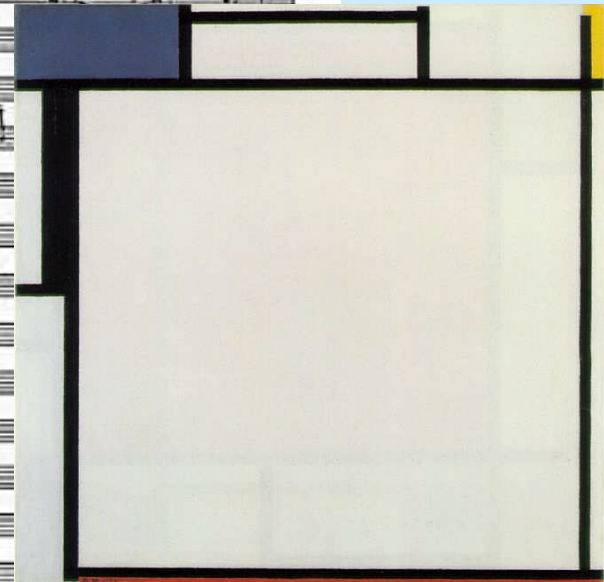
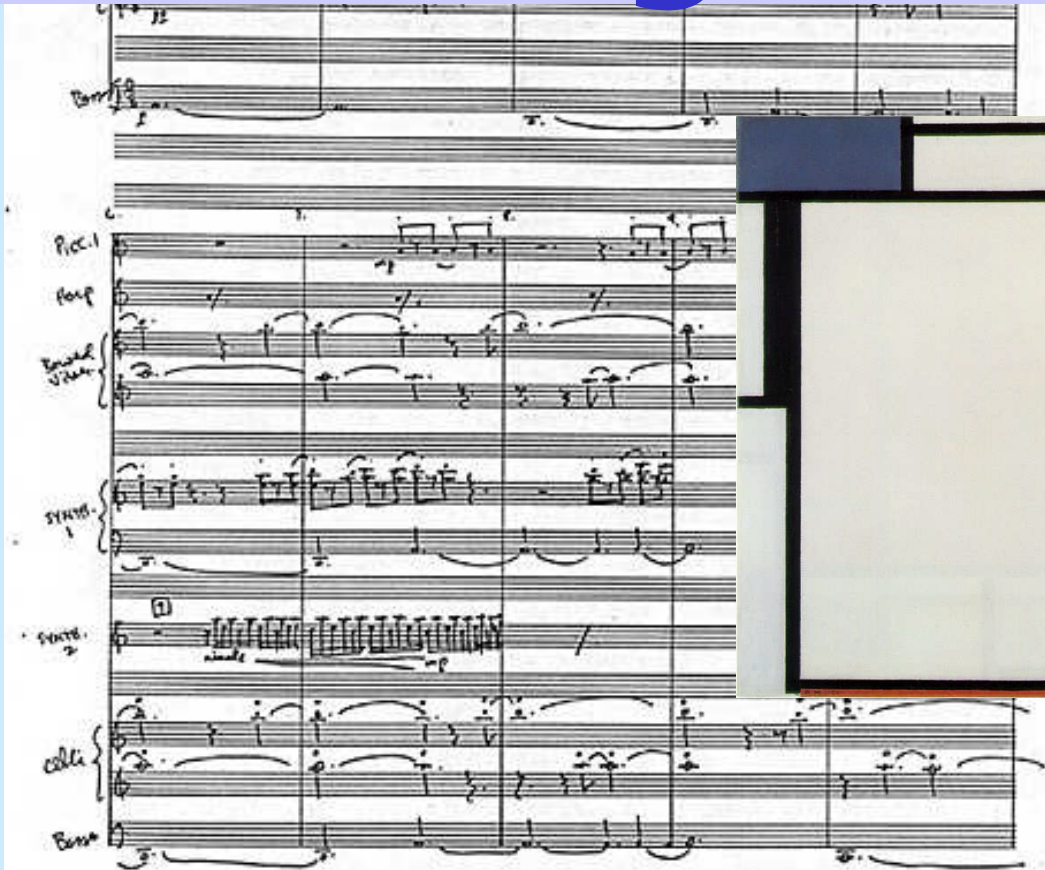


# Compositional Design



*some*

# PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

REPETITION

VARIATION

CONTRAST

BALANCE – symmetry/asymmetry

PROPORTION

ECONOMY

SCALE

# Rhyme in poetry

# Alliteration & assonance in poetry

## TO THE STONE-CUTTERS

Stone-cutters fighting time with marble, you foredefeated

Challengers of oblivion

Eat cynical earnings, knowing rock splits, records fall down,

The square-limbed Roman letters

Scale in the thaws, wear in the rain. The poet as well

Builds his monument mockingly;

For man will be blotted out, the blithe earth die, the brave sun

Die blind and blacken to the heart:

