2026/27
EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONCERT
TEACHER'S GUIDE
GRADES 3–8

OREGON SYMPHONY

# STORIES IN MUSIC



## Welcome!

This guide accompanies the 2026/27 Young People's Concert: Stories in Music. We offer background information on the pieces you will hear at the concert, biographical information about the composers, and extension activities for further study. It is our hope that utilizing this guide will deepen the concert experience for your students. We encourage you to adapt this material to your teaching style and specific student needs.

The Oregon Symphony believes that music is an essential part of the total school curriculum. We hope you will take full advantage of this guide so your students can in turn be knowledgeable and eager participants.

Please email us at **educate@orsymphony.org** if you have questions or wish to share your experiences in preparing your students for our Young People's Concert.

Enjoy!



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# CONCERT PROGRAM

## Stories in Music

**Su-Han Yang,** Conductor
**Pam Mahon,** Narrator

Literature and stories have often been at the heart of great works of music, serving as a driving force for operas, ballets, and symphonic masterpieces. Join the Oregon Symphony as we discover how composers have translated the world's greatest myths, plays, novels, and stories into instrumental narratives.

### 1. Overture to *Candide*

**Leonard Bernstein, Composer**

Inspiration: Voltaire's novel, *Candide*

Watch Video →

### 2. "Entrance of the Queen of Sheba" from *Solomon*

**George Frideric Handel, Composer**

Inspiration: Stories of King Solomon

Watch Video →

### 3. Selections from "Song of the Picaflor" and "Prophecy of the Mollusks" from *Picaflor: A future myth*

**Gabriela Lena Frank, Composer**

Inspiration: Mythology of Andean Perú

Watch Video →

### 4. Selections from "The Montagues and Capulets" and "Juliet–the Young Girl" from *Romeo and Juliet* Suite No. 2

**Sergei Prokofiev, Composer**

Inspiration: William Shakespeare's play, *Romeo and Juliet*

Watch Video 1 →
Watch Video 2 →

### 5. "Marcia Moderato" from *Movimientos de la Muerte*

**Jacobi Esparza, Composer & Student of the Young Composer's Project**

Inspiration: Esparza says the piece was inspired by "Hispanic traditions around death and legacy." Learn more in his interview on p. 29.

Watch Video →

### 6. Selection from *Night on Bald Mountain*

**Modest Mussorgsky, Composer**

Inspiration: Nikolai Gogol's story, "St. John's Eve," as well as Slavic folklore

Watch Video →

### 7. "Finale" from the Overture to *William Tell*

**Gioachino Rossini, Composer**

Inspiration: Friedrich Schiller's play, *Wilhelm Tell*

Watch Video →

### 8. "Main Title" from *Star Wars*: Suite for Orchestra

**John Williams, Composer**

Inspiration: Star Wars story and films, created by George Lucas

Watch Video →

## ARRIVAL & SEATING INFO

Prior to the concert date, you will receive a seat confirmation for your group by email. Bring this with you on the day of the concert, either printed or on your phone. For those coming to the Portland concerts, please note your entrance location (either **Broadway** or **Park Ave**.) and the section in which you are seated. When you arrive at the hall, please proceed directly to the entrance noted on your confirmation. An usher will greet you and lead you to your section. Groups will be seated in their assigned section from front to back on a first-come, first-seated basis. If you arrive together, your group will be seated together.

Please arrive 15-30 minutes before the concert start time. No student backpacks, food, drink, or gum will be allowed in the concert hall. If you plan to bring lunches, please store them on your bus or in the lobby.

Flash photography and video recording are prohibited during the concert.

## CONCERT EXPECTATIONS

Please take time before the concert to discuss with your students and chaperones your expectations for their concert behavior. Young People's Concerts are designed to be informative and entertaining. We encourage kids to move to the music and show that they are having a good time by applauding and participating at appropriate times.

Please remind your students to respect fellow audience members by refraining from conversation throughout the concert, just as they would be asked in an assembly at their school. Students from all over the region will be joining for these concerts—let's show each other kindness and respect in the concert hall! The best way to show the performers that you are enjoying the concert is by listening quietly during the performance and clapping enthusiastically after each piece!

# MEET THE CONDUCTOR AND NARRATOR







**Su-Han Yang**
Oregon Symphony Harold & Arlene Schnitzer Associate Conductor

Taiwanese conductor Su-Han Yang won First Prize in the 10th International Grzegorz Fitelberg Competition for Conductors. He has previously served as the Associate Conductor of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra and as Associate Conductor of the Taiwan Philharmonic. He collaborated with the Silesian Philharmonic and Chamber Orchestra, the Polish Baltic Philharmonic, the Lodz Philharmonic, the Pomeranian Philharmonic, the Hungarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Brandenburger Symphoniker, the Gliwice Chamber Orchestra, the Capella Bydgostiensis, and many others. Since 2016, he conducts regularly the Camerata Taiwan. They went on a concert tour of Germany in 2022 and released the album "Beyond Boundaries" on major music streaming platforms in 2023.

In 2024, he conducted the opening concert with Bruckner's *Te Deum* at the Taipei International Choral Festival. In 2022, he conducted Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel* at the National Taichung Theater and performed two programs of contemporary music at the Weiwuying International Music Festival. His appearances at music festivals also include the Taiwan International Festival of Arts, the Festival of Polish Music in Kraków, the Classica Nova in Gdynia, the Taipei International New Music Festival, and the Asian Composers League's Conference and Festival. He was one of the two conductors selected for the Mentoring Program of Peter Eötvös Foundation in 2018. In 2017, he was invited to study with Jun Märkl at the Pacific Music Festival. He was the chosen conductor to work with Riccardo Muti on the production of Verdi's *Falstaff* at the Italian Opera Academy in 2015. He graduated from the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler Berlin, the National Taiwan Normal University, and the Tunghai University, where he studied conducting with Prof. Christian Ehwald, Prof. Hans-Dieter Baum, Prof. Apo Hsu, and Prof. Annie Chung.



**Pam Mahon**
Narrator

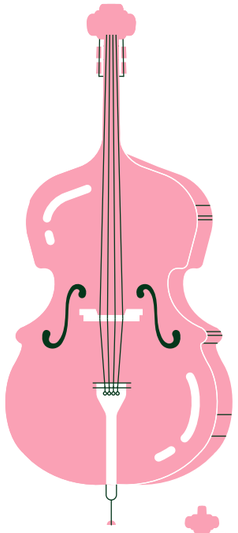
Pam Mahon is delighted to be performing yet again with her favorite symphony orchestra family. Ms. Mahon is the narrator for the Oregon Symphony's Family series concerts, as well as the teaching artist for the Symphony's Kinderkonzerts and Carnegie Hall Link Up National Concerts. To Ms. Mahon, entertaining the young audiences of the Oregon Symphony is an absolute dream job! Other Portland credits include: Lureena Jones, *Adrift in Macao* (Broadway Rose); Aldonza, *Man of La Mancha*; Mother, *Ragtime*; Baker's Wife, *Into the Woods*; Claire Ganz, *Rumors*; Donna/Oolie, *City of Angels*; Carmen, *Sweet Charity*; Pam, *The Full Monty* (Lakewood Theatre Company); Mary Bland, *Eating Raoul* (Live on Stage); Madame de la Grande Bouche, *Beauty and the Beast*; Wicked Witch of the West, *The Wizard of OZ*; Brooke Wyndham, *Legally Blonde: The Musical* (Pixie Dust Productions); Mazeppa, *Gypsy* (Portland Center Stage); Susan, *[title of show]* (Triangle Productions); Young Boy, *Jenůfa*; Chocholka/Jay, *The Cunning Little Vixen*; Papagena, *The Magic Flute*; and Nurse Maid, *Street Scene* (Portland Opera).

# GETTING TO KNOW THE INSTRUMENTS

It's the big day and you take your seat in the concert hall ready to hear some classical music. You look up and see almost 80 people in the orchestra. Here's a breakdown of the instruments they're playing.

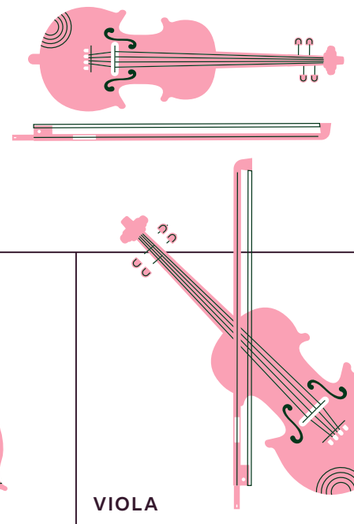
### BASS OR DOUBLE BASS

An enormous, stand-up instrument that plays the lowest notes of all the strings.



