



Stories & Legends

Study Guide

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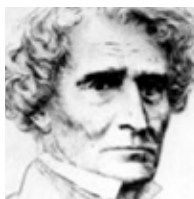
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Study Guide

Overview

Dear Teachers,

This packet contains a Study Guide and Learning CD to help you prepare your students for the upcoming Pennsylvania Philharmonic Educational Concert: *Stories and Legends*. The Study Guide contains an overview, composer biographies, lesson plans, and a section about stories. We hope that these materials will be useful to both music and classroom teachers alike. Feel free to adapt or change the activities to suit the needs and abilities of your students.

The musicians of the Pennsylvania Philharmonic are looking forward to performing for you and your students! They know that this special opportunity can be life-changing for the listeners.

Please enjoy *Stories and Legends*, presented to you by the Pennsylvania Philharmonic!

We wish to extend our sincerest thanks to the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra; we have adapted their educational materials to create this packet.

Background Information

Meet Michael Butterman



Michael Butterman is the Music Director for the Pennsylvania Philharmonic. He is also in his eighth season as Music Director for both the Shreveport Symphony and the Boulder Philharmonic Orchestras and has been the Resident Conductor of the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra since 2009. In addition, he has held the position of Principal Conductor for Education and Outreach for the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra since its 2000-2001 season.

Mr. Butterman began studying music at the age of seven. He took piano lessons beginning in the second grade and added violin the next year. He enjoyed music so much that he became a violinist in the Northern Virginia Youth Symphony, and he practiced piano for hours every day. When he was in high school, he entered and won several piano competitions.

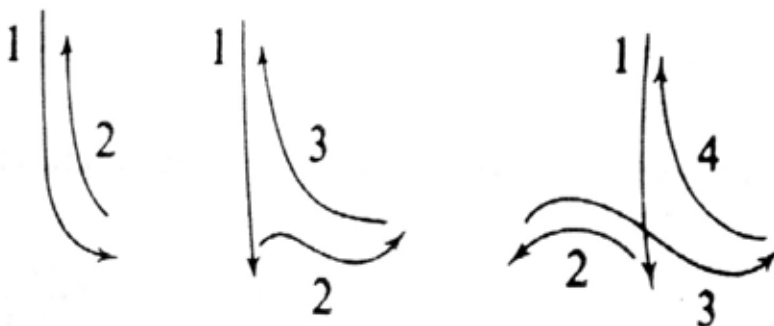
Although he loved music, he decided to concentrate on studies in chemistry when he was in college. He remained involved in music by playing piano for his school's choruses. One year, he was asked to conduct the choruses, and he discovered how much he enjoyed working with other musicians to prepare concert programs. Mr. Butterman then decided to get some specialized training in conducting, enrolling at Indiana University.

Mr. Butterman has been very successful as a conductor and college educator in his career. Music has taken him all over the country and the world. His work has been featured on public radio and on CD's. Today, he lives in Louisiana with his wife, Jennifer and daughter, Olivia.

Learn to Conduct!

A conductor has many different responsibilities. He plans the music that the audience will hear, learns the different parts that each musician plays, and decides how to interpret what the composer has written. The conductor uses each of his hands differently. With the right hand, he keeps the beat with a specific pattern (see below), with the left hand, he communicates the expressive qualities of the music.

Practice these conducting patterns with music!



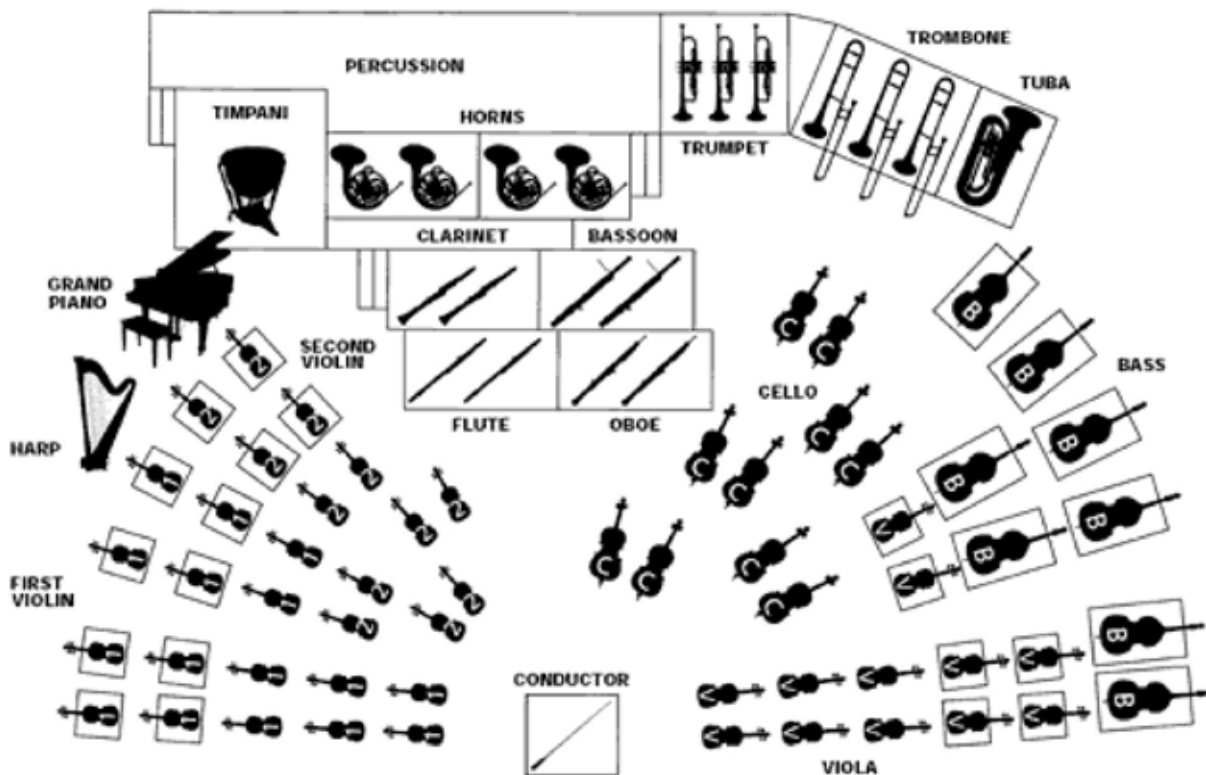
Background Information

What Is an Orchestra?