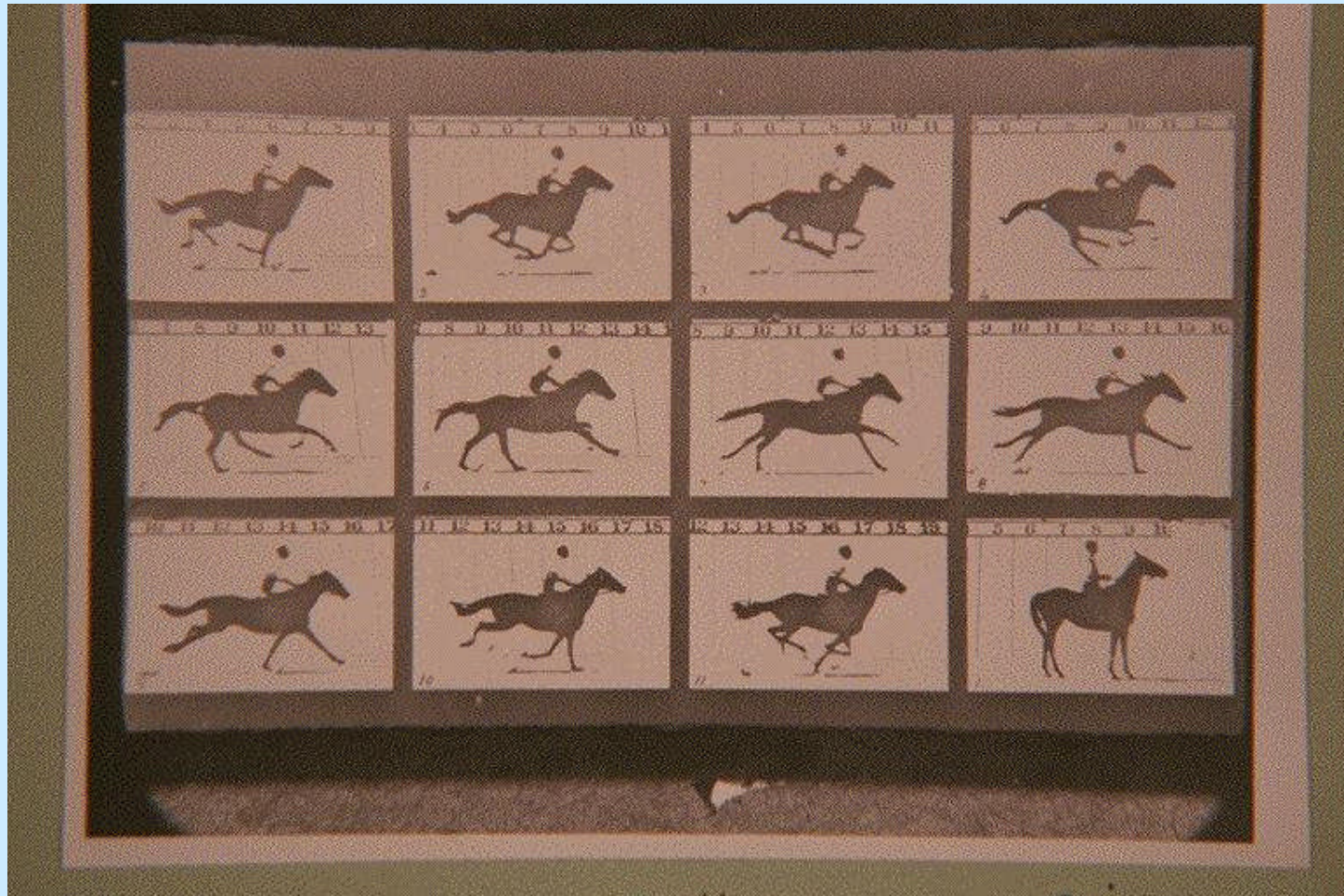
Yet stones have stood for a thousand years, and pained thoughts found

The honey of peace in old poems.

Robinson Jeffers, 1924

Andy Warhol,  
*Orange Disaster*  
No. 5, 1963





Eadweard Muybridge, photographer

Some repetition in music

PHILIP GLASS

*EINSTEIN ON THE  
BEACH*

(an opera)

Monet *Poplars . . .*





Monet *Poplars* . . .



Monet *Poplars* .



Charles Demuth,  
*The Figure 5 in  
Gold*, 1928



Cimabue,  
*Madonna  
Enthroned*,  
1280-90



# CAILLEBOTTE, Gustave

*Paris: A Rainy Day*, 1877, Oil on canvas, 83 1/2 x 108 3/4"



## Mozart Symphony No. 40 in G minor

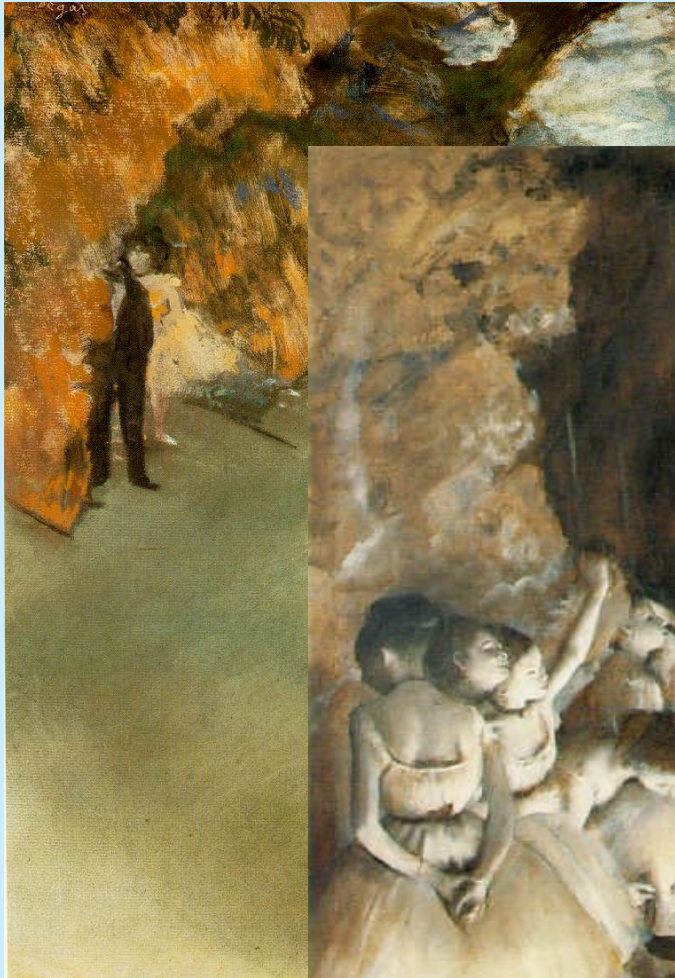
The **motif** is repeated and varied – the music is built with this motif (aka motive)

# VARIATION:

the alliance between repetition and surprise

The extensive poem, moreover, satisfies another two-fold requirement, one that is closely related to the rule of variety within unity: repetition and surprise. Repetition is a cardinal principal in poetry. Meter and its accents, rhyme, the epithets in Homer and other poets, phrases and incidents that recur like musical motifs and serve as signs to emphasize continuity. At the other extreme are breaks, changes, inventions - in a word, the unexpected. What we call development is merely the alliance between repetition and surprise, recurrence and invention, continuity and interruption.

Octavio Paz, "Telling and Singing" in *The Other Voice*



dancers



# Repetition/Variation in Music

Small-scale repetition creates a sense of pulse, rhythm and meter

Motivic repetition is used to build phrases

Large-scale repetition creates FORM

# Repetition/Variation in Music

Small-scale repetition creates a sense of pulse, rhythm and meter

AAAAAAAAAAAAAA

AAA AAA AAA AAA AAA

repetition creates patterns and ostinati

# Repetition/Variation in Music

Motivic repetition is used to build phrases

ABCD ABCD EFGH ABCD

Motives can be varied

A a A A A a a A A A

Repetition is combined with variation

AABC AABC

# Repetition/Variation in Music

Small-scale repetition creates a sense of pulse, rhythm and meter

Motivic repetition is used to build phrases

Large-scale repetition creates FORM

- 4-bar units common
  - combine to 8, 12, 16 even 32-bar patterns
- Classical forms can extend for many minutes

**CONTRAST**

Martin Munkacsi  
*Black Boys on  
the Shore of  
Lake Tanganyika*  
(1931)  
photograph





*Night Attack on the Sanjo Palace (detail)*

Japan, Kamakura period, second half of the 13th Century

Handscroll; ink and color on paper

16 1/4 x 275 1/2 in.