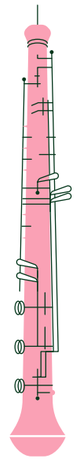
### VIOLIN

The highest-pitched string instrument, made of wood with a bow played over four metal strings. The sound is sweet, singing, and divine.



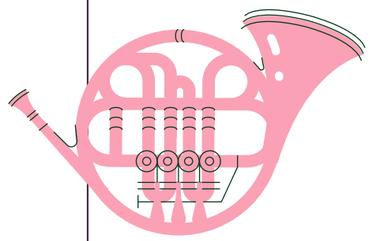
### OBOE & ENGLISH HORN

Played by blowing into a reed, a whittled-down flat piece of sugar cane, these produce a sound that is full, clear, and vibrant.



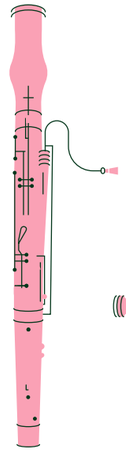
### FRENCH HORN

A noble-sounding brass instrument with a full, round, majestic tone.



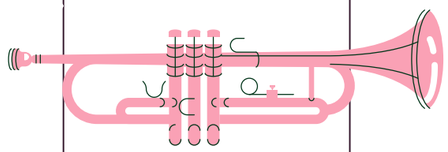
### BASSOON

Looks like a plumbing pipe, sounds like a dream. High notes sound otherworldly. Middle notes sound luscious and mellow. Low notes sound deep and powerful.



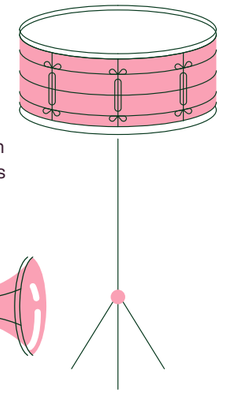
### TRUMPET

The highest-pitched brass instrument in the orchestra. Executes impressive runs and leaps in a single bound.



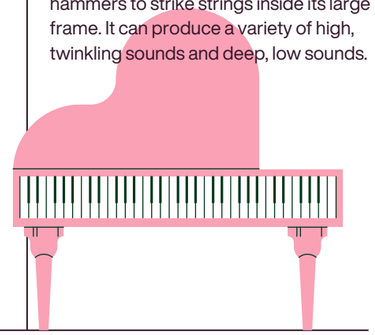
### PERCUSSION

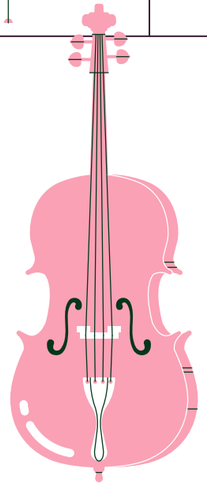
The player is expected to be a master of a vast range of different instruments: timpani, bass drum, snare drum, cymbals, xylophone, and other oddities.



### PIANO

Played by pressing keys that cause hammers to strike strings inside its large frame. It can produce a variety of high, twinkling sounds and deep, low sounds.





### VIOLA

Slightly larger than a violin, playing slightly lower notes, with a breathier or throatier sound.

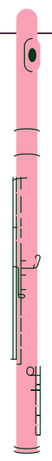


### CELLO

Played sitting down, with the instrument between the legs. Makes a beautiful, rich, singing sound.

### FLUTE

Blown across, just like a bottle; produces a sweet, silvery sound.



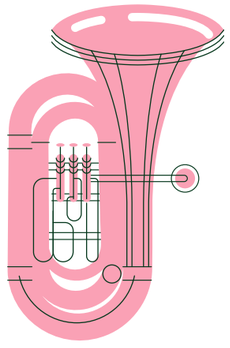
### CLARINET

A tubular woodwind instrument that creates a full, round sound—very pure, without the edge of the oboe's sound.



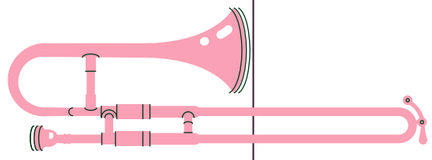
### TUBA

Lowest of the brass instrumentsCan produce a wall of low, blasting sound.



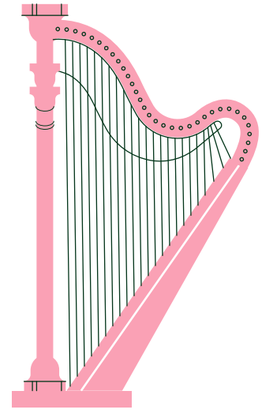
### TROMBONE

A powerful low brass instrument with a slide to change notes. Essential for parades, as well as symphonies.



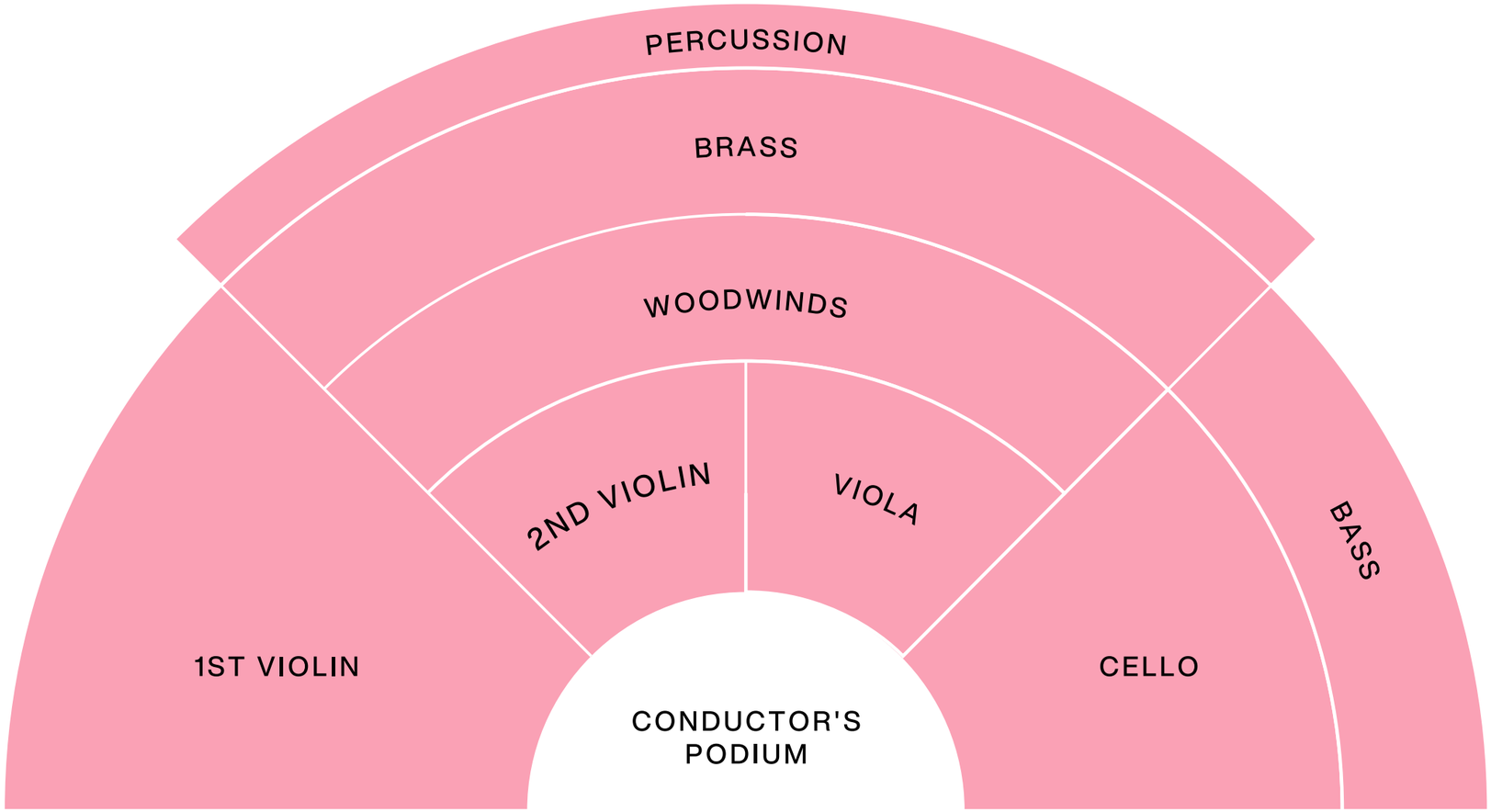
### HARP

A triangular framed instrument with a curved neck. Strings stretched between a soundbox and the neck are plucked with the fingers to produce an elegant tone.



