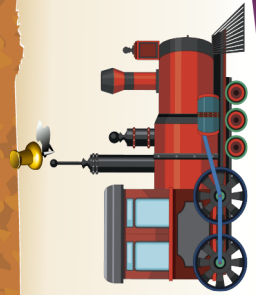


Railroad (Travel Song)

by Meredith Monk (b. 1942)

About the Composer

- Meredith Monk was born in New York City in 1942 and is a Contemporary Period composer.
- Monk is not just a composer, but also a performer, director, singer, filmmaker, and choreographer.
- She is known for her unique way of singing. She explored many new ways to use her voice in what is now called "extended vocal techniques."
- Over her career she has won many awards, such as the MacArthur Fellowship and the Creative Capital Award for Performing Arts.
- She was awarded the National Medal of the Arts from President Obama in 2015.



About the Music

- Composed in 1982, *Railroad (Travel Song)*, is a minimalist piano composition.
- Monk incorporates a variety of time signatures in this selection, constantly shifting to create the feel of the traveling train.
- This selection is composed based on repetitive melodic and rhythmic motifs.



Vocabulary

Minimalism a musical style in which composers use very little (minimal) melodic material

motive or motif a recurring short musical idea

More

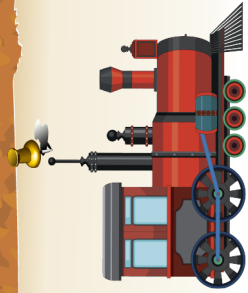
Alan Kriegsman, a journalist and dance critic for the Washington Post, once wrote about Meredith Monk: "When the time comes, perhaps a hundred years from now, to tally up achievements in the performing arts during the last third of the 20th century, one name that seems sure to loom large is that of Meredith Monk. In originality, in scope, in depth, there are few to rival her."

Railroad (Travel Song)

de Meredith Monk (b.1942)

Acerca del Compositor

- Meredith Monk nació en la ciudad de Nueva York en 1942 y fue una compositora del período contemporáneo.
- Monk no sólo es una compositora sino una artista, directora, cantante, cineasta y coreógrafa.
- Ella es conocida por su manera única de cantar. Ella exploró varias formas de usar su voz en lo hoy es conocido como técnicas vocales extendidas.
- A lo largo de su carrera ha ganado numerosos premios, tales como el MacArthur Fellowship y el premio Creative Capital de Arte Escénico.
- En 2015, recibió la Medalla Nacional de Artes por parte el presidente Obama.



Vocabulario

Minimalismo es un estilo de música en cual el compositor utiliza muy poco material melódico (mínimo)

motivo o motif es una breve idea musical que se repite en una pieza musical

Más

Alan Kriegsman, un periodista y crítico de la danza del periodico Washington Post, escribió a cerca de Meredith Monk:

“Cuando llegue el momento, quizá dentro de cien años, de hacer un recuento de los logros de las artes escénicas durante el último tercio del Siglo 20, un nombre que parece seguro ocupará un lugar destacado será el de Meredith Monk. En originalidad, alcance y profundidad, hay pocos que puedan rivalizar/competir con ella.”

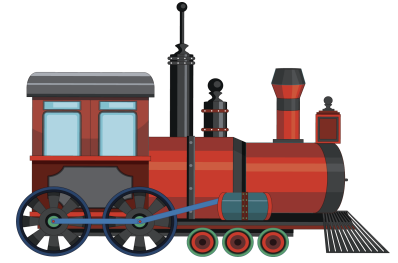
La Pieza Musical

- *Railroad (Travel Song)*, compuesta en 1982, es una composición Minimalista para piano.
- Monk incorpora una variedad de compases en esta selección, que cambia constantemente para crear la sensación de un tren en viaje.
- Esta selección está compuesta a base de melodías y motivos rítmicos repetitivos.



LESSON

Railroad (Travel Song) by Meredith Monk (b.1942)



QUICK VIDEO LESSON

Day 1 (12 minutes):

- Setting the Stage
- Animated Map Lesson Video

KEY CONCEPTS

1. Solo Piano
2. Minimalism
3. Motif

Day 2 (10 minutes):

- Live Performance Video
- Pick One Supplemental Activity

LESSON CONCEPTS/VOCABULARY

Minimalism, motif, piano, solo

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Identify repeated motif.
2. Define Minimalism.