David Hockney, *Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)*, 1971

## Contrasts & Oppositions in Hockney's *Portrait of an Artist*

- Diagonal/horizontal
- Straight/curved lines
- Air/water/Earth/*fire?*
- Natural/artificial
- Clothed/(nearly) naked
- Tint/shade (light/shadow)
- colors

# CONTRAST IN MUSIC

**ACROSS TIME**

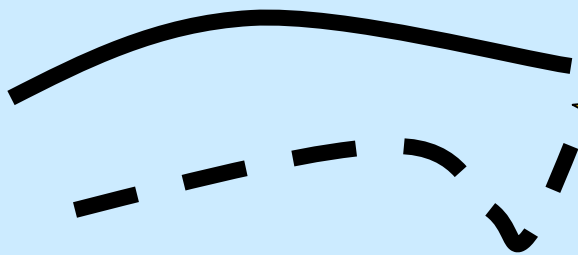
**-OR-**

**SIMULTANEOUS**

# CONTRAST IN MUSIC

Contrasting melodic styles (rhythmic v. lyrical, reinforced by text & timbre) presented separately and then

## SIMULTANEOUSLY

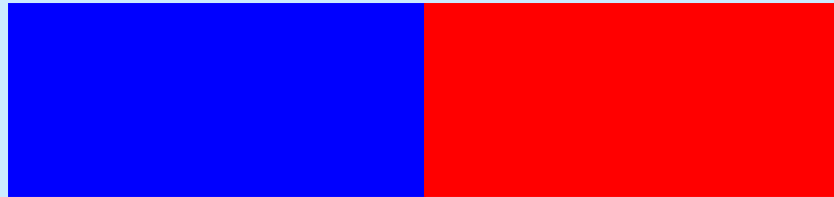


Example: polyphony in "Tonight" quintet from *West Side Story*

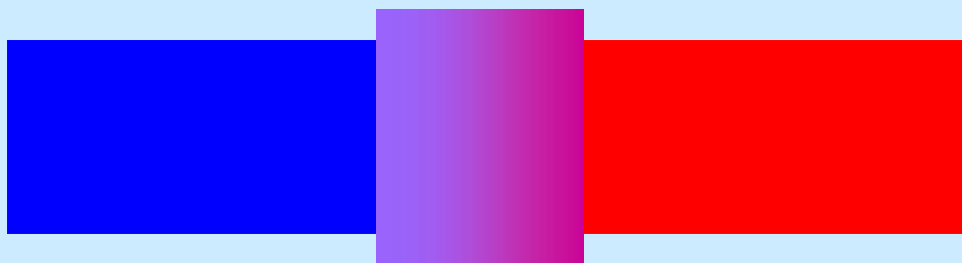


# CONTRAST IN MUSIC

## ACROSS TIME



IMMEDIATE  
(JUXTAPOSITION)



TRANSITION

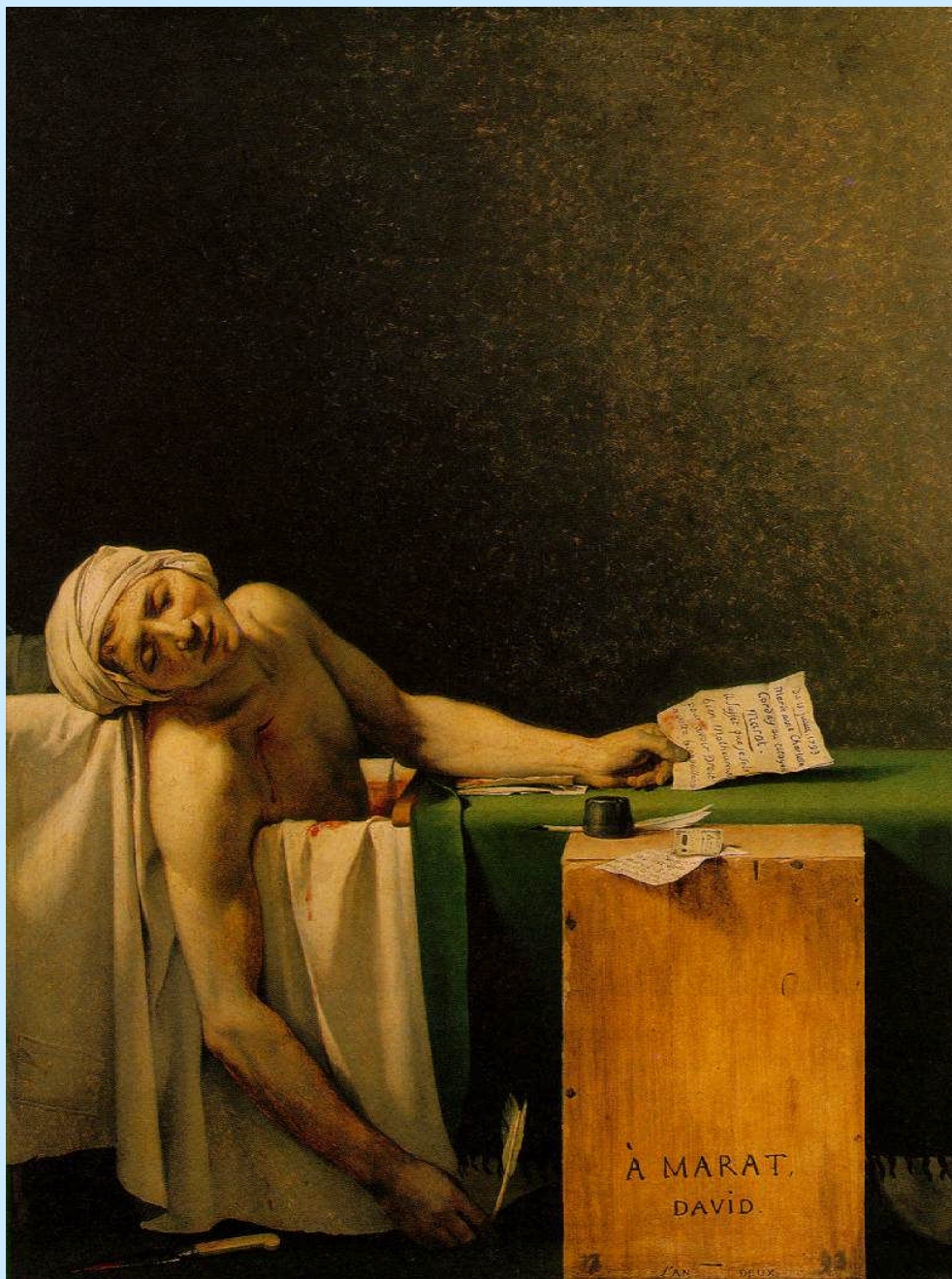


Example: Ravel String Quartet IV,  
vigorous  $\frac{5}{8}$  and lyrical  $\frac{3}{4}$  sections