In ancient Greece, the orchestra was the space between the auditorium and the proscenium (or stage) where the chorus and the instrumentalists were seated. This is how the modern orchestra got its name. In some theaters, the orchestra is the area of seats directly in front of the stage (called “primafla” or “platea”). The term more properly applies to the place in a theater or concert hall set apart for the musicians.

The modern symphony orchestra consists of around 20 different musical instruments. There are four main groups: Strings (violin, viola, cello, bass, and harp), Woodwinds (flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon), Brass (trumpet, horn, trombone and tuba), and Percussion (including the piano). Can you find all of them at the theater?

The word “philharmonic” means “love of music.” The orchestra you will hear is called the Pennsylvania Philharmonic. It performs throughout areas in Pennsylvania, and those who work for the Pennsylvania Philharmonic certainly love music. If you were to start up a neighborhood or classroom orchestra, what would you call it? Think of special characteristics that you could include in the name.



Background Information

Concert Manners

Going to a concert may be a new experience for your students. The following guidelines will help them (and those around them) to enjoy the concert more fully.

Concert manners begin the moment you arrive at the concert space. Please be respectful as you quietly walk into the concert space. Stay with your group.

After you get to your seats, all teachers and students are asked sit and remain seated. When people are standing and talking in the aisles, it takes us much longer to get everyone seated.

At this time, you may see the musicians “warming up” onstage. Just as athletes warm up before a big game, musicians warm up, too. You may hear musicians playing scales, practicing excerpts from their music, or sustaining long notes. Watch them to see if they do anything that surprises you.

When the concertmaster walks onstage, you will know that the music is about to start; clap enthusiastically! The concertmaster will help the orchestra to tune. After the concertmaster sits down, your conductor, Michael Buttermann, will walk onstage. Again, clap loudly for Maestro Buttermann and the musicians!

Then get ready to listen! While the music is playing, listen and watch carefully. Think about things you learned from the lessons in this packet. Keep your hands to yourself and sit still.

Sometimes Maestro Buttermann might ask the audience a question. This is your turn to add to the concert experience! Please answer him so he knows that you are listening. When he turns to face the musicians, be silent and get ready to listen actively again.

After the orchestra plays the last piece, someone will walk onstage to give a few brief closing comments and to dismiss you. Be respectful as you quietly leave the concert space. Stay with your group.

After you have left the concert space, talk to your friends about what you saw and heard. Tell them your favorite piece and ask them what their favorite piece was. Maybe your teacher will quiz you on instrumental families! You could even write a letter to the Pennsylvania Philharmonic. Be sure to tell your parents about the concert when you get home.

No food or drink is permitted in the concert space
Please share this information with adult chaperones!

Stories

Elements of a Story

Setting/Time/Place

Includes place, weather conditions, social conditions, mood, or atmosphere.

Character

An imaginary person, animal, or thing represented in a work of fiction.
We get to know characters through their actions (what they say, think, or feel).

Problem/Conflict

Conflict can be external or internal. There are four kinds of conflict:

Man vs. Man

Man vs. Circumstances

Man vs. Him/Herself

Man vs. Society

Plot

The series of events through which a character goes.
The plot includes introduction, rising action, problem/conflict and, resolution.

Resolution

How does the conflict get resolved? Is there a happy ending or a sad ending?

Also consider the following two elements:

Point of View: Who is telling the story?

Theme: What is the central idea or belief of the story?

Stories

Story Map

Use this guide with the various lesson plans to help you write a story.

Begin by writing notes in each section.

Setting:	Time:	Place:
↓		
Characters:		
↓		
Problem/Conflict:		
↓		
		Plot/Events:
↓		
Resolution:		

Stories

Story Ideas

Since the theme of the concert is music telling stories, it might be fun to try some of the ideas below. This is just a starting point; try some of your own.

1. Write a story along with a piece of music.



2. Improvise music along with a story that is being read.



3. Create a “progressive story” where each student contributes one line to the plot.



4. Draw a comic strip with each frame being part of the story.



5. Use clip art to create a storyboard.



6. Write a story based on another culture.



7. Create a story about how a composer was inspired to write one of the pieces we are studying. Use information you’ve learned from the composer pages in this guide.



8. Bind all your activities in a storybook.

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov—Music Creating Character



Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Николай Андреевич Римский Корсаков

Composer Quick Facts: Life Dates: 1844–1908, Country: Russia, Era: Romantic

Rimsky-Korsakov was a celebrated Russian composer and music teacher. His piece *Scheherazade* is considered one of the most popular orchestral works ever written.

Rimsky-Korsakov was born into a noble family in Tikhvin, Russia, on March 18, 1844. He took piano lessons at the age of six and began composing by the age of 10. His love of music grew, and his musical talent became very evident.