MATERIALS

Animated Map Lesson Video

Live Performance Video



NOTES

1. *Kinesthetic Title Video* is available on the Digital Teacher's Guide or the Mighty Music YouTube Channel.
2. *Early Childhood Student Booklet* is available on the Digital Teacher's Guide.
3. Be sure to have students listen to other recordings of this selection from YouTube or other music streaming services that vary in tempo and style.

SUPPLEMENTAL



Audio Bank for Full Selection and Themes



Student Reproducible Pages:

Background Page in English/Spanish
Checking for Understanding
Railroad Rhythms Activity Page
Reader's Theater Script
Early Childhood Pages



Skill Assessment



Connection to Art

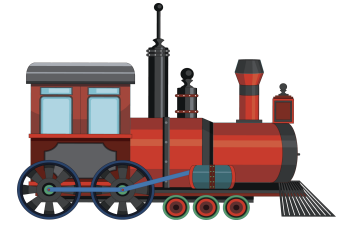


Alternate Version Performances



Composer Portrait & Wall Sign

LESSON



Railroad (Travel Song) by Meredith Monk

LESSON BY BRIAN VANDEWALLE



TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

SETTING THE STAGE

Echo say the selection title and composer name while viewing the Composer Portrait and Wall Sign.

Read or listen to background information on M. Monk (b. 1942) and this selection.

Introduce the concept of a *motif*.

- ◆ **Explain** that composers can use repetition to help create patterns in music. The composer picks a melody or rhythm and repeats it throughout the song. This repetition ties the music together and makes it easier for listeners to recognize. Composers also use different patterns and change them just a little bit each time to keep the music interesting.
- ◆ **Define** the concept of *motif* as a recurring short musical idea.

Tell students that today they will be listening to a piano selection that uses *motifs*.

ANIMATED MAP LESSON VIDEO

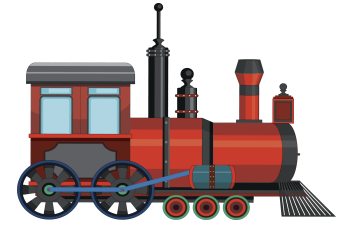
View the Animated Map Lesson Video

- ◆ **Composer Card**
Read or have students read aloud the Composer Card.
- ◆ **Static Listening Map**
Pause the video and review the Key Concepts of the Listening Map.
 1. Solo Piano
 2. Minimalism
 3. Motif
- ◆ **Animated Listening Map**
Watch the animated Listening Map.

LIVE PERFORMANCE

Watch <https://safesha.re/monk01> to see a performance of this selection by Conrad Tao.

LESSON



Railroad (Travel Song) by Meredith Monk



SUPPLEMENTAL ACTIVITIES



KINESTHETIC TITLES

Watch *Kinesthetic Title Video* to move to show the selection title and composer name.



WORDS TO THEME

Sing the Theme with words. This can be found in the Notated Themes section of the lesson.



SKILL ASSESSMENT

Observe students to assess understanding as they:

Turn and talk to another student and discuss the key concepts of Minimalism and motif. How do these two concepts work together in this selection?



ACTIVITY PAGE

Complete the “Railroad Rhythms” Activity Page. Students will **compose** short rhythmic phrases and perform them for classmates.



CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

Complete the “Checking for Understanding” worksheet.

ANSWERS: 1. c 2. b 3. c 4. a 5. b



ALTERNATE VERSION PERFORMANCES

Watch <https://safesha.re/monk02> to see a animated graphical score of this selection.

Selection is performed by Conrad Tao.



CONNECTION TO ART

View the selected artwork, *Time Transfixed* by René Magritte (1898-1967) and discuss the connection information for this music.



READER'S THEATER

Use the Reader's Theater Script.

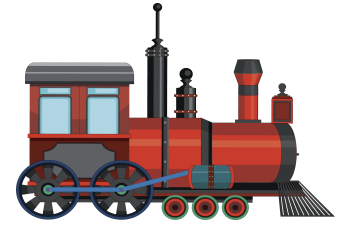


EARLY CHILDHOOD

Complete the Early Childhood Pages with younger students after watching the Animated Listening Map. Students may listen to the music again as they work.

