

Teacher Guide 2025

Picture the Music

Inspire Creativity!

SLSO education programs are presented by



An education program for grades K-6
presented by the **St. Louis Symphony
Volunteer Association**

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**St. Louis Symphony
Orchestra**

Stéphane Denève : Music Director



A special invitation for teachers of student artists

Showcase your students' imagination and creativity with **Picture the Music**, now in its 35th year of celebrating art by students in public, private, parochial, and homeschools throughout the region. This year, this FREE cross-curricular art competition invites students in grades K–6 to discover **Conga del Fuego Nuevo by Arturo Márquez** and respond with paintings and drawings that express creative thought and emotion inspired by the music.

We are proud to partner with the Missouri Botanical Garden, the Magic House, and the Saint Louis Art Museum to bring Picture the Music 2025 to you and your students.

Art and music offer powerful strategies for emotional exploration and regulation. Picture the Music gives your students a learning activity that goes beyond the curriculum to discover new ways to understand and process their emotions.

- Engaging in art is cathartic when individuals express their feelings, thoughts, and experiences.
- Listening to music connects us with and validates our own emotions.
- Experiencing beauty, wonder, and awe—whether through music, art, or the natural world—improves our mental and physical health.

This resource offers guidelines and ideas for making your students' Picture the Music experience truly meaningful and memorable!



How it Works

Students listen, create, and share. Teachers encourage creativity and imagination then choose seven pieces of art to submit.

! *Don't share the title of the piece! Give your students the opportunity to react to the music, not the title. The title should be a fun surprise for your students after they've completed their artwork!*

Listen: Using good quality audio equipment, listen to *Conga del Fuego Nuevo* by Arturo Márquez. Allow time for students to listen more than once to explore the emotions and thoughts that form in their minds. The musical selection is just over four minutes long, and students will become more familiar and comfortable with it through repeated listening. Some schools have found success when their students listen in music class and then create their artwork in art class.

Explore: Encourage students to share whatever thoughts come to their minds while listening. What feelings, images, and memories does the music evoke? Here are some questions for discussion provided by the Saint Louis Art Museum:

- Close your eyes as you listen. What colors, shapes, or images come to mind?
- What words would you use to describe the music?
- What does the music feel like? What emotions does the music inspire?

- What do you imagine is happening? What story is the music telling?
- If you were to dance to this music, how would you move? If you are comfortable, move to the music in place or in a safe spot.

Create: After students are familiar with the music, they should begin creating their own works of art inspired by it. Continue to listen to the music periodically, while students create.

Share: Teachers choose and submit up to seven (7) students' artwork per school, preferably one from each grade K–6. Each homeschool network may enter one (1) piece of art per student up to seven (7) students.

Where to Find the Music

1. [YouTube](#)
2. [Spotify](#)

Bring your students to hear the music live! The SLSO is performing *Conga del Fuego* in this season's Dance Party! education concert. Performances will be on October 22–23, 2024, at Touhill Performing Arts Center at UMSL, and February 4–5, 2025, at Lindenwood University's J. Scheidegger Center for the Arts. Visit slo.org/edconcerts for more information and to register for tickets.

Artwork Requirements

Each artwork entry must fulfill these requirements:

- Artwork must be created on **12" x 18"** paper.
- Acceptable media include crayon, oil pastels, pen, ink, paints, batik, or mixed media collage. If using collage, use only firmly glued, flat materials.
- The art must be as flat as possible. Please minimize the use of embellishments such as gemstones, beads, etc. that would add weight to the artwork.
- Students' names should NOT appear on the front of their artwork (name on the back of artwork is okay).

Please consider the following when creating artwork:

- Mounting is not required for entry into the competition. If you choose to mount artwork, do not use white glue as it will warp the paper.
- Do not mount on foam core or cardboard.
- Do not use soft pastels or powdered chalk because they may smear and ruin the artwork.
- Consider that the artwork will be viewed from a distance as you choose your media.
- Do not mat your artwork.

Photographing Artwork for Submission

Digital photographs of the artwork will be uploaded via an online submission platform. Please take extra care when photographing student artwork.

- Take the photograph in a well-lit room.
- Avoid photographing the art from above.
- Place the artwork on an easel or something similar.
- Put a solid background behind the art (preferably white).
- Determine whether the photograph should be taken in landscape or portrait mode.

How to Submit Entries

Visit slo.org/picture to access the online submission form.

