



## Lesson: Odd Time Signatures and Mixed Meters

Ages: 11 - 18

Projected time: 60 min total

**Supplies needed:** Any type of computer or smart-phone.

**Project Intro:** Students will learn about music in odd time signatures and mixed meters with audio and visual examples from various musical sources/performances taken from YouTube.

### **Vocabulary:**

**Claude Debussy:** (22 August 1862 – 25 March 1918) French composer and pianist. He was among the most influential composers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Known as an impressionist composer, although he rejected the term.

**Impressionism:** the name given to a movement in European classical music that arose in the late 19th century and continued into the middle of the 20th century. The term was taken from the European 19th-century art movement occurring at the same name.

**Mixed Meter:** involves placing a different time signature at the beginning of each measure, resulting in an irregular rhythmic feel.

**Complex/Odd Time Signatures:** a time signature in which the top number is an odd number, for example:  $3/4$ ,  $5/4$ ,  $7/4$ ,  $9/8$ ,  $11/8$ .

**Ballet:** a theatrical art form using dancing, music, and scenery to convey a story, theme, or atmosphere.

**Igor Stravinsky:** Russian composer, pianist, and conductor. He is one of the most important and influential composers of the 20th century (17 June 1882 – 6 April 1971).

Heitor Villa-Lobos: Brazilian composer, cellist, guitarist, and one of the foremost Latin American composers of the 20th century. He wrote over 2000 works; his music combines indigenous melodic and rhythmic elements with Western classical music.



Cello: The *cello* or violoncello is a bowed (and occasionally plucked) four-stringed instrument of the violin family. It is the second lowest instrument in the violin family; second to the double bass. A cello player is called a cellist.

## PART 1: Music in Odd Time

1. One type of odd time signature or meter is 5/4. This meter is special because it was used in the biggest-selling jazz single of all time: Paul Desmond's *Take Five*.  
[Take Five, performed by the Dave Brubeck Quartet](#)  
[Take Five: Live in Belgium 1964](#)
2. Up next, we have the meter 7/4. The most famous example of this meter in popular music is by the English rock band *Pink Floyd* and their song *Money* from the 1978 album *Dark Side of the Moon*  
[Pink Floyd - Money \(Official Music Video\)](#)
3. In 9/8, we have one of the most beloved piano pieces of all time, off of Debussy's *Suite bergamasque - Clair de Lune* published in 1905.  
[\(With Sheet Music\) Clair de Lune, performed by Moura Lympany](#)  
[\(Overhead piano view\) Clair de Lune, performed by youtuber Rousseau](#)
4. Finally we arrive at 11/8. These two following examples will be the last ones for this lesson, but they highlight the idea of mixing different time signatures or meters. The first example uses a more subtle approach to meter mixing, while the second example uses various meters to create an intense and chaotic rhythmic feel.  
[Villa-Lobos - O cachorrinho de borracha \(Yuri Smirnov, piano\)](#)  
[\(With sheet music\) Igor Stravinsky - The Rite of Spring \(1913\)](#)  
[\(LIVE Performance\) Stravinsky The Rite of Spring // London Symphony Orchestra/Sir Simon Rattle](#)

**That's it. Good job completing this project! How was the music?**