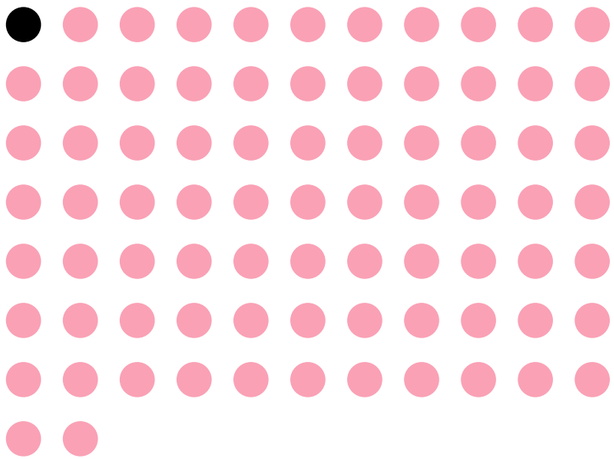
# ORCHESTRA SEATING CHART

The symphony orchestra is the largest and most exciting of all musical groups, with as many as 100 players, depending on the piece. It is divided into four musical families called strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion. Every instrument in the orchestra belongs to one of these families.




BY THE NUMBERS

## 1 Conductor
## 78 Musicians



## 49 Strings

25 Violins
9 Violas
8 Cellos
6 Basses
1 Harp

## 12 Brass

5 French Horns
3 Trumpets
3 Trombones
1 Tuba

## 5 Percussion

3 Percussion
1 Timpani
1 Keyboard

## 12 Woodwinds

3 Flutes
3 Oboes
3 Clarinets
3 Bassoons
Piccolo*
English Horn*

*These are additional instruments played by members of the flute or oboe section.

# OUR HISTORY

## THE OREGON SYMPHONY

The Oregon Symphony is Portland's largest performing arts organization today, but it has long and deep roots that go all the way back to 1896 and the founding of the Portland Symphony—the first orchestra west of the Mississippi River.

The decades that followed saw many milestones, but two of the biggest came in the mid-20th century. Firstly, in 1967, the orchestra's name was officially changed to the Oregon Symphony, reflecting the increasing number of concerts played outside Portland and a commitment to serve the larger statewide and regional community. Secondly, in 1984, under the leadership of Music Director James DePreist, the orchestra moved from the Portland Civic Auditorium (now Keller Auditorium) to its current home, the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall. The move, and DePreist's leadership, were turning points in the Oregon Symphony's history that resulted in a new level of concert and recording activity, as well as greater service in the areas of education and community engagement.

Now, the orchestra is led by Jean Vollum Music Director David Danzmayr, who joined the organization during its 125th anniversary season in 2021. The Oregon Symphony now performs for hundreds of thousands of people each year, and the Symphony's recorded works have reached millions of music lovers over the years via broadcasting on All Classical Radio and American Public Media programs. These recordings have earned the Oregon Symphony multiple GRAMMY® nominations.



Portland Symphony, 1957




## THE ARLENE SCHNITZER CONCERT HALL

The Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall is a historic theater building and performing arts center in Portland, Oregon. It is locally nicknamed "The Schnitz" and is the last surviving theater on Broadway, which was once lined with large theater houses. The architectural firm Rapp and Rapp designed the Italian Renaissance-style building and it was considered, at its opening, to be the largest and most lavish theater for a city of Portland's size. It opened as the Portland Public Theatre, a vaudeville venue, in March 1928, then changed to the Paramount Theater in 1930, as the owners had a contract to run Paramount films locally. The building continued to show films until 1972.

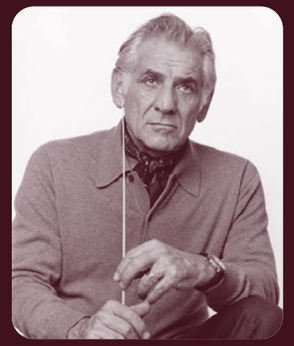
The Schnitz's 65-foot high "Portland" sign above the Broadway Marquee originally contained approximately 6,000 theatrical lights. The current sign is an exact replica of the original–which read "Paramount" from 1930–1984.

The theater's original organ and statuary were sold off in an auction in March 1975. During the auction, there was a general outcry from the audience to keep a marble statue called "Surprise" (a nude girl with her hands thrown across her face) in the theater. The 1200-member audience took up a collection, and $5,233.97 was raised to purchase and keep the statue in the theater lobby. "Surprise" once had a finger missing from a box-office robbery bullet in the 1920s, but is now restored in the hall's main foyer. The building (as the Paramount Theatre) was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.

A major renovation of the hall began in September 1983 by Boora Architects, restoring the building to much of its original opulence. Portland residents Arlene and Harold Schnitzer contributed generously to the completion of the initial phase of the renovation. The one-year, $10 million renovation involved repairing, recasting, or replacing much of the ornate interior while making it comfortable and safe for today's audiences and performers. The Schnitz is a gem in our city and we are happy to welcome you into the Oregon Symphony's home!

# 1. Overture to *Candide*, 1956

## Composed by Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990)



A cultural icon, Leonard Bernstein is often regarded as having lived four lives in one: he was the first American to lead a major American orchestra, the New York Philharmonic; he was one of the first American composers to garner world-wide attention; he was a virtuosic solo pianist; and he was a committed educator, especially for youth. He composed popular musicals, operas, and ballets, including *West Side Story* and *Candide*. He was renowned around the world at the time of his death both for his creative endeavors and humanitarian work, and this legacy continues.



### SELECTION TO BE PERFORMED TODAY

Overture to *Candide*

Overtures are typically performed before any action on stage, serving as a preview for what is to come in the opera. In this overture, Bernstein introduces many of the melodic themes featured in *Candide*, including brash, energetic "battle scene" music and selections from *arias* (songs in an opera), such as the tender love duet between Candide and his romantic interest, Cunégonde.

### STORY INSPIRATION

*Candide*, a satirical novella written in 1759 by French author, Voltaire. The title character, Candide, a naive young man, embarks on an adventurous journey around Europe. Through many trials and tribulations, he discovers that the world is not perfect, and eventually comes to realize that the secret to a happy life is simple: "We must cultivate our own garden."

### WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

**Introduction**

A brass-heavy fanfare that immediately introduces and sets the tone for the upbeat excitement that follows.

**Overture Body**

Bernstein centers the main overture around two contrasting themes: the first a frantic, scurrying theme and the second a soaring, lyrical duet. He uses shifting meters and syncopated, driving rhythms to keep the energy up and momentum moving forwards, and shares melodic material throughout the orchestra, producing, at times, an almost shimmering effect. You can hear the influences of jazz and musical theater in this work, as well as other popular musical idioms of the day.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

# Candide's Musical Rollercoaster

Students will use physical movement and visual maps to track dramatic shifts in tempo, dynamics, and melody, helping them to understand the musical structure and expression of the piece.

## Preparation/Materials

| | |
|---|---|
| A device to listen to Overture to *Candide* on YouTube | **Watch Video** → |
| Paper and writing/drawing utensils | |

## Instructions

### Part 1: Movement

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. | Teacher has students stand up at their desks with enough room to move their arms safely. |
| 2. | Teacher tells students to imagine they are buckled into a musical rollercoaster and that they must use their hands and bodies to mirror the "speed" and "height" of the music. |
| 3. | Teacher plays the recording of the Overture to *Candide*, guiding students through the 6 major sections outlined below, while they move their bodies along to the music: |

### Listen for:

**Fanfare (0:00-0:28)**: Triumphant announcement that should elicit a pause in physical movement, as if students are at the very top of a rollercoaster and preparing to drop

**0:28**: Scurrying theme, as if students are working their way through the twists and turns of the rollercoaster's ups and downs, corners and loops

