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Orchestra Inside Out!

An Educational Concert for Third and Fourth Graders

For teachers...

This curriculum has been designed to prepare your students for their upcoming field trip, and to make connections with your work in the classroom.

It may work best to divide it into five sections: Meet the Orchestra, then one piece at a time.

Each piece is explained, and there is an activity designed to explore it further. Feel free to use these activities in their entirety, as small group work, or as whole-class projects.

We'd love to see any of the work your students create as inspired by the music! Please share with us at brenda@foundationsofmusic.org, and mgreen@cyso.org.

Thank you, and we'll see you on April 24th!

We're so glad you will join us!

Welcome to a concert field trip experience you'll never forget!

On April 24th, your class will join us at the historic Studebaker Theater for a concert presented by the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras' own Philharmonic Orchestra.

The information and listening examples in this presentation will help you be ready to take in the amazing sights and sounds you will experience with us.

Enjoy, and see you soon!



What is an orchestra?



An Orchestra is a group of instruments playing together!

The orchestra you will see will have instruments from all of the four instrument families:

The String Family

The Woodwind Family

The Brass Family

The Percussion Family

Meet the String Family



The **string** family includes the violin, viola, cello and bass.

Sound is made by vibrating strings on the instrument. Players make the strings vibrate by pulling a bow made of wood and horsehair across the strings, or by plucking the strings with their fingers.

The pitch (how high or low the sound is) is changed by pressing fingers on the strings to change their length.

[Listen and watch the instruments in the string family here!](#)

Meet the Woodwind Family



The **woodwind** family includes instruments like the flute, clarinet, oboe, and bassoon, among others.

Except for the flute, these instruments produce sound by blowing air across a thin piece of wood called a reed. The vibration of the reed.

Even though it is not made of wood any longer, the flute is a member of the woodwind family.

[Listen to and watch the Woodwind family here!](#)

Meet the Brass Family



The **brass** family includes instruments such as the Tuba, Trombone, French Horn and Trumpet.

The instruments are made of metal, and produce sound by blowing into the instrument while buzzing one's lips. The pitch changes when the length of the tube is changed by pushing the valves or sliding the slide.

[Listen to and watch the Brass family here!](#)

Meet the Percussion Family

[Listen to and watch the Percussion family here!](#)



The **percussion** family includes any instrument that produces sound by being struck (hit), scraped, or shaken.

Some examples of percussion instruments commonly seen in the orchestra include the timpani (kettle drums), xylophone, chimes, and cymbals.

The piano is also part of the percussion family because sound is produced when hammers connected to keys strike strings.

Meet the Conductor



The *conductor* is the person who keeps the orchestra playing together.

The conductor makes sure everyone starts and stops together, and leads the group in playing the music expressively (how loud or soft, fast or slow, etc.).

Conductors read music (called the *score*) which shows what everyone in the orchestra is playing, all at the same time.

What kind of music will we hear?

You'll hear "Classical Music" on concert day. What is classical music?

"The real difference [between what we think of as classical music and other types of music] is that when a composer writes a piece of what's usually called classical music, he puts down the exact notes that he wants, the exact instruments or voices that he wants to play or sing those notes -even the exact number of instruments or voices; and he also writes down as many directions as he can think of, to tell the players or singers as carefully as he can everything they need to know about how fast or slow it should go, how loud or soft it should be, and millions of other things to help the performers to give an exact performance of those notes he thought up."

--Leonard Bernstein



How to listen

To understand the music, and to understand why it might make you feel a certain way, or think of certain things or ideas, ask yourself questions as you listen. For example,

- Which instruments do I hear? Why did the composer make those choices?
- How fast or slow is the music, or, in musical terms, what is the **tempo**? Why do you think the composer chose this tempo? What does it make you feel, or think about?
- How loud or soft is the music, or, in musical terms, what are the **dynamics**? Why do you think it's being played that way?

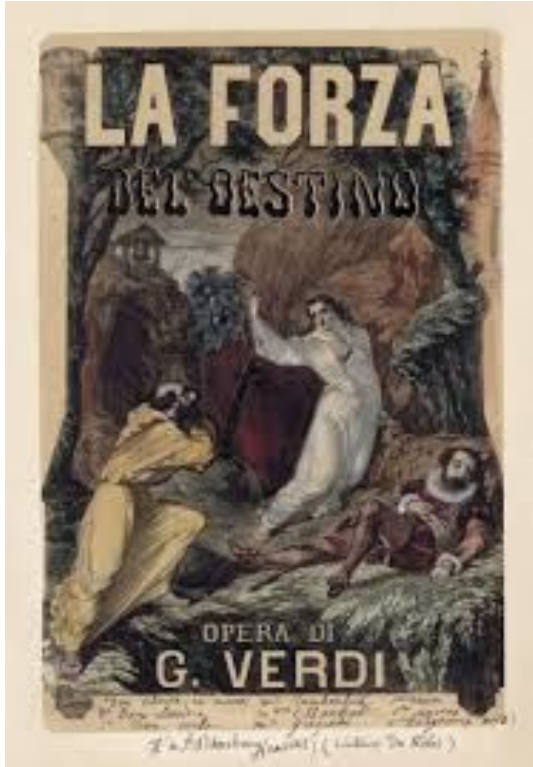
Giuseppe Verdi

Giuseppe Verdi was born in 1813 a tiny, poor village in Italy. His father recognized his talent at an early age, and worked hard to get him the best music education possible. He was so gifted, by the age of 9, he was regularly standing in for his music teacher in the village church!

Verdi went on to compose 37 complete operas, many of which are still performed regularly around the world.



