The Thrill of the Orchestra!

Teachers Guide
Galop from *Masquerade*  
Aram Khachaturian  
(1903 - 1978)

Dance of the Blessed Spirits  
from *Orfeo and Euridice*  
Christoph Willibald Gluck  
(1714 - 1787)

Witch's Ride  
from *Hänsel and Gretel*  
Engelbert Humperdinck  
(1854 - 1921)

*John Henry*  
Aaron Copland  
(1900 - 1990)

Nimbus 2000  
from *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*  
John Williams  
(1932 - )

*The Thrill of the Orchestra*  
Russell Peck  
(1945 - 2009)
A note from the ESO’s Resident Conductor, Stephen Squires:

Dear Educators,

It is with pleasure that I introduce this Teacher Guide for “The Thrill of the Orchestra.” Within this guide you will find fresh ideas to spark young imaginations and build excitement for the concerts in April. Although it is possible to enjoy this concert without any preparation, the more engagement with the music beforehand, the greater the enjoyment and the more solidly the experience will be remembered by the students for years to come.

One can find a connection among all of the art forms, as in basic form all ideas spring forth from the same well. For this program we are focusing on the connection between music and literature. As educators you have seen the evidence in the many scientific studies over the past few years that show the correlation between music study and improved reading ability. We won’t attempt to explain this phenomenon, but we will point out how reading and writing are similar to music composition.

Band and Orchestra teachers, we hope that this guide brings students a familiarity with the famous composers on the program and the times in which they composed. I have chosen music from the Baroque, Romantic, early 20th century and Modern periods. You can point out in particular cultural identity and contrast the works of Khachaturian and Copland. What about this music makes one sound Russian, and one sound so much like America? We also think that your students will find inspiration by hearing the quality of the musicians on stage. How many hours of practice does it take to get a position in the ESO? Our musicians would be happy to make themselves available to you to answer questions from your students.

As you page through this guide, notice that for each of the first four pieces on the program we are attaching music fundamentals to aspects of literary elements, including character, form, foreshadowing, plot and theme. In creating this concert and guide and we researched the K-8 National Core Arts Standards for Music and the Illinois Learning Standards for Language Arts, among other common core resources.

As a character can be developed by an author in a novel or short story, so can it be composed in a piece using rhythm, melody and dynamics. Khachaturian’s Galop from Masquerade is a good example of this and will be an exciting and energetic way to start the concert.

A great piece of music, especially from earlier periods including the baroque, can have a very clear physical structure and form. The second piece on the program, Gluck’s Dance of the Blessed Spirits, is written in A-B-A form. This structure is also seen quite clearly in some poetry, and we are providing some examples of haiku, and for more advanced students, William Shakespeare and Robert Frost poems and exercises to practice the element of form.

The element of foreshadowing is evident in music, especially programmatic music and opera. How does a composer give hints of what is to come in the story? By studying Witch’s Ride by Humperdinck we are able to illustrate this technique, engaging the students in a simple composition exercise and a game of detective.
The classic story of John Henry is told by Aaron Copland in his composition by the same name. By reading the story and understanding the plot, we focus on the concept literary theme, the author’s opinion, and how a phrase, or theme, in music can represent the composer’s opinion about the plot of the story.

Next, I know you will all enjoy Nimbus 2000 from the movie Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone, by John Williams. I wanted to include a piece of music that was written for one of the most successful book series’ for young readers of our time. Most students will be familiar with this music from seeing the movie, however we will probe the question, “Why the woodwinds?” Broomstick...wood...I don’t know...you make the connections!

Finally, the showcase piece, “The Thrill of the Orchestra” by Russell Peck. This piece requires little prior study or preparation, as we will be giving you all you need from the stage at the concert. We want to keep this as a show-stopping surprise for a big finish.

We look forward to seeing you in April. I would like to thank you for your work in preparing your students for this concert.

Stephen Squires, Resident Conductor

Stephen Squires enters his 25th season with the Elgin Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Squires received musical training at the Preparatory School of the Eastman School of Music, and earned a Bachelor of Music in Music Education at the Crane School of Music, State University of New York at Potsdam. Mr. Squires also earned a Master of Music in Instrumental Conducting/Trumpet Performance at California State University, Northridge. He has studied conducting in seminars with Helmuth Rilling, Maurice Abravanel, Daniel Lewis, Tsung Yeh, and at the Aspen Music Festival.