# Giving or withholding in time

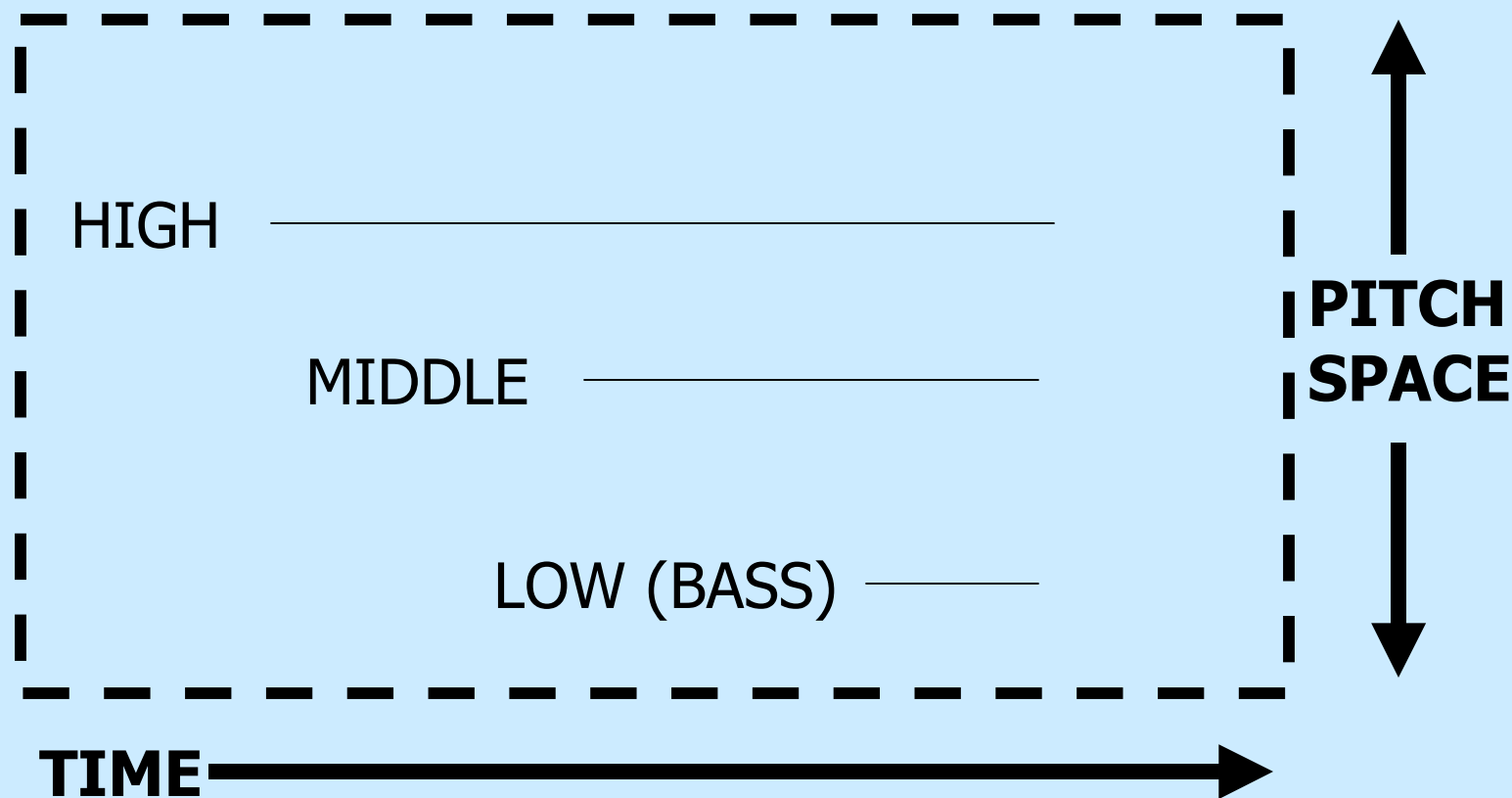


David,  
*Death of Marat*,  
1793



# Withholding/giving example

Värttinä – Finnish folk-rock band





# CONTRAST IN MUSIC

LOW – HIGH (contrast in *register*)