Many of Rimsky-Korsakov's family members served in the military and navy. He followed in their footsteps and joined the Imperial Russian Navy at the age of 12. He completed his final exam at the age of 18. A few months later, he set sail on a ship that journeyed around the world. This trip lasted over two-and-a-half years! At first he worked diligently on his compositions while aboard the ship, but two years into the trip, he began to neglect his musical studies.

Fortunately, when he returned home, Rimsky-Korsakov met with a teacher who reminded him how important music really was. This teacher encouraged him to finish and perform the symphony he had worked on while at sea. Rimsky-Korsakov listened to his teacher. When his work was performed, the audience was so surprised to see that the person who wrote the beautiful piece was such a young naval officer.

Rimsky-Korsakov became a music professor in 1871 at St. Petersburg Conservatory. He eventually focused completely on music, no longer working for the navy. Many of the students he taught went on to become great musicians. Rimsky-Korsakov worked hard to preserve Russian traditions at the school. Being a professor gave Rimsky-Korsakov the financial security to get married and have a family (a wife and 7 children). He worked at St. Petersburg Conservatory until 1906.

Rimsky-Korsakov is considered to be one of the most influential Russian composers throughout history. In his writing, he enjoyed using fairy-tale subjects and melodies that sounded like folk tunes. Often times, he even borrowed sounds from the neighboring Chinese and Japanese cultures. He was very talented at orchestration (the way a composer combines different instruments at once), and he became famous for his imaginative blend of musical sounds. During his travels, Rimsky-Korsakov saw many different places that influenced his compositions. For example, *Scheherazade* contains depictions of the rolling, unpredictable sea.

A particularly unique characteristic of Rimsky-Korsakov is that he was affected by synesthesia: a condition where two or more of the senses are connected (for example, a particular sound might also have a color, smell, or taste). For each musical note, Rimsky-Korsakov saw a specific color (E was “sparkling sapphire”). Other people in history who were affected by synesthesia include Van Gogh, Einstein, Frank Lloyd Wright, Beethoven, and Schubert.

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov—Music Creating Character

Lesson Plan for *Scheherazade* by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Objectives:

- Prepare the students for the Pennsylvania Philharmonic Educational Concert.
- Introduce the idea of a musical theme representing characters within a story.
- Provide students with the opportunity to identify the instruments and musical elements that are used to create a character within a musical story.

Materials:

- Learning CD and player
- Picture and information about the composer
- Story of *Scheherazade*
- “What is an Orchestra?”
- Access to *Peter and the Wolf* recording

Listening Repertoire:

- *Scheherazade, Op. 35, 1st Mvmt.* (The Sea and Sinbad’s Ship) by Rimsky-Korsakov
- *Peter and the Wolf* by Prokofiev
If you do not own a recording of *Peter and the Wolf*, you may access it at:
https://archive.org/details/PeterAndTheWolf_753

Vocabulary:

Melody: Notes that are played one after the other to make a tune (a melody).

Chord: When three or more notes are played at the same time.

Harmony: A combination of pitches sounding together, such as a chord.

2. The relationship between a series of chords.

Timbre: The quality or color of sound that makes one voice or instrument different from another.

Examples: **Warm**

Mellow

Piercing

Harsh

Resonant

Brassy

Reedy

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov—Music Creating Character

Vocabulary: (continued)

Range: The span of notes between highest and lowest of an instrument.

Key: The tonality, or scale on which a piece of music is based.

Examples: **Major** (bright, cheerful sound)

Minor (dark, sad sound)

Dynamics: Loudness or softness – indicated in Italian in music.

Examples: **Forte** (*f*) loud

Fortissimo (*ff*) very loud

Piano (*p*) soft

Pianissimo (*pp*) very soft

Mezzo half

Mezzoforte (*mf*) half loud or moderately loud

Mezzopiano (*mp*) half soft or moderately soft

Crescendo: Gradually increasing in volume from soft to loud.

Procedures:

- Present vocabulary words to enable the students to use them appropriately when analyzing the excerpts.
- Read “What is an Orchestra?” to familiarize students with the instruments in an orchestra.
- Play the recording of *Peter and the Wolf*. Ask the students questions, including the following, and encourage them to use musical terminology in their responses:
 - Does the music help to tell the story?
 - When you hear the music representing the wolf, how do you feel?
 - What key (major or minor) do you associate with the wolf?
 - What instrument portrays the bird?
 - How do you know it is the bird?
 - What character does the oboe represent?
 - When the oboe is played faster and sounds frantic, what is going on in the story?
- Tell the story of *Scheherazade* (see below).
- One of the stories Scheherazade tells is “The Sea and Sinbad’s Ship.” Play this recording. Ask the students to listen for the sound of the ocean, as well as the sultan (king) and Scheherazade. Ask the students questions, including the following, and encourage them to use musical terminology in their responses:
 - How did the composer depict the sound of the ocean (what instruments, musical elements)?
 - What instrument represents Scheherazade?
 - How can you tell that this is Scheherazade?
 - What instruments represent the sultan?
 - How did the composer depict the sound of the sultan?

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov—Music Creating Character



The Story of *Scheherazade*

Every day the Persian king would marry a new young bride, and every day he would send yesterday's wife to be beheaded. This was done in anger, having found out that his first wife was betraying him. He had killed 1000 wives by the time he was introduced to Scheherazade. Against her father's protestations, Scheherazade volunteered to spend one night with the king. Once in the king's chambers, Scheherazade asked if she might bid one last farewell to her beloved sister. Her sister instructed Scheherazade to tell a story during the long night. As Scheherazade told the first story, the King lay awake and listened in awe. Dawn was breaking, and she stopped in the middle of the story. The king asked her to finish the story, but Scheherazade said there was no time. The king spared her life so that she could finish the story the next night. After finishing the story the next night, she started a new tale that was even more exciting than the first. However, she again stopped in the middle of the tale when dawn broke. The king spared her life yet again so that he could hear the ending to second story. This went on day after day; the king kept Scheherazade alive as he eagerly anticipated each new story. After 1001 nights and 1000 stories, Scheherazade told the King she had no more tales to tell. The King had fallen in love with Scheherazade. He spared her and made her his queen.

