

SCHOOLS CONCERT

Regional Tour 2025



Orchestral Magic with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra

Stage 1 – 3 Teaching Resource

Sydney Symphony Orchestra

Acknowledgements

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The Sydney Symphony Orchestra would like to express its gratitude to the following for their generous support of the Learning & Engagement program and the production of this resource kit:

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“Your life can be changed and enriched through all sorts of music; music from now, music from the past, music from the very distant past and music from as recently as yesterday.

Through intensive listening students become involved in one of the highest orders of thinking.

As a teacher, by bringing students to a concert and studying music in the classroom, you are providing your students with a special pathway to musical knowledge through direct experience of and contact with live music.”

Richard Gill AO
(1941 – 2018)

Conductor, notable educator and advocate. Richard was the founding Artistic Director of Education at Sydney Symphony. He has inspired generations of musicians through his work and continues to inspire new generations through his legacy.

Background

The purpose of this resource

The activities in this resource are intended to prepare students for the Sydney Symphony's school concerts in regional NSW in May. The music performed is representative of the culture, particularly stories, of the composers' homelands.

By completing the activities students will engage in Performing, Listening and Composing as interrelated practices in music. They develop deeper knowledge, understanding and skills as they apply their learning to inform and enrich their music experience of attending a live concert.

As always, we welcome all feedback and suggestions regarding the nature of our Teaching and Learning Kits. Please feel free to be in touch with our friendly Learning & Engagement team at schools@sydneysymphony.com.

Learning Outcomes

Performing

Singing, moving, playing and using listening skills. Students will develop knowledge, understanding and skills in performing, using the elements of music to communicate musical ideas. They engage with music from various cultures and contexts, performing repertoire by others and their own compositions. Students develop an understanding of the roles of performer and composer.

Listening

Students using aural awareness to experience sound. Students engage with repertoire and music styles from various cultures and contexts. They use listening skills to explore how the elements of music are used in their own singing, moving and playing, and in the music they experience.

Composing

Involves organising sound by using the elements of music to convey musical ideas. Students use performing and listening skills as they explore and compose music through singing and playing. They have opportunities to imitate, improvise and arrange the music of others and create their own compositions. Students use symbols, graphic notation or staff notation to represent musical ideas.

Introduction to the repertoire

An overview of the repertoire that will be played by the orchestra in the concert is provided below. To listen to the repertoire, visit our Resource Library page in this resource kit where you can enjoy both a Spotify playlist and YouTube links to each work. Please note that the selection of repertoire may change for the live concert.

ADAM MANNING *Rhythmic Acknowledgement of Country*

4 minutes

FELIX MENDELSSOHN *A Midsummer Night's Dream: Overture*

12 minutes

MANUEL DE FALLA *Introduction and Fandango from The Three-Cornered Hat: Suite No.1*

4 minutes

MAURICE RAVEL *Tom Thumb and Princess of the Pagodas from Mother Goose (Suite)*

6 minutes

Edvard Greig *In the Hall of the Mountain King*

5 minutes

Lesson 1

Felix Mendelssohn: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: Overture

Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a collection of music, primarily an overture and 13 incidental pieces, composed to accompany Shakespeare's play of the same name. The overture was written when Mendelssohn was 17 and captures the magical, whimsical atmosphere of the play. This work is in sonata form and is the longest piece in the concert. The overture introduces the fairy world, the "lovers" theme, and a depiction of Bottom the donkey. The overture introduces us to the fairy world, the love affairs and the comedy in the story.

Musical Themes

Fairy Music: Characterized by quick notes and treble-only passages, conveying the nimble and playful nature of the fairies and cheekiness of Puck.

Lovers Theme: Played in a major key in the exposition and a minor key in the development, representing the romantic drama of the play.

Bottom's Theme: Features "hee-hawing" strings, evoking the comedic and donkey-like character.

Activity 1

Six audio excerpts have been selected from the Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

- a) Listen to each of the audio examples and describe what the music is doing.
- b) Now study the page of images and consider what music might sound like to show what is happening in each picture.
- c) Listen to each of the audio clips and match them to a picture.
- d) Explain what you heard in the music to make your decision.