Mr. Squires has had a distinguished career (now entering 36 years) as a Professor of Music. Currently he is Professor of Conducting in the Music Conservatory at the Chicago College of Performing Arts, Roosevelt University. Prior to his appointment at CCPA, Mr. Squires served on the artist faculty at the Northern Illinois University School of Music, receiving the honor of its “Excellence in Teaching” award. Fully dedicated to the work of living composers, he has conducted the premieres of more than fifty new works.

In addition to his duties with the Elgin Symphony Orchestra, he is the Music Director of the Mendelssohn Chamber Orchestra, the Millar Brass, and the Illinois Brass Band. Mr. Squires has conducted recordings for the Delos, Spring Hill (a division of EMI) and Centaur Labels. He has guest conducted the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Green Bay Symphony, the Syracuse Symphony, the Chicago Composers Orchestra, and this season makes his conducting debut with the Columbus, OH Symphony. Mr. Squires remains active as a performer – he is an accomplished recital accompanist and freelance trumpet player.
The ESO was founded as a community orchestra at the Elgin Community College by Doug Steensland in 1950. In 1971 Margaret Hillis was appointed Music Director and the Orchestra’s artistic growth grew significantly. Margaret Hillis was an incredibly talented person. She was born in Kokomo, Indiana. During World War II, she was a civilian flight instructor and contemplated a career as a professional golfer. Ms. Hillis broke many barriers in her career. Her leadership and founding of the Chicago Symphony Chorus led her to eventually conduct major orchestras around the country. She captured national attention in 1977 when she substituted on short notice for an ailing Sir Georg Solti and conducted the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in Mahler’s Symphony No. 8 at Carnegie Hall.

Ms. Hillis was succeeded by Maestro Robert Hanson in 1985 as the Music Director of the ESO. Under Maestro Hanson’s leadership, the ensemble became a fully professional ensemble. In 1988, 1989, and 2005, the ESO was named Orchestra of the Year by the Illinois Council of Orchestras. The ESO was the first three-time winner of this award that recognizes programming excellence, artistic quality and leadership. Maestro Hanson resigned in 2011.

In 2013, after an international search that featured 200 applicants, the ESO appointed Maestro Andrew Grams as the fourth Music Director to lead this orchestra. Andrew has appeared with many of the great orchestras of the world as Conductor. Ironically, Maestro Grams and Maestra Hillis both received their conducting training from the renowned conductor, Otto-Werner Mueller.

With the annual operation budget of just under $3 million, the ESO is Illinois’ premier regional orchestra. Audiences of over 40,000 are served each year, and over 20,000 students are reached yearly with a combination of Traveling Ensembles and Kidz Konzerts/Music in the Middle. The Elgin Symphony continues to enlarge its mission as one of the foremost education orchestras in the country, adding programs for adults like the Listeners Club at the Gail Borden Public Library and the Elgin Symphony Orchestra Listeners Club on Huntley Community Radio. A partnership with Advocate Sherman Hospital (Musicians Care) and Alexian Brothers Health System (Music Heals) brings professional musicians weekly into area hospitals with healing and soothing music.
Khachaturian is a central figure in 20th century music. His famous composition “Sabre Dance” is one of the most popular compositions of our age.

He was born to the Armenian family of a bookbinder. During his lifetime, Armenia was part of the Soviet Union, and Khachaturian was a pillar of the Soviet School of Composition which included Prokofiev and Shostakovich. He began composing at the age of 21 and was able to synthesize musical achievements of his age with Armenian peasant songs and urban folklore. He was criticized by the Central Committee of the Communist Party for modernistic tendencies, but he did not let this affect his work.

Khachaturian was asked by Soviet artist and director, Ruben Simonov, to write incidental music for his production of Masquerade, a four-act verse play written in 1835 by the Russian romantic writer Mikhail Lermontov. At the time it was written, Russians censors did not approve of the play because it implied criticism of the masked balls held by an aristocratic family. Despite revisions, the play was not produced in the author’s lifetime. The play with Khachaturian’s music was first performed in June of 1941 in Moscow. The music was later modified in the form of a five-movement suite, of which the humorous “Galop” is the final movement.

Galop: a lively dance in duple time, popular in the 19th century.

This dance form was named after the fastest running gait of a horse. The step combined a glide step, or slide, with a straight leg followed by a glide step with a bent leg in a fast 2/4 time. It was often the last dance of the evening and would signal the party was coming to a close.

