

## Exploration 18

### It's Got Rhythm: Listen to the Building

Some have called architecture frozen music, although few have called music melted architecture. In 2000, performance group Puzzle of Light created and performed a sound sculpture concert based on their experience of Fallingwater.

A long time admirer of the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, Michael Bashaw, Puzzle of Light's leader, said after visiting Fallingwater, "We had a sudden realization that the house could serve as a musical score; the cantilevered terraces became long tones, the stone work percussion pattern [creating] a kind of aural architecture." With that inspiration, they developed their own sculptural instruments to create a musical experience designed to take listeners on an odyssey that weaves audio-scapes around and with-in musical compositions inspired by Fallingwater. Dramatic, thunderous rolls of sound mix with exotic timbres. Atmospheric tone poems segue into more traditional music structures, but all work to convey the feeling of Fallingwater.

#### *Materials:*

- *Puzzle of Light: Sound Sculpture Music for Fallingwater*, CD
- Items to build sound sculpture—bottles, cans, string, twine, cardboard, metal, etc.
- Water source such as rain or hose

#### *Objective:*

After visiting Fallingwater, students will transform their experiences through the design of a working sound sculpture.

#### *Standards:*

- Arts: NA-VA 1, 2, 3, 6; NA 8
- English: NL-ENG 12
- Mathematics: NM-MEA 2; NM PROB 1-4; NM-PROB.CONN 3, NM-PROB.REP 3
- Science: NS 1, 2, 3, 4, 7
- Social Studies: NSS-G 3

#### *Procedures:*

- After your class visits Fallingwater, listen to *Puzzle of Light: Sound Sculpture Music for Fallingwater*. Ask the students what parts of Fallingwater they can "see" in the music? What parts

are missing? How would those parts sound? What might make those sounds?

- Have students make their own “sound sculpture” that elicits the sound experience of a building that you visit—it doesn’t have to be Fallingwater. Test different materials in running water, sprayed water, dripped water, etc. Choose materials for their sound and shape and attach them like a mobile to make “music” evoking the experience of your visit. Hang the sculptures in the outdoors/in the rain, or spray them with a hose, to “play” them. Close your eyes and listen. Ask students to write about what they hear.