[Excerpt 1](#)

[Excerpt 2](#)

[Excerpt 3](#)

[Excerpt 4](#)

[Excerpt 5](#)

[Excerpt 6](#)

Answers for Teachers

Excerpt 1	Once upon a time
Excerpt 2	Royal fanfare
Excerpt 3	Sneaking, tip toeing quietly
Excerpt 4	Fairies Scurrying
Excerpt 5	Donkey braying
Excerpt 6	Sleeping in the woods

Images

Once upon a time



Sleeping in the woods



Braying donkey



Royal fanfare



Fairies scurrying around



Tip toeing quietly



Activity 2

A Midsummer Night's Dream is one of Shakespeare's most famous plays. Here is an animated summary of the story:

Younger students

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q8Nv6DyWImQ>

Older students

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qXhKHrhc2MU&t=53s>

Watch the story and then listen to the overture. Does the overture have a happy ending?

Discuss:

- Which parts of the story can you hear in the overture?
- An overture is always heard at the start of a play or a show.
What do you think the point of an overture is?

Activity 3

Choose one of the characters from the story and compose a short musical excerpt that would represent them using either classroom instruments and voices or available technology

- Puck, the cheeky mischief making fairy
- Oberon the King
- Bottom the silly actor who becomes a donkey
- The lovers Helena and Demetrius

Lesson 2

Manuel de Falla: *Introduction* and *Fandango* from *The Three-Cornered Hat: Suite No. 1*

Manuel De Falla was one of the most important Spanish composers of the 20th century and his music has been called the spirit of Spain in its purest form. *The Three-Cornered Hat* suite is made up of music from his homeland in the southernmost part of Spain known as Andalusian folk music.

The suite is made up of music from ballet music written by de Falla in 1919. The ballet tells the story of a Miller and his wife who decide to play a trick on the local magistrate or judge who is known to be interested in other people's wives. The Miller's wife pretends to seduce him with a romantic dance (the Fandango) and after a chase the Miller and his wife make the magistrate look silly. The magistrate wants the wife for himself, so arrests the Miller with false charges but he escapes from prison. The magistrate wears a three-cornered hat and this becomes a symbol of his authority and reason for the conflict in the story and the plot is based upon a Spanish story from the 1800s. It is a complicated story but in the end the magistrate looks foolish for his bad habits and the Miller and his wife live happily ever after.


Introduction

A short fanfare opens the suite. It features the timpani, trumpet and horn. Like a traditional fanfare it is intended to attract the attention at the opening of the suite.



The music is clearly based around 2 chords. In the original score it is in the key of A flat major, but our activity is in C major.

Performance Activity

- a) Younger children play the 2 notes of the timpani (low sounding drum) part on their legs, right hand be the higher note and left hand the lower.
Note the music starts loud (*f*) and in the last 4 bars it slowly becomes quieter as shown by: 



- b) Older children learn the arrangement of the Fanfare and perform as a class to become familiar with the music.

Introduction
(Fanfare)

de Falla

$\text{♩} = 120$ Marcato

Part 1 in C

Part 1 Bflat

Part 2 in C

Part 2 in Eb

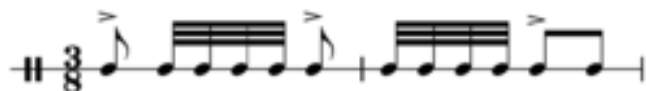
Bass

9 *f*

17 *mf*

The Miller's Wife's Dance – *Fandango*

A Fandango is a dance originating in Portugal and Spain, usually with 3 beats in a bar, traditionally accompanied by guitars, castanets, tambourine or hand-clapping. The characteristic fandango rhythm is:



The feel of the beat is strong, but the speed of the beat is not usually fast which means little ornamental notes are often used. Interestingly this pattern while in 3 beats in a bar, also uses accents to give it a feeling of 2 beats. (Think *America* from *West Side Story*)

Activity 1: Performing

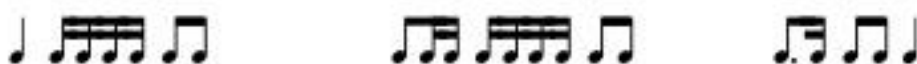
a) Clap these rhythms while counting the 1-2-3 beat aloud.