Khachaturian uses many techniques to bring out humor in this movement by using a fast tempo with syncopated rhythms, a dissonant melody, surprising instrumental outbursts, and fluctuating dynamics. The composer ties these musical elements together to create a lively dance while launching a character or characters for the listener to imagine in a musical “daydream”.

What makes music funny?

What Leonard Bernstein said in his Young People’s Concert about Humor in Music: “There’s one very important thing we have to know about humor in music: it’s got to be funny for musical reasons. You see, music can’t make jokes about anything except itself; it can make fun of itself, or of other pieces of music; but it sure can’t make jokes about that elephant and that mouse. And when music is funny, it’s funny in the same way that a joke is funny: it does something shocking, surprising, unexpected, absurd; it puts two things together that don’t belong together, which are, to use a very hard word, incongruous. Now that’s a word you ought to try to learn and remember.”
Lesson Objectives:
This lesson will ask students to identify the musical characteristics of the piece and to create a character that represents what they hear in the music.

Vocabulary

dynamics: in music, variation and contrast in force or intensity
galop: a lively dance in duple time, popular in the 19th century
incongruous: not appropriate for a particular occasion or situation

Plan

1. Name and discuss humorous characters from favorite books and stories. What are some of the things they do and say that makes them funny?

2. Listen to Galop and begin a discussion about character as a literary term.
   a) Who do you see as the character in this piece? What is the character doing?
   b) Which instruments do you hear bringing out the humor in the music?
   c) What mannerisms does the character you envision possess?
   d) What would you name the character?

3. Play Galop again, and this time invite the students to dance to the music. As they notice that the music changes tempo in the middle, ask, what is the character doing? How does the mood change with a slower tempo?

4. Notice the changes in dynamics. Are the changes made slowly or quickly? When the dynamics change what do you think the character is doing?

5. Have the students draw a picture of the character in their imagination after listening to Galop. Choose a few from the class to send to the ESO. Email to w.evans@elginsymphony.org. We will choose some to share on the overhead screen at the concert!

6. Ask the students to write a brief description about their character.
Dance of the Blessed Spirits

From Orpheus and Eurydice

Christoph Willibald Gluck

b. July 2, 1714 d. November 17, 1797

Gluck was born in Germany, and although his father was a forester and taught Gluck the skills to become a forester, Gluck learned to play instruments and fell in love with music. He traveled to study music in Prague, Czechoslovakia, and Milan, Italy, where he studied composition and wrote and produced opera in the very famous LaScala Opera House.

Gluck wished to create a new kind of opera, though. Up to that point, opera had been composed with the main goal of giving the superstar opera singers the chance to sing music that showed off their wonderful voices. Gluck wanted to create opera that used all the parts of the production—orchestra, singers, and stage design—to tell the story. If the story was sad, he wanted the singers to sing sad-sounding music instead of virtuosic music.

Orpheus and Eurydice was composed in 1762, and is a special type of opera called a Dance Opera. Opera uses singers and an orchestra to act out a story on stage, and a Dance Opera adds in special music for dancers. Dance of the Blessed Spirits is one of these dances. The beautiful music and dancers set the scene for Orpheus to visit The Elysian Fields. In Greek Mythology, this was the part of the Underworld where people who had lived a good life spent their afterlife. The music is calm, peaceful, and beautiful, just like this part of the Underworld! Because this is dance music from the opera, there are no singers in Dance of the Blessed Spirits.

The Myth of Orpheus and Eurydice

This Greek Myth tells the story of a husband and wife, Orpheus and Eurydice. Eurydice dies, and Orpheus is hear his sad song, and take pity on him. They tell him that he may go to the Underworld to rescue Eurydice and bring her back to life, but he must not look at her until they have returned from the Underworld.

Orpheus made the dangerous trip to the Underworld, and met Eurydice in The Elysian Fields. On the journey back from the Underworld, Orpheus became scared that Eurydice was not following him, and he looked back to see if she was there. Sadly, by doing this, he lost Eurydice forever.

Form: Dance of the Blessed Spirits

Gluck composed this piece using a form called A-B-A. This means that there are three contrasting sections of music, and the first and third are the same melody. A simple example of this is Twinkle Twinkle Little Star.
Introduce the A-B-A form of *Dance of the Blessed Spirits* by pointing out the instruments which are playing in each section:

*Form* in music is important because it creates a structure for the melody and harmony, but it is especially important in dance music because it gives the choreographer a structure to guide their plans.

