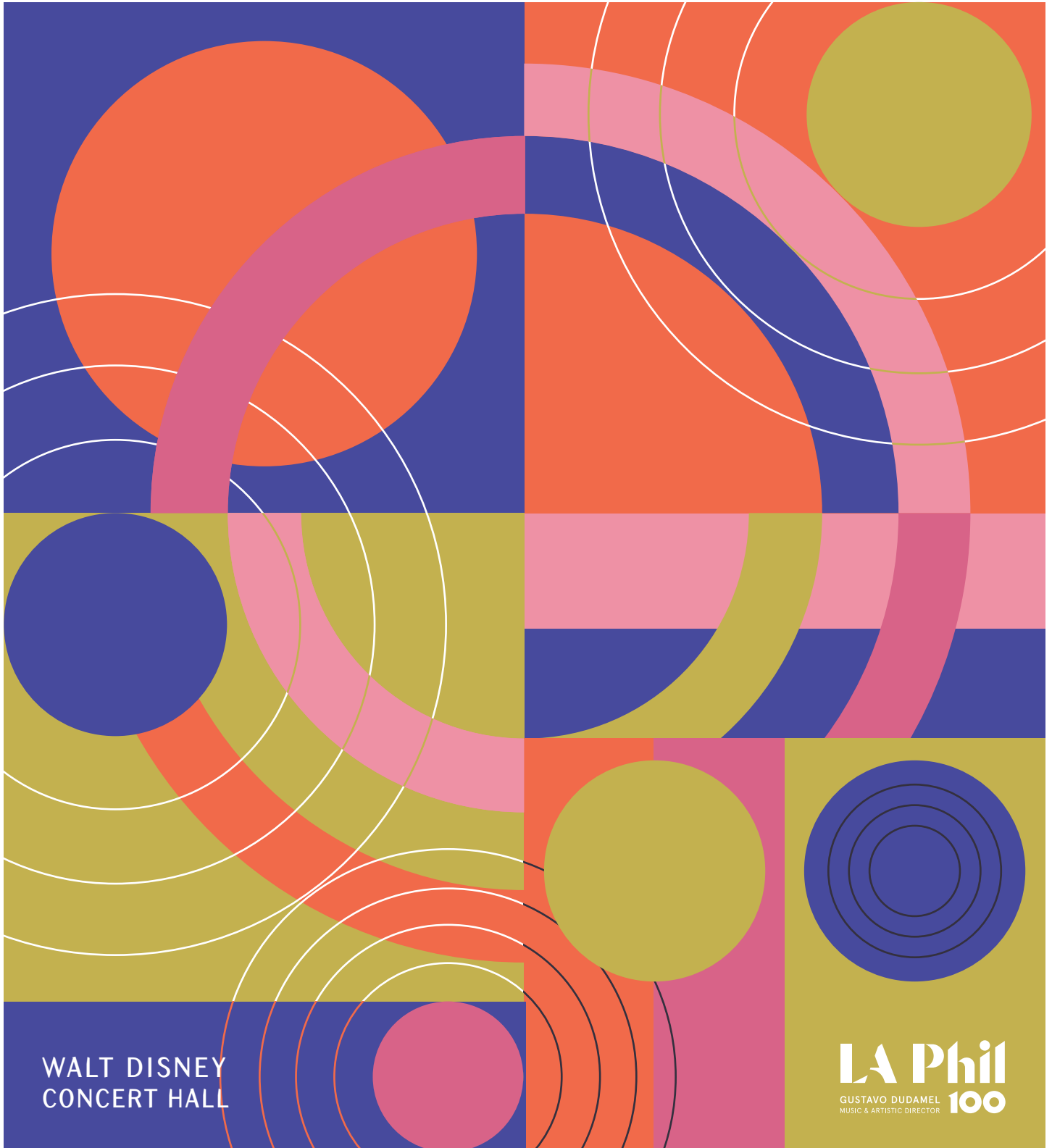


A Journey Through Minimalism



WALT DISNEY
CONCERT HALL

LA Phil
GUSTAVO DUDAMEL **100**
MUSIC & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

About the Composers

JOHN ADAMS

Born 1947
Worcester, Massachusetts



Raised in New England, John Adams began composing at the age of 10 and studied at Harvard. He decided early in his career to break with the modernist style common in Europe and U.S. academia after the mid-20th century, launching a vigorous exploration of Minimalism infused with American vernacular influences. Adams' later music expands these elements with long lines, counterpoint, and his "earbox" technique of moving scales and modes. He has won many awards, including three Grammys® and the Pulitzer Prize. Adams is also an important conductor and is the Creative Chair for the LA Phil, with which he has been closely associated for many years.