1. 2. 3. 1 2. 3. 1. 2 &. 3. 1. 2& 3

b) Listen to the opening minute of the Fandango and clap the pattern.

Older students can also learn these 3 beat patterns and clap these to the music.



c) Sometime the feel of the music can change from 1&2&3& to 123 456.

All the notes stay the same length, but the natural accents of the music change from a 121212 feel to a 123 123 or more lilting feel:



Now clap the pattern below counting 1 2&3 4 5 6.



Activity 2: Listening

a) Listen to the *Fandango*. Make a list of adjectives to describe the mood of the music. As a class predict the sorts of actions that a dancer might do to this music.

b) Watch this short video of a lady doing a traditional fandango.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAyYJy7EIdE&t=75s>

Watch this video of a couple dancing a fandango

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZ1456V7WlQ>

Can you see why this type of dance might be used in the story as the way the Miller's wife would attract the attention of the magistrate?

c) Which of the two fandangos is most like the de Falla? Why?

d) Compare the first, more traditional fandango music with the de Falla *Fandango*. Make a list of the similarities and differences you hear.

Extension activity for older students

Follow the score of the De Falla's *Fandango* using the YouTube clip below.

<https://www.wisemusicclassical.com/work/7613/The-Three-Cornered-Hat-Scenes-and-Dances-from-Part-I--Manuel-de-Falla>

What features of traditional Spanish music can you hear in this piece?
Consider the instruments (particularly percussion), rhythms and the harmony.

Activity 3: Older Students Only

Learn the rhythms of this percussion accompaniment and clap along karaoke style with the recording..

Note there are a number of repetitions of each line so you will need to count aloud until you become familiar with the different sections of the piece.

Secondary Students body percussion piece

(NB The Fig 7 etc is a reference to rehearsal marks in the score.)

You will require a conductor counter who will count the repetitions!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukhq9NGs54s&t=98s>

The Miller's Wife's Dance "Fandango"

Fig 7  x9

Fig 8  x4

Fig 9  x12


Fig 10  (= fill beat with a fast drumroll on legs) x11

Fig 12  x8

Fig 13  x4

Fig 14  x10

Fig 16  x 4

Fig 17  x 4

Fig 18 

Lesson 3

Maurice Ravel: *Tom Thumb* and *Princess of the Pagodas* from *Mother Goose (Suite)*

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937), was a French composer known for his exceptional craftsmanship and innovative approach to composition. His *Mother Goose Suite*, originally written as a piano duet and later orchestrated, is a delightful and enchanting work that brings to life the magical world of fairy tales. The *Mother Goose Suite* takes inspiration from the beloved stories of Charles Perrault and includes five movements, each representing a different fairy tale. We will be playing *Little Tom Thumb* and the *Princess of the Pagodas*. *Princess of the Pagodas*, is the story of Laideronette, a princess, who was made ugly by a wicked witch. She was ashamed of her appearance and hid in a distant castle. One day she met a green serpent, who had himself once been a handsome prince. They travel to a country inhabited by Pagodas, tiny people made of jewels, crystal, and porcelain where the green serpent is king. Eventually both the Laideronette and the green serpent are restored to their original forms and marry.

Ravel does not attempt to tell the story in music. He provides a colourful depiction of a scene from the story where Laideronette is entertained by the Pagodas playing musical walnut-shells and almond-shells as she bathes. To create the 'Asian' sound of the piece Ravel uses pentatonic melodic figures, string tremolo's, 'exotic' percussion, and a cheerful 'oriental' tune played by the piccolo.

Tom Thumb begins in a similar way to the story of Hansel and Gretel – a very tiny boy with brothers that his family cannot afford to feed. The boys are left in the wood to fend for themselves and have adventures. Ravel's *Tom Thumb*, opens quietly and the score has the text:

"He thought that he could easily find his way home by the breadcrumbs that he had dropped along the path, but he was very surprised when he found that he could not find a single crumb--birds had eaten them all."