**Lesson Objectives: Elementary**

In *Dance of the Blessed Spirits*, the music is essential to creating the atmosphere and setting of The Elysian Fields. Gluck composed the music using an A-B-A form, with many “musical descriptors” to transport the audience to a very special place. Poetry often does the same thing. By using carefully selected adjectives, verbs and nouns in a structure, a poem creates a mood, idea or a scene. This lesson will use the *form* of the Haiku poem to understand the descriptors in *Dance of the Blessed Spirits*.

[Link to PDF: Pattern Worksheet for younger students]

**Vocabulary**

- **choreographer**: the person who arranges how the dancers will move across the stage.
- **Form**: the way in which the elements of something (as a work poetry or music) are arranged
- **haiku**: an unrhymed verse form of Japanese origin having three lines containing usually five, seven, and five syllables respectively
- **setting**: the time, place, and conditions in which the action of a book, movie, etc., takes place

**Plan**

1. Discuss the form and setting of *Dance of the Blessed Spirits*, emphasizing how the music describes the setting. Review the definitions of nouns, verbs and adjectives.

2. Have students divide a piece of paper into six sections and ask each student to write down any nouns, verbs and adjectives that they imagine for the A and B sections of Dance of the Blessed Spirits. Remind them that the string instruments play the A section and the flute joins the strings for the B section. Listen to *Dance of the Blessed Spirits*.

3. After listening and brainstorming, have the students share some of the words they wrote down. Have them practice counting the syllables in each word. Each student should write the syllable count for his or her list of words.
4. Introduce the structure of the Haiku, sharing some examples of Haiku to demonstrate the syllable counts for each of the three lines. (17 syllables total in 3 lines, first line 5 syllables, second line 7 syllables, third line 5 syllables.)

5. Ask the students to write a Haiku using words from their worksheet to describe how they imagine The Elysian Fields to be.

6. Wrap up by having the students read aloud their Haiku, then discuss the process. Was it easy or hard to picture the setting of The Elysian Fields by listening to the music? Were the students able to find nouns, adjectives, and verbs to describe the music and setting? Were their words different for the A and B sections?

Example Haiku

By Basho Matsuo

An old silent pond
A frog jumps into the pond
Splash! Silence again.

As the wind does blow
Across the trees I see the
Buds blooming in May

Temple bells die out
The fragrant blossoms remain
A perfect evening!

By Richard Wright

Whitecaps on the bay:
A broken signboard banging
In the April wind

Lesson Objectives: Middle School

In *Dance of the Blessed Spirits*, the large form of the composition (ABA) creates a structure for a choreographer to work within, as well as an atmosphere for the listener to imagine the *setting* of the Underworld. This lesson will use the idea of *form* and atmosphere used in the Gluck composition to examine the use of form and atmosphere in poetry.

Vocabulary

**end-stopped lines**: lines that end with punctuation

**enjambed lines**: lines that break where there is no punctuation and continue in the reader’s same breath.

**rhyme-scheme**: charting the form of a poem using letters
Lesson Materials

Choose a formal, rhymed poem. Make copies, and cut out each line of the poem, keeping each copy’s cut-outs together.

[Click here for Poem 1]
[Click here for Poem 2]

Plan

1. After listening to Dance of the Blessed Spirits and introducing the idea of form in music, divide the class into small groups. Give each group a set of lines from the poem, and ask them to reassemble the poem, using rhyme and their sense of what the poem is about. Suggest they try reading the lines both silently and out loud in their groups as they reassemble the poem.

2. Once each group has reassembled the poems, have the groups present their version of the poem by reading it aloud. Discuss whether there were different versions and discrepancies. Discuss the process or reassembling the poem: Was it difficult? What was the meaning of the poem? Did the meaning help to order the lines? Did reading it aloud help? Remind the students of the different uses of line in poetry vs. prose.

3. Have the students use letters to chart the rhyme-scheme of the poem. Discuss how rhyme provides structure in a poem. Have the students read the poem as if every line is an end-stopped line. Introduce the terms “end-stopped lines” and “enjambed lines”. Read the poem once more to the students, using a “natural” through-reading to demonstrate the use of both end-stopped and enjambed lines.
Witch’s Ride from Hänsel and Gretel

Engelbert Humperdinck

b. September 1, 1854  d. September 27, 1921

Humperdinck was a German composer. He received piano lessons at an early age, and by the age of 7 he had written his first composition. His parents discouraged his music study but he persisted, winning scholarships and awards for his work. His fame as a composer was assured with the extraordinary success of the opera Hänsel and Gretel, written to a libretto by his sister Adelheid Wette, which was based loosely on the tale by the Brothers Grimm. In Wette’s version, the mother in the story was the children’s real mother rather than their wicked stepmother, which made it a more optimistic plot and happier ending than the original story. With its fairy-tale score, unique charm and delightful melodies written in a Wagner-like style, this opera pleases old and young alike and has secured Humperdinck a place in history as one of Germany’s most-beloved composers.

