

## Activity 2 – Where’s the Motive?

### Objective:

Students will understand the concept of a musical motive, identify the main motives of Prokofiev’s “Montagues and Capulets” and Bernstein’s “Prologue,” and track motivic development through active listening.

### Materials:

- “Where’s the Motive?” worksheet
- Pencils
- Concert playlist

### Lesson Sequence:

1. Distribute “Where’s the Motive?” worksheets. Explain the definition of a **motive** in music – you may wish to use the opening four notes of Beethoven’s 5<sup>th</sup> Symphony as an example.
2. Looking at the worksheet, ask students to visually compare the motive from Prokofiev’s “Montagues and Capulets” with the motive from Bernstein’s “Prologue.” What looks similar about the two motives? What looks different?
3. Play each of the two motives on a piano or other melodic instrument for students. What similarities and differences do they notice in how the music sounds?
4. Explain that composers make changes to a motive in order to make the music more interesting. These changes might include making the motive higher, lower, faster, or slower; putting it in reverse; adding extra notes; or having the motive played by a different instrument or group of instruments.
5. Tell students they are going to be “motive detectives” as you listen to the first piece of music, Prokofiev’s “Montagues and Capulets.” Play the regular motive one more time to remind them how it sounds. Each time they hear the motive, students will use a symbol from the key to notate how it appears. Some may have more than one symbol!
6. Play Track 3, “Montagues and Capulets,” **beginning at 2:50** and playing to the end. Remind students that the first thing they will hear is the **regular** motive. If students hear the motive more than eight times, they can continue on the back.
7. Listen to the track again as a group, this time having students raise their hands every time they hear the motive. If you like, pause the track each time and compare which symbols students used.
8. Repeat the activity with Track 1, Bernstein’s “Prologue” (play motive again to remind students how it sounds).

Note: For students who are younger or less experienced with active listening, you may wish to do the Prokofiev excerpt as a class, then have students try tracking the Bernstein motive on their own.

### **Where's the Motive? Key**

(These are the motives we hear, but you might hear more!)

#### Prokofiev

1. Regular (violins)
2. Higher
3. Backwards with extra notes
4. Slower (slightly different rhythm) – flute and tambourine
5. Slower (slightly different rhythm) – flute and tambourine
6. Slower (slightly different rhythm) – flute, strings, snare drum
7. Slower (slightly different rhythm) – flute, strings, celesta
8. Saxophone
9. Clarinet
10. Backwards with extra notes – violins
11. Regular (violins)
12. Higher
13. Backwards and higher
14. Extra notes

#### Bernstein

1. Regular (saxophone and vibraphone)
2. Extra notes
3. Higher
4. Strings
5. Strings with extra notes
6. Trumpet
7. Whole orchestra
8. Whole orchestra with extra notes
9. Whole orchestra
10. Whole orchestra with extra notes