Watch the animation that has been created to tell the story of Tom Thumb:

<https://www.scottbrothersduo.com/ravelmothergoose.htm>

Ravel creates a sense of bewilderment and unease with an accompaniment of constantly shifting metre and a plaintive melody which is searching for a way home. The 'birds' are clearly audible at the top of the piano as they chirp and twitter whilst eating the crumbs.

Activity 1

Imagine you are a film company and need to compose the music for two scenes in a film:

- a) One is about a young, small boy, lost in the woods, and looking for his trail of breadcrumbs to find his way home. However, the many birds in the woods have all pecked them up and his trail is lost forever.
 - b) The other scene is about an exotic princess from the Orient arriving for a royal visit.
1. Predict the type of sounds a composer might use to create these scenes.
What sorts of things do you think would be featured in the music

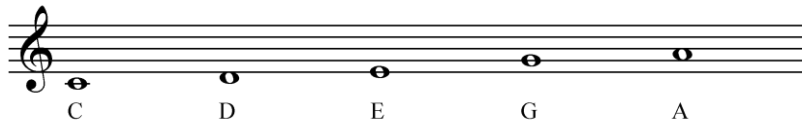
Tiny Boy lost in woods	Oriental Princess
Volume of the music	Volume of the music
Instruments used to show the boy	Types of instruments used
What might the tune sound like?	What might the tune sound like?
Many or few layers of sound?	Many or few layers of sound?
Sounds that the music might imitate	Sounds that the music might imitate
What might the speed of the music be?	What might the speed of the music be?

Activity 2: Listening (*Princess of the Pagodas*)

1. Listen to the recording of *Princess of the Pagodas*
(Discuss the students' observations of the music.
 - What is the mood of the music?
 - What might the music be describing?
 - Which of the 2 scenarios above is this describing?
2. Tell students the story of *Princess of the Pagodas* and discuss the scene that Ravel is describing in the music.
3. In 1889, Ravel heard the music of the Javanese Gamelan at the World Exposition in Paris. This inspired the Asian sounds in this piece including:
 - Pentatonic melodies that are very repetitive and use a short range of notes.
 - Shimmering sounds of the string tremolos.
 - Use of metal percussion instruments such as the tam-tam
4. Watch this mini documentary on gamelan music: <http://safeshare.tv/w/rykNNrGFpB>

- a) Relisten to the piece by Ravel. Can you hear similarities?
Discuss the features of the music that give it an Asian sound.

5. What is a pentatonic scale? Play a C pentatonic scale, e.g. C D E G A.



Compare its sound with the sound of a major scale, e.g. C D E F G A B C.

- a) Have the children echo sing pentatonic patterns that the teacher creates.
 - b) Watch the Bobby McFerrin demonstration of a pentatonic scale:
<http://safeshare.tv/w/dzLFEOTMNB>
 - c) Listen to the pentatonic melodies in *Princess of the Pagodas*.
 - d) Discuss the characteristics of each melody and the instruments that play them.
 - e) Are some of the melodies played more than once? (Yes) Identify the melodies as they are repeated.
6. Listen to the percussion instruments heard and identify each one as it plays.
- a) How do the percussion instruments add to the Asian sound of the piece?
(e.g. *metallic sounds, xylophone and celeste, gong (tam-tam) sounds.*)

Activity 3: Composition

Choose ONE of the scenes in Activity 1 and in groups of 3-4 create a one-minute film score (older students) or short sound scape (younger students). Use available instruments, found sounds, body percussion and vocal sounds and create a graphic score to document your ideas so that you can perform your film music for the class.

Challenge for Years 4-7

The different layers of Ravel's *Princess of the Pagodas* move at different rhythmic speeds. When the music gets going you can hear a slow melody below faster melodies using different note values.

As you listen to the piece move firstly in slow steps that take 2 long beats each. (NB: the children should look like they are moving in slow motion).