LOUD – SOFT

SHORT – LONG

articulation

TIMBRE

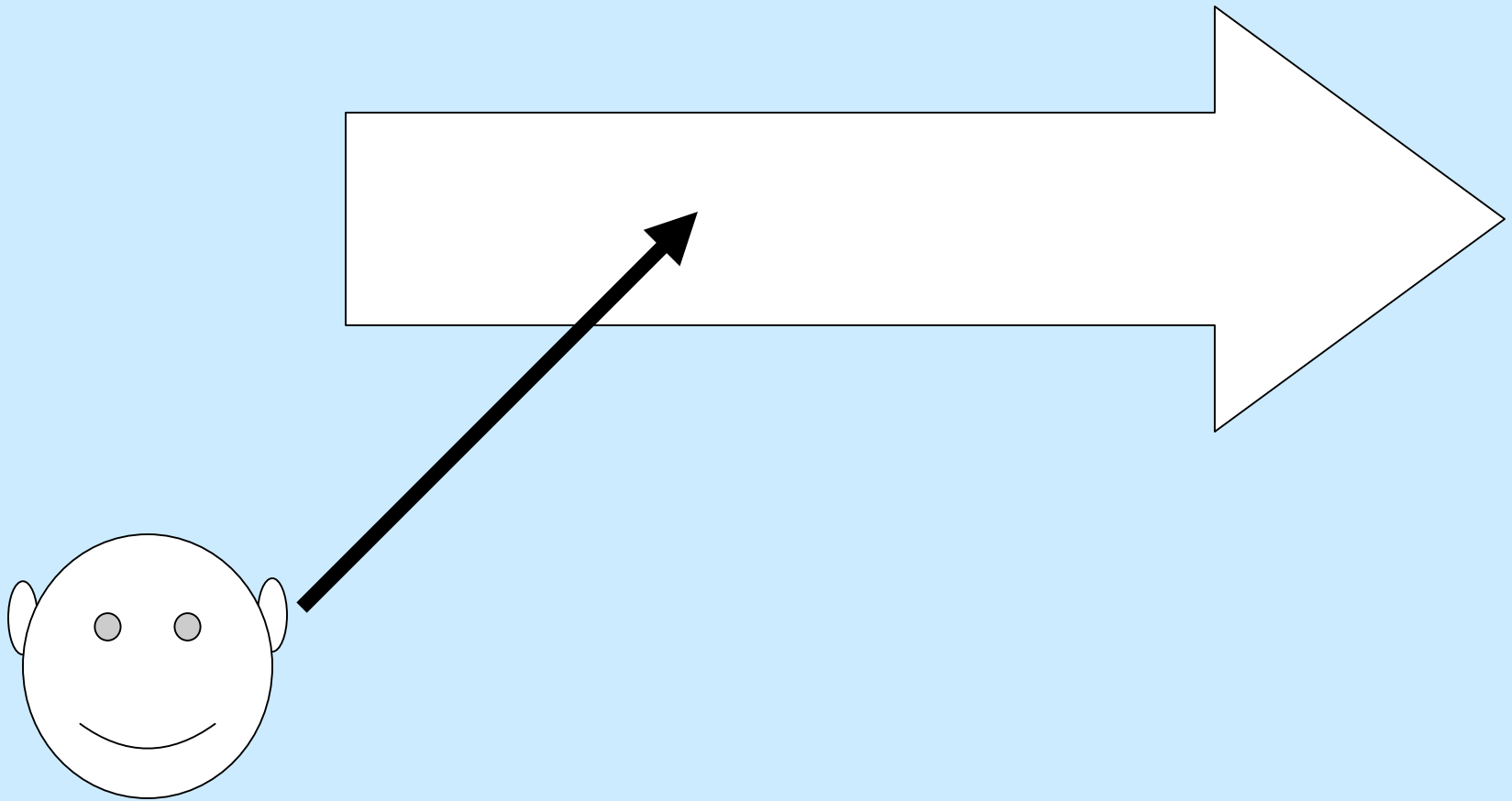
METER

MAJOR – MINOR

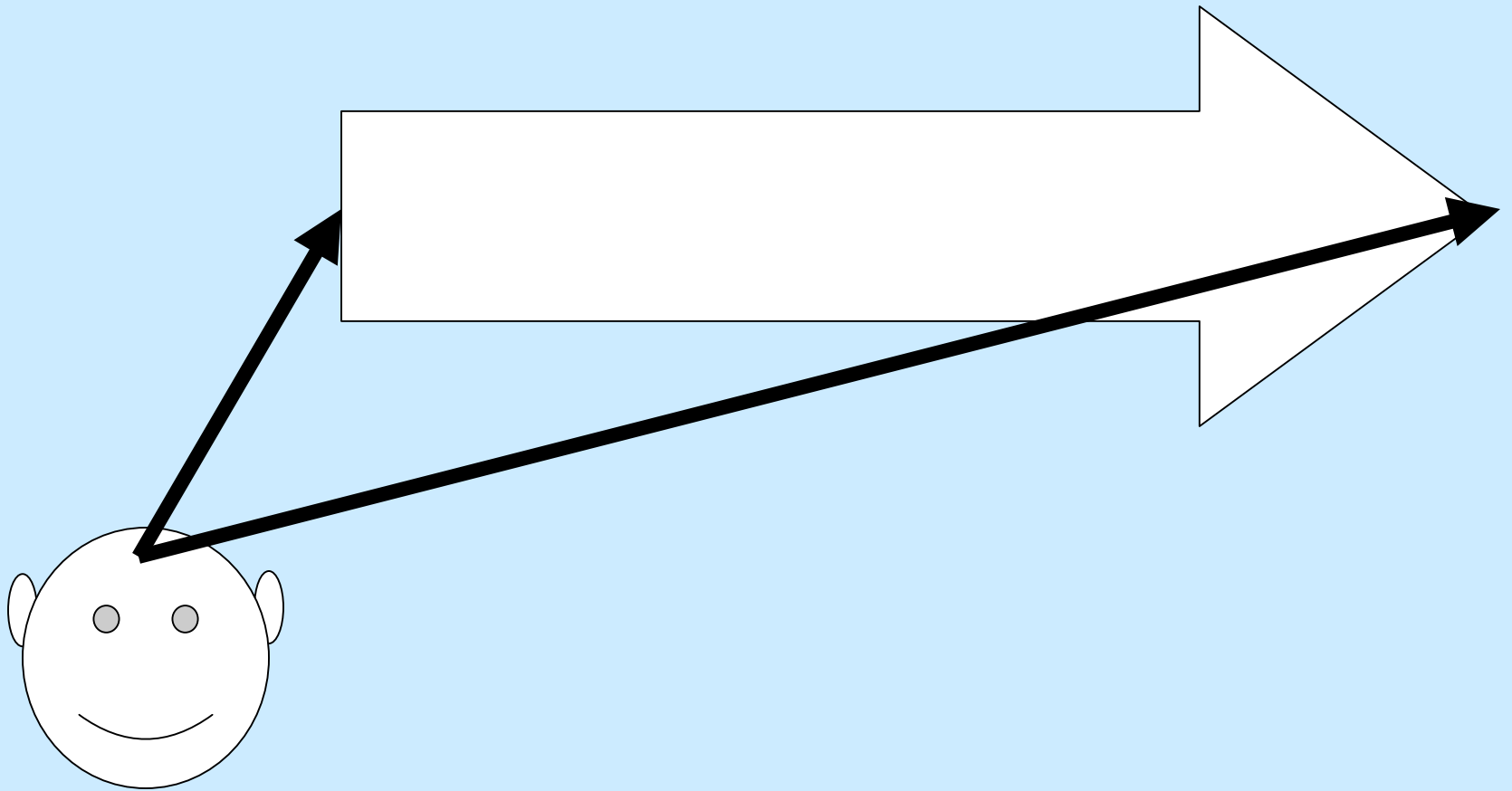
FAST – SLOW (TEMPO)

These are often used in combination

# Listening **to** music



# Listening ***across*** music



# CONTRAST IN MUSIC

**Mozart** -- first movement from **Symphony No. 35 in D Major, K. 385, "Haffner"**  
**LOW/HIGH** (contrast in *register*)

Louis Andriessen, *De Staat*, (The State, 1973-1976)

Contrast in *timbre* (sound color):

