

# MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA



## MUSIC FOR A BETTER WORLD: CONCERT GUIDE

*Designed for students in grades 1-6*

Prepared by Minnesota Orchestra Education & Community Engagement Department



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# MUSIC FOR A BETTER WORLD

Dear educators,

Thank you for joining us for Music for a Better World Young People's Concerts! In this program, we will take a look at how composers use the music they write to respond to the world around them and make a powerful statement. Often, composers write music to advocate for change or spread awareness about the causes close to their hearts and we are excited to share some thought-provoking pieces of music with you.

We are proud to be collaborating with 29:11 International Exchange for this program! 29:11 is a musical ensemble based in South Africa and the United States. Their mission is to facilitate hope and reconciliation and spread the message that by recognizing that each of us is worthy of understanding and love, we can bridge the ideological, racial and socio-economic gaps that divide us and live together as citizens of the world.

At the end of these performances, students will have the opportunity to join 29:11 in singing their song, Shosholoza. There are videos included in this curriculum by Brendon Adams, Artistic Director of 29:11, to help you and your students learn Shosholoza.

We look forward to seeing you at Orchestra Hall!

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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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



**DOUBLE BASS**  
String Family



**PICCOLO**  
Woodwind Family



**FLUTE**  
Woodwind Family



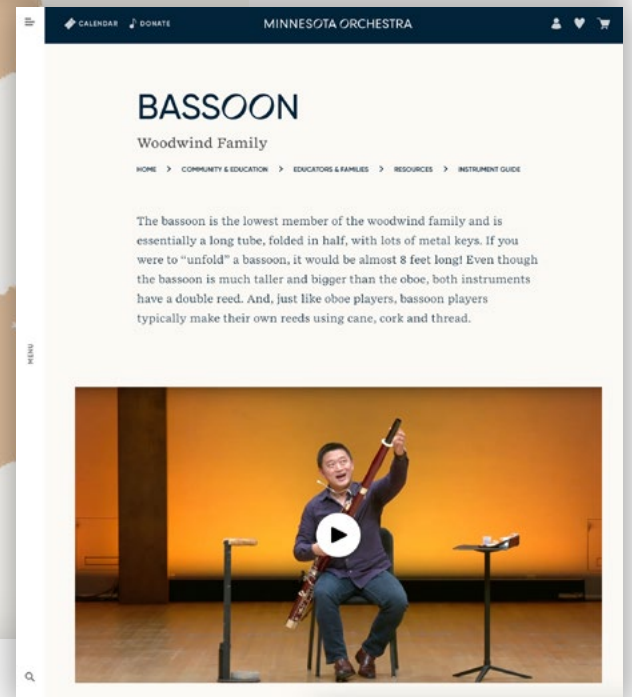
**OBOE**  
Woodwind Family



**CLARINET**  
Woodwind Family



**BASSOON**  
Woodwind Family



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

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



[MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA MUSICIANS](#)

PHOTO Travis Anderson Photography.

## Composer Corner



**Ludwig van Beethoven**

(1770–1827)

Ludwig van Beethoven was a German composer and pianist and is one of the world's most well-known composers, known for his dramatic symphonies. With his earlier works using composition techniques consistent with the Classical era and his later works aligned with music of the Romantic era, he spanned the transition between the two musical periods. Beethoven was born in Bonn, Germany, and began playing piano and composing at an early age with his father, Johann van Beethoven, as his teacher. At age 21 he moved to Vienna, Austria, and studied composition with Franz Joseph Haydn and was known around the city as a virtuoso pianist. Beethoven began gradually losing his hearing around 1798, resulting in almost full deafness by 1812. Despite this, Beethoven continued to compose music up until 1826, just one year before his death.



**Mary D. Watkins**

(B. 1939)

Mary D. Watkins is an American composer and pianist and a native of Denver, Colorado. Watkins is known both for her jazz and classical music. She graduated from Howard University in 1972 and began performing with jazz ensembles in Washington, D.C. shortly after. She has released several full-length albums, composed commissioned works for many jazz ensembles, written film scores, and is the recipient of countless awards and grants.



