

MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA



STUDENTS CENTER STAGE: CONCERT GUIDE

Designed for students in grades 3-6

Prepared by Minnesota Orchestra Education & Community Engagement Department



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Students Center Stage

The background features a stylized illustration of a young person in a blue outfit playing a violin. The scene is set on a stage with blue curtains on the left and right. On the right side, there are detailed illustrations of hands: an orange hand holding the violin's body, a brown hand holding the bow, and another brown hand positioned below. The overall color palette includes blue, yellow, orange, and brown.

Dear educators,

Thank you for joining us for Students Center Stage Young People's Concerts! In this program, we will celebrate music made by young artists and the life-changing influence of their music teachers.

This curriculum will take students through the pieces on the program to prepare them for the music they will experience when they attend the concert. The activities included emphasize form and will turn your students into young composers!

Please feel free to contact us if you or your students have questions about the concert guide. We welcome and value feedback from teachers who use these curricula and will send out a post-concert survey for you to give us your thoughts on the program as well as this concert guide.

We look forward to seeing you at Orchestra Hall in January!

Sincerely,
Jessica Lowry, Manager of Education Programs

Preparing for Your Trip

We want you and your students to have a **GREAT DAY** at Orchestra Hall!
Please help us by following these simple guidelines:



QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

Please contact our Logistics Coordinator at 612-371-5671 or youngpeoples@mnorch.org.

1

BEFORE YOU LEAVE SCHOOL

Please give a copy of your ticket to every bus driver and group leader on the day of the concert.

Tickets will be emailed to you approximately 2 weeks prior to the concert and will give detailed parking, arrival and seating instructions.

2

Please ensure all adults in your group are wearing the nametags provided.

Nametags will be mailed to you prior to the concert. Safety is our first priority at Orchestra Hall and we appreciate your help in ensuring a safe environment.

3

WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT ORCHESTRA HALL

Please keep a single file line from your bus to your assigned seats.

HOMESCHOOLERS: Please park private vehicles in nearby parking ramps.

SCHOOLS: Security personnel and ushers will greet your bus as you arrive and help you park. You will be directed to your arrival door and led directly to your seats.

SEATING: We have assigned your school to a specific section of Orchestra Hall.

You are seated from front to back according to when you arrive. If anyone in your group needs an assistive listening device, please let one of our ushers know on the way to your seats.

Please note: If your group gets separated, let our ushers know. They will direct you to a holding area so you can gather everyone in your group and enter the auditorium together.

4

ONCE YOU ARE SEATED

Please let the usher seat your group **BEFORE:**

- Sending students to the restrooms (must be accompanied by an adult)
- Re-arranging the seating of your students

If you or someone in your group requires assistance during the concert, please contact the ushers located at the back of each section near the auditorium exits.

Preparing for the Concert



QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

Please contact our Logistics Coordinator at 612-371-5671 or youngpeoples@mnoch.org.

CONCERT ETIQUETTE

Watch this short [Class Notes video](#) from YourClassical Minnesota Public Radio to help students understand some of the expectations for classical audiences.

ACCESSIBILITY



Please contact our Logistics Coordinator at 612-371-5671 or youngpeoples@mnoch.org in advance of your visit if you require any services or amenities.

We also have noise-reduction head phones, fidgets and other sensory supports available for anyone who needs them. Please ask an usher for assistance once your group is seated.

LISTEN TO THE MUSIC

Use this [Spotify playlist](#) to hear the music being performed on the concert.

When introducing the music on this concert to your students, consider asking the following questions to create an inquiry-based, focused discussion in class. Have students focus on one question at a time as they listen. This will allow them to hear the piece multiple times and gain familiarity with the music.

1. What did you notice in the music?
2. What does the music remind you of?
3. How do you think the composer wants to make you feel?
4. What would you want to know about the music?

CHECK OUT THE PREPARATION ACTIVITIES!

All activities are aligned with Minnesota State Standards.