**DOUBLE REEDS/BRASS/VOICES+PIANO**

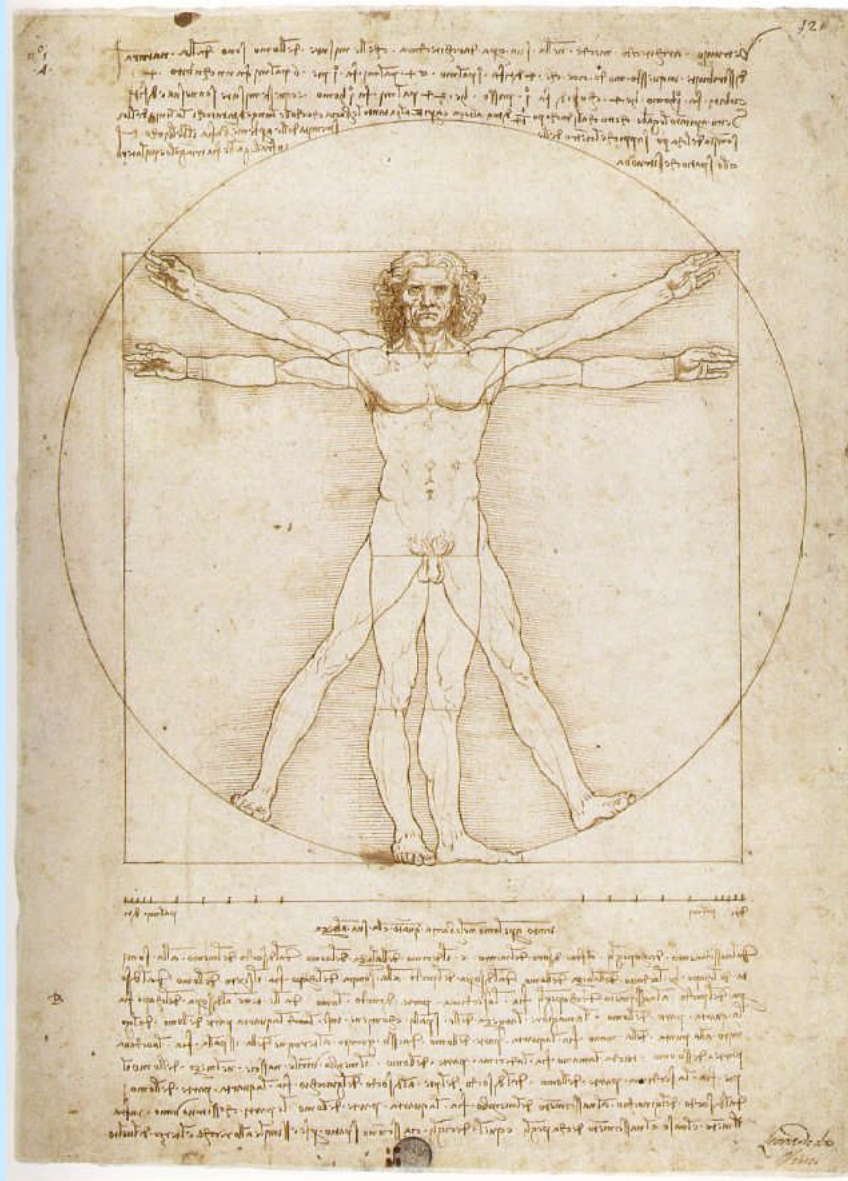
(double reeds = woodwind instruments: oboe, English horn, bassoon)

**BALANCE**  
**BALANCE**

**asymmetry**

symmetry

**EQUILIBRIUM**



Leonardo da Vinci, *Proportions of the Human Figure* ("Vitruvian Man")



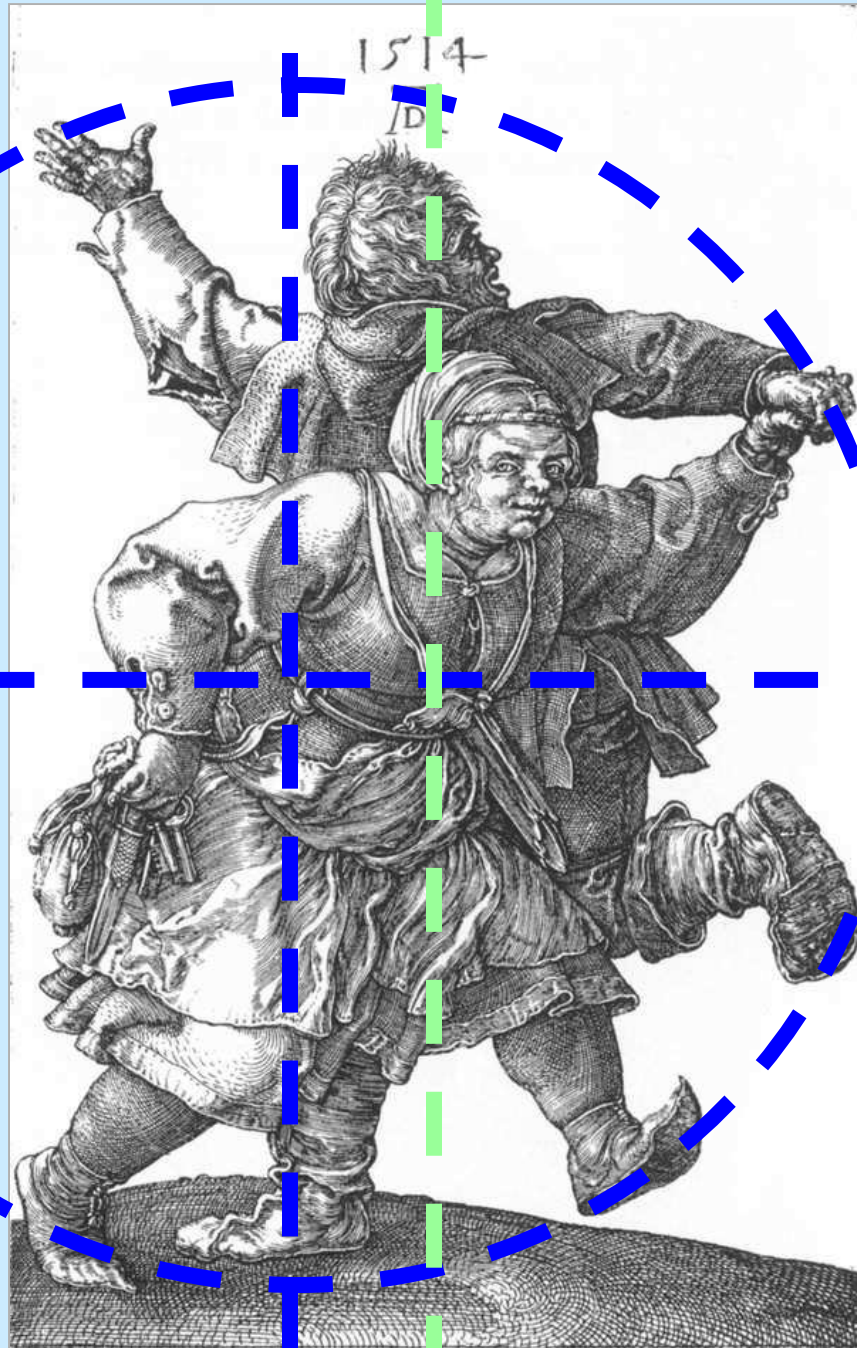
*Shiva*, bronze temple sculpture, Chola Era (9<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> C.), South India



Frida Kahlo, *The Two Fridas*, 1939



Durer  
*Dancing Peasants*  
1514



# MOZART

## BALANCED PHRASES

*Eine Kleine Nachtmusik, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt*

This could also be considered . . .