(adapted from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scheherazade>)

Gioachino Rossini—Music Creating Setting



Gioachino Rossini

Composer Quick Facts: Life Dates: 1792–1868, Country: Italy, Era: Romantic

On February 29, 1792, Gioachino Rossini was born in Pesaro, on the coast of Italy. He was born into a musical family; his father was a horn player, and his mother was a singer. His parents taught him about music, and by the age of six, he was playing the triangle in his father’s musical ensemble.

Before long he was also playing the harpsichord, piano, horn, cello, singing, and composing. He wrote his first pieces of music at the age of 12! He fell in love with the music of the famous German composers Haydn and Mozart. His devotion towards them earned him the nickname “The Little German.”

Rossini is best known for composing operas, which were very popular in his days. He was as skilled at writing tragedies as he was at writing comedies. Two of his most famous operas are *The Barber of Seville* and *Othello*.

Another one of Rossini’s operas, *William Tell*, became very popular at its premiere. Although it is a wonderful opera, today it is mostly known for its overture (the introduction). It is rarely heard in its entirety; the uncut version is over 4 hours long!

The *Overture to William Tell* has four parts: Prelude—a slow passage with low-voiced instruments such as cello and bass; Storm—a dynamic section played by full orchestra; “Call to the Dairy Cows”—which features the English Horn; and Finale—the high energy “Cavalry Charge” announced by the trumpets. The theme of the Finale has become Rossini’s most admired and well-known work. It has been featured as cell phone rings and in TV shows, commercials, “Looney Tunes” cartoons, and cowboy films.

During his life, Rossini wrote more than 30 operas. He wrote them all very quickly. Sometimes he would wait until the last minute and finish an opera on the day before opening night! In his spare time he wrote extra opera overtures and then put this music in a cookie jar. When he began writing a new opera, he would pull out an overture at random (from the cookie jar) and attach it to the work.

Besides music, Rossini’s greatest gift was his gregarious personality; he loved life, and enjoyed being with people. He often hosted parties, where he would cook and tell jokes for other artists. Rossini was born on a leap-year day, and on February 29, 1868, he decided to celebrate his 19th birthday (there had only been 19 leap years since his birth!). He was a very superstitious man, and ironically, he died on Friday, November 13, of that same year.

Opera is an art form that began in Rossini’s home country, Italy. Unlike a play, all of the words are sung, and most of the action on stage is shown through the music. Italian opera is particularly beautiful, decorative and elegant.

Gioachino Rossini—Music Creating Setting

Lesson Plan for *Overture to William Tell* by Gioachino Rossini

Objectives:

- Prepare the students for the Pennsylvania Philharmonic Educational Concert.
- Introduce the idea of music creating a setting.
- Provide students with the opportunity to identify the instruments and musical elements that are used to create various settings within a musical story.

Materials:

- Learning CD and player
- Picture and information about the composer
- “What is an Orchestra?”

Listening Repertoire:

- *Overture to William Tell* by Rossini
- *Light Cavalry Overture* by von Suppe

Vocabulary:

Tempo: The rate of speed of a piece of music.

Examples (listed in order of slow to fast):

Grave	Italian for “slow and serious”
Largo	very slowly, Italian for “broad, large”
Adagio	slowly, “without hurrying”
Andante	not too fast, not too slow, Italian for “walking”
Allegro	fast, Italian for “merry, lively”
Vivace	lively, brisk, Italian for “full of life”
Presto	very fast

Opera: A theatrical drama in which the characters sing all of their lines to tell the story while orchestral instruments accompany.

Overture: A piece of music played at the beginning of a play, opera, or ballet in order to set the mood. Also, an orchestral concert piece written as a single movement.

Rhythm: The pattern of musical movement through time formed by a series of notes that differ in duration and stress.

Gioachino Rossini—Music Creating Setting

Procedures:

- Present this lesson's vocabulary words to enable the students to use them (and those from the previous lesson) appropriately when analyzing the excerpts.
- Review “What is an Orchestra?” and focus on instrumental families. The following link provides additional information about instrumental families:
<http://www.classicsforkids.com/music/orchestra.asp>
- Play the recording of *Overture to William Tell*. Ask the students questions, including the following, and encourage them to use musical terminology in their responses:
 - What are some of the moods and/or scenes that you associate with this overture?
 - How did the composer depict these moods and/or scenes (what instruments, instrumental families, musical elements)?
 - What does the rhythmic figure towards the end of the piece (Finale) bring to mind?
 - Can you clap or sing this rhythmic figure?
 - Who has heard of the Lone Ranger?
- Play the recording of *Light Cavalry Overture*. Ask the students questions, including the following, and encourage them to use musical terminology in their responses:
 - What are some of the moods and/or scenes that you associate with this overture?
 - How did the composer depict these moods and/or scenes (what instruments, instrumental families, musical elements)?
 - Was there an instrument or instrumental family that stood out to you? Which one? What about it caught your attention? What was its role in telling the story of this piece of music?
 - How did the composer depict these moods/scenes (what instruments, instrumental families, musical elements)?
 - Was there an instrument or instrumental family that stood out to you? Which one?
 - What about it caught your attention? What was its role in telling the story of this piece of music?