Guide to the Orchestra

VIOLIN
String Family

VIOLA
String Family

CELLO
String Family

DOUBLE BASS
String Family

PICCOLO
Woodwind Family

FLUTE
Woodwind Family

OBOE
Woodwind Family

CLARINET
Woodwind Family

BASSOON
Woodwind Family

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GUIDE TO THE ORCHESTRA

HOME > COMMUNITY & EDUCATION > EDUCATORS & FAMILIES > RESOURCES

Get to know the instruments that make up an orchestra and learn what makes each instrument special.

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BASSOON

Woodwind Family

HOME > COMMUNITY & EDUCATION > EDUCATORS & FAMILIES > RESOURCES > INSTRUMENT GUIDE

The bassoon is the lowest member of the woodwind family and is essentially a long tube, folded in half, with lots of metal keys. If you were to "unfold" a bassoon, it would be almost 8 feet long! Even though the bassoon is much taller and bigger than the oboe, both instruments have a double reed. And, just like oboe players, bassoon players typically make their own reeds using cane, cork and thread.

VIDEO

Visit our [Guide to the Orchestra](#) to learn about the instruments of the orchestra. You'll see photos of the instruments, descriptions, and short video demonstrations too!

Meet the Performers

MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

The Minnesota Orchestra began as the “Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra” in 1903. Within a few weeks of the orchestra’s first performance on November 5, 1903, baseball’s first World Series was played and the Wright brothers made their first airplane flight.

Re-named “Minnesota Orchestra” in 1968, the ensemble plays nearly 175 performances a year. The orchestra has toured to Australia, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Canada and Latin America, and the most recent international tours have been to Cuba, England and South Africa.

There are approximately 85 musicians in the Orchestra.

The Minnesota Orchestra won a Grammy Award for “Best Orchestral Performance” in 2014 for their recording of Sibelius’ Symphonies No. 1 and 4.

Our musicians are the best at what they do and dedicate their lives to music making. And that’s not all! They are also athletes, teachers, volunteers, pet-owners, environmentalists and more.



[MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA MUSICIANS](#)

PHOTO Travis Anderson Photography.

Composer Corner



Felix Mendelssohn

(1809–1847)



Erich Wolfgang Korngold

(1897–1957)



**Wolfgang
Amadeus Mozart**

(1756–1791)

Felix Mendelssohn was born in 1809 in Germany. He demonstrated considerable musical talent at a young age and was performing in public on piano and composing in his early teens. By his late teens, he was composing mature works and full symphonies. He was also a conductor who championed the works of an earlier German composer, Johann Sebastian Bach. Mendelssohn traveled widely throughout Europe, performing, conducting and collaborating with other musicians, including his sister Fanny Mendelssohn, who was also a composer. Felix Mendelssohn died in 1847 at age 38.

Erich Wolfgang Korngold was born in 1897 in an area that is now part of the Czech Republic. He demonstrated remarkable musical talent at a very young age and was composing original music by age 7. He composed concert music in Vienna, Austria throughout his childhood and teenage years. In 1934, he moved to Hollywood, California, and began composing music for movies. He became a very well-established and respected film composer, influencing many others who came after him. He died in California in 1957 at the age of 60.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Austria in 1756. He showed great musical talent as a very young child. He was composing and performing for royalty by the time he was just 5 years old. His father was his music teacher and he also had a very musical sister who composed as well. As a young adult, Mozart moved to Vienna, a very important center of classical music activity during that time. He composed hundreds of important works, including symphonies, operas and concertos, before dying at the age of 35 in 1791.

Composer Corner



Bohuslav Martinů

(1890–1859)



Avril Coleridge-Taylor

(1903–1998)



Luke Soneral

B. 2008

Bohuslav Martinů was born in 1890 in what is now the Czech Republic. He began his musical career as an accomplished violinist but shifted his focus to composition in his teenage years and early adulthood. He spent some time studying in Paris. He was interested and influenced by many different styles and composers, including jazz and ballet. He spent over ten years working and teaching in the United States and had several famous composition students. He eventually moved back to Europe and died in 1959 at age 69.