**1:23**: New, mellow, more lyrical and serene theme

**2:19**: Return to a brief fanfare before the scurrying theme recommences

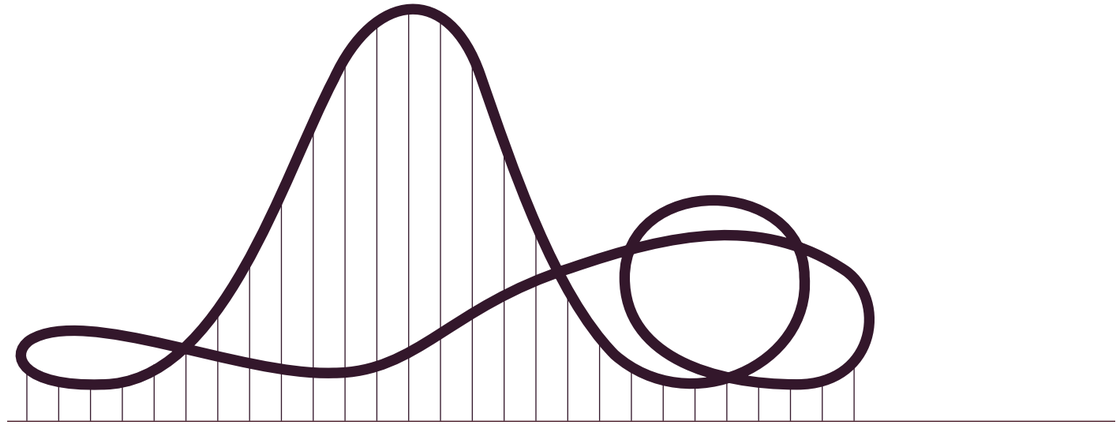
**2:57**: Return of the mellow, lyrical and serene theme

**3:29**: New squirrely theme, yielding to a bobbing-along theme, finishing with a fast and furious passage that hurtles towards the end, where the rollercoaster finally stops



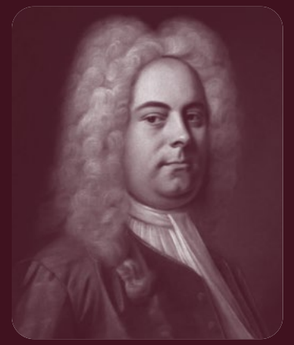
### Part 2: Live Listening Map

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. | Teacher passes out blank pieces of paper and a crayon or marker to each student (ideally paper size for each student is at least 11x17). |
| 2. | As the Overture to *Candide* plays for a second time, students are asked to keep their marker moving across the paper without lifting it, creating a continuous and seamless "rollercoaster" track that represents the music. Students can be encouraged to make shapes that evoke the quality of the music. |
| For example, when the music is loud and fast, students could draw sharp zigzags, loops, and spikes. | |
| Similarly, when the music is soft and smooth, students could draw gentle waves and big loop-de-loops. | |
| 3. | Students show their work (in pairs, small groups, or to the whole class). |
| 4. | Now that each student has their own visual representation of the form of the Overture, play the piece one last time and ask the students to trace their finger over their rollercoaster drawing as they listen to the music. |



# 2. “Entrance of the Queen of Sheba” from *Solomon*, 1748

## Composed by George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)



Especially considering the times in which he lived, Handel was extremely well-traveled. He was born in Germany, but his success as a composer gave him the opportunity to also live in Italy and London, England, where he relocated in 1712. He became so beloved by the English public that he reached celebrity status and, upon his death, was buried in Westminster Abbey, the cathedral in which 40 Kings and Queens of England have been crowned.



### SELECTION TO BE PERFORMED TODAY

“Entrance of the Queen of Sheba” from *Solomon*

This piece is a sinfonia that introduces the third and final act of Handel’s oratorio (essentially an un-staged opera), *Solomon*. In this act, Solomon receives a state visit from the Queen of Sheba, who arrives with a large entourage of camels, spices, gold, and precious jewels to test Solomon’s resolve to be wise. Solomon passes her tests, which ushers in a period of prosperity and health for his people.

### STORY INSPIRATION

The ancient stories of King Solomon can be found in Christian, Judaic, and Islamic religious texts, although Handel would have encountered them through the Old Testament. When God offered Solomon anything he wanted, Solomon did not choose money or longevity, but wisdom – ultimately becoming known as “wise King Solomon” as a result.

### WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

**Melody**

Handel’s melodies stand out from the backdrop of the larger ensemble rather than being entwined within a more complicated texture. Listen for displays of melodic virtuosity, especially from the pair of oboe soloists, who add their own embellishments and flourishes to those Handel notated. Handel would have welcomed these additions, as Baroque performers were expected to add their own riffs and ornamentation to a composer’s notated melodies.

**Harmony, texture, and Handel’s use of the orchestra**

Much of the structure of Baroque music is built on a play of contrasts, between instrumental families (strings vs. winds), high vs. low, soft vs. loud, and small sub-ensembles contrasting with the larger ensemble. All of these can be heard in the “Entrance of the Queen of Sheba,” in which the full orchestra alternates with an oboe duet in a seamless musical fabric. The orchestra functions as a musical engine, full of energy and motion, anchored by the *continuo* (a foundational musical role in Baroque music – in essence, the bassline – typically covered by cello or double bass and harpsichord.) Note how the instrumentation in this piece differs from that of the rest of this concert: many now-common orchestral instruments are absent from this piece, as they had not yet been invented!

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

# Conducting Handel

## Preparation/Materials

| | |
|---|---|
| A device to listen to “Entrance of the Queen of Sheba” on YouTube | **Watch Video** → |
| Paper and writing/drawing utensils for taking notes | |
| Print out of **Conducting Chart** & **Create Your Own Conducting Chart** | **PDF Download** ↓ |

## Instructions

1. Teacher plays the recording of “Entrance of the Queen of Sheba” for the class.

2. Teacher explains that when this piece was originally performed it would have been without a conductor. Teacher tells students that each of the performers only had access to their individual parts and asks class to imagine what it must have been like for all the performers to play together, in the correct place and at the correct time, without a conductor leading the ensemble. How did it all work? (It would have been very difficult!)

3. Teacher explains the role of the conductor (to lead the orchestra – setting tempos, shaping dynamics and expressive elements, interpreting the score, and giving cues) to the students, and explains that they will see the conductor when they go to the Young People’s Concert. Today in class, the students will get to try their hand at being the conductor!

4. Teacher divides students into small groups and explains that they will take turns to instruct their group to do four actions without speaking:

   Stand up
   Sit down
   Hands on heads
   Shake your arms

5. Teacher demonstrates possible directions to students:

   e.g. for “stand up,” slowly raise your hands towards the ceiling
   e.g. for “sit down,” slowly lower your hands towards the floor
   e.g. for “hands on head,” lightly touch the top of your head
   e.g. for “shake your arms,” wiggle your fingers

6. Students work in their groups to think of a direction for each action (can be the directions suggested above, or students can think of alternative options.)

Encourage students to explore modifications in size and speed of the directions, to yield a similar result in terms of how the group responds with their action (i.e. raising your hands towards the ceiling quickly yields a fast “stand up” while lowering your hands towards the floor slowly yields a slow “sit down”).

7. Invite students to direct their groups – actions only, no words!

Once students are comfortable with leading/following, encourage students to feel a slow and steady beat together, moving through the movements at a steady pace – just like the conductor would lead an orchestra at a steady tempo. To help groups maintain a steady beat, students can all tap their foot together in the same beat, or the teacher can play a steady metronome beat set to quarter note = 60 bpm over the classroom speakers (free metronome apps are available online).

To extend the activity further, play “Entrance to the Queen of Sheba” recording and help the students identify the macro-beat of the recording (it is at about quarter note = 62 bpm, if set to a metronome), and have students lead the conducting exercise along with the music.

As another extension option, teacher or students can create a chart of actions performed by different groups at different times, and student conductors can be invited to direct the combined group following the chart (See Conducting Chart example and Create Your Own template).

8. Teacher brings class groups together to discuss what went well, what was difficult, what would make the exercise easier! Integrate student feedback to try variations of the activity (such as teacher-only leading; one student leading the class; dividing the class into different “sections” that each do one action, with the “conductor” cueing sections).