Witch’s Ride

The Witch’s Ride serves as an instrumental interlude between Act 1 and Act 2 of the opera so that they can be performed without intermission. This music also represents Hänsel and Gretel’s journey into the dangerous woods to pick strawberries. Humperdinck employs the use of a leitmotif, a short recurring musical phrase, to associate parts of the music to his characters and ideas.

Foreshadowing

One might assume from the title that Witch’s Ride is an accompaniment piece for the evil witch on her broomstick, soaring across the stage like a scene from the Broadway musical Wicked. However, during this interlude the witch does not appear at all. Humperdinck uses a foreshadowing technique by employing the use of leitmotif as a clue to the action to come.

Throughout Witch’s Ride we hear the broomstick motif, with its heavy rhythms:

This is not the first time this motif has been heard. If we had been listening to the opera from the beginning, we would know that this music is associated ominously with the witch. It is first heard late in Act 1, initially in the woodwinds and punctuated by the Timpani, when Father finds out that his children have set out for the woods. Mournfully, he sings a chilling melody and describes to his wife the witch’s attacks on stray children. Father sings: “A broomstick, a broomstick, you know what it’s for...you know what it’s for...” as the motif continues. This gives the audience an immediate intuitive and emotional understanding of the setting when we hear the Witch’s Ride and know that Hänsel and Gretel are headed for trouble.
Foreshadowing is an effective device which is used in music and in literature. It can add tension to the drama, build anticipation, and help the reader or listener better understand what comes later in the story.

Lesson Objective:
This lesson will engage younger students in a game to explain the concept of foreshadowing with leitmotifs and includes a simple and brief composition activity. Most children will know the story of Hänsel and Gretel, but you might want to review the story before you listen to the piece.

Recommended reading:

Hansel and Gretel/ Hansel y Gretel / adaptation by Elisabet Abeyà ; illustrated by Cristina Losantos
Hansel and Gretel illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky; retold by Rika Lesser

Vocabulary

foreshadowing: a literary device in which a writer gives an advance hint of what is to come later in the story.

leitmotif: an associated melodic phrase or figure that accompanies the reappearance of an idea, person, or situation especially in a Wagnerian music drama

libretto: the words of an opera or musical
Lesson Materials:
A variety of classroom percussion instruments may be used including the tambourine, rhythm sticks and shakers. Students may also make instruments. Here is an excellent video instruction on how to make balloon drums: Click here to learn how to make balloon drums.

Plan:

1. Explain what a leitmotif is, and compose a simple one as an example and/or sing or play the following excerpt from the Imperial March from Star Wars, one of the most famous and recognizable leitmotifs ever composed (Darth Vader’s theme):

   ![Musical Notes]

2. Have the class divide into four groups, evenly divided.

3. Write “Happy” “Sad” “Angry” “Calm” on slips of paper and fold them up and put them in a basket. Ask one student from each group to choose a slip of paper from the basket.

4. Ask each group to compose a leitmotif based on the word that their group chose. Explain that it should be very brief and should try to evoke the feeling of their word, for instance, happy might be a quick tempo, sad slow, angry loud, and calm soft.

5. Have a member from each group perform their leitmotif, and see if the other students can guess what feeling they are representing. During the game, have each student in the group take a turn at performing their leitmotif.

6. Game:
   a. Blindfold one student. This is the detective. The detective’s job is to hear the clues and perform the appropriate action.
   b. Instruct the student that he/she is to take the following action when each leitmotif is heard:
      i. Happy: do a dance
      ii. Sad: pretend to cry
      iii. Angry: stomp feet
      iv. Calm: pretend to fall asleep
   c. Silently point to each student in charge of playing their group’s leitmotif. Vary the order in which the leitmotifs are chosen. When the blindfolded student performs the wrong action, his/her turn is over and another student gets to be the detective.