LESSON

Railroad (Travel Song) by Meredith Monk



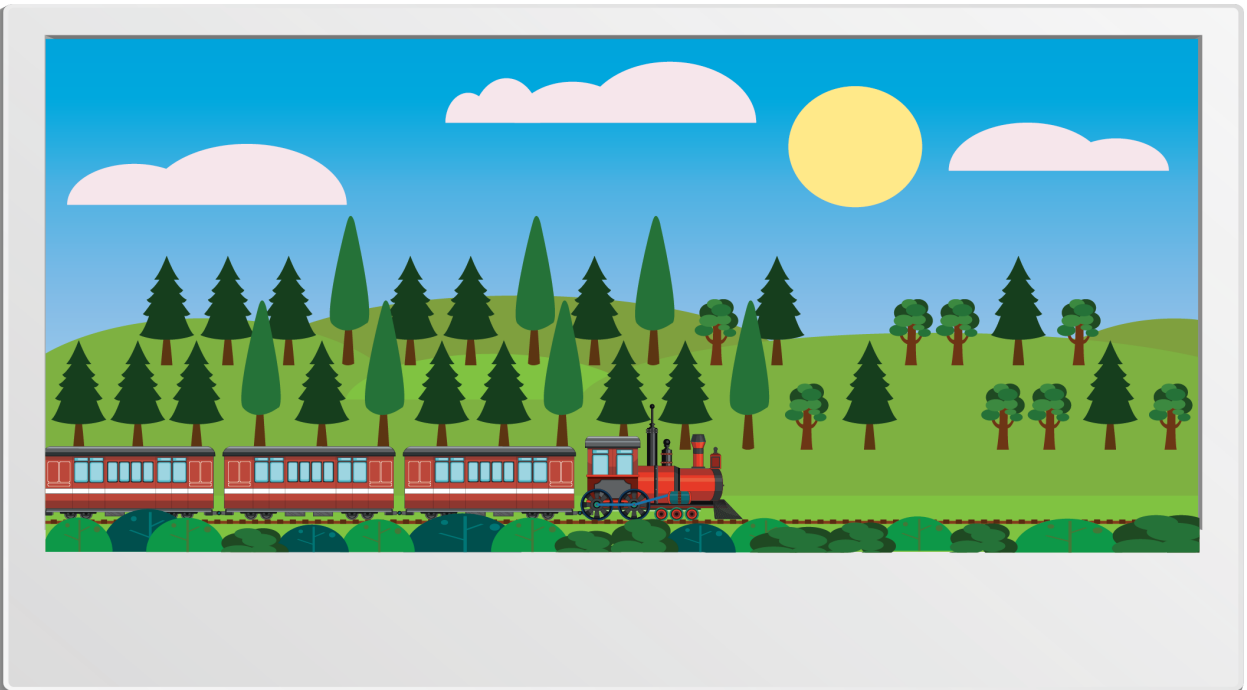
VOCABULARY/DEFINITIONS

Minimalism a musical style in which composers use very little (minimal) melodic material

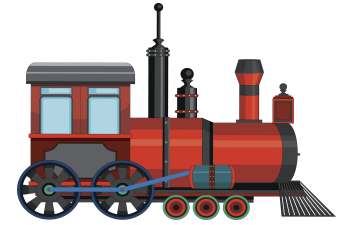
motive or motif a recurring short musical idea

piano a keyboard instrument with hammers that strike metal strings

solo one person performing alone



LESSON



Railroad (Travel Song) by Meredith Monk



CONNECTION TO ART



[Time Transfixed](#) by René Magritte (1898-1967) (click to view full screen)

Description of the Painting:

[Time Transfixed](#) by René Magritte is a surprising painting. The train coming out of the fireplace is represented as if it were coming out of a railway tunnel. The painting has unrelated objects and the scale is totally disconnected from reality. This is called the surrealist style of painting.

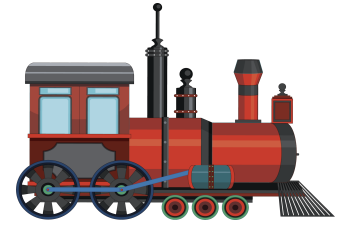
Short Biography of the Artist:

René Magritte was born on November 21, 1898, in Lessines, Belgium. He is one of the most famous surrealist painters, known for creating strange and imaginative art. As a child, he loved comic strips but had a tough life, losing his mother when he was young. Magritte painted his first picture in 1914 and later studied art in Brussels.

How the Painting Relates to the Music:

René Magritte's painting *Time Transfixed* and Meredith Monk's song *Railroad (Travel Song)* both explore the mystery and wonder of trains. In the painting, a train is coming out of a fireplace, blending something ordinary with something magical. Similarly, Monk's piece uses the sound of a piano to capture the feeling of traveling on a train, full of rhythm and movement. Both the painting and the music make us think about the excitement and dream-like quality of journeys.