## Conducting Chart

Keep your eyes focused on the conductor of the class, and your ears focused on the beat!
Based on your assigned group, follow the actions outlined on each beat count below.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| stand | — | — | — | sit | — | — | — | shake | — |
| **11** | **12** | **13** | **14** | **15** | **16** | **17** | **18** | **19** | **20** |
| shake | — | stand | — | head | — | shake | shake | — | — |
| **21** | **22** | **23** | **24** | **25** | **26** | **27** | **28** | **29** | **30** |
| head | head | — | — | shake | shake | head | head | stand | sit |
| **31** | **32** | **33** | **34** | **35** | **36** | **37** | **38** | **39** | **40** |
| head | head | stand | sit | head | head | stand | sit | head | — |

## Create Your Own Conducting Chart

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | |
| **11** | **12** | **13** | **14** | **15** | **16** | **17** | **18** | **19** | **20** |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| **21** | **22** | **23** | **24** | **25** | **26** | **27** | **28** | **29** | **30** |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| **31** | **32** | **33** | **34** | **35** | **36** | **37** | **38** | **39** | **40** |
| | | | | | | | | | |

# 3. “Song of the Picaflor” and “Prophecy of the Mollusks” from *Picaflor: A future myth* (2024)

## Composed by Gabriela Lena Frank (b. 1972)



Frank was born in Berkeley, California, to parents of Chinese, indigenous Peruvian, Lithuanian, and Jewish descent. This multiculturalism, coupled with a lifetime spent both traveling and exploring South America while also connected to the earth on her farm in rural California, inspires Frank’s compositions. In 2017, Frank and her husband founded the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music on their farm, a place and space away from traditional academia that nurtures “creativity, community, and eco-citizenship” for early and mid-career composers of all stripes. *Picaflor: a future myth* was awarded the 2026 Pulitzer Prize for music.



### SELECTION TO BE PERFORMED TODAY

The third movement of the 10-movement work, “Song of the Picaflor,” which leads *attacca* (without pause) into an excerpt of the fourth movement, “Prophecy of the Mollusks.”

### STORY INSPIRATION

Frank conceptualized the story for *Picaflor: a future myth* herself. In Frank’s words, the piece “draws on the mythology of Andean Perú, the object of my lifelong fascination – The existence of a sky kingdom under the dominion of a creator sun god, and a mischievous hummingbird, the *picaflor*, who leaves the kingdom by ripping the sky...What happens, I wonder, when we imagine these ideas as taking place in the future rather than the past? And in a future that will bear the mark of our attitudes towards Mother Earth? How do mythologies change in such a future?” Regarded as a Promethean figure, this *picaflor* has a warrior-like resistance to forces that may seem bigger than itself. Troubled by unrest and challenges all around the world, Frank reimagines mythic qualities of the hummingbird to tackle future problems, or “future myths.”

> **Gabriela Lena Frank’s Composer’s Note includes this narrative for these movements:**
>
> **III. Song of the Picaflor**
> Awed, the creatures watch the Picaflor sing. They have never seen anything like her.
>
> **IV. Prophecy of the Mollusks**
> Ancient Mollusks emerge. From within their soft flesh, a memory jiggles: Picaflor had once created the world by stealing fire from a jealous Sun God and sharing its warmth with Pachamama. The abandoned creatures feel hope.

### WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

*Picaflor: a future myth* is such a new piece that it has not yet been recorded! The Oregon Symphony’s performance in October 2026 served as the West Coast premiere of the piece. When you hear this piece in February 2027, you will be one of the first audiences in the world to hear the piece come to life!

In “Song of the Picaflor,” listen for the hummingbird’s fluttering song performed by the flutes and piccolos. The other “creatures” marveling at the Picaflor soon enter, depicted by a haunting clarinet duet and then joined by a similarly spooky French horn duo. As if emerging from a swamp or primordial stew, the bass clarinet and contrabassoon join in with a menacing counter-melody, accompanied by a low-drone in the double basses. Keep your eyes on the percussion section to see them *bowing* a marimba with a violin bow – producing a ghostly gasp. The movement leads straight into “Prophecy of the Mollusks,” a lugubrious waltz in 3/8 meter. The rest of the string sections join in, contributing eerie *glissandi* (sliding on one note to the next) and *pizzicato* (plucked) effects, possibly eliciting the “soft flesh” of the mollusks and snap of their shells.

### Links for Further Study

| | |
|---|---|
| Oregon ArtsWatch article: “When does a story need music? Speaking with Gabriela Lena Frank about Picaflor: a future myth” | **Read Article** → |
| Video: Gabriela Lena Frank on the world premiere of *Picaflor: a future myth* | **Watch Video** → |

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

# Your Future Myth

Myths about Bigfoot in the Pacific Northwest have coalesced around environmental stewardship, which align with Indigenous peoples' long-held view of Bigfoot as a "spiritual being who teaches humans to respect and care for the land."

In this exercise, students use Bigfoot as the inspiration for their own multi-movement future myths. What issues could these future myths cover? Forest fires, climate change, A.I., bullying (cyber and otherwise), disinformation, screen time, etc.

Depending on the age of your students, either pictures or words could be used for this exercise.

OPB video: "Guardian of the Land" **Watch Video**

"Indigenous peoples of the Nch'i-Wána, or Columbia River, know Bigfoot not as a monster but as a protector—a spiritual being that teaches one to respect, revere, and enter into relationship with the land. Featuring the lived experiences of world champion jingle dancer Acosia Red Elk, artist Toma Villa, tribal council member Carlos Calica, and anthropologist Phil Cash Cash." (2025, 25 minutes)



## Preparation/Materials

Paper and writing/drawing utensils for taking notes

## Activity

1. Teacher leads a discussion about how music can illustrate a story.
2. Teacher explains how Gabriela Lena Frank was inspired by the traditional mythical powers of the hummingbird, the *picaflor*, yet reimagined those powers to address some of the challenges and issues in today's world and in the future.
3. Teacher leads discussion about types of issues in today's world that students may want to address in a future myth: forest fires, climate change, A.I., bullying, disinformation, screen time, mental health, hunger, hurricanes...Teacher may prompt students with age and context-appropriate suggestions.
4. Teacher asks students to reimagine the powers of Bigfoot and to create *future myths* or stories about how Bigfoot helps solve the issues of today. Students may either illustrate their myth, write their myth into a story, or both!



# 4. “The Montagues and Capulets” and “Juliet—the Young Girl” from *Romeo and Juliet* Suite No. 2 (1937)

## Composed by Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953)



In his early years, Prokofiev felt a profound sense of belonging in his Russian home. He was recognized as a musical prodigy, having written his first opera at age nine, and entered the prestigious music conservatory in Saint Petersburg at age thirteen. His career as a composer and pianist flourished after graduation. The Russian Revolution of 1917 caught him unawares, however, and when living conditions became increasingly difficult, he emigrated to the United States. Prokofiev never felt at home or at peace in the U.S., so he moved to Paris, France, yet remained unsettled. Ultimately, he returned to what had become the very different socio-political culture of the Soviet Union, where, in part because his return was voluntary, his work was venerated and celebrated.



### SELECTION TO BE PERFORMED TODAY

“The Montagues and Capulets” and “Juliet - the Young Girl,” the first and the second movements of Prokofiev’s seven-movement suite, which he adapted for concert orchestra from his full-length ballet. The Montague and Capulet families are rivals, and Prokofiev outlines their contentious relationship musically in the first movement. In the second, he gives us a sense of Juliet’s character at the start of the ballet, the sweet, sometimes flighty girl who falls in love with Romeo.

### STORY INSPIRATION

*Romeo and Juliet* is a play by William Shakespeare, written between 1591 and 1595. Although Shakespeare wrote it in London, the story takes place in Verona, Italy. It tells the famous tale of Romeo Montague and Juliet Capulet, two young people and “star-crossed lovers” from feuding families. Their relationship is challenged from the very beginning by their families’ conflict and a tragic fate that seems impossible to escape.

### WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

**Form in “The Montagues and Capulets”**

Since the “The Montagues and Capulets” introduces a larger, 7-movement work, Prokofiev begins “The Montagues and the Capulets” with a substantial introduction, after which follows a ternary, or A B A’ form, piece that situates the tense relationship between the two families.

**Introduction**

Listen how Prokofiev begins the introduction with a single note in the brass section, and how he adds other instruments of the orchestra to build loud, dissonant, and appropriately wrenching cacophonous chords. Prokofiev notated dynamics precisely and with care, exploring the limits of the orchestra’s dynamic range (volume), swelling from quiet to loud, with subsequent sudden transitions from loud back to quiet.

**Section A**

Listen to the angular, angry, wide-ranging melody in the violins played over an almost grotesque and relentless oom-pah accompaniment in the lower instruments of the orchestra. Hear the theme passed around various instrument families (low brass, trombones, etc.) before the transition to the second section, B.

**Section B**

Section B features a softer, more lyrical melody in the woodwinds, although it is still melancholy, simmering, and mournful. We hear the harp, the celeste, and bell-like percussion, and the dynamic range and overall energy level is reduced.