Avril Coleridge-Taylor was born in London, England in 1903. Her father was the famous composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. She composed her first known composition at age 12 and won a scholarship to study at a special music academy. In addition to composition, she studied conducting. She had a number of notable conducting assignments and helped form several orchestras and music ensembles. She traveled to Africa for conducting work several times, in part to honor her father's African heritage, as her grandfather was from Sierra Leone. She eventually moved to the Sussex region of England and died there in 1998 at the age of 95.

Luke Soneral (b. 2008) is a ninth-grade student at Minnetonka High School and a music composition major at the Juilliard School Pre-College in New York City. Luke currently studies composition with Dr. Eric Ewazen at Juilliard. A small ensemble winner of the 2022 National Young Composer's Challenge, his woodwind quintet, *Melting Icicles* premiered at the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts in Orlando, FL. At home in Minnesota, the Minnesota Sinfonia premiered Luke's work, *Nocturne in C minor*, as the winning composition for the 2022 Minnesota Sinfonia Young Composer Competition. Luke is honored to share *Muggle's March* with audiences at the Young People's Concert of the Minnesota Orchestra. An avid pianist and bassist, Luke is a current student of Dr. Mika Sasaki of the Juilliard School and bassist Robert Anderson of the Minnesota Orchestra. Luke plays bass with the Symphony Orchestra of the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies. Outside of the arts, Luke enjoys playing basketball, tossing the football, reading, playing Scrabble, and spending time with friends and family.



1. Felix Mendelssohn: Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* —

An *overture* is often defined as a piece of orchestral music that comes at the beginning of an opera or musical theater production. These overtures usually include musical themes and melodies that will occur in the opera or musical—kind of like a preview.

Felix Mendelssohn did things a bit differently when he composed *Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He didn't write it to come before a stage production. Instead, the piece was his response to reading the play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, by William Shakespeare. In this "concert overture," Felix Mendelssohn used music to capture the energy and mood of the play. Written when Mendelssohn was just 17 years old, this was one of the first examples of a concert overture.

As you listen, see if you can hear instruments imitate the "hee-haw" of a donkey. In the Shakespeare play, a character's head gets turned into a donkey's head by a mischievous fairy Puck.

2. Erich Wolfgang Korngold: *Moderato nobile*, from Violin Concerto —

A concerto is a piece of music composed for a soloist who plays together with a large ensemble, usually an orchestra. Erich Wolfgang Korngold was a famous film composer. In his Violin Concerto, the violin soloist plays melodies and themes taken from some of his film scores.

As you listen, notice the violin's *range*. The term range describes the distance from the lowest pitch to the highest pitch that any instrument (or voice) can play. At the very beginning of the violin's solo, the instrument starts in the lower part of its range. In just a few notes, the melody has leapt up much higher. While listening, you might use a finger in the air to trace the direction and shape of the violin's melody, moving throughout the range of the instrument.

3. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Overture to *The Magic Flute* —

Like Felix Mendelssohn's *Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream*, this piece is an overture. Unlike Mendelssohn's piece, the *Overture to The Magic Flute* was intended to be played before the start of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's opera called *The Magic Flute*. Mozart composed the overture after he finished the opera. That way, he could use themes and musical ideas from the opera in the overture. Though it was written to go before the opera, it can be played on its own as a concert piece.

As you listen, notice the beginning starts with a pattern of three chords. The number three was important to the plot of this opera, and Mozart found several ways to mix in patterns of three throughout the overture. The plot of the opera is both serious and silly. While listening, see if you can predict some events or characters in the opera. Can you make a prediction about some things that might happen in this opera?



4. Bohuslav Martinů: *Poco allegro*, from Oboe Concerto —

Remember that a *concerto* is a piece for a soloist together with an orchestra. In many concertos, the soloist gets to play something called a *cadenza*. The *cadenza* is a section of the concerto—often toward the end—where the soloist plays alone. The *cadenza* is often challenging and showy. It's a good way for the soloist to showcase their *virtuosity*, or advanced skill, on their instrument.