ARVO PÄRT

Born 1935
Paide, Estonia



As a young musician, Arvo Pärt supported himself as a recording engineer for Estonian Radio and composed over 50 film scores. After graduating from the Tallinn Conservatory, he began developing serial techniques through independent study. After a period of stylistic crisis and further study of early music, Pärt emerged in the mid-'70s with his own distinctive "tintinnabulation" style of bell-like, triadic Minimalism. Neither tintinnabulation nor the explicit Christian texts he frequently set to music endeared Pärt to Soviet-era cultural authorities, and, in 1980, he emigrated to the West. The LA Phil commissioned and recorded his Symphony No. 4, *Los Angeles*.

PHILIP GLASS

Born 1937
Baltimore, Maryland



Philip Glass studied at Juilliard, but further study with Nadia Boulanger and Ravi Shankar in Paris inspired him to make a decisive stylistic break, and, in the mid-1960s, he began composing in a pared-down idiom of simple harmony and rhythmic cycles. He has developed this into a readily recognizable personal style capable of great power and color. He has composed in many forms but is most identified with theatrical and ceremonial works, ranging from film scores and operas to the opening and closing music for the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. The LA Phil first presented Glass and his ensemble in 1982 and has since commissioned several major works from him.

STEVE REICH

Born 1936
New York City, New York



Steve Reich studied drumming with Roland Kohloff, principal timpanist of the New York Philharmonic, and later composition at Juilliard and Mills College. His other influences range from John Coltrane to Ghanaian drumming and Balinese gamelan music, resulting in lively, pulse-oriented music of great color. The scope of his music ranges from the sound of clapping hands to full-length multimedia theater pieces. The LA Phil first presented Reich's music in January 1983, when William Kraft led the New Music Group in an evening devoted to Reich's works, with the composer himself playing percussion in his groundbreaking *Drumming*.

What is Minimalist Music?

Minimalism has the word “mini” in it, which means small. Minimalist music is about small things like a simple pattern, rhythm, or melody. An easier way to understand minimalism is to compare it to something that you are already familiar with – clouds.

HAVE YOU EVER REALLY LOOKED AT CLOUDS IN THE SKY?

At first, the clouds may look a bit similar. If you look at them long enough, you may find that the simplest things can sometimes lead you into a whole world of discovery. Minimalist music is similar. It may sound simple at first, but when you listen closely, you'll hear how minimalist composers create a whole world of music from simple ideas and sounds.

← PATTERN & CHANGE →

The shapes of clouds transform into other shapes—in other words, the **patterns** slowly **change**.



Minimalist music uses lots of **patterns** that repeat. Patterns **change**, sometimes slowly and sometimes fast, into other patterns.

← RHYTHM →

Some clouds move faster than others – they have different **rhythms**.



Many patterns have different **rhythms**, so you'll hear multiple patterns happening at the same time.

← TEXTURES →

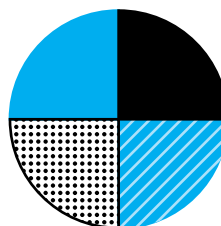
Some clouds are thicker while other clouds are thinner – they have different **textures**.



Music can be heavy, or it can be light. This is similar to clouds – some are big and thick, and some are light and airy. Music has different **textures**.

← COLOR →

The sky is like a backdrop for the clouds. Sometimes it is bright blue. Other times, it is gloomy and gray. The sky creates **color**.



Each instrument has its own unique sound. Sound can be like **color**. In minimalist music, the patterns played by different instruments create a range of colors.