**Oswald Huynh**

(B. 1997)

Oswald Huynh is a Vietnamese American composer whose music navigates Vietnamese aesthetics and tradition, language and translation, and the relationship between heritage and identity. His work is characterized by intricate contrasts of timbre and interweaving textures that are rooted in narrative, culture and memory. Huynh has collaborated with artists like the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, Alarm Will Sound, American Composers Orchestra, Akropolis Reed Quintet and Tacet(i) Ensemble. He has received honors from Luigi Nono International Composition Prize, New England Philharmonic, Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra and Musiqqa. Huynh holds a bachelor's degree from Lewis & Clark College and master's degree from University of Missouri.





**Carlos Simon**

(B. 1986)

Carlos Simon is an American composer who grew up in Atlanta, Georgia. He attended Morehouse College in Atlanta before earning his master's degree at Georgia State University and his doctorate degree from the University of Michigan. His music ranges from concert music to film scores with influences of jazz, gospel and neo-romantic styles. Simon is currently the composer in residence for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the inaugural Boston Symphony Orchestra Composer Chair, and was nominated for a 2023 Grammy Award for his album *Requiem for the Enslaved*.



**29:11 International Exchange**

29:11 International Exchange is a musical ensemble based in South Africa and the United States. Its mission is to facilitate hope and reconciliation through musical performance and cross-cultural collaboration and artist development. 29:11 provides valuable professional experience to all members of the ensemble. The group produces, performs, and records music across a wide range of genres. Repertoire features original works, Gospel favorites, remixed rhymes and pop covers.

29:11's universal message is centered around the ancient African concept of **Ubuntu**. Ubuntu roughly translates to "humanity to others," meaning recognition that a person is who they are because of others. Ubuntu means recognizing that everyone is worthy of understanding and love, and that we can use compassion to heal and transcend barriers that divide us because we are strongest together. They use music in a variety of ways to inspire and cultivate Ubuntu, one group at a time.

## Learning Targets —

I can define “overture”  
I can compose a short piece of music

## The Story of Leonore —

This heroic story is about Leonore who, disguised as a prison guard named Fidelio, rescues her husband, Florestan, from being put to death in a political prison. Florestan was a powerful Spanish nobleman who threatens to expose the crimes committed by a rival nobleman, Pizarro. As an act of revenge, Pizarro secretly imprisons Florestan in a prison that he owns, as he spreads lies about Florestan’s death. However, Leonore does not believe Pizarro’s lies.

Disguised as Fidelio, Leonore gets a job at Pizarro’s prison as the prison warden’s assistant. On her rounds, she finds her husband Florestan chained in his prison cell. He does not recognize her in disguise. Just as Florestan is about to be killed by Pizarro, Leonore stands in front of him, removing her disguise and telling everyone her real identity. Leonore and the prison warden then expose Pizarro’s lies and Pizarro is taken away. Leonore removes the chains from Florestan’s wrists, making him a free man.

## The History of Leonore and its Many Overtures —

*Leonore* (Leonora in German) was the original title to the opera *Fidelio* written by German composer Ludwig van Beethoven in 1804. This was the only opera that Beethoven ever wrote! The opera premiered at the famous Theater an der Wien in Vienna, Austria. The opera title was changed to *Fidelio* because two other operas premiered that year with similar titles and used the same libretto as inspiration. Beethoven and the theater wanted to stand out and reduce confusion to opera goers.

With this title change, Beethoven wrote a brand new overture to *Fidelio*. An overture is a piece of music at the beginning of an opera or a play. This new overture was the fourth one Beethoven wrote for the opera. *Leonore Overture No. 3*, the version the Minnesota Orchestra will play, was actually the second overture Beethoven wrote for this opera.

Here are the overtures in order of when they were written:

1. 1805: *Leonore Overture No. 2* – this is the version that was played at the opera’s premiere
2. 1806: *Leonore Overture No. 3* – this is the version the Minnesota Orchestra will play
3. 1807: *Leonore Overture No. 1* – this version was never performed in the opera
4. 1814: *Fidelio Overture* – this version is still performed in the opera today

Notice that the overture’s numbers are out of order. There is no concrete answer as to why they were numbered this way. *Leonore Overture No. 2* was played at the opera’s first performance. *Leonore Overture No. 3* is still performed by orchestras around the world and is sometimes played during the second act of opera performances. *Leonore Overture No. 1* was never performed with the opera because intended the performance was cancelled. Then, before the next performance of the opera, the opera’s title was changed to *Fidelio* and Beethoven had written a new overture.