LESSON



Railroad (Travel Song) by Meredith Monk



NOTATED THEME

A Theme

Musical notation for the A Theme. It consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The lyrics are: "Monk wrote Rail - road it's for pi - a - no a Song for Tra - vel".

Monk wrote Rail - road it's for pi - a - no a Song for Tra - vel

B Theme

Musical notation for the B Theme. It consists of a grand staff with a bass clef. The melody is written in the bass clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The notation includes a forte (*ff*) dynamic marking.

ff

3

Musical notation for the third measure. It consists of a grand staff with a bass clef. The melody is written in the bass clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The notation includes a fermata over the first note of the melody.

3

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

Name: _____

Class: _____



Railroad (Travel Song)

by _____

_____ 1) Which instrument is featured in this selection?

a.



b.



c.



_____ 2) Which of the following is the best definition of a *motif*?

- a. the reason a composer wrote a piece
- b. a recurring short musical idea
- c. the main part of a train that makes it move

_____ 3) Meredith Monk is a composer in which historical period?

- a. Classical
- b. Romantic
- c. Contemporary

_____ 4) A style of music in which there is very little melodic material is called _____.

- a. Minimalism
- b. Motivation
- c. Theme and Variation Form

_____ 5) Melodic Direction can be best described as _____.

- a. the path of notes in a melody getting louder or quieter
- b. the path of notes in a melody moving up, down, or staying the same
- c. a melody with performance directions to the performer

Write complete sentences to answer the following questions:

Write one fact about this selection or its composer.

Write one opinion statement about this selection or its composer.





Name _____

Class _____

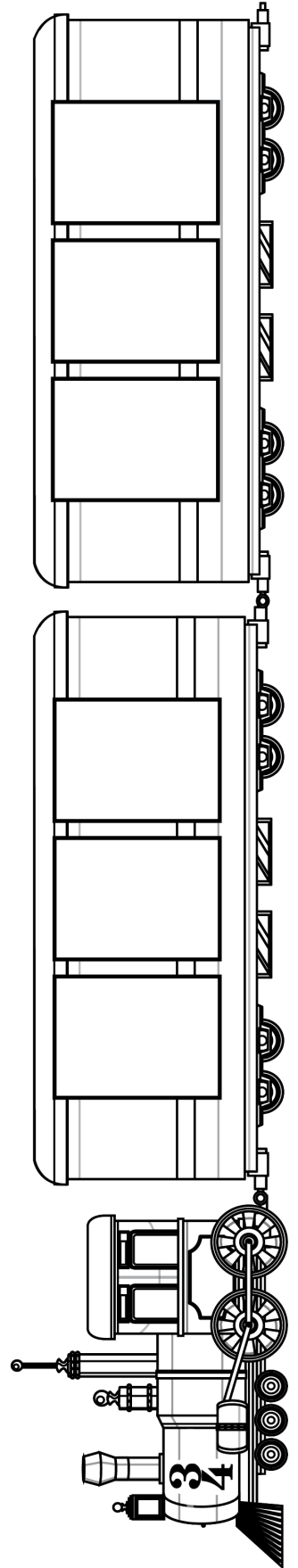
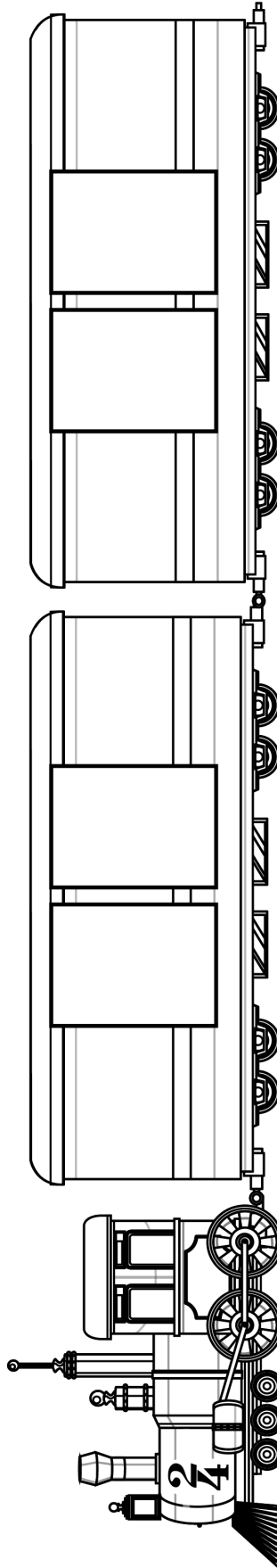
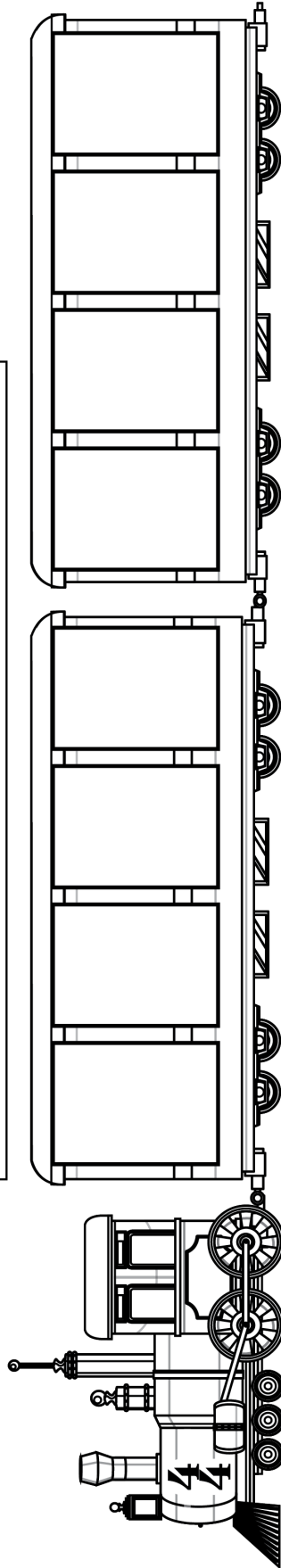
Railroad Rhythms