Overture from *La Forza del Destino*



An Overture is like the summary in the back of a book. It introduces the main musical ideas you will hear in the opera, and previews the major events and action.

This overture you will hear is from an opera is called “The Power of Fate.” Fate means that something is destined to happen a certain way, no matter what.

Overture from *La Forza del Destino*

The brass instruments play a **MOTIF**, or musical idea, of 3 long, loud notes to represent fate.

This warns the audience that something is about to happen. It's like the instruments are saying, "HERE IT COMES!"

Why do you think Verdi uses brass instruments for this motif?



[Click here and listen!](#)

Making the Connection: Motifs and Loops



MOTIFS, like the one in the Overture you'll hear, are like **LOOPS** in pop music. A loop is an electronic way to use the same musical idea over and over again in a song.

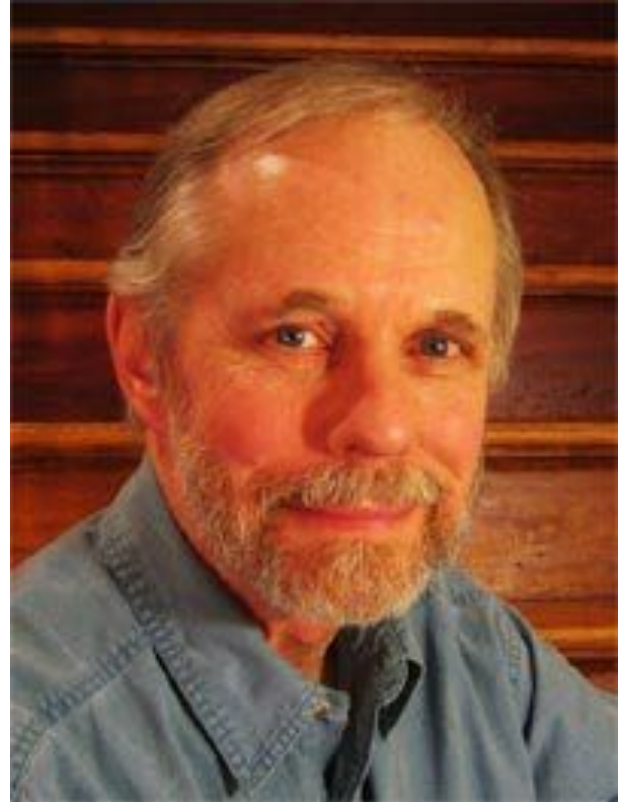
You can use online tools like [Incredibox](#) or [LoopLabs](#), or apps like GarageBand on your iPad, to create your own loop-based song.

Can you create a loop-based song with the same sense of warning, or *HERE IT COMES*, like we hear in Verdi's piece?

Dana Wilson

Dana Wilson (born in 1946) is a composer who is living and working today. He has written pieces for many different kinds of ensembles, or groups of musicians.

You will hear the **WORLD PREMIERE** of one of his new pieces at the concert! This means you will be among the first people in the entire world to hear a live performance of a new piece of music.



Musical Poetry

The piece you will hear was inspired by a poem by an American writer, Langston Hughes, who lived from 1902-1967.

Hughes wrote about important issues like race, class, and culture. He is credited with inventing a new form of writing called **JAZZ POETRY.**



“Dreams” by Langston Hughes

Here is the poem that inspired Wilson’s composition.

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow



Making the Connection: Predict the Music



Since this is the world premiere of the piece, you won't have a chance to listen to it before concert day. That means YOU can play the part of the composer!

Read the poem together as a class, then think about the music you might write to go with it. You could even go back and create a loop-based song to represent it!

Write about what instruments you might feature, how loud or soft they might play, and how fast or slow the music would go. Explain your choices, and share them with the class.

Kareem Roustom



Kareem Roustom is another modern composer. He is Syrian-American, and calls himself “musically bilingual.”

He believes different types of music are like different languages.

He uses lots of these different musical languages in his compositions.

Dabke

At the concert, you will hear Roustom's piece, *Dabke*.

Dabke is a type of dance from Palestine, Syria and Lebanon. It is performed at joyous occasions, like weddings.

The leader of the dance, called the **HAWAASH**, directs the music of the dancers behind him.

[Watch the dance by clicking this link!](#)



Dabke

In Rousom's *Dabke*, you will hear the **STRING** instruments play rhythms that would help keep the dancers on track.

The strings are playing **PIZZICATO**, or plucking their strings.

The rhythm uses six beats, and is called **SUDAASI**. Try saying it like this:

DANCE (*shh*) AND **KEEP** (*shh*)
THIS RHY-THM!

[Listen to *Dabke* here!](#)



Making the Connection: Musically Bilingual

Roustop's music is inspired by his own cultural background as well as his Western musical training. Can you speak more than one musical language, too?

1. Write down any information you know about your heritage. Where were you born? What about your parents and grandparents?
2. Do some research about music from the part of the world your relatives came from, or where they live, and listen to it!
3. Create a chart comparing the music to your favorite song. How are the instruments the same or different? The tempo? The dynamics?
4. Share with a classmate, and see if you can find anyone else in the room who speaks the same "musical language!"



Concert Behavior

Be open to a new experience!

Sometimes, trying something new can make us uncomfortable. Try to keep an open mind and a positive attitude about what you see and hear.

Listen, listen, listen! Don't talk during the performance. There will be plenty of time to share your stories with your friends on the bus after the performance.



Remain in your seat! If you absolutely must leave, try to do it between songs, not during the music.

Look your best! This is a special occasion. Making sure you look neat shows respect to the performers who have worked so hard to prepare for you.