Be a Minimalist Composer

Now that you have learned about minimalism, it's your turn to compose! Use this activity to write your own minimalist piece of music for body percussion.

Make sure to give your piece a name. You could name your piece after a friend or a pet, or you could use a more traditional title like "Concerto for Body Percussion No. 1."

1. Get to know your sound palette

For this piece, we will use four different body percussion sounds. In your written piece, they will be represented by these shapes:



Clap



Stomp



Knee Slap



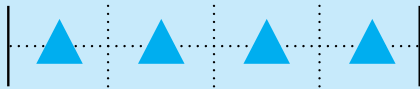
Rest
(Silent Beat)

2. Create three patterns

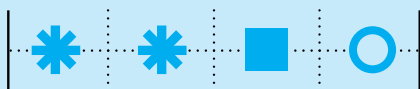
Minimalist music starts with patterns. Create three patterns in the spaces to the right. Each pattern should have four sounds. You can repeat or combine the sounds in any way you like.

Example

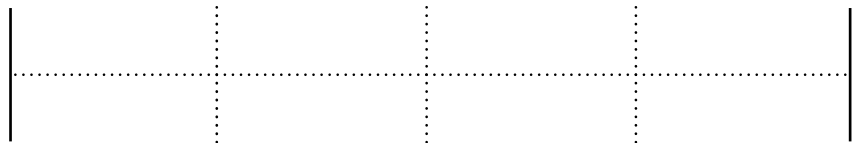
A pattern could be four knee slaps in a row.



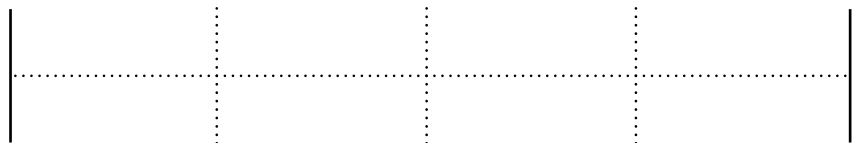
A different pattern could be two claps, a stomp, and a rest.



