



## Meet the Composer: Michael Gandolfi

Michael Gandolfi possesses a broad range of musical interests, including contemporary concert music, jazz, blues and rock (his pathway to becoming a musician). His compositions run parallel his cultural curiosity, resulting in multiple connections between his music and other disciplines, including science, film, and theater.

His music is performed by many of the world's leading orchestras and ensembles, including the Boston, Houston, Atlanta, San Francisco, Memphis, London BBC, BBC Scottish and Grant Park Festival symphony orchestras; the Boston Modern Orchestra Project; the Orpheus, Los Angeles, St. Paul, and Pro Arte chamber orchestras; Nieuw Sinfonietta Amsterdam, the London Sinfonietta, The Chicago Sinfonietta, The President's Own United States Marine Band, Boston Symphony Chamber Players, Atlanta Chamber Players, Speculum Musica, Boston Musica Viva, and Collage New Music, among others.



Mr. Gandolfi's extensive discography includes "The Garden of Cosmic Speculation," recorded on the Telarc label by Robert Spano and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and inspired by Charles Jencks' spectacular private garden in Dumfries, Scotland. It earned a 2009 Grammy nomination for Best Classical Contemporary Composition. The New York Times named Gandolfi's "Y2k Compliant," a BMOP Sound recording, the Best CD of 2008, and the Boston Globe cited the BMOP Sound recording "From the Institutes of Groove" the Best Album of 2013. Other works by Gandolfi have been recorded on the Deutsche Grammophon, Telarc, ASO Media, BSO Classics, Reference Recordings, Foghorn Classics, CRI, Innova, Klavier and BMOP Sound labels.

He is the chair of the Composition Department of the New England Conservatory of Music, and a faculty member of the Tanglewood Music Center. Prior positions include serving as faculty member at both Harvard and Indiana Universities. He is listed in the "New Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians."

## Responding to the Music

"Steps Ahead" describes a journey to three destinations. Each section begins with a promenade, then an arrival at an unnamed place. Students will focus on and respond by describing what they notice in the **first** promenade and the destination. They will SPECULATE on where they think the music takes them, writing and/or sketching their thoughts. Use the YouTube recording of "Steps Ahead" found [here](#).

### Process

1. Pose these questions:

**What's going on in the music? Can you describe it in musical terms?**

Play the first *Promenade* (beginning-:32/mm. 1-10), then ask for student responses. Write responses on the board as they talk. Then give the section title, *Promenade*.

2. Play again through the *First Destination* (beginning-:50/mm. 1-17). Students listen and again respond. Focus on their descriptions of the *First Destination*. Write responses on the board and add the section title, *First Destination*.
3. Listen again and add any additional comments. Ask volunteer readers to read the descriptive responses about both sections out loud.
4. Write the word **SPECULATE** on the board, and ask students what it means.
  - In pairs, direct students to have a speculative conversation about **WHERE** they think the music took them.
  - Encourage them to let their imaginations take over and describe an actual place or event.
5. Direct students to write a short paragraph (with or without an illustration) about the *Promenade and First Destination*. Apply this process to the *Second Destination* and the *ARRIVAL!*

### Speculate

Engaging in thoughtful conjecture (guessing).