## COMPOSE A CONCERT OVERTURE

### 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 composed to precede an opera or play, and a concert overture composed as an independent piece but may be inspired by a play or literary work. Beethoven’s *Leonore Overture* is an example of one that precedes an opera, though it is often performed as a standalone piece. The piece is intended to communicate ideas and characters from Jean-Nicolas Bouilly’s French libretto *Léonore, ou L’amour conjugal* (Leonore, the Triumph of Married Love).

# Activity #1

## Leonore Overture No. 3 by Ludwig van Beethoven

2. Tell students that they can compose an overture based on a favorite book, story or poem, or have them write their own short stories. 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 student 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 increase in volume  <	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 five	

## Activity #2

# Once Upon a Time, from *Five Movements in Color* by Mary D. Watkins

### Learning Targets —

I can identify instruments through listening  
I can use a listening map

Composer Mary D. Watkins describes this piece as “a statement about the African American experience” and an “epochal painting” that moves chronologically through five movements. The first movement begins in West Africa, featuring various musical styles and genres from the African diaspora and drumming. As the movements go on, the tone of the music moves from serenity to grief to chaos and anxiousness and depicts peace, loss and a complicated contemporary experience.

### Introduce Listening Maps —

Listen to [this 1954 recording](#) by the Minnesota Orchestra of *March* from Tchaikovsky’s *Nutcracker* ballet. As you listen, guide students through the listening map (found in PRINTABLES) to help them decipher how different articulations, dynamics and instruments can be expressed in the listening map.

## PIECE TOGETHER A LISTENING MAP

### Materials Needed —

Listening map sections, scissors, glue stick/tape

This activity can be done by students individually or as a class. The first movement of *Five Movements in Color* by Mary D. Watkins does not follow a specific form. Now that students understand the concept of a listening map, students will piece together a listening map comprised of 11 small sections, outlined below. Students will cut out each of the sections (found in PRINTABLES) and paste them to a separate blank sheet of paper.

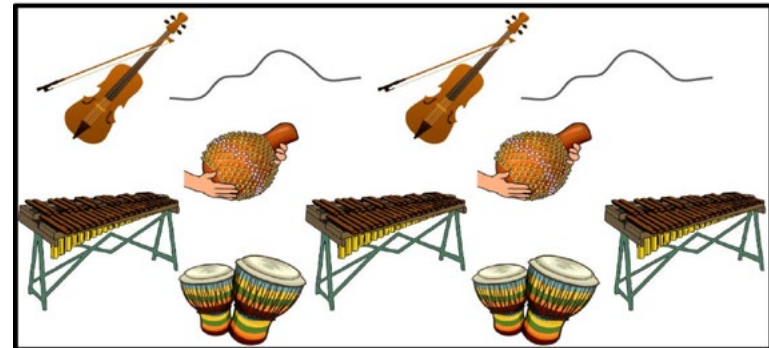
As you listen to this movement, you may want to pause and repeat different sections to give students more than one chance to hear it and match the section of music with the corresponding section of the listening map.

Link to recording: [Once Upon a Time, from \*Five Movements in Color\* \(YouTube\)](#)

