

Come On, Get 'Appy!

By Phyllis Thomas

This is the first in a series of app reviews for Activate! Included is a great app for learning about classical music, a rhythm app, and a classroom management tool. Whether you have classroom access to a single smartphone/tablet, have a class set, or work in a one-to-one setting, these apps are worth checking out.

My First Classical Music App

Naxos Digital Services, Ltd.

Author: Genevieve Helsby; Illustrator: Jason Chapman

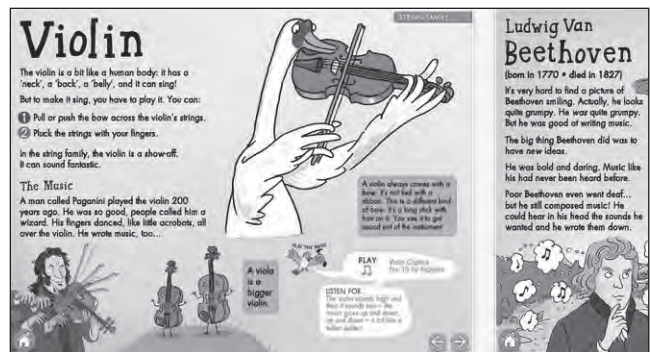
\$4.99

iPhone: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/my-first-classical-music-app/id530616330?mt=8>

iPad: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/my-first-classical-music-app/id470865535?mt=8>

Android: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.pgs.mfcma.phone&feature=search_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwyLDEslmNvbS5wZ3MubWZjbWEucGhvbmUiXQ

This is an interactive version of *My First Classical Music Book*, published by Naxos, the world's largest independent, classical-record company. A wonderful introduction to classical music, *My First Classical Music App* is full of information, and has beautiful graphics, engaging narration, and the high-quality recordings you would expect from Naxos. Tap any of the words and pictures to hear the text narrated, listen to music excerpts, or start an animation or sound effect. If you are able to project the app, it can be used for whole-class instruction. It can also be used in small groups or centers on one or more devices, or explored by individual students. One reviewer wrote, "This app sets the bar for others that call themselves 'educational.'"



The "Welcome" page explains how to navigate the app, using the forward and back arrows and tapping the home icon to go to the "Contents" page. You can see how the animation works when you touch either the text or a picture. You also meet the Music Bird, which talks about the music, may ask you to listen for something, or asks a question.

The content is organized into three sections: "When? Where?," "People," and "Instruments."

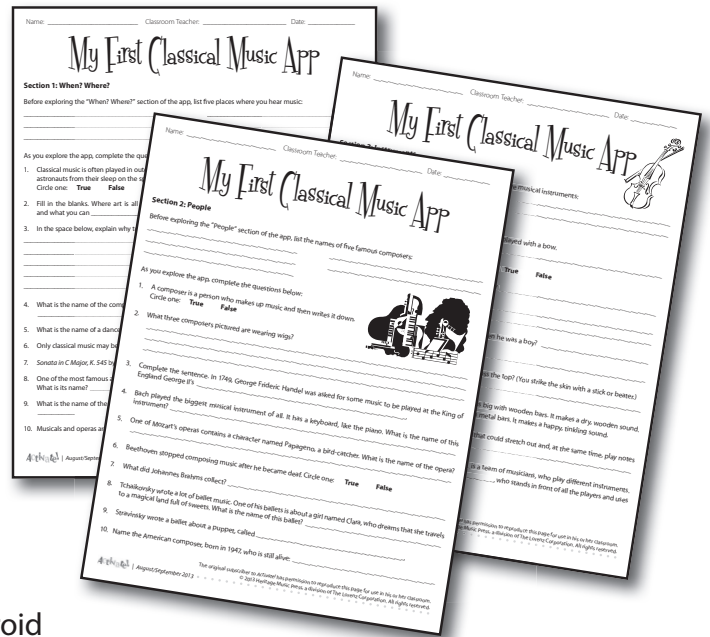
The "When? Where?" section contains six pages about when and where you may hear music. In this section, you can read about and listen to music from television, the movies, the ballet, the concert hall, weddings, and the theater.

In the “People” section, you learn delightful anecdotes about eight famous composers (Handel, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky, and Adams) and can listen to one of their compositions.

The “Instruments” section contains pages for instruments of the string, brass, woodwind, percussion, and keyboard families. The text explains how the instruments are played, and each page contains a recording of a composition that features the discussed instrument.

Near the end of the app is a list of details and audio of the musical tracks it contains, followed by a composer pronunciation guide. The music is available on *My First Classical Album*, which may be downloaded in the iTunes store for \$4.99.

I have developed a set of worksheets to use with this app. You may wish to print and copy the worksheets for your students to complete as they explore the app individually or in small groups. There is one worksheet for each section of the app.



Rhythm Cat Lite

LMuse Ltd.

Lite version is free

Pro version is \$3.99 for iPad and \$2.99 for iPhone and Android

iPhone: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/rhythm-cat-learn-to-read-music/id488167475?mt=8>

iPad: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/rhythm-cat-lite-hd/id505012140?mt=8>

Android: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.stockmusicboutique.rhythmcatlite&feature=more_from_developer#?t=W251bGwsMSwyLDEwMiwiY29tLnN0b2NrbXVzaWNib3V0aXF1ZS5yaHI0aG1jYXRsaXRlll0

Rhythm Cat Lite is the free version of an app that teaches students to read and perform standard rhythmic notation. The audio is of great quality, and in a variety of musical styles, instruments, voices, meters, and tempi. Also, the graphics are engaging, with a different rhythm cat or cats at each level.

There are fifteen levels that become increasingly more difficult, with one rhythmic example of four, eight, twelve, or sixteen measures at each level. A level must be performed correctly in order to advance to the next level. Note values include eighth notes; quarter notes and rests; half notes; dotted half notes; and whole notes. The notation of level 10 is in $\frac{3}{4}$ meter, while all the other patterns are written in $\frac{4}{4}$.



At level 1, step-by-step instructions are given detailing how to play. As a new note value, rest, or time signature is added, it is explained in a pop-up at the beginning of the level. Tapping **Want to learn more** opens a Wikipedia page that covers the new element. When the player closes the instructional pop-up, the rhythmic notation is displayed. Selecting **Play** starts the background audio. After a measure is counted (1-2-3-4 or 1-2-3) on the screen, the player performs the rhythm by tapping a green button. The app is a little sensitive and requires precision, and it seems to work best when the rhythm is performed with a little weight. (I use my right-hand thumb.) Levels