Leonard Bernstein—Music Creating Setting



Leonard Bernstein

Composer Quick Facts: Life Dates: 1918–1990, Country: America, Era: Twentieth Century

Bernstein was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts, on August 25, 1918. At the age of 10, Bernstein began to play the piano. His father was a businessman who initially opposed Bernstein's interest in music and refused to pay for lessons. Bernstein raised enough money to pay for a few lessons himself. It became clear that Bernstein was extremely talented, and his father began to support his musical development; for his bar mitzvah, his dad bought him a baby grand piano! Bernstein was passionate about learning about music. He went to Harvard University, where he studied classes that would help him to compose, and to the Curtis Institute of Music (in Philadelphia), where he learned about conducting.

At the age of 27, Bernstein became famous overnight when he masterfully conducted the New York Philharmonic. At the last minute, he filled in for the guest conductor, who had gotten sick only hours before the performance. This first performance was the beginning of one of the most extraordinary careers in American music.

After his premiere, Bernstein conducted various orchestras in the United States and internationally. He became recognized as a composer during this same time. It is rare to find musicians throughout history who were both great composers and great conductors, like Bernstein was.

Bernstein also had a passion for teaching music. While he was conductor of the New York Philharmonic, he created a series of educational TV programs for children called "Young People's Concerts." These programs gave young audiences an opportunity to discover and explore exciting classical music along with Bernstein. He had a special way of speaking with young audiences and was eager to share his knowledge.

Bernstein wrote some tremendously popular Broadway musicals, including *West Side Story*. Inspired by *Romeo and Juliet*, *West Side Story* is based on the classic story of two people who fall in love in spite of their very different families. It takes place in the 1950's in New York City. The show has lots of energetic dancing and dynamic music.

During his lifetime, Bernstein received many honors and awards, and he was one of the most recorded conductors in history. A dynamic and captivating musician, Bernstein symbolized the Twentieth-Century American: energetic, passionate, intellectual and mindful of (but not held back by) tradition. He linked classical music with popular music in a unique and American way.

Leonard Bernstein—Music Creating Setting

Lesson Plan for “Mambo” from *West Side Story* by Leonard Bernstein

Objectives:

- Prepare the students for the Pennsylvania Philharmonic Educational Concert.
- Reinforce an understanding that music can create setting.
- Provide students with the opportunity to identify the instruments and musical elements that are used to create a certain mood and/or set a scene within a musical story.
- Encourage students to use their imaginations as they listen to music.
- Guide students in interpreting their own story from the listening selection.

Materials:

- Picture and information about the composer
- Handout with “Listening Chart” and “Compare and Contrast”
- Drawing papers (or writing papers)
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers (or pencils)
- Access to recording and video of “Mambo” from *West Side Story*

Listening Repertoire:

- “Mambo” from *West Side Story* by Leonard Bernstein
If you do not own a recording of “Mambo” from *West Side Story* you may access it at:
<http://www.dsokids.com/listen/by-composer/leonard-bernstein.aspx>

Procedure: This lesson could be done over two or three days.

• Introduction

Tell your students to imagine that they are a composer. Encourage them to use musical terminology (especially instrumentation, dynamics, and tempo) with their responses to the following:

- If you wanted to create a piece of music that sounds exciting, describe the music you would write.
- How would this music change if you wanted your music to sound scary? Sad? Peaceful? Agitated?
- Visualize your favorite place and explain how you would convey this musically.

• Listening Chart

Tell the students you will play a new piece. Do NOT tell your students the name of the piece or that it is from *West Side Story*. Show them the chart at the top of the handout. Instruct the students to fill in the chart as they listen. Play the recording of “Mambo.” After they have had time to fill in their chart, divide the students into small groups of three or four so they can discuss their answers. As a class, let students share their answers and discuss what they heard in the music that led them to feel a certain mood after listening.

Leonard Bernstein—Music Creating Setting

- **Interpreting Their Own Story**

Give the students a piece of drawing paper and crayons, markers, or colored pencils. Play “Mambo” again and let the students individually draw a scene that comes to mind. Remind them to think about the answers that they wrote on the chart and how the musical elements and instrumentation may influence the scene. You may play the listening selection a few times depending on how much the students need to hear. (Students could write about the scene instead of depicting it visually.) Let the students share their artwork (or narrative) and discuss what they heard in the music that led them to draw (or write) this scene.

- **“Mambo” Scene from *West Side Story***

Give the students a short synopsis and background of this scene in *West Side Story* before showing it. (If you do not have a DVD of *West Side Story*, consider finding the “Mambo” clip online.)

- **Compare and Contrast**

Using the chart given on the handout (see below), have the students compare and contrast their own scenes to the actual scene that was intended for this music. Discuss with the students any similarities and differences. Ask the students if there was anything that surprised them in the scene or the music.

- **Closure**

Give the students time at the end to write a journal response to today’s lesson. This can be done right on the back of their drawings (or narratives) if you wish. Ask them to answer the following questions:

- What instrumentation and musical elements can a composer use to create the mood for his or her piece?
- What instrumentation and musical element (if any) do you think is the most effective for creating a mood?
- Do you think Leonard Bernstein was successful at creating the mood he wanted for the “Mambo” scene? What did you hear that brings you to that conclusion?