- Then when all have that slow pace change to stepping on the beat.
- Then change to taking 2 steps for each beat.
- As the piece continues, alternate between these three note values until the children change easily between the slow, medium, and fast patterns.
- When students have mastered this form 3 circles. The inner circle should have about 4 children, the next 7, and the outer circle the rest.
- The inner circle will walk the slowest pattern, the middle circle the beat and the outer circle on tip toe should move 2 steps in each beat.

- Make the point that the students are all moving in the same tempo or speed, the difference is caused by using different note values / divisions of the beat.

Activity 4: Older Children

The class arrangement below shows how the different layers in the texture of the music have different rhythms. The higher pitches play faster notes, and the lower pitches play slower notes. This technique was also often used by Australian composer Peter Sculthorpe.

The musical score consists of three systems, each for a different xylophone part. The first system (measures 1-5) shows a crescendo from *pp* to *cres*. The second system (measures 6-9) continues the patterns. The third system (measures 10-14) shows a fortissimo (*ff*) section. The rhythms are as follows:

- Top Xylophone:** Measures 1-5: continuous eighth-note patterns. Measures 6-9: eighth-note patterns with rests. Measures 10-14: continuous eighth-note patterns.
- Middle Xylophone:** Measures 1-5: eighth-note patterns. Measures 6-9: eighth-note patterns with rests. Measures 10-14: eighth-note patterns with rests.
- Bottom Xylophone:** Measures 1-5: quarter-note patterns. Measures 6-9: quarter-note patterns with rests. Measures 10-14: quarter-note patterns with rests.

Activity 5: Tom Thumb

1. This is the part of Perrault's fairy story of *Tom Thumb* that Ravel depicts in the music.

"Tom, the youngest of seven sons, overhears his impoverished parents planning to lose their children in the forest because they cannot feed them. The self-reliant boy first leads his brothers' home thanks to a trail of stones, but the second time, his trail of crumbs is eaten by birds. Spying a light in the distance, he leads his

siblings to the castle of an ogre and begins a David-and-Goliath confrontation of wits."

2. Ravel describes features of the story in the music. These include:

- A meandering accompaniment that represents Tom and his brothers wandering in the forest played by the strings.
- Bird calls.
- A melody that represents Tom:



Listen to the recording of Tom Thumb.

- Which instrument plays Tom's melody? (*Oboe*)
- How are the bird calls and the feeling of meandering achieved?
(*Wandering notes played softly by strings with notes moving mainly by step; time signature keeps changing. Bird sounds are created by violins playing glissandos, harmonics, tremolo notes and trills; flutter tonguing in piccolo; and cuckoo calls in flute (falling minor 3rd).*)
- What is the mood of the piece? (*e.g. sad, lonely*)
- Describe the dynamics. (*e.g. mainly soft, loud in the middle, before becoming soft again.*)
- Clap the beat and describe the tempo. (*e.g. a slow walking pace*)
- Learn to play the above melody if students are able to.
- Discuss how the dynamics and tempo contribute to the mood of the piece? (*Quiet, small, scared, hesitant*)
- Students identify the entry of the bird calls raising their hands when heard
- How does the piece end?
(*e.g. very softly; the same as the beginning, with the meandering accompaniment played by violins (and oboe for the last four notes); on a bright note produced by the violin harmonics.*)
- Listen to the oboe tune again and draw the shape of the tune in the air or on a piece of paper. Can you see how the music is wandering around like it is lost?

Investigate the instruments of the woodwind family that play in *Tom Thumb*: piccolo, flute, oboe, cor anglais, clarinet, bassoon:

- Show pictures of the instruments.
- Discuss their features and how they are played.
- If possible, listen to samples of their sounds.
- At the concert look for these instruments.

What sounds can you find in the classroom environment that could be used to imitate bird sounds? How might you write this down so that another person would know how to play it?

Older Students

Investigate the playing techniques that are used to produce the bird calls. The links below demonstrate players making these sounds. Watch the musicians demonstrate these at the concert.

