



MEET THE COMPOSER:

Tania León

Age Range: Elementary, Middle School, High School

Introduction: Composers write music, just like authors write books. In the Class Notes “Meet the Composer” series, we will learn a little bit about the achievements, backstory, and influences of a variety of composers. Get ready to learn about these influential composers and listen to some of their music.

Total Video Time: 13:01

Total Lesson Time: Approximately 25–30 minutes

BACKGROUND on Tania León

Tania León was born in 1943 in Havana, Cuba. She showed an early interest in music and began piano lessons at age 4. She graduated from a music school in Cuba and shortly after, moved to New York City. In New York, she began her career mostly as a pianist. She eventually also studied conducting. She got involved with the Dance Theater of Harlem, then she started composing. Over the years she has also taught music at a number of different colleges and universities and won many awards for her compositions.

MUSIC of Tania León

1. When she moved to New York, Tania León began working for the Dance Theater of Harlem, where she started composing for dance and ballet productions. In this video, you will see and hear samples of some of her compositions created for dancers.

[In Motion](#). Composed 1973–2009. Video approx. 6 minutes.

2. Tania León is from Cuba, a country known for its lively carnivals and street festivals. The music at these carnivals often includes roving drummers. In her piece *Permutation 7*, Tania León recreates aspects of this lively street drumming. Notice the drummer’s movement during the performance.

[Permutation 7](#). Composed 1980. Video approx. 4.5 minutes.

3. Tania León’s music is known for its rhythmic energy. This short piece for piano is a good example:

[Tumbao](#). Composed 2005. Video approx. 2.5 minutes.



MEET THE COMPOSER: **Tania León, cont.**

CREATE, CONNECT, & RESPOND to León's music

1. In [this short video](#), the composer herself describes the path that she took to becoming a composer and how her involvement with a dance company was a crucial part of her journey.
2. In addition to composing, Tania León is a well-regarded conductor. Learn more about the art form of conducting in the Class Notes lesson [What is a CONDUCTOR?](#)

Tania León

FAST FACTS

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