7. When you are finished playing the game, play the opening 10 seconds of Witch’s Ride for the students and point out the broomstick leitmotif. Play it a few times so that they become familiar with it.
8. Discuss the setting of the piece and how the broomstick leitmotif adds tension by foreshadowing the appearance of the witch during Hänsel and Gretel’s journey into the woods. Ask: Knowing what the leitmotif represents, how do you feel about what they are doing? Should they be worried? If you could change the story, what action would you take to help Hänsel and Gretel?


ESO Traveling Ensembles
**John Henry**

**Aaron Copland**
b. November 14, 1900 d. December 2, 1990

Along with composers such as George Gershwin and Leonard Bernstein, Aaron Copland was one of the most important and popular composers in America during the 20th Century. His music is known to sound uniquely “American” and in his later years, he was referred to as the “Dean of American Composers.”

Copland was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1900 to immigrant parents from Lithuania, a country in Eastern Europe. He studied music from an early age and at 15, knew that he wanted to become a composer. As a young man, he traveled to Paris in 1917 to study composition with Nadia Boulanger, a leading music teacher of the time. It was during this exciting time that he began to develop his own style of contemporary music by using composers such as Igor Stravinsky and as a model.

Copland is known for incorporating different styles of music into his own works. He used elements from modern classical composers like Stravinsky, but he also used jazz, dance, and folk music in his writing. By the 1930s and 1940s, his works such as *Appalachian Spring* and *Fanfare for the Common Man* illustrated this “populist” style of music. Populist is a word that means something that has broad appeal with the public. By blending different styles, his music was sophisticated and serious, but also enjoyable to the average listener.

**John Henry**

Composed in 1940 as a miniature work for high school orchestra, *John Henry* is a programmatic piece about the American folk legend and tall tale and his heroic battle in a contest against a railroad pile-driver. Copland wrote, "Knowing my audience was to be a young one, and that young people like their music exciting and not too long, I kept *John Henry* down to less than four minutes and called it "a descriptive fantasy." The melody is loosely based on the traditional folksong, *The Ballad of John Henry*.

**Lesson Objective:**

For this lesson, we read the folk tale of John Henry and study how the plot of the story is symbolized by Copland in his music by using a traditional folk melody as a theme.

**Vocabulary**

*theme*: (in music) a principal melodic subject in a musical composition, (in a story) a unifying or dominant idea

*plot*: the main story of a literary work
Plan

1. Read the story below, John Henry: The Steel Driving Man. Discuss: what is the theme of the story?

2. Fill in the story map sheet provided [Link to pdf: Story Map for John Henry] to understand the beginning, middle and end of the story and the elements including the characters, setting, and plot.

3. Teach the students to sing the folk tune “John Henry” below.

4. Listen to the recording of John Henry while following the listening map provided [Link to pdf: Listening Map]. A listening map, like a story map, will help the students understand the structure or the piece. There are many elements to listen for in John Henry. Our listening map focuses on the repetitions of the folk song as the musical theme in various instruments and sections of the orchestra. In addition to the folk song theme, you will also want to point out the sound of the John Henry’s sledgehammer, portrayed initially by the solo trumpet and subsequently in the percussive anvil and the violins, and the “chuga-chuga” theme in the strings portraying the train and the steam-drill.

5. A theme is the author’s opinion on the subject of the story. Discuss: what is the theme of John Henry? How is the theme of the story brought out in the folk tune, or the musical theme of the piece?

Recommended reading:
John Henry by Julius Lester, illustrated by Jerry Pinkney
John Henry was a mighty man, yes sir. He was born a slave in the 1840’s but was freed after the war. He went to work as a steel-driver for the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad, don’t ya know. And John Henry was the strongest, the most powerful man working the rails.

John Henry, he would spend his day’s drilling holes by hitting thick steel spikes into rocks with his faithful shaker crouching close to the hole, turning the drill after each mighty blow. There was no one who could match him, though many tried.

Well, the new railroad was moving along right quick, thanks in no little part to the mighty John Henry. But looming right smack in its path was a mighty enemy - the Big Bend Mountain. Now the big bosses at the C&O Railroad decided that they couldn’t go around the mile and a quarter thick mountain. No sir, the men of the C&O were going to go through it - drilling right into the heart of the mountain.