5. Avril Coleridge-Taylor: *Largo – Maestoso*, from *Sussex Landscape* —

Sussex Landscape is a kind of composition called a *tone poem*. A poem describes a mood, feeling or scene through words. A tone poem describes a mood, feeling or scene through music and sound. The composer Avril Coleridge-Taylor decided to musically depict the landscape of the Sussex region of England in her tone poem *Sussex Landscape*.

As you listen, try to imagine what the landscape in Sussex looks like based on what you hear. How can you use music vocabulary to describe what you hear? Think about a landscape or part of nature that is special to you. What kind of sounds would you use to paint a musical picture of that landscape?

6. Luke Soneral: *Muggle's March* —

Music is composed for many different reasons. We might use music for celebration, dancing, quiet reflection, meditation, or marching. This piece is a march—we know that because “march” is in the title.

Listen for clues that tell us this is a march. Are there certain elements that help us know it's a march? Use music vocabulary to describe elements that help identify this as marching music. Are there sections of this piece that don't sound much like a march?

Activity #1

Leveled Composition Lessons: ABA

Curiosity, creativity and the exploration of sound are at the core of the composition process. Students of all ages and abilities can compose! The following four lessons facilitate composition in the classroom.

Compose an ABA Composition —

(Target age range: Grades K–2)

Materials Needed —


ABA Composition Grids (See [PRINTABLES](#) section at the end of this guide for a copy)



Directions —

- 1: Introduce and explain the idea that pieces of music follow patterns. A common pattern in music is called “ABA.” In an ABA piece of music, we hear one thing, then something different, then the first thing again.
- 2: Demonstrate the idea with a very short musical example, such as singing four notes, clapping four times, and then singing the same four notes again.
- 3: Explain that we can organize musical ideas by writing them down. Project or write an ABA composition grid for students to see. Find a [PRINTABLE](#) version of this grid. Show the empty grid to reinforce the pattern.

A	B	A

4: Fill in the empty grid with some simple examples to demonstrate. The examples below use combinations of solfege notes, basic rhythms, pictures, found objects, classroom percussion instruments and words to communicate the desired sounds. Adjust and customize as needed for your students.

A	B	A
Sol Sol Mi Mi Do		Sol Sol Mi Mi Do

A	B	A
 4 presto claps	Sing your favorite classroom song!	 4 presto claps

A	B	A
		

5: Distribute blank ABA Composition Grids to individuals or groups and ask them to create their own ABA compositions. Rehearse and perform for each other. Encourage groups to practice good ensemble skills like counting off and eye contact/body language to start together, stay together and end together. Make sure to give your ABA Composition a title!

Compose a Melody for Voice, Slide Whistle, or Instrument —

(Target age range: Grades 1–3)

Materials Needed —

None. Optional: Slide whistle and/or melodic classroom instruments such as Orff glockenspiel or piano/keyboard.

Directions —

1: Remind or explain to students that music is made up of different parts or elements, and a melody is one part of music. A melody is a series of notes that can move around—from low to high or high to low.

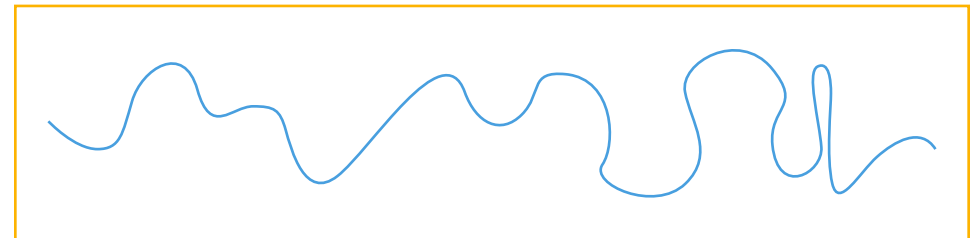
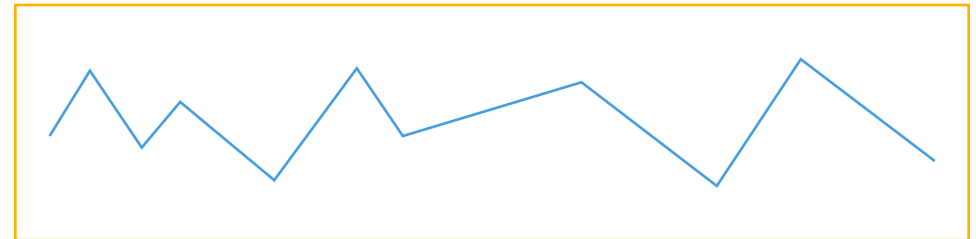
2: Reinforce the concept by explaining that we can't clap a melody. If we try to clap the song Happy Birthday without also singing the notes, we can feel that it's missing something. Demonstrate this. After trying to only clap, sing the beginning of the song slowly, tracing the shape of the melody with a finger in the air.