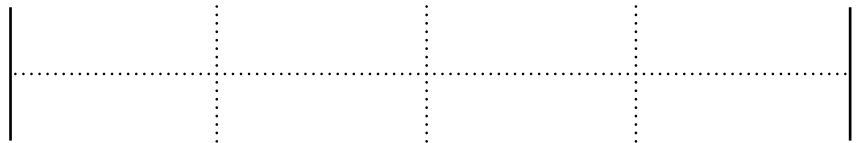
PATTERN A



PATTERN B




PATTERN C




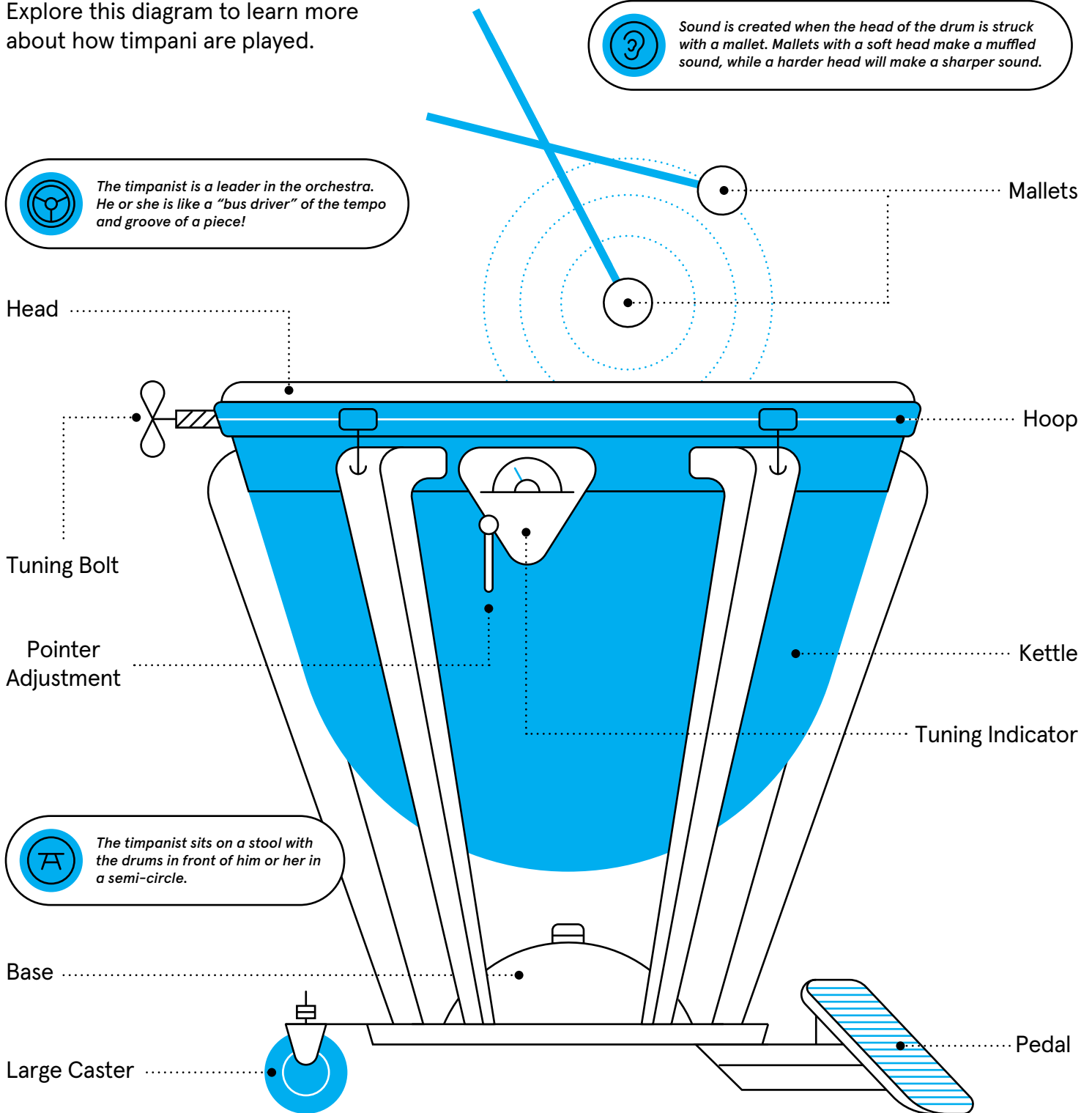
Anatomy of Timpani


Sometimes known as kettledrums, timpani are drums in the percussion family. A standard set includes four timpani of slightly different sizes. Timpani players – or *timpanists* – in orchestras usually specialize in playing only timpani.

Explore this diagram to learn more about how timpani are played.

 The timpanist is a leader in the orchestra. He or she is like a “bus driver” of the tempo and groove of a piece!

 Sound is created when the head of the drum is struck with a mallet. Mallets with a soft head make a muffled sound, while a harder head will make a sharper sound.