A thousand men would lose their lives before the great enemy was conquered. It took three long years, and before it was done the ground outside the mountain was filled with makeshift, sandy graves. The new tunnels were filled with smoke and dust. “Ya couldn’t see no-how and could hardly breathe”, they said. But John Henry worked tirelessly, drilling with a 14-pound hammer, and going 10 to 12 feet in one workday. No one else could match him.

Then one day a salesman came along to the camp. He had a steam-powered drill and claimed it could out-drill any man. Well, they set up a contest then and there between John Henry and that there drill. The foreman ran that newfangled steam-drill. John Henry, he just pulled out two 20-pound hammers, one in each hand. They drilled and drilled, dust rising everywhere. The men were howling and cheering. At the end of 35 minutes, John Henry had drilled two seven foot holes - a total of fourteen feet, while the steam drill had only drilled one nine-foot hole.

John Henry held up his hammers in triumph! The men shouted and cheered. The noise was so loud, it took a moment for the men to realize that John Henry was tottering. Exhausted, the mighty man crashed to the ground, the hammer’s rolling from his grasp. The crowd went silent as the foreman rushed to his side. But it was too late. A blood vessel had burst in his brain. The greatest driller in the C&O Railroad was dead.

Some folks say that John Henry’s likeness is carved right into the rock inside the Big Bend Tunnel. And if you walk to the edge of the blackness of the tunnel, sometimes you can hear the sound of two 20-pound hammers drilling their way to victory over the machine.
Something fun to watch! Click on the link below to watch a Disney version of *John Henry* on You Tube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cb1DqGC1Ey4
Nimbus 2000 from *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*

**John Williams**

b. February 8, 1932

Known as the greatest film score composer of all time, Williams has written music for movies spanning six decades. He has also written for television, including themes for the Olympic Games, NBC Sunday Night Football and the NBC Nightly News.

In 1975, Williams teamed up with Stephen Spielberg to compose music for his epic film *Jaws*. The score’s sinister 2-note motif has become synonymous with sharks. Williams considers this score to have been the jump-start of his career, winning him his first Academy Award for an original composition.

From 1980 to 1993, he followed Arthur Fiedler as the Boston Pops Orchestra’s principal conductor. He has written many concert pieces, including a symphony, concertos for horn, clarinet, trumpet, flute, violin, cello, and bassoon, and a sinfonietta for wind ensemble.

Williams is an accomplished pianist, and has played on many film score recordings. He studied composition at The Juilliard School in New York City, and has received 5 Academy Awards and 45 Academy Award nominations.

*His film scores include:*

*Jaws* (1975)  
*Star Wars* (1977)  
*Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977)  
*Superman* (1978)  
*Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981)  
*E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982)  
*Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984)  
*Home Alone* (1990)  
*Hook* (1991)  
*Jurassic Park* (1993)  
*A.I.: Artificial Intelligence* (2001)  
*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (2001)  
*War of the Worlds* (2005)
In the film, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, the Nimbus 2000 was a model of broomstick used in the game Quidditch, a wizarding sport played on broomsticks.

**The Woodwind Family**

Williams chose the woodwind section for the music. Composers use *timbre*, or tone colors, much like painters use colors to evoke certain effects on a canvas. A variety of timbres are produced by combining instruments. In using the woodwind family alone, with its more subtle differences in timbre among the instruments, a distinct effect is created.

There are two types of woodwind instruments, the flutes, who do not use reeds, and the instruments which do use reeds. Reed instruments include those with a single reed: the clarinet family, and double reed: the oboe and bassoon families.

**Single reeds** are used on the mouthpiece of the instruments of the clarinet family. The back of the reed is pressed onto the mouthpiece and held in place with a clamp, called a ligature.

**Double reeds** are not used with a mouthpiece and are used by the oboe and bassoon families. Two reeds are tied together in this case and vibrate together to make sound.
Lesson Objective
This lesson will highlight the diversity of sounds, similarities and differences within the woodwind family.

Vocabulary

timbre: the character or quality of a musical sound or voice as distinct from its pitch and intensity.

tone painting: the use of varying timbres and sound symbolism in creating musical effects especially in impressionistic composition or program music

Plan

1. Read or re-read Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone by J.K. Rowling, and/or watch the movie.

2. Listen to Nimbus 2000.

3. Why do you think Williams chose the woodwind family of instruments to portray a broomstick?

4. Woodwind players use their breath, or wind, to produce sound. The flute player blows across a hole in the mouthpiece. Have the students try to make this sound by blowing across the opening of an empty soda bottle. Once this is achieved, have them tap their tongue on the roof of their mouth while blowing, making a “t” sound.