3: Explain that the shape of a melody can vary a lot. Some melodies might mostly repeat the same note, then just move a little. Demonstrate by singing the four-note motif from [Ludwig van Beethoven's Symphony No. 5](#) and moving your finger to correspond to the shape. Contrast this with a few other examples, such as the beginning of [Claude Debussy's Clair de Lune](#) or the [Elephant movement from Carnival of the Animals by Camille Saint-Saëns](#).

4: Explain that we can use lines to compose a melody. Draw a line on the board or in the air with your finger. Match the shape with your voice, using vocables like "la." Encourage students to join you. This same activity can be easily adapted to use slide whistle or a classroom mallet/keyboard instrument instead of a singing voice.

5: Using paper and a writing utensil, ask students to draw a melodic shape and perform their melody. Extend to integrate notation on a staff as appropriate. The process is more important than the product in this exercise.

Below are some examples that you might use for further demonstration with students.



Activity #3

Leveled Composition Lessons: Compose an Overture

Compose a Concert Overture —

(Target age range: Grades 4–7)

Materials Needed —

Literary text, like a poem, short play or story; story map (provided in this lesson); a variety of classroom instruments

Directions —

1: Remind students that there are two kinds of overtures: one that is composed to precede and opera or a play, and a concert overture, that is composed as an independent piece but may be inspired by a play or literary work. Felix Mendelssohn’s *Overture to A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is an example of a concert overture. The piece is intended to communicate ideas and characters from William Shakespeare’s famous play called *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

2: Tell students that they can compose an overture based on a favorite book, story, or poem. Use a story map (below) to organize ideas. See the [PRINTABLES](#) section at the end of this guide for a copy of this story map.

TITLE: Overture to _____			
	PART ONE: (what happens first)	PART TWO: (what happens next)	PART THREE: (how it ends)
Voices:			
Instruments:			
Additional Instructions:			

3: Help facilitate the composition process by asking a series of leading questions, such as:

What’s the overall mood of the story?

What’s the setting?

Who are the main characters?

Asking these questions will help students begin to imagine how they will communicate these events, characters, and ideas through music.

4. Then, using the story map grid, encourage students to fill in the boxes with musical instructions. Adjust as necessary for students age and experience. Integrate music notation as you see fit. You might want to walk through an example for purposes of demonstration. Here is a completed example:

TITLE: Overture to _____			
	PART ONE: (what happens first)	PART TWO: (what happens next)	PART THREE: (how it ends)
Voices:	None	Whisper: <i>I think, I can, I think, I can, I think, I can, I think, I can!</i>	None
Instruments:	Sandpaper blocks rub back and forth to make a chugga-chugga pattern to imitate the sound of a train for 30 seconds, with a gradual crescendo <	Sandpaper blocks clap together on steady beats, lining up with “think” and “can” in the words above	Sandpaper blocks rub back and forth to make a chugga-chugga pattern again, this time getting quieter, like the train disappearing into the distance >
Additional Instructions:		After four repetitions of “I think I can,” everybody cheers/celebrates for the count of 5	

Compose a Concert Overture —

(Target age range: Grades 6 & up)

Materials Needed —

Staff paper or music notation software; instrument or voice

Directions —

- 1:** Remind students that a cadenza is a technical passage for voice or solo instrument.
- 2:** Using staff paper or music notation software, ask students to compose a short theme, or melody) for their instrument or voice. Four measures is a good length to start with.
- 3:** Once their original theme is composed, encourage them to embellish and add to it to create their own cadenza.
- 4:** Get started by asking a question: How you can repeat this phrase to make it more difficult to play?
- 5:** Provide students with a list of ideas for expanding or embellishing their theme. Reading following list might help generate ideas:

Repetition of notes: can you play the same theme but repeat certain notes, maybe at shortened durations, to build excitement and increase energy?