**Section A’ (return)**

The main melody from section A first returns in the saxophone and clarinets, from where the volume slowly winds up for a final rendition of the opening melody.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

# Prokofiev Listening Map

## Preparation/Materials

| | |
|---|---|
| A device to watch "The Montagues and Capulets" from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* Suite No. 2 | **Watch Video** |
| A device to watch YouTube video of the String Family | **Watch Video** |
| A device to watch YouTube video of the Brass Family | **Watch Video** |
| A device to watch YouTube video of the Woodwind Family | **Watch Video** |
| A device to watch YouTube video of the Percussion Family | **Watch Video** |
| Print out of Prokofiev Listening Map and writing/drawing utensils | **PDF Download** |

## Activity

1. Teacher explains how the form of Prokofiev's movement, "The Montagues and Capulets," is built through musical repetition. In this exercise, we will listen to how musical themes are articulated to create repetition and contrast.
2. Teacher hands out **Prokofiev Listening Maps.**
3. Teacher explains how Prokofiev uses different themes (melodies), instruments, and dynamics (or volumes) to create each section of the piece.
4. Teacher plays instrument family videos for the class.
5. Teacher explains *dynamics* to the class. In music, *dynamics* refer to the volume, or how loud or quiet the sound is, and how that volume changes through a piece of music.
6. Teacher plays Prokofiev's "The Montagues and Capulets" for the class as students complete their Listening Maps (this may be either stop-start or repeated as necessary).
7. Students pair up with a partner to share and compare their listening maps.
8. Teacher facilitates class sharing to help show how the trajectory of *dynamics*, expression, instruments, and melodies are used to create the form of this work, and how the form of the work suggests the nature of the relationship between the Montague and Capulet families at the opening of *Romeo and Juliet*.



# Prokofiev Listening Map

Write down information in the blank sections below on the Listening Map as you listen to "The Montagues and Capulets" from this video. What instruments do you hear? What dynamics are used in the section (consider using the Dynamics chart to identify dynamics using the Italian words or abbreviations)? Is the tempo fast or slow? What is the mood or feeling of the section? Do you notice any other interesting elements, such as how the orchestra members are playing (facial expressions, techniques, what they're paying attention to) or how it is led by the conductor? Use this Listening Map to guide and enhance your active listening experience.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Introduction** 0:00-0:31 | **Transition** 0:32-0:53 | **Section A (main theme)** 1:34-2:17 | **Section A (contrast)** 2:18-2:58 | **Repetition of introduction** 0:54-1:11 | **Transition** 1:12-1:33 |
| The instruments I hear are: | The instruments I hear are: | The instruments I hear are: | The instruments I hear are: | The instruments I hear are: | The instruments I hear are: |
| The dynamics used: | The dynamics used: | The dynamics used: | The dynamics used: | The dynamics used: | The dynamics used: |
| Tempo (Fast or Slow): | Tempo (Fast or Slow): | Tempo (Fast or Slow): | Tempo (Fast or Slow): | Tempo (Fast or Slow): | Tempo (Fast or Slow): |
| Mood or Feeling: | Mood or Feeling: | Mood or Feeling: | Mood or Feeling: | Mood or Feeling: | Mood or Feeling: |
| I also noticed: | I also noticed: | I also noticed: | I also noticed: | I also noticed: | I also noticed: |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Section B: New melody** 3:23-4:04 | **Section B: New melody, variation** 4:05-4:42 | **Return of Section A: original theme** 4:43-5:06 | **Return of Section A, original theme** 5:07 | | |
| The instruments I hear are: | The instruments I hear are: | The instruments I hear are: | The instruments I hear are: | | |
| The dynamics used: | The dynamics used: | The dynamics used: | The dynamics used: | | |
| Tempo (Fast or Slow): | Tempo (Fast or Slow): | Tempo (Fast or Slow): | Tempo (Fast or Slow): | | |
| Mood or Feeling: | Mood or Feeling: | Mood or Feeling: | Mood or Feeling: | | |
| I also noticed: | I also noticed: | I also noticed: | I also noticed: | | |

## About Dynamics

Dynamics dictate the volume at which the music should be played. In music, dynamics are indicated using Italian words, with the abbreviations shown below written in the music:

| Dynamic, or volume | Italian word | Abbreviation shown in music |
|---|---|---|
| Very quiet | *Pianissimo* | ***pp*** |
| Quiet | *Piano* | ***p*** |
| Medium quiet | *Mezzo piano* | ***mp*** |
| Medium loud | *Mezzo forte* | ***mf*** |
| Loud | *Forte* | ***f*** |
| Very loud | *Fortissimo* | ***ff*** |
| Music gradually increases in volume | *Crescendo* | ***Cresc.*** |
| Music gradually decreases in volume | *Decrescendo* | ***Decresc.*** |

# 5. “Marcia Moderato” from *Movimientos de la Muerte* (2026)

## Composed by Jacobi Esparza (b. 2008)

student of Fear No Music’s Young Composers Project



Jacobi Esparza is a composer and percussionist from Portland, Oregon. He is currently studying at Lewis & Clark College, where he is preparing to become a music educator. Esparza began playing percussion and writing music when he was in middle school and has been passionate about music ever since. His compositions have been performed by high school orchestras, chamber ensembles, the Metropolitan Youth Symphony, and the Oregon Symphony. As a performer, he has played in orchestras, wind ensembles, jazz bands, and musical theater productions, and has even appeared on stage as an actor. An accomplished percussionist, Esparza earned top honors in district music competitions and competed at the state level as a timpani soloist. He believes music is one of the most meaningful forms of human expression and feels honored to share his creativity with others through composition and performance.



### SELECTION TO BE PERFORMED TODAY

“Marcia Moderato” from *Movimientos de la Muerte*. *Movimientos de la Muerte* is Jacobi’s first solo work for a full orchestra. It was premiered by the Metropolitan Youth Symphony’s Concert Orchestra on May 10, 2026. The title translates to “Movements of Death,” a reflection of the style of music over the three short movements. The first movement is being performed here on its own, but still carries a message about death and how we must accept the fact that it is part of life. The first movement represents the death of a loved one, the second represents the inevitable period of mourning, and the third represents the celebration of their life through acceptance.

### AN INTERVIEW WITH THE COMPOSER: JACOBI ESPARZA

With the rare opportunity to meet and talk with a young composer, we conducted an interview with Jacobi to learn about him, his compositional process, and his piece being performed on this Young People’s Concert. His interview is included here, lightly condensed for clarity:

**Tell us about your musical background. What first drew you to music, and when did you realize you wanted to become a composer?**

When I was younger, I tried lots of instruments, including drums, piano, and guitar, but none of them really clicked. In high school, I started taking lessons in digital music production, which led me to composition. I loved being able to put notes into a computer and hear them come to life. Finishing a piece and thinking, “I made that!” was an amazing feeling and made me want to keep composing.

**As a young composer, who or what has most influenced your artistic development?**

I find inspiration in all kinds of sounds and musical traditions. I enjoy exploring different textures in the orchestra and discovering new ways to make the music interesting. *Movimientos de la Muerte* includes influences from Latin dance music, Russian folk music, and even American military music. As a percussionist, I also like making sure the percussion section has plenty to do!

**Your piece, *Movimientos de la Muerte* (“Movements of Death”), has a striking title. What inspired this piece?**

The piece is inspired by Hispanic traditions surrounding death. As a member of the Latino community myself, I can tell you firsthand that death and legacy are large parts of the culture. While we do mourn, as is customary with the passing of a loved one, we also use their death as a celebration of their life. Some students may recognize this idea from the movie *Coco*, where the afterlife is shown as colorful, joyful, and full of music. The full version of *Movimientos de la Muerte* has three movements that explore different parts of these traditions. The movement you’ll hear today represents the passing of a loved one and the feelings of shock and disbelief that can come with that loss.

**What advice would you give to young musicians or aspiring composers?**

The most important thing is to build connections and take opportunities. Join your school band, orchestra, or choir, participate in community music groups, enter competitions, and meet other musicians. I started with lessons in digital music production, and now my music is being performed by the Oregon Symphony. None of that would have happened without the people who supported and encouraged me along the way.

**Looking ahead, what are your goals as a composer?**

My dream is to become a film composer and write music for movies, television shows, and video games. I would also love to write music for school ensembles. More than anything, I hope that one day I can look back on a lifetime of music and feel proud of what I’ve created and the impact it has had on others.