Leonard Bernstein—Music Creating Setting

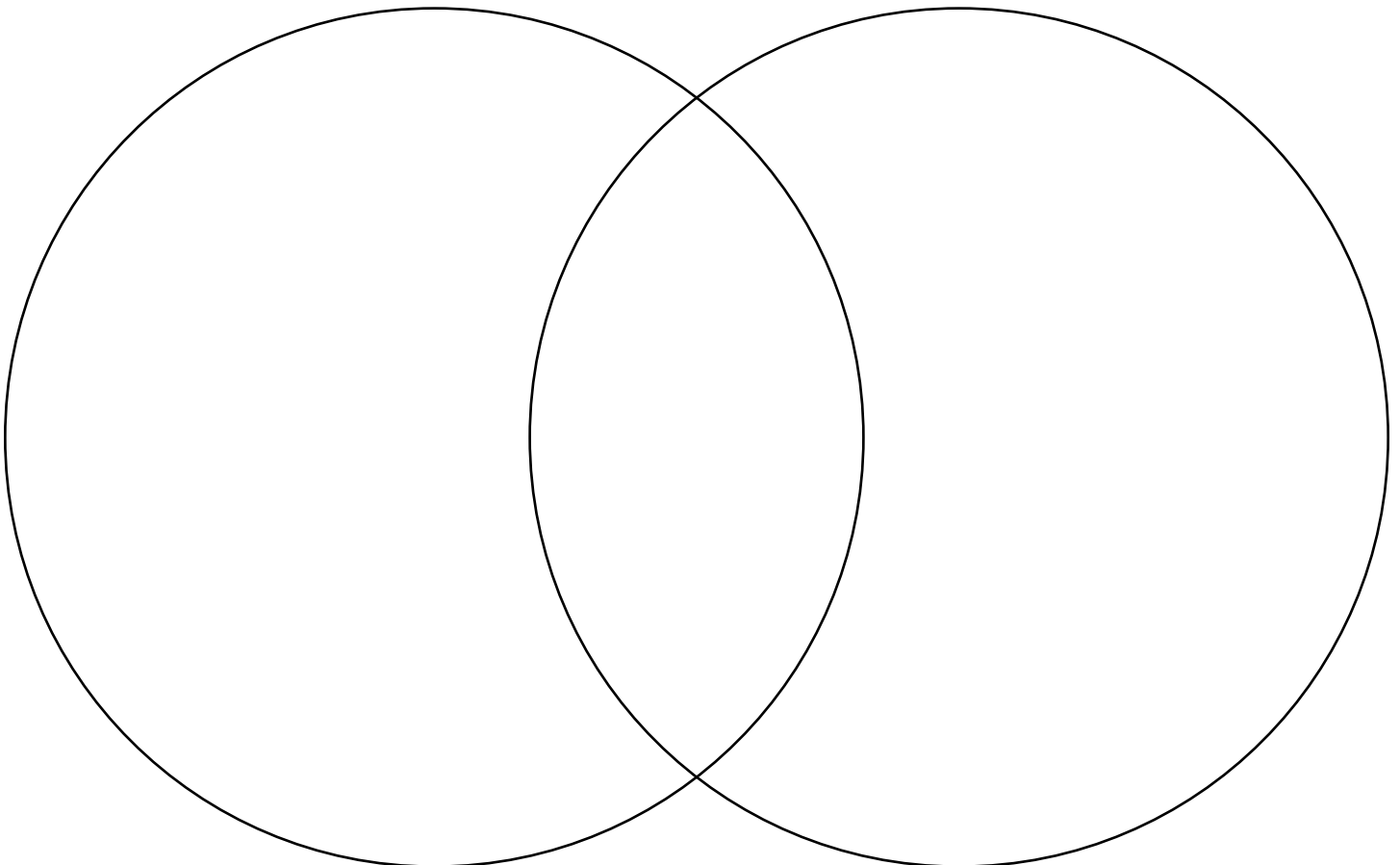
Listening Chart

Instuments	Dynamics	Tempo	Mood

Compare and Contrast

Your Story

Bernstein's Story



Camille Saint-Saëns—Music Creating Plot



Camille Saint-Saëns

Composer Quick Facts: Life Dates: 1835–1921, Country: France, Era: Romantic

The Romantic Period refers to a time in history when the arts (visual, literature, and music) focused on the expression of intense emotions. For music, the Romantic Period began in Europe during the beginning of the 19th century. A lot of music from this period was programmatic (meaning it described something—like a scene in nature or a feeling).

Saint-Saëns was born in Paris, France, on October 9, 1835. He was a talented musician from an early age. His aunt began teaching him piano lessons when he was two years old. He began composing almost immediately afterwards, finishing his first piano piece at age three! He gave his first public concert playing piano at the age of seven. When he was 13, he studied organ and composition at a music conservatory, and by the age of 16, he composed his first symphony.

In addition to music, Saint-Saëns was interested in many subjects, including plants, insects, mathematics, geology, archeology, and astronomy. He wrote various literary works while also having a music career. As a musician, he performed on piano and organ, and he composed and taught piano. Saint-Saëns' compositions had very French characteristics; his music had an elegance to it and was considered neat, clean, polished, and never excessive. Some of his most famous compositions are *Carnival of the Animals*, *Danse Macabre*, and *Symphony No. 3 (Organ Symphony)*.

Danse Macabre is a spooky piece that depicts an old French superstition about Halloween night. At midnight, the skeletons rise from their graves and dance to the music of a violin. Saint-Saëns uses the xylophone to imitate the sound of the skeletons' rattling bones! The skeletons dance all night until dawn, when they must return to their graves until the next year.

Saint-Saëns' lived to be 86 years old! His life was so long that it spanned almost the entire Romantic Period. During his lifetime, he witnessed the rise of jazz and modern music in the 20th century. Saint-Saëns held very strong opinions about music and expressed them openly. He would praise some fellow musicians but speak negatively about the compositions of others. As a result, he was either a friend or an enemy to his colleagues.