Inversion: can you flip the notes “upside down” on the staff, so that the distances between each note are reversed?

Diminution: can you cut the rhythmic value of every note in half so the theme is played twice as fast?

Augmentation: can you double the rhythmic value of every note so the theme is played twice as slow?

Sequencing: can you move the pattern of the melody around on the staff, repeating several times in a sequence, but beginning on the next pitch up or down?

- 6:** Encourage students to use any combination of these techniques to fill out their original theme. Notate the entire thing, practice and perform for others.



PRINTABLES

A	B	A

TITLE: Overture to _____			
	PART ONE: (what happens first)	PART TWO: (what happens next)	PART THREE: (how it ends)
Voices:			
Instruments:			
Additional Instructions:			

About Orchestra Hall



WELCOME!

Orchestra Hall, home of the Minnesota Orchestra since 1974, is known as one of the best acoustic spaces in the world. In 2012, the Hall was renovated to create long-awaited upgrades and additions throughout the building.

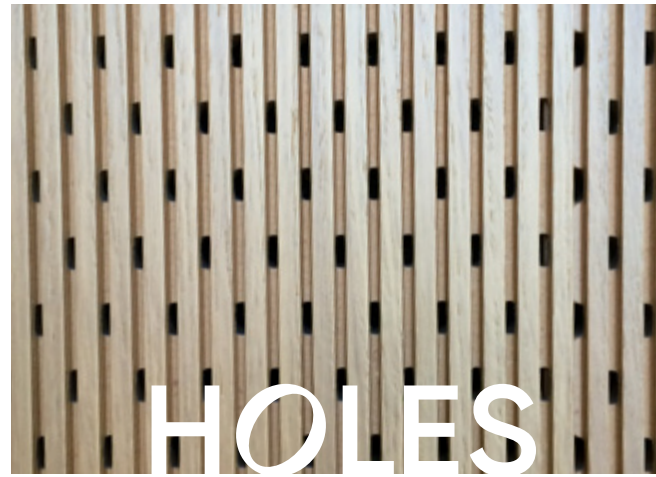
As you walk into the lobby area and into the auditorium, here are some things to look for...

About Orchestra Hall



LOCKERS

Yes, Orchestra Hall has lockers! But instead of putting school books in them, audience members put their coats in them during concerts. We thought about getting rid of them during the renovation but discovered that having coats in the lockers actually helps to sound-proof the auditorium because they soak up sound!



HOLES

The small holes in the brown paneling on the lobby walls absorb sound so everyone can talk to their friends at the same time without having to shout!



FUZZ

Fuzzy carpeting on the walls is another soundproofing element of the ring corridor.



1 INCH

Look for a one inch gap as you walk through the lobby doors into the ring corridor. Orchestra Hall is actually two separate buildings separated by a one-inch gap that is filled with a special material to block noise and vibrations from going inside the auditorium.



114 CUBES

There are 114 cubes on the ceilings and walls. Instead of absorbing sound like in the lobby, the cubes bounce the sound all over the place so everyone can hear our Orchestra play. But that also means that if you talk from your seats the musicians can hear you too!



Why cubes? When they were first building Orchestra Hall the architects kept envisioning a shape on the walls and ceiling but couldn't decide what to use. Legend has it that one of the architects went home to have dinner with his family and as he described the problem with the hall, his kids responded "It could be like Fantastic Four superhero 'The Thing!'" He loved the idea so much that he added cubes on the wall and ceiling, giving the hall its iconic "Thing-inspired" look!