PROPORTION

PROPORTION

PROPORTION



**Shahn, Ben, *Vacant Lot*, 1939**

Watercolor and gouache on paper mounted on plywood panel, 19 x 23 in

# Proportion in music

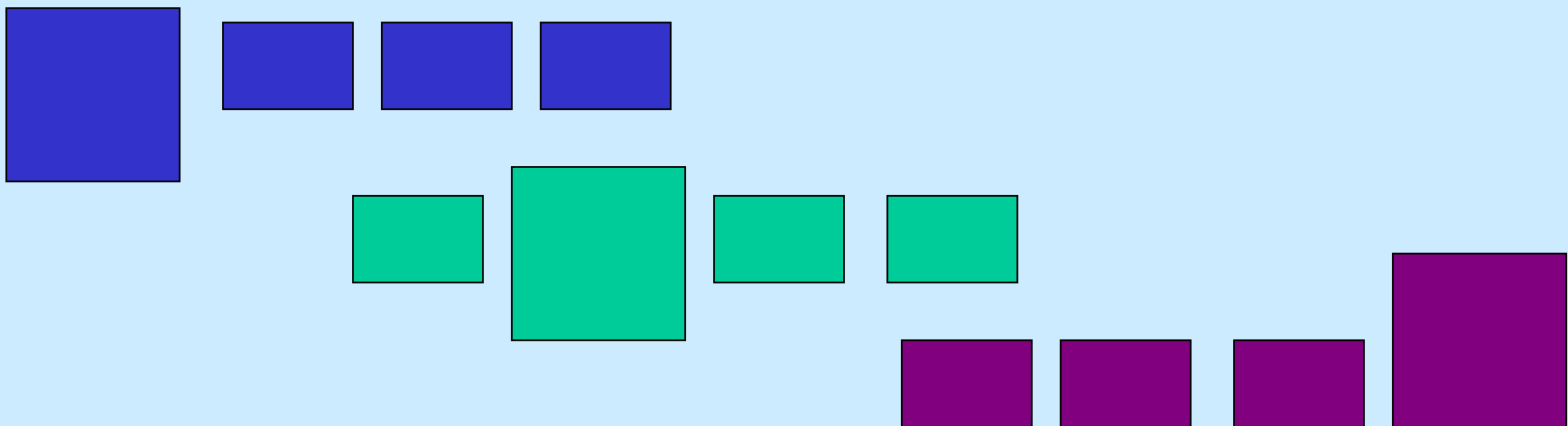
A matter of time, usually lots of time.

Example: 3 Beethoven string quartets (Op 59, 1, 2 & 3). Each in 4 movements.

No. 1 – BIG 1<sup>st</sup> mvt

No. 2 – nervous 1<sup>st</sup> mvt, BIG 2<sup>nd</sup> mvt

No. 3 – BIG finale (4<sup>th</sup> mvt)



# ECONOMY



Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937

# ECONOMY

limitation of a composition to a few essential elements; usually a voluntary constraint that is part of the creative process

*SPECIFIC TO AN INDIVIDUAL WORK, NOT THE GENRE , TYPE OR MEDIUM*

Examples in music: deriving everything from a single theme (musical idea), limiting the number of pitches, type of instrument, etc.

Steve Reich, *Music for Pieces of Wood, Clapping Music*, or other pieces

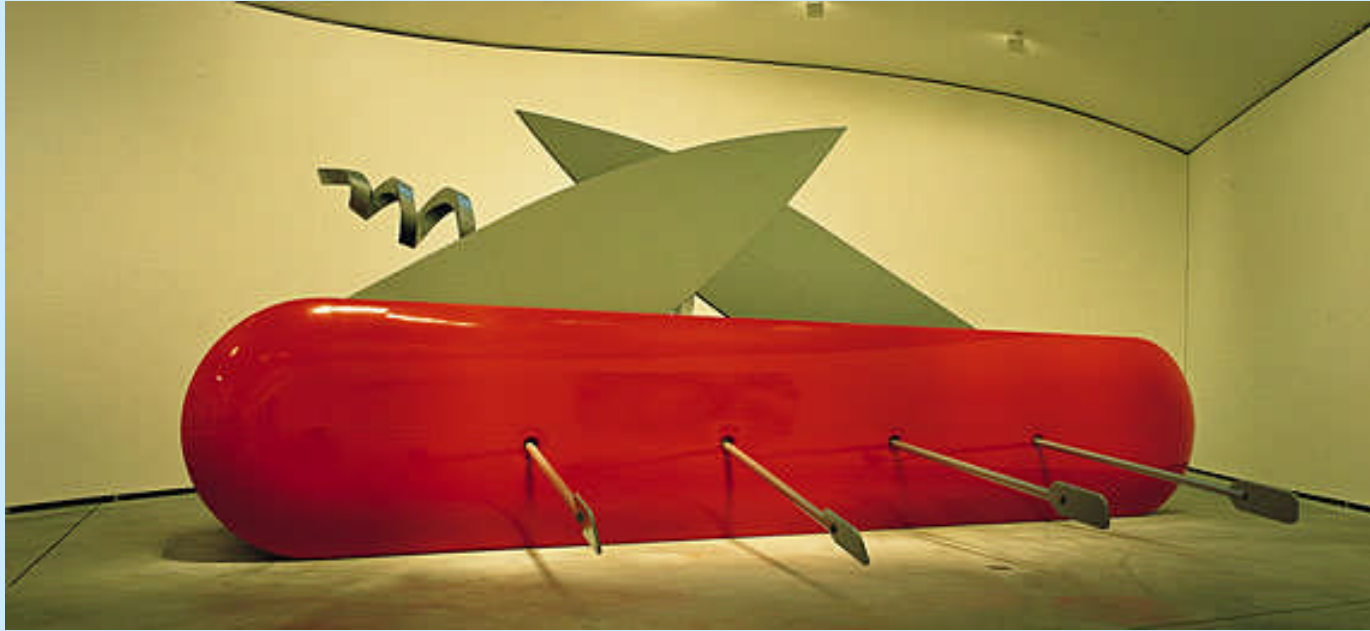
DC Meckler, *Bliss* (1999)

**Morton Feldman, *Three Voices* (1982)**

# SCALE

**SCALE** - the size of a work compared to the environment: miniature, human, monumental. The term can also apply to musical works, although it has an entirely different meaning than “musical scale.” Then it is a matter of DURATION. (“A symphony is a large-scale musical work when compared to a song.”)