Glissandos <http://safeshare.tv/w/CRUfVHJedH>

Harmonic notes <http://safeshare.tv/w/dZfDoIFYOd>

Trills <http://safeshare.tv/w/aopuVarsOt>

Tremolo <http://safeshare.tv/w/dQSzlohYNR>

Flutter tonguing <http://safeshare.tv/w/azgTgvISCZ>

Lesson 4

Edvard Grieg: *In the Hall of the Mountain King* from *Peer Gynt*

By completing activities in this resource, students will:

- Listen to, recognise and talk about a well-known example of orchestral music;
- Develop understanding of how a composer uses the elements of music to create meaning;
- Manipulate the elements of music to create music.

Edvard Grieg was a Norwegian composer. This music was written in 1867 and comes from his orchestral work called *Peer Gynt* which was written to accompany a play about a young Norwegian adventurer called Peer Gynt. This particular piece is very well-known music and has been used many times in other formats. In this part of the story, Peer Gynt, a young adventurer, enters the Hall of the Mountain King looking for treasure and adventure only to be discovered by a large group of trolls. He is chased out by the noisy crowd of trolls but manages to escape and head to his next adventure.

Activity 1 Listening: What did you hear?

Focus Skills and Elements: Listening, Tempo, Dynamics and Expression, Timbre
Listen to the recording and complete the questions below

Circle the answer to complete the sentence

The speed (tempo) of the music is a) fast b) slow c) fast and slow
The volume (dynamics) of the music is a) loud b) soft c) loud and soft

Write 2 adjectives that describe the mood of the music.

Draw an instrument or sound you hear.

Activity 2 Performance: Sing the Trolls theme

Below is the tune that's repeated many times. Listen again to the music and try to follow the shape of the notes.



Here are some possible words for the melody: (NB Older students can develop their music reading skills and learn to play the theme on an instrument)

*We are scary, horrid trolls, horrid trolls, horrid trolls.
We are scary, horrid trolls and now we're after you!*

- Tell the story to the children and ask them to make up their own words; or ask them what the story behind the music might be and make up their own words go with the rhythm of the tune.
- Why does the music get faster?

Activity 3 Performance: Play the accompaniment and put it together

Below is the bass line that is played with the tune by the lower instruments in the orchestra cellos, double basses and bassoon.

Play it on a low-sounding instrument like a keyboard or xylophone. If you do not have an F# play a D instead.



Listen to the recording again. The second melody is very like the first one but different. How is it the same and how is it different?

- Divide the class into 2 groups and have one group play the bass line while the other sings the melody from Activity 1. Swap groups so each has a turn at both.
- Was it easy to keep together? What ways can students think of to help keep the 2 melodies fitting together properly?
- As the notation is the original key so children could play along with a recording. Listen to the work again and discuss any difficulties they can hear. (It speeds up, and this tune doesn't continue right to the end).

- Try it at the fastest speed required, then go from the beginning with the aim of managing the increasing speed throughout and finishing at the right time to allow the ending to be clear.

Activity 4 Composition

Imagine you have been asked to create the music for a 30-45 second chase scene in a cartoon.

- What musical ideas from *In the Hall of the Mountain King* might you use in your piece?
- What layers of sound (texture) might you use in your piece?
- What instruments or sounds might you use?
- How would you structure (plan) your piece?
- How would you use the concepts of music to increase the tension in the music?

Then use available technology (e.g. Garage Band) or in groups create your short piece.

Related Cross Curricular Activity

- Read the full plot of Peer Gynt's adventures by Henrik Ibsen on the Wikipedia website
- Research the history of trolls in Norse mythology or Scandinavian folk lore.
- Read another story about Trolls like *The 3 Billy Goats Gruff* or *The Troll in the Ditch*
- Compare the character of the Trolls in folk lore with the Trolls in the Lord of the Rings or the Hobbit.
- Investigate Norway – find it on a globe. Trolls according to legend lived in rocky regional areas. Can you find this type of terrain on the map?
- Investigate Norway. What is its climate and population? Do schools work differently in Norway to Australia? What language and currency do people use? What are some popular Norwegian foods?
- You are going to stage the story of Peer Gynt for an assembly performance. Complete one of these tasks:
 - a) Design a costume for the Troll
 - b) Design a set box which shows the interior of the Troll Kingdom
 - c) Write a diary entry from the point of view of a Troll about Peer's invasion of their territory