



MEET THE COMPOSER: **Viet Cuong**

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:	33:02
Total Lesson Time:	Approximately 40–45 minutes

BACKGROUND on Viet Cuong

Viet Cuong (Vee-ETTE Kwawng) was born in 1990 in California. As a child, he moved to Georgia and got involved in his school’s band program. He learned to play piano, percussion, and clarinet and eventually began composing. He continues to compose and teaches music at the University of Nevada–Las Vegas.

MUSIC of Viet Cuong

Note: Class Notes Meet the Composer lessons often feature three short listening examples. In the Viet Cuong lesson, we have included just two slightly longer examples. See the Create, Respond, and Connect section at the end for more listening recommendations.

1. Viet Cuong’s interest in music was cultivated in his school band program. The piece *Second Nature* features a saxophone quartet accompanied by a concert band, also called a “wind ensemble”. In his program notes about the piece, Viet Cuong said this piece was influenced by House music. Listen and watch the first five minutes or so of this piece. As you listen, think about if this sounds like dance music to you.

[Second Nature](#). Composed 2024. Video approx. 16 minutes.

2. In his piece *Re(new)al*, Viet Cuong features a percussion ensemble accompanied by a wind ensemble. The piece begins with unconventional instruments: water glasses! As the piece goes on, Viet Cuong adds new *timbres*, or tone colors, from different instruments.

[Re\(new\)al](#). Composed 2016–2019. Video approx. 17 minutes.



MEET THE COMPOSER: **Viet Cuong, cont.**

CREATE, CONNECT, & RESPOND to Cuong's music

1. Viet Cuong is known for using interesting *timbres*, or tone colors, in his music. Learn more about timbre in the Class Notes lesson [What is TIMBRE?](#)
2. Viet Cuong sometimes uses found objects like waterglasses in his compositions. Learn more and create your own music using found objects with the Class Notes lesson [Create Your Own Instrument](#).

Here are a few additional listening examples of Viet Cuong's Music:

- [Extra\(ordinarily\) Fancy- Concerto for Two Oboes](#). Here is an example of interesting new combinations of timbres, or tone colors, including oboe and harpsichord.
- In his piece [Diamond Tide](#), Viet Cuong requires the percussionists to drip a vibrating crotale (percussion instrument) in water. As you listen and watch, notice the unique timbre this creates.
- Viet Cuong played the clarinet. Listen to and watch [this piece](#) composed for solo clarinet.

Viet Cuong

FAST FACTS

Viet Cuong (Vee-ETTE Kwawng) was born in 1990 in California.

As a child, he moved to Georgia and got involved in his school's band program.

Viet Cuong learned to play piano, percussion, and clarinet and eventually began composing.

He continues to compose and teaches music at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas.