- Complete one Submission Form for each school. On this form, you will be able to submit up to seven (7) student entries. If you are entering artworks for more than one school, submit a separate Submission Form (with up to seven entries) for each school.
- Double-check the spelling of all student names. **Names will be reproduced on certificates, programs, and artwork exhibit cards exactly as teachers submit them.**

- Double-check artwork titles and the orientation of the file uploads before submitting. **Titles and artwork will be reproduced exactly as submitted.**
- Acceptable image file types are .jpg, .png, .gif, .bmp, .tiff, .webp, .heic, .heif.
- Please name each file using the following naming system
 - StudentLastName_firstInitial_grade (K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6)
- If you are unable to access the online platform, please contact education@slo.org.

All entries must be submitted online by Wednesday, January 15, 2025.

Questions? Email svapicturethemusic@slo.org.

Judging

- A panel of judges—experts in art, music, and art education—will judge the students' art on originality, creativity, and imagination.
- Artwork must meet all requirements to be entered into the competition.
- Judges will not see any information about the student or their school. They will only see the artwork.
- Judges select 100 finalists who are invited to an awards ceremony.

Finalist Artwork Submission

Teachers will receive results via email in early February. Physical artwork from all 100 finalists must then be received by February 21, 2025. Instructions for mounting finalists' artwork and for mailing and/or drop-off later that month will be included in the email.

Awards Ceremony

An awards ceremony honoring the 100 finalists will take place at the Missouri Botanical Garden on Saturday, April 12, 2025, at 2:00pm. Finalists' parents, relatives, friends, teachers, principals, and district superintendents are encouraged to attend. The following awards will be presented:

Maestro Award (2 winners): Awarded to one student artist from grades K–3 and one student artist from grades 4–6 whose works were identified as best capturing the essence of the music and spirit of Picture the Music.

St. Louis Symphony Orchestra Award (7 winners): Awarded to one student artist from each grade whose works were identified as best capturing the essence of the music.

Blue Ribbon Award (25 winners): Awarded to 25 student artists for works of excellence.

Special Recognition Honorees (66 winners): Awarded to 66 student artists for outstanding work.

Each finalist receives a certificate and has their artwork on display in the Picture the Music art exhibit. The traveling exhibit showcases students' art at several public locations throughout St. Louis following the awards ceremony.

Every student whose artwork is submitted to Picture the Music will receive a Certificate of Merit. Certificates for finalists will be handed out at the awards ceremony; certificates for all other entries will be emailed to teachers directly.

Artwork Pickup

For the 100 finalists, physical artwork pickup will be arranged after the completion of the traveling artwork exhibit. Teachers with finalists will be emailed directly with information about artwork pickup in spring 2025.

Dates to Remember

- Artwork submission deadline: January 15, 2025
- Emails to top 100 finalists sent out: Early February 2025
- Finalist artwork drop-off: February 10–21, 2025
- Finalist artwork postmark deadline: February 12, 2025
- Awards ceremony: April 12, 2025
- Traveling Exhibit: April and May 2025
- Finalist artwork pickup: May 12–16, 2025

About the Composer and Composition

Note: Discuss the composer's life and culture and the world events that happened during their lifetime ONLY AFTER students have completed their artwork to ensure that the students' work reflects their own personal and individual emotions and thoughts about the musical selection.

Arturo Márquez was born on December 20, 1950, in Alamos, Sonora, Mexico.

Arturo Márquez's family immigrated to a suburb of Los Angeles, California, when Márquez was about twelve years old. Growing up, Márquez was around a lot of traditional folk music from Mexico. His father was a mariachi, and his grandfather was a folk musician in northern Mexico. In school, Márquez played the trombone in his school band, and he started composing when he was 16. He attended college in Mexico, but also studied in Paris and in the United States. Currently, Márquez lives in Mexico City and works at the National University of Mexico.



Conga del Fuego Nuevo is a lively piece of orchestral music that is inspired by the tradition of Conga dance, which originated in Cuba. Conga is also the name of a drum used in Conga dance and in this piece. "Fuego nuevo" means "new fire" in Spanish. This is a reference to an Aztec ceremony where fires are extinguished and then relit to symbolize the start of a new world.

State Standards for Visuals Art and Music

Picture the Music fulfills many components of the Missouri Learning Standards in music and visual arts, as well as the Illinois Fine Arts Learning Standards, including the following:

[Missouri Learning Standards](#)

Visual Art Grade-Level Expectations: VA:Cr1A, VA:Cr1B, VA:Cn10A

Music Grade-Level Expectations: MU:Re7A, MU:Cn10A, MU:Cn11A

[Illinois Fine Arts Learning Standards](#)

Visual Arts: VA:Cr1.1.K-6, VA:Cr2.1.K-6, VA:Cn10.1.K-6

Music: MU:Re8.1.K-6, MU:Cn10.1.K-6, MU:Cn11.1.K-6



Encourage your students to visit our partner organizations with their families!

[Saint Louis Art Museum](#)

[Missouri Botanical Garden](#)

[The Magic House](#)