# 6. Selection from *Night on Bald Mountain* (1866)

## Composed by Modest Mussorgsky (1839–1881)



Although Mussorgsky was born the son of a landowner, he was also descended from Russian peasants. This dichotomy of circumstance served as the foundation of a "classical" musical style that came from and was for the people. Although he worked as a civil servant for the government, he found time to become a lauded composer, helping to forge a new Russian style that blended traditional Russian musical elements and Western musical conventions. This new style was on a par with compositions from continental Europe, which, at that time, were the mainstay of concert houses all over the world.



### SELECTION TO BE PERFORMED TODAY

The beginning of Mussorgsky's tone poem, *Night on Bald Mountain*, in which we hear the witches, ghouls, and monsters gather atop a mountain as darkness descends.

### STORY INSPIRATION

Mussorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain* is a dramatic symphonic fantasy, inspired by "St. John's Eve", a spooky short story by Nikolai Gogol published in 1830. The story tells of witches and evil spirits gathering on a barren mountaintop for a wild nighttime celebration. As dawn approaches, the ringing of church bells breaks the spell, sending the spirits fleeing and bringing the night's eerie revelry to an end.

### WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

**Melody**

Mussorgsky's melodies are perfectly suited to the task of creating a musical environment filled with fear, darkness, and eeriness for a nighttime gathering of ghouls and spirits. His melodic phrases are short and extreme, characterized by strongly accented beats, distinct rhythmic motives, and extreme range (low or high).

**Harmony, texture, and Mussorgsky's use of the orchestra**

Mussorgsky employs relatively traditional harmonic structures in his compositions; however, in an effort to create an eerie quality suitable for this more macabre music, he did pioneer the re-ordering of traditional chords to great spooky effect. You can hear this harmonic eeriness both in this *Night on Bald Mountain* and its influence on many compositions by subsequent composers, including on film soundtracks to this day. Mussorgsky's careful use of timbre is exceptional in this composition: he uses the orchestra as a sonic paintbox to capture the essence of the musical images he created in this piece. In so doing, he pays close attention to and exploits the individual technical abilities, timbres, and ranges of each instrument at his disposal, and thinks outside the box with how he can use them to best effect. For example, imagine if Mussorgsky had given the trombone and tuba (low brass) melody at 0:59 to the flutes and oboes!

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

# *Night on Bald Mountain* Bingo

## Preparation/Materials

A device to watch *Night on Bald Mountain* (0:00-2:56) on YouTube (this is the excerpt performed on the Young People's Concert. In your class activities, you are welcome to listen beyond this point.) **Watch Video**

Bingo cards (printed and distributed to the class) and writing utensils **PDF Download**

## Activity

1. In this activity students will observe and listen to Mussorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain* performed by the Orchestre national d'Île-de-France, conducted by Wayne Marshall. As they observe and listen, they will play "bingo" with bingo cards distributed by the teacher.

2. Each of the elements on the bingo card will be part of this Young People's Concert. Students will learn to identify by sight and sound some of the instruments of the orchestra; students will become familiar with what it is to see a live classical music concert; and students will become familiar with aspects of this piece.

3. The squares in each bingo card relate to one of three types:

   Instruments seen (and heard) in this performance
   Aspects of the concert hall performance space (seen but not heard)
   Characteristics of this music

4. Students can work alone or in pairs, and teacher facilitates playing bingo, until all cards are full. The video may need to be played more than once.

   Optional: Teacher displays list of all "squares" and students work out which ones are not on their boards, and, in one final run through of the video, try to find all squares shown in the performance.

   Optional: Teacher facilitates discussion about the three types of squares that are part of the board (instruments, aspects of the concert hall, and characteristics of the music). Which are the ones you would observe at most symphonic concerts?



| B | I | N | GO |
|---|---|---|---|
| Loud section | Oboe | Double bass | Baton |
| French horn | Quiet section | Music accelerating slow to faster | Cello |
| Flute | Violins playing high and fast | Violin | Conductor |
| Audience | Timpani | Music Stands | Stage |

| B | I | N | GO |
|---|---|---|---|
| French horn | Oboe | Loud section | Double bass |
| Audience | Music accelerating slow to faster | Cello | Conductor |
| Quiet section | Music Stands | Trombone | Violins playing high and fast |
| Baton | Moment of silence | Low brass playing all together | Stage |

| B | I | N | GO |
|---|---|---|---|
| Stage | Audience | Oboe | Baton |
| Timpani | Violins playing high and fast | Cello | Moment of silence |
| French horn | Double bass | Loud section | Conductor |
| Music accelerating slow to faster | Loud section | Music Stands | Low brass playing all together |

| B | I | N | GO |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cello | Timpani | Stage | Conductor |
| Violins playing high and fast | Moment of silence | Flute | Loud section |
| Music accelerating slow to faster | Music Stands | Oboe | Low brass playing all together |
| Baton | Audience | Quiet section | French horn |

| B | I | N | GO |
|---|---|---|---|
| Violin | Flute | Quiet section | French horn |
| Timpani | Music accelerating slow to faster | Violins playing high and fast | Low brass playing all together |
| Double bass | Cymbal crash | Oboe | Trombone |
| Cello | Moment of silence | Loud section | Baton |

| B | I | N | GO |
|---|---|---|---|
| Quiet section | Flute | Double bass | Violins playing high and fast |
| French horn | Stage | Oboe | Moment of silence |
| Loud section | Music accelerating slow to faster | Cello | Conductor |
| Low brass playing all together | Audience | Baton | Timpani |

# 7. “Finale” from the Overture to *William Tell* (1829)

## Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868)



In the early nineteenth century, more people had heard of Rossini than of Beethoven. Why? Rossini composed and produced some of the most popular operas ever written, and at that time in Europe, opera was the most celebrated genre. Born into a musical family, Rossini was commissioned to write his first opera when he was just eighteen. Over the next thirteen years, he produced operas primarily in Italian before moving from his home in Italy to Paris, France to run the Italian Theater. Successful and rich, he was able to retire from composing operas before he was forty, living the rest of his days in his villa outside Paris.



### SELECTION TO BE PERFORMED TODAY

The finale – or last part – of the overture, an instrumental movement that introduces a longer work, in this case, an opera. This section of the overture is also known as the “March of the Swiss Soldiers,” or the “Cavalry Galop.”

### STORY INSPIRATION

“William Tell” is the story of a brave archer who stood up against an unfair ruler to protect his fellow countrymen. The tale is a popular Swiss legend set in the early 14th century. Since it was first written down in the late 15th century, the story has been recast and retold, and William Tell has become a hero in Swiss culture, folklore, and history. Rossini, an Italian, based this French-language opera on a nineteenth-century play by his contemporary German playwright, Friedrich Schiller.

### WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

**Introduction**

The final section of the overture is introduced with a brass fanfare with punchy rhythms that set the stage for the galloping horse melody that follows.

**Melody**

Rossini is known for his incredibly catchy melodies, with singable contours, crisp rhythms, and clear phrase structures. These melodic ideas are often repeated through a composition, engendering a sense of familiarity and immediate recognition with the listeners.

**Harmony, texture, and Rossini’s use of the orchestra:**

Rossini used a relatively small orchestra for the times, with a conservative harmonic structure and relatively simple orchestral texture with the purpose of supporting, and never overshadowing, the prevailing melody. One musical device for which Rossini became known is the “Rossini *crescendo*,” in which a phrase is repeated, each time louder, and sometimes a tad faster, which can give the sense of the music rushing in a somewhat haywire fashion to the edge of control.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

# Rossini *Crescendo* Worksheet

## Preparation/Materials

| | |
|---|---|
| A device to listen to the "Finale" from the Overture to *William Tell* | **Watch Video** |
| **Rossini Crescendo Chart** | **PDF Download** |
| Paper and writing/drawing utensils | |

## Activity

1. Teacher explains that the "Finale" from the Overture to *William Tell* begins with a fanfare that announces the Cavalry Galop, a fast, synchronized gait used by military riders on horseback. When galloping, all four horse hooves are momentarily off the ground with each stride.
2. Teacher plays the "Finale" to Rossini's Overture.
3. Teacher explains that Rossini used a specific compositional technique to evoke galloping in this piece, specifically, the "Rossini Crescendo."
4. Teacher explains the concept of the Rossini Crescendo to students:

   In essence, a Rossini Crescendo is created through the repetition of a musical phrase, each time louder, and sometimes a little bit faster, than the time before. This can give the sense that the music is rushing in a haywire manner and feeling almost out of control.
5. Teacher explains that students will complete the Rossini Crescendo Chart to explore the form of the Finale, specifically how the Rossini Crescendo is produced. On the chart, students will track dynamic levels, speed, and energy by phrase.