Camille Saint-Saëns—Music Creating Plot

Lesson Plan for *Danse Macabre* by Camille Saint-Saëns

Objectives:

- Prepare the students for the Pennsylvania Philharmonic Educational Concert.
- Reinforce an understanding that music can depict characters in a story.
- Introduce the idea of music depicting plot in a story.
- Provide students with the opportunity to identify the instruments and musical elements that are used to create the characters and plot within a musical story.
- Guide students in creating their own musical stories.

Materials:

- Learning CD and player
- Picture and information about the composer
- Handouts of “Listen Up!” and “A Listening Map”
- *Danse Macabre* poem by Henri Cazalis
- A selection of instruments for students to play (percussion or orchestral)

Listening Repertoire:

- *Danse Macabre* by Camille Saint-Saëns

Vocabulary:

Articulation: The characteristics of attack and decay of single tones or groups of tones and how these characteristics are produced.

Examples: **Staccato** short, sharp, disconnected notes

Legato smooth notes with no separation between

Procedure:

• *Danse Macabre* Background

Explain the concept behind this piece. *Danse Macabre* or “Dance of Death” is a medieval allegory on the universality of death. It has been depicted for centuries in paintings and poetry. Some Hispanic cultures celebrate it as Dia de los Muertos. It came into being during a time when people in Europe were facing difficult situations like the Black Plague, famine, and wars. *Danse Macabre* reminds us that life is precious and fleeting.

Camille Saint-Saëns—Music Creating Plot

• A Listening Map

Emphasize that *Danse Macabre* is a work that tells a story (and has a plot). You can read the poem (see below) that goes with it. Outline the scenes that are depicted and describe the characters. The students will listen to the piece while following the listening map (see below). As they are listening, call out to them when each character and scene is heard. Ask students to answer the following questions:

- How does the story resolve?
- How does Saint-Saëns use various instruments to depict the action and characters in the music?
 - Harp: Bell tolling
 - Violin: Death
 - Xylophone: Bones of dancing skeletons
 - Oboe: Crowing rooster
- Do you think the story occurs in the daytime or nighttime? (You could restart the recording, instructing students to count the number of times the “bell” tolls.)
- Describe the way the violin is played. What might this indicate about the character the violin is depicting?

• Listen Up

Teach students the two themes as shown on “Listen Up” (see below). Review this lesson’s vocabulary words.

• Creating Their Own Story

Have students create their own musical story by choosing instruments that represent specific characters and then building a story around that. Their story does not have to have the same theme of *Danse Macabre*. It could depict something very ordinary that your students encounter every day. For example, they could build a story based on what they see when they walk or ride to school every day. You could follow these steps:

- Divide your class into groups of six or seven students.
- Students choose from various percussion or orchestral instruments.
- One group at a time, students improvise with the instruments and then discuss the different “characters” that emerged during the improvisation. (Teacher may need to participate in the improvisation to add structure.)
- Teacher asks students for actions or a plot for the characters.
- Students again improvise with the instruments, with the goal of depicting the identified actions or plot.
- Teacher elicits feedback from the class about the musical stories that the students told.

Camille Saint-Saëns—Music Creating Plot

Listen Up!

Here are the principal themes of each section. As your teacher plays them, you can sing along.

Legato sounds are smooth, long, and connected.

Sometimes, the notes are marked with long curved lines over or under them.



Notes in music that have a distinctly short sound are called staccato

They are sometimes marked with dots over or under them.



Camille Saint-Saëns—Music Creating Plot

A Listening Map

Follow the listening map according to the arrows.
Listen for the two themes that were outlined on the previous page.



Camille Saint-Saëns—Music Creating Plot

Danse Macabre by Henri Cazalis

On a sounding stone
With a blanched thigh-bone
The bone of a saint, I fear;
Death strikes the hour
Of his Wizard power
And the specters make haste to appear.
(*specter: ghost*)

From their tombs they rise
In their deathly guise
Obeying the summons dread.
And gathering round
With reverence profound
They salute the King of the Dead.

Then he stands in the middle
And tunes up his fiddle
And plays them a gruesome strain.
And each gibbering wight
(*gibbering: chattering or senseless talk, wight: creature*)
In the moon's pale light
Music dance to that wild refrain.

Now the fiddle tells
As the music swells
Of the graveyard's ghastly pleasures.
And they clatter their bones
As with hideous groans
They reel to those maddening measures.

The churchyard quakes.

And the old abbey shakes
To the tread of that midnight host.
And the sod turns black
On each circling track
Where a skeleton whirls with a ghost.

The night wind moans
In shuddering tones
Through the gloom of the cypress tree.
While the mad mob raves
Over yawning graves
And the fiddle bow leaps with glee

So the swift hours fly
'Til the reddening sky
Gives warning of daylight near.
Then the first rooster crow
Sends them scurrying below
To sleep for another year.

Hector Berlioz—Music Creating Setting



Hector Berlioz

Composer Quick Facts: Life Dates: 1803–1869, Country: France, Era: Romantic

Berlioz was born in La Côte-Saint-André, France on December 11, 1803. He began studying music at the age of 12. He learned to play the flute and guitar, but he never became skilled at any instrument. When Berlioz was 18 years old, he was sent to medical school to become a doctor. In spite of his father's wishes (his father was a doctor), Berlioz left medical school to study music composition instead.