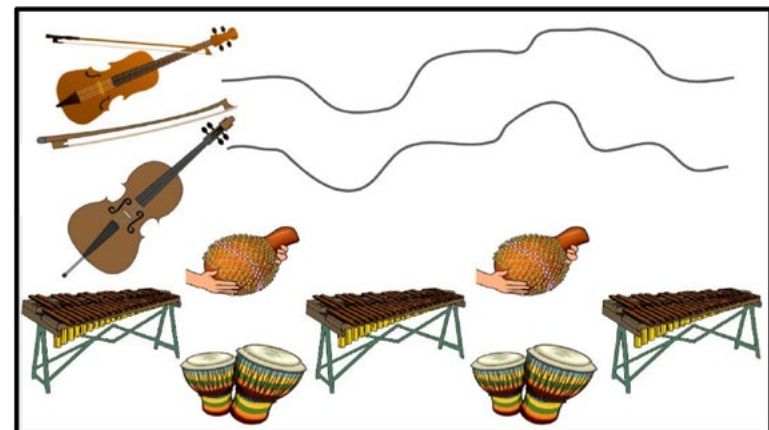
#### Section 1: beginning – 0:36



#### Section 2: 0:37 – 1:16



#### Section 3: 1:17 – 1:50



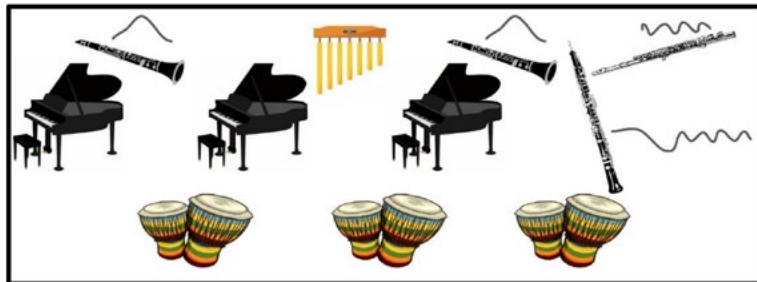
# Activity #2

## Once Upon a Time, from Five Movements in Color by Mary D. Watkins

Section 4: 1:51 – 2:28



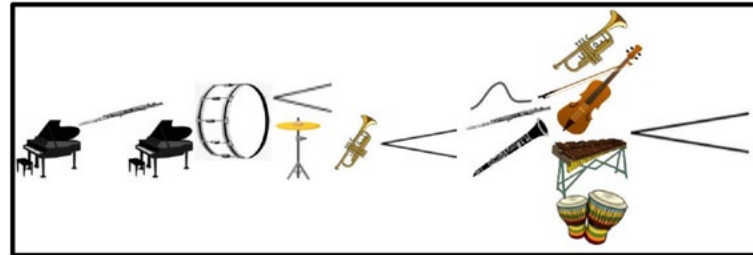
Section 5: 2:29 – 3:01



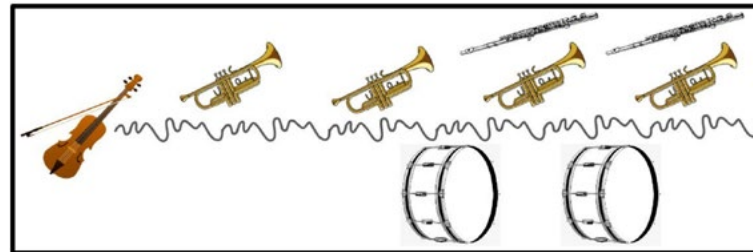
Section 6: 3:02 – 3:47



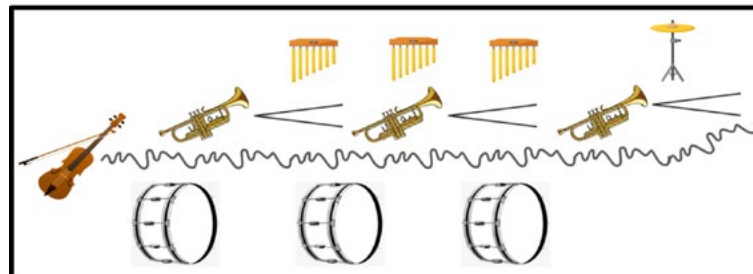
Section 7: 3:48 – 4:14



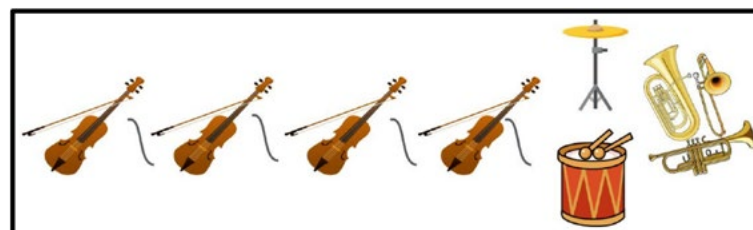
Section 8: 4:15 – 4:48



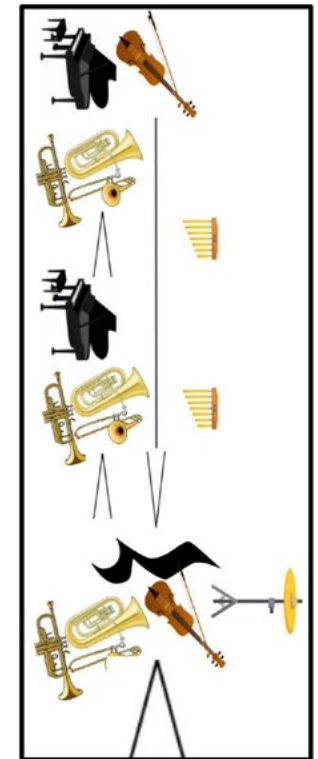
Section 9: 4:49 – 5:18



Section 10: 5:19 – 5:30



Section 11: 5:31 – end



## Activity #3

# *Blood is thicker than water*, from *Gia Đình* by Oswald Huỳnh

### Learning Targets —

- I can write a paragraph about a personal experience
- I can define “melody”
- I can compose a melody inspired by a story

The title of this piece, *Gia Đình*, means “family” in Vietnamese. In the words of composer Oswald Huỳnh, this piece explores intergenerational trauma, cultural inheritance, and what is lost between generations. Specifically, this piece focuses on the greater Vietnamese diaspora and the Vietnamese boat people who traveled across the ocean in makeshift boats in search of a bright future for their families.

The final movement, *Blood is thicker than water*, centers around the feelings one might experience during migration, displacement and getting used to living in a new place. As families move away from their own culture, many pieces of that culture are lost between generations, including language and cultural practices. This loss of culture is represented musically by two extremely contrasting melodies: a slow, lyrical melody inspired by Vietnamese folk melodies and a more chaotic section that cycles through the entire orchestra.