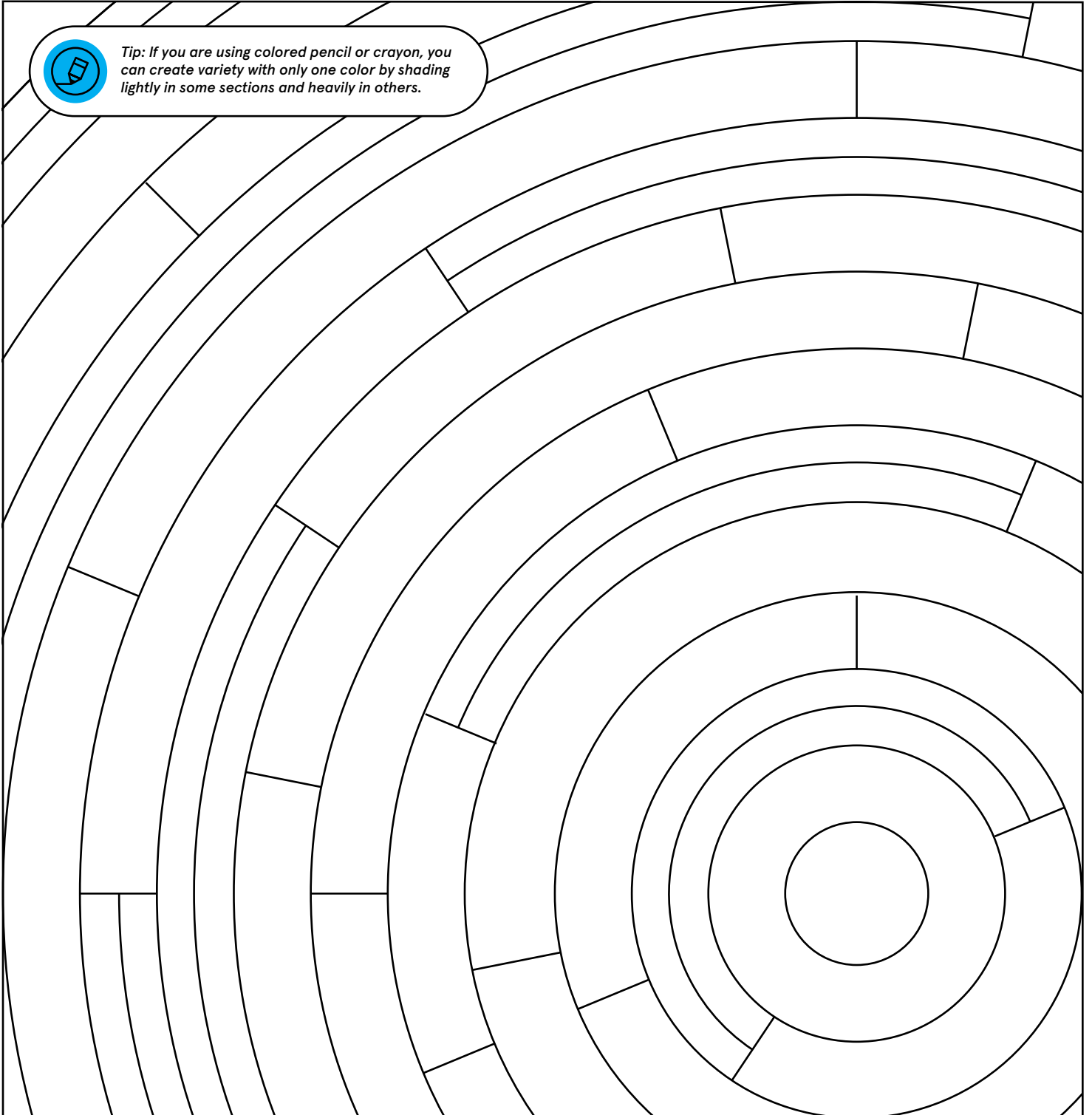
 The timpanist sits on a stool with the drums in front of him or her in a semi-circle.

Minimalist Coloring

Much like its musical cousin, minimalist visual art often uses only a few simple patterns, colors, or shapes to create a beautiful image. Try coloring in this page with only three colors or fewer.



Tip: If you are using colored pencil or crayon, you can create variety with only one color by shading lightly in some sections and heavily in others.



Word Search

GLASS
REICH
ADAMS
PÄRT
TIMPANI

MUSIC
MINIMALISM
PERCUSSION
CONCERTO
ORCHESTRA

ART
PATTERN
COMPOSER
LISTEN
RHYTHM

TEXTURE
COLOR
MELODY
REST
PHILHARMONIC

X Z U Q M M N R O L I S T E N
T R Ä P S A A H O R T N J L T
K Z X F I R Y Y J Y B N H C W
S A Q J L T H T T D B P I Z Y
U T B H A S A H F J N N F D P
I S H G M E S M P G O H O E Z
N R A T I H H K W M C L R R G
A E F B N C E N R I E C B L B
P S A R I R U A S M U H A C B
M O D E M O H U B S P S P O R
I P A I P L M D S R S S R L L
T M M C I C X I A E A K A O E
D O S H T X O J E S S H V R W
O C P I Z N P A T T E R N M T
E R U T X E T C O N C E R T O