Even as a child Berlioz, experienced his emotions deeply. He strongly believed that music could represent emotions. His most famous work, *Symphonie Fantastique*, depicts the daydreams Berlioz had about a love interest (actress Miss Smithson) and what happened when he realized that his love was not being reciprocated. *Symphonie Fantastique* is divided into five movements. The fifth movement, “Dance of the Witches’ Sabbath,” conveys the bizarre and scary nightmare Berlioz had in response to Miss Smithson not loving him. The moods that Berlioz created throughout the story of *Symphonie Fantastique* are intense.

Berlioz was very interested in books, and the stories of many writers inspired his own musical compositions. He was a good author, too, and supported his family by writing articles about music. In addition, he also wrote books on his composition and orchestration techniques. His *Treatise on Instrumentation and Orchestration* was—and continues to be—highly influential, and his *Memoires* is considered to be among the best of musical autobiographies.

During his lifetime Berlioz was criticized by many people from his own country for being too unusual and eccentric. He often had a hard time getting the public to come to his concerts. He was appreciated much more by people in other countries, where he was better recognized as a conductor than a composer. He liked his performances to be very big and grand; one of his concerts had 1,200 musicians! With so many performers, Berlioz hired seven other conductors to follow him and help lead the ensemble.

In his *Mémoires*, Berlioz explained, “The prevailing characteristics of my music are passionate expression, intense ardour [difficulty], rhythmical animation, and unexpected turns.” Berlioz’s music is noted to have fluctuating dynamics, frequent changes in tempo, and abrupt contrasts. It is unique and always exciting!

The Violin:

“It is the orchestra’s real feminine voice, at once passionate and chaste [innocent], heart-rending and gentle; it can weep, cry and lament, or it can sing, pray and dream, or it can break out in joyful strains, like no other instrument.”

—from *Treatise on Instrumentation and Orchestration*
by Hector Berlioz

Hector Berlioz—Music Creating Setting

Lesson Plan for “Dance of the Witches’ Sabbath” from *Symphonie Fantastique* by Hector Berlioz

Objective:

- Prepare the students for the Pennsylvania Philharmonic Educational Concert.
- Reinforce an understanding that music can create setting.
- Provide students with the opportunity to identify the instruments and musical elements that are used to create atmosphere within a musical story.
- Enable students to play (or sing) a theme and variations of it.

Materials:

- Learning CD and player
- Picture and information about the composer
- Mallet instruments
- Notation of Dies Irae

Listening Repertoire:

- “Dance of the Witches’ Sabbath” from *Symphonie Fantastique* by Hector Berlioz

Vocabulary:

Col Legno: Striking the strings on a string instrument with the wooden part of the bow instead of with the hair of the bow.

Tremolo: Quick and continuous sound on a string instrument, produced by an up-and-down movement of the bow on a single note. Tremolo creates a “trembling” effect.

Pizzicato: Plucking of strings on a string instrument with fingers.

Procedure:

- **Dies Irae Theme**

Set up mallet instruments throughout the classroom. Devise a strategy so all students learn and play the Dies Irae theme on a mallet instrument. (If mallet instruments are not available, students may sing the theme on a syllable or with solfeggio.) Teach the students the Dies Irae main theme first. Then explain that the composer uses rhythmic variations of this theme in the composition. Each variation has a different rhythm but the same notes. Teach the students to play “Variation 1” and “Variation 2.” Ask the students the following questions:

- What sort of atmosphere and/or mood comes to mind when you hear the Dies Irae theme?
- What do you notice about the variations?

Hector Berlioz—Music Creating Setting

- Is the rhythm quicker or slower in the variations?

Explain to the students that the Dies Irae theme means “Day of Wrath.” Berlioz used it in *Symphonie Fantastique*, and other composers, including Mozart, Rachmaninoff, Verdi, and Saint-Saëns, have used it in their works, as well.

- Present this lesson’s vocabulary words to enable the students to use them (and those from previous lessons) appropriately when analyzing the excerpts.
- Play the recording of “Dance of the Witches’ Sabbath,” the fifth movement of *Symphonie Fantastique*. Ask the students questions, including the following, and encourage them to use musical terminology in their responses:
 - How would you describe the overall atmosphere of this music?
 - What instrumentation, musical elements, or theme contributed to the creation of this atmosphere?
 - What do you imagine has happened in the story of this movement of music?
 - Use your discretion to decide if it is appropriate to share with your class a synopsis of this movement, written by Berlioz (see below).
- Play the recording again, and this time, instruct students to raise their hands when they hear the following (and to keep in mind the synopsis, if you read it):
 - Dies Irae theme
 - Tremolo in the violin section
 - Pizzicato
 - Col Legno
 - “Bells” tolling


Synopsis of “Dance of the Witche’s Sabbath”:

He [the artist Berlioz depicts] sees himself at a witches’ sabbath, in the midst of a hideous gathering of shades, sorcerers and, monsters of every kind who have come together for his funeral. Strange sounds, groans, outbursts of laughter; distant shouts which seem to be answered by more shouts. The beloved melody [representing the artist’s love interest] appears once more, but has now lost its noble and shy character; it is now no more than a vulgar dance tune, trivial and grotesque: it is she who is coming to the sabbath...Roar of delight at her arrival...The funeral knell tolls, burlesque parody of the Dies Irae. The dance of the witches. The dance of the witches combined with the Dies Irae.

(<http://www.hberlioz.com/Scores/fantas.htm>)

Hector Berlioz—Music Creating Setting

Dies Irae

Theme 



Variation 1 



Variation 2 



Hector Berlioz—Music Creating Setting

Listening for Mood

Name _____ Date _____

Write down words to describe the atmosphere and emotions of each section.

Introduction



Beginning



Middle



End