### Write About a Lived Experience —

Like Oswald Huỳnh’s piece, many pieces of music are inspired by experiences and events in history. Often, these pieces contain a reoccurring melody that represents either the things experienced by the composer or the event itself. Think about all the things you have experienced in your life so far; have you ever traveled or moved to a new place? Did you play an important sporting event? Have you taken a ride on a roller coaster? Think of an experience that is important to you; this experience can be positive or negative—whatever you wish to write about. Once you decide on the experience you’d like to focus on, write a paragraph about that experience. As you write, consider these questions:

- What was the event?
- How did you feel during this experience?
- What was the outcome of this event?
- Why did you choose to write about this experience and why is it important to you?

### COMPOSE A MELODY FOR VOICE, SLIDE WHISTLE, OR INSTRUMENT

#### Materials Needed —

None. Optional: Slide whistle and/or melodic classroom instruments or keyboard.

#### Directions —

None. Optional: Slide whistle and/or melodic classroom instruments or keyboard.

For this activity, students will use the paragraph they wrote about their chosen experience and write a melody that represents it. These melodies should convey their feelings during the event they wrote about and represent the event itself.

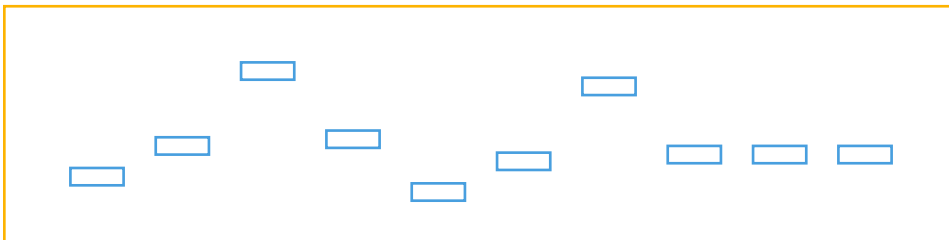