Railroad (Travel Song)

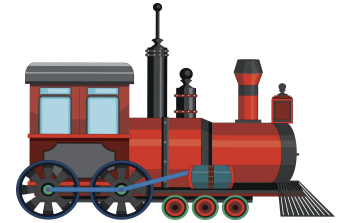
by _____ (b. 1942)

Directions: Choose one rhythm from the Rhythm Bank to fill in each window of the train cars. Read and clap your completed rhythms. Perform your rhythms for a classmate.

Rhythm Bank



LESSON



Railroad (Travel Song) by Meredith Monk



Characters: Teacher, Justin, Christina
Setting: A School Classroom

Teacher: Today, we'll learn about an incredible woman composer, Meredith Monk, and her fascinating piece, *Railroad (Travel Song)*.

Justin: Who is Meredith Monk?

Teacher: Meredith Monk is a groundbreaking composer, singer, and performer. She's famous for creating music that's different from anything you've heard before.

Christina: Is she like Beethoven or Mozart?

Teacher: Yes, she composes music to be enjoyed by performers and listeners. But she is different in that she is still alive today, and composes in a style called *Minimalism*.

Justin: *Minimalism*? What's that?

Teacher: It's music that uses simple patterns, repeated and layered, to create something beautiful and unique.

Christina: This piece is for only one instrument, the piano, correct?

Teacher: Yes, she wrote a small amount of melodic material and repeated patterns that the pianist performs to create sounds like a train!

Justin: Wait—a *train*?

Teacher: That's where *Railroad (Travel Song)* comes in. Monk used the piano to create the feeling of a train journey—clicking wheels, the whistle, and the rhythm of travel.

Christina: That's so creative!

Teacher: And inspiring. Meredith Monk shows us how women composers can push boundaries and create music that takes us on a journey – only one instrument needed!

All Characters: Let's listen to *Railroad (Travel Song)* and imagine the journey!