5. Discuss how a reed works. If possible, bring in examples of a single reeds (with mouthpiece) and double reeds, and demonstrate the sound they make without the rest of the instrument. Discuss: how does the timbre differ between the clarinet reed and the oboe/bassoon reed? Pass the reed around and have the students touch and notice the thinness of the wood.

6. Click on this link for a fun activity: Make a double reed from a drinking straw
Russell Peck was an American musician who composed music from the 1960s through the early years of this century. He was born in Detroit in 1945 into a somewhat musical family. His father sang in the Detroit Symphony Chorus and was a supporter of his son’s interest in classical music. He studied piano from an early age and later played trombone in his school’s band and orchestra. Later, he attended The University of Michigan where he earned degrees in music composition.

Detroit was the home of Motown records and Peck was heavily influenced by the sounds of Motown artists. Popular artists of the time included Diana Ross & The Supremes, The Temptations, and Stevie Wonder. “The Motown Sound” was characterized by certain musical elements that appeared frequently on albums. Common elements included a tambourine accenting the back beat (beats 2 and 4 of a musical measure), prominent electric bass lines, call & response singing style and engaging rhythms. Although Russell Peck was a classical composer, he used a number of the Motown Sound features in his music, including *The Thrill of the Orchestra*.

*The Thrill of the Orchestra* was composed in 1985 and is an exciting exploration of various instrument families of the modern symphony orchestra. A unique feature of this piece is the narrator (speaker) who will guide listener throughout the music. The musical journey explores the four sections – percussion, brass, woodwinds, and strings - and how these instruments make sound. Not only will the listener learn how each instrument is played, they will also learn how composers in general use these instruments to create certain musical emotions, effects, driving rhythms and big climaxes.

By this point in the concert, you will already know what thrilling music is. Russell Peck takes the music apart and then puts it back together in an effort to show us how and why the symphony orchestra is thrilling.
Top 10 List for Concert Etiquette for Students

10. Leave your cell phone at home! (Or at least turn it off). And no electronic games!

9. No gum or candy.

8. No reading during the concert...we want your full attention on the music...but please read as much as you can after the concert!

7. Picture taking is not allowed! (That includes videos)

6. Refrain from talking. (and whispering).

5. Applaud when the concertmaster walks on stage. That is the signal that the concert is about to begin.

4. Careful, if you think the piece is over, wait a few seconds until you hear other people clapping...sometimes it’s just a pause in the music. (You should never be the only one clapping!) When the conductor’s arms are down, it’s usually time to clap.

3. Sit still.

2. Please don’t hum or tap your feet. We want you to enjoy yourself, but we want your neighbors to enjoy the music too! Don’t be a distraction.

And the number one rule for Concert Etiquette:

1. Smile! Bring a good attitude...you are going to love this concert!

References:

Baker’s Biographical Dictionary of Musicians

The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians

The New Grove Dictionary of Opera

International Dictionary of Opera

John Henry: http://www.americanfolklore.net/folktales/wv2.html

Merriam-Webster Dictionary
Appendix

Pages to print:

- Pattern Worksheet
- Poems: Acquainted with the Night; Sonnet XVIII
- Story Map for John Henry
- Listening Map for John Henry
PATTERNS

a combination of qualities, acts, tendencies, etc., forming a consistent or characteristic arrangement

Complete the pattern by cutting out and gluing what instrument comes next:

Complete the pattern by writing what LETTER comes next:

A B A A B A A B B

Complete the pattern by cutting out and gluing what instrument comes next:
Acquainted with the Night
Robert Frost

I have been one acquainted with the night.
I have walked out in rain-and back in rain.
I have outwalked the furthest city light.

I have looked down the saddest city lane.
I have passed by the watchman on his beat
And dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain

I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet
When far away an interrupted cry
Came over houses from another street,

But not to call me back or say good-bye;
And further still at an unearthly height,
One luminary clock against the sky

Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right.
I have been one acquainted with the night.
Sonnet XVIII
William Shakespeare

Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer’s lease hath all too short a date;
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm’d;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature’s changing course untrimm’d
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow’st;
Nor shall death brag thou wander’st in his shade
When in eternal lines to time thou grow’st:

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,

So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.
Listening Map: John Henry by Aaron Copland
Follow each instrument and family as they play the folk tune

- Clarinet
- Trumpet
- Trombone
- Violins
- Trumpets
- String Section