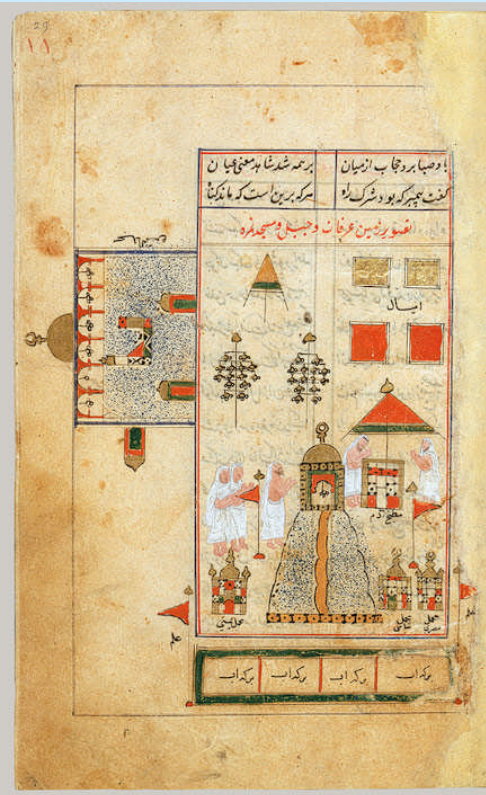




Claes Oldenburg, *Knife Ship I*, 1985

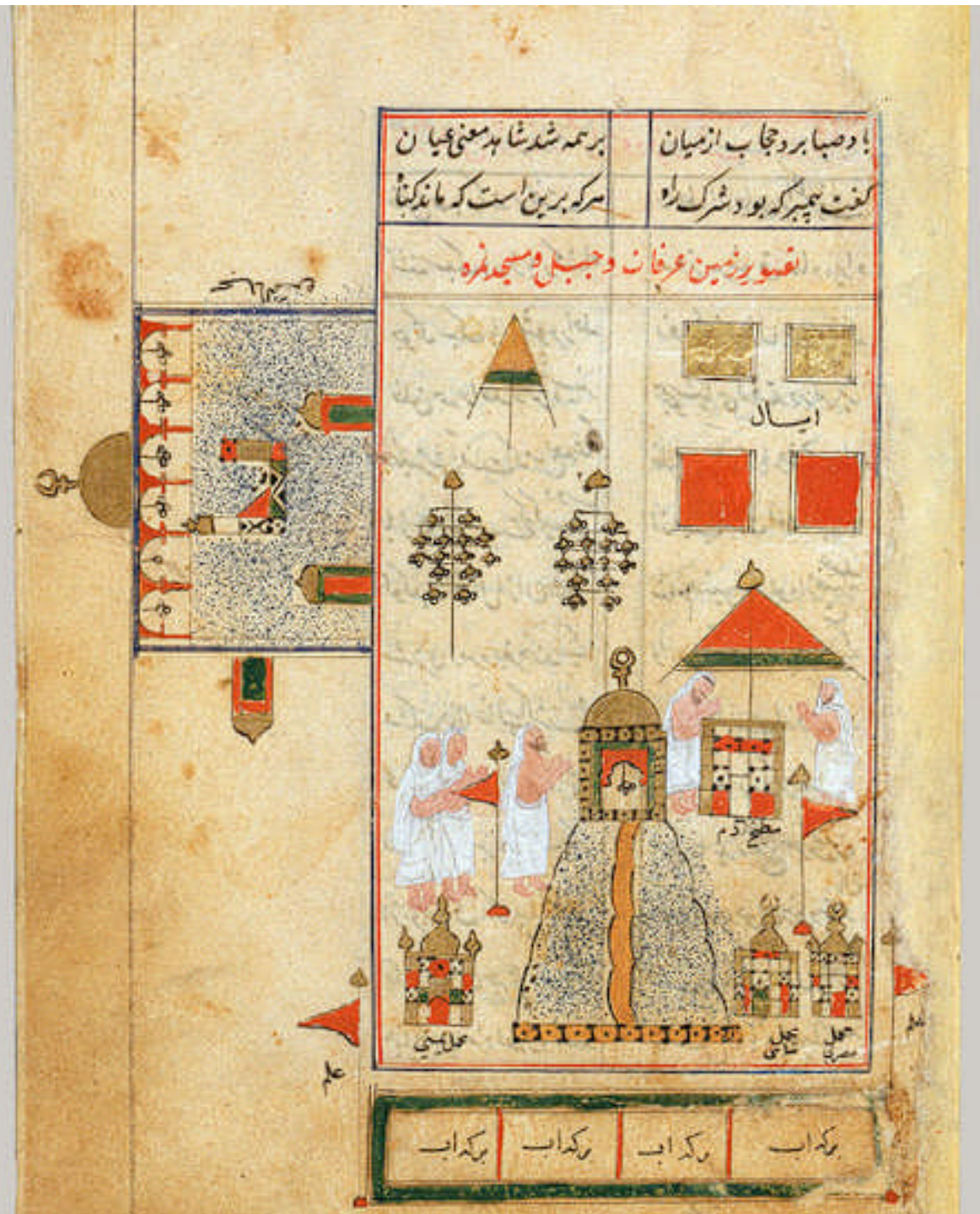
Vinyl-covered wood, steel, and aluminum with motors, dimensions variable, maximum height **31 feet 8 inches x 40 feet 5 inches x 31 feet 6 inches.**

# Miniature



Leaf from *Futuh al-Haramain* (Description of the Two Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina), mid-16th century; Ottoman, 8x5 in.

a bit bigger . . .



## Some examples of time scales in music

Less than a minute - Miniatures – Chopin, Webern

Pop songs – 3-6 minutes

Early symphonies – 25-35 minutes

Later symphonies – 45 min - 1 hr

Longest – Mahler – 1 ½ hrs

Short opera – 2 hours

Average opera – 3-4 hours (including intermissions)

Long opera – 5 hours

Longest traditional opera – Wagner's *RING* – 18 hours

# PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

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SCALE