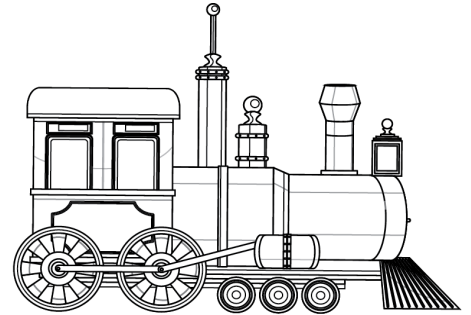
EARLY CHILDHOOD PAGES

Name _____

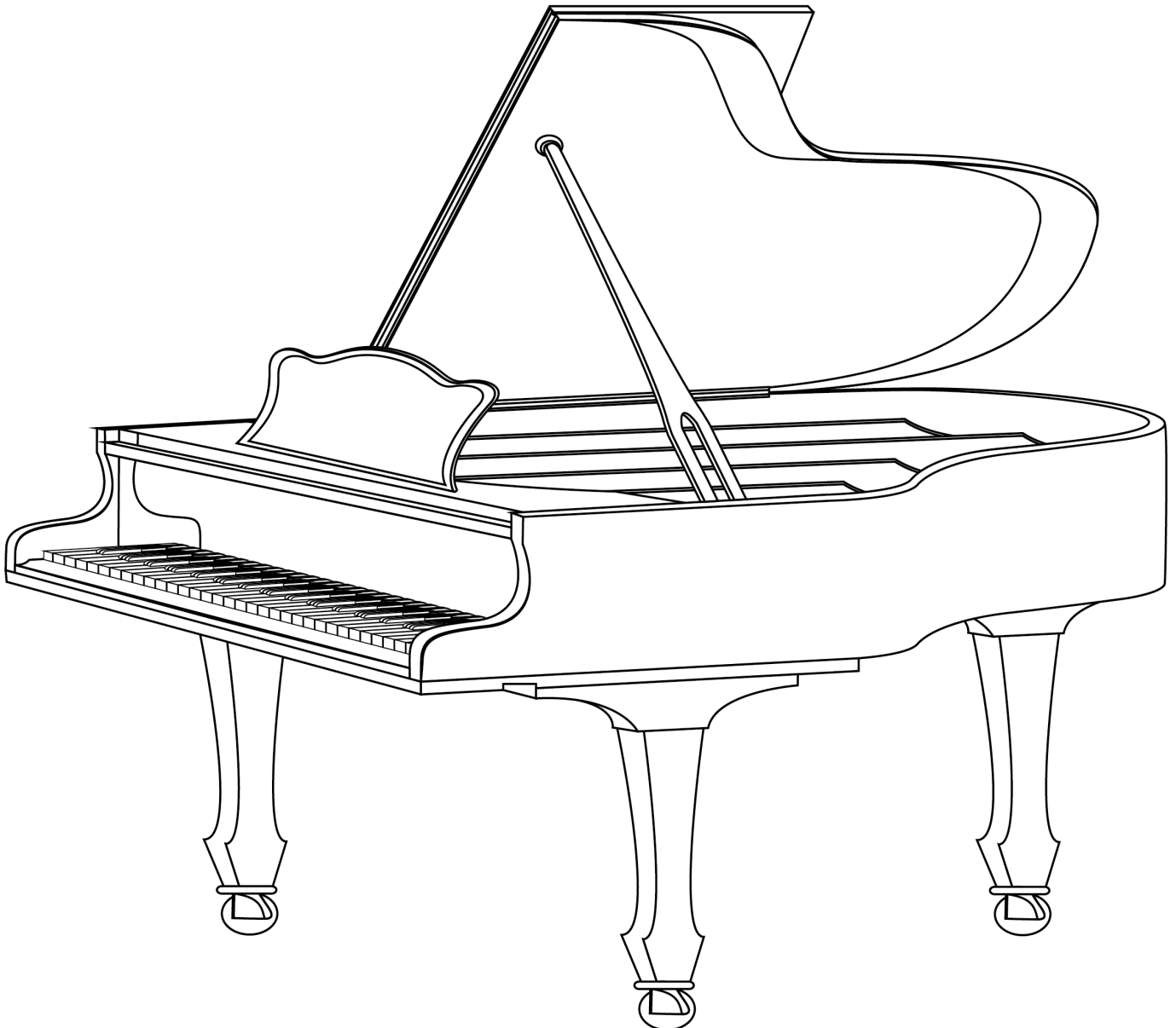
Railroad (Travel Song)
by Meredith Monk



In this piece you hear the piano.
Write the word piano.



piano



Color the pictures as you listen to the music.

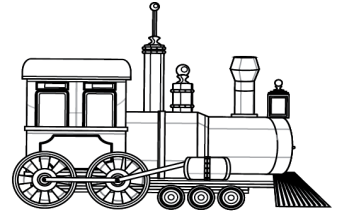
EARLY CHILDHOOD PAGES

Name _____

Railroad (Travel Song) by Meredith Monk



Did you notice the train on the listening map?



You might like to travel somewhere by train, plane, or car. Where would you like to visit? What would you see when you are there? What would you like to do while you are there? Who would you like to travel with on your trip?

Draw a picture of where you would like to visit.
Write a story about your travels.
