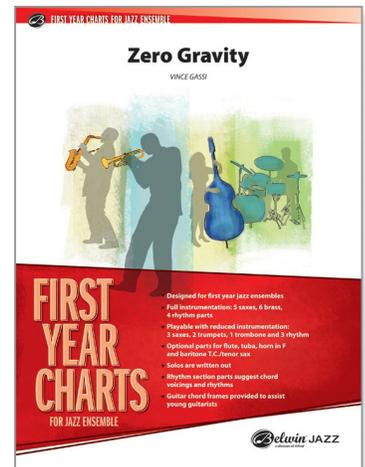


# Guided Listening

## Zero Gravity

Accessing this piece in [smartmusic](#) will allow you to see **your individual part**. It is really interesting to explore the parts of the other instruments in the band or orchestra as well! Follow [this link](#) to see the score as you listen, which is what the director sees when conducting your ensemble.



### Before you listen:

Melody is one of the primary elements of music which attracts listeners. Being able to compose a strong melody is an important skill for any composer. Here are some of the characteristics of strong melodies.

- Many times a strong melody will stay within an octave.
- Moving from one note to the next is mostly by step (like a scale) with occasional leaps.
- A strong melody grows out of itself. It is organic, meaning that certain characteristics are repeated as the melody extends further and further but...
- Balance is critical. Too much repetition is boring, too much change is boring. Notice that, in Zero Gravity, thematic material in measures 5-6 (the melody in the trumpets and alto saxes) is repeated in measures 9-10. This material is developed a little in measures 7-8 and 11-12 (the melody is growing "out of itself").
- Question and Answer: Music can be like a conversation. Notice how in measures 5-6, the trumpets ask a question, and in measures 7-8, we hear the answer?
- Melodies have a contour or shape, notes that ascend and descend. This helps to provide interest (see the Zero Gravity Worksheet).
- All of the previous points suggest that melodies have a form. Measures 5-12 is the A section, 14-21 is also an A section and also has a background melody. The B section is from measures 25-32 (note the different feel or flavor because of the different harmony and the melody is noticeably different in this section). Measures 33-40 is the A section again. Final form = AABA

### While you listen:

- Is this piece in a major or minor key? Can you tell by listening?
- Where does the main melody start? Can you name the instruments that are playing the melody?
- Where does the melody switch to another instrument (measure numbers)?
- At measure 25, notice what instruments have the melody. How do you think that will change the sound of the piece?
- What is the melodic contour or shape of each section? Draw it.
- Background figures or BGs for short are really countermelodies. They have certain traits too. Notice that when the melody is moving, the background figure is more sustained and when the melody is more sustained or resting, the BGs are more rhythmically active. Listen to measures 14-21. Which instruments play the BGs?
- Can you find questions and answers anywhere else in this piece?