   Teacher explains dynamics to the class. In music, dynamics refer to the volume, or how loud or quiet the sound is, and how that volume changes through a piece of music.

   Teacher explains how students can notate the relative speed for each phrase by drawing or coloring an arrow on the meter.

   Teacher explains how students can complete the relative energy section for each phrase by drawing or coloring an arrow on the meter.
6. Teacher explains that students can use the final row to jot down any observations they've noticed. Note, for a few brief seconds, the melody becomes suddenly fragmented, is played in unison, and becomes quieter in phrase 7.
7. Teacher plays Rossini's Overture for class as students complete their Crescendo charts (this may be either stop-start or repeated as necessary)
8. Students pair up with a partner to share and compare their charts.
9. Teacher facilitates class sharing to help show how trajectory of dynamics, speed, and energy suggests a cavalry galop. Is Rossini successful?



## Rossini *Crescendo* Chart

Write down or draw information in the blank sections below on the Rossini Crescendo Chart as you listen to the "Finale" of the Overture to *William Tell* from this video. What dynamics are used in the section (consider using the Dynamics chart to identify dynamics using the Italian words or abbreviations)? What tempo (speed) is the section? With the dynamics and tempo considered together, does the energy of the section feel more intense or less intense? Do you notice any other interesting elements, such as how the orchestra members are playing (facial expressions, techniques, what they're paying attention to) or how it is led by the conductor? Use this Chart to guide and enhance your active listening experience.

| | FANFARE 0:00–0:11 | PHRASE 1 0:14–0:25 | PHRASE 2 0:26–0:45 | PHRASE 3 1:17–1:34 | PHRASE 1' 0:46–0:57 | PHRASE 3 0:58–1:16 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Dynamic level:** | | | | | | |
| **Tempo (speed)** Draw an arrow on the meter to indicate the "speed." | | | | | | |
| **Energy/Intensity** Draw an arrow on the meter to indicate the "energy" – for instance, are many instruments playing fast and frantic and loudly (high energy)? | | | | | | |
| **I also noticed:** | | | | | | |

| | TRANSITION 1:35–1:40 | CODA (END) 1:41–END |
|---|---|---|
| **Dynamic level:** | | |
| **Tempo (speed)** Draw an arrow on the meter to indicate the "speed." | | |
| **Energy/Intensity** Draw an arrow on the meter to indicate the "energy" – for instance, are many instruments playing fast and frantic and loudly (high energy)? | | |
| **I also noticed:** | | |

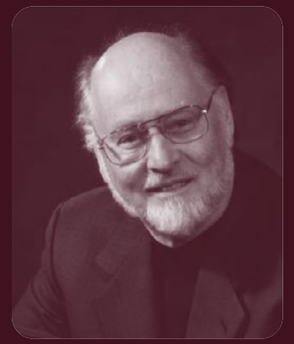
## About Dynamics

Dynamics dictate the volume at which the music should be played. In music, dynamics are indicated using Italian words, with the abbreviations shown below written in the music:

| Dynamic, or volume | Italian word | Abbreviation shown in music |
|---|---|---|
| Very quiet | *Pianissimo* | ***pp*** |
| Quiet | *Piano* | ***p*** |
| Medium quiet | *Mezzo piano* | ***mp*** |
| Medium loud | *Mezzo forte* | ***mf*** |
| Loud | *Forte* | ***f*** |
| Very loud | *Fortissimo* | ***ff*** |
| Music gradually increases in volume | *Crescendo* | ***Cresc.*** |
| Music gradually decreases in volume | *Decrescendo* | ***Decresc.*** |

# 8. “Main Title” from *Star Wars*: Suite for Orchestra (1977)

## Composed by John Williams (b. 1932)



Williams began studying the piano when he was 8 years old and has been composing since, becoming one of the most well-known and beloved American composers of all time. He has been awarded 26 GRAMMY® Award and 5 Oscars for his film music, composing the soundtracks for *E.T.*, *Harry Potter*, *Jaws*, *Schindler’s List*, *Indiana Jones*, and *Star Wars*. He has also composed traditional orchestral music as well as music for several Olympic games.



### SELECTION TO BE PERFORMED TODAY

The “Main Title,” which is the first of five movements from the orchestral suite John Williams adapted from film music composed for the *Star Wars* movies *A New Hope* and *The Empire Strikes Back*.

### STORY INSPIRATION

George Lucas completed the first draft and outline of the story of *Star Wars* in 1973. This served as the basis for the *Star Wars* screenplay used for the 1977 film and subsequent media franchise. By now a well-known story, *Star Wars* is a space adventure pitting good (Jedi and the Rebel Resistance) against evil (Sith and the Empire) in a galaxy filled with planets, spaceships, robots, aliens, and an energy field called “The Force.”

### WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

**Melody**

Williams introduces the “Main Title” with the same, familiar fanfare that accompanies the opening credits of *Star Wars: A New Hope*. This fanfare yields to the main theme, Luke Skywalker’s theme, an instantly recognizable melody that is heard in three distinct sections of the movement. We hear this main, ternary form theme in numerous instruments, including trumpets, strings, horns, and low brass, interspersed with more ethereal, transitional material, in addition to a couple of secondary themes.

**Harmony, Texture, and Williams’ Use of the Orchestra**

At times, Williams’ “Main Title” sounds bold and triumphant; at others, it evokes the mystery of a distant, alien world. Through these contrasting musical ideas, he introduces the journey Luke Skywalker will undertake as he navigates the forces of good and evil. Williams brings the music to life by highlighting melodies with distinctive instrumental colors, including glockenspiel, percussion, solo piccolo, and muted strings, alongside the orchestra’s more traditional string and brass sections. By combining and layering these different sounds, he creates a wide range of dynamics and textures. This flexibility allows the music to shift seamlessly between moments of excitement, wonder, and tension, suggesting the many challenges, environments, and adventures Luke will encounter throughout the story.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

# Luke's Story

## Preparation/Materials

| | |
|---|---|
| A device to listen to "Main Title" from *Star Wars* | **Watch Video** → |
| **Luke's Story Handout** and **Williams Listening Map** | **PDF Download** ↓ |
| Paper and writing/drawing utensils | |

## Activity

NOTE: Students can either write or draw for this exercise.

1. Teacher distributes **Luke's Story Handout** and accompanying **Williams Listening Map**
2. Teacher leads a discussion about the "Main Title," and Luke Skywalker's recurring theme in the piece.

NOTE: Luke's theme is a ternary form, or ABA' structure. Phrases A and A' use the same melody, and phrase B uses a contrasting, yet related, melody. See the Williams Listening Map for the breakdown.

3. Using the Williams Listening Map as your guide, follow Luke Skywalker's theme through the "Main Title" music of *Star Wars* from this video linked above. On Luke's Story Handout, write a description or draw a picture in each circle or rectangle about what Luke might be thinking, feeling, or experiencing based on what the music sounds like for that section.

Circles indicate transitional music, and rectangles indicate Luke's three-part theme.

4. Afterwards, students can share their ideas with their partner, group, or class.
5. Teacher can lead larger discussion about how music can shape a story.



Using the Williams Listening Map, follow Luke Skywalker's theme through the "Main Title" music of Star Wars from this video. On the Luke's Story Handout, write or draw a picture in each circle or rectangle about what Luke might be thinking, feeling, or experiencing based on what the music sounds like for that section. Circles indicate transitional music, and rectangles indicate Luke's theme.

## Williams Listening Map: "Main Title" from *Star Wars*: Suite for Orchestra

| | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shape on Luke's Story handout | ○ | □ | ○ | □ | ○ | □ | ○ |
| Phrase | Introduction: Fanfare | Luke's theme (1) | Transitional music (plus another theme) | Luke's theme (2) | Transitional music (plus another theme) | Luke's theme (3) | Coda: Ending fanfare |
| Timestamp | 0:00 | 0:10 | 1:15 | 2:35 | 3:30 | 4:28 | 5:03 |
| **Features** | Full orchestra with triangle.<br>Brief fanfare | A: trumpet<br>B: upper strings<br>A': horns and strings | Transitional material. Ethereal quality, listen for the piccolo solo.<br>Listen for impending doom and evil at 2:15. | A: horns and glockenspiel<br>B: violins and harp<br>A': horns | Transitional material. Other-worldly, but more optimistic than phrase 3. | A: trumpet<br>B: variation in strings and harp<br>A': Trick! – instead of A' we move to section 7! | 5:03: variation of opening fanfare, then presented in muted strings alone (5:29), then concluding chords. |

## Luke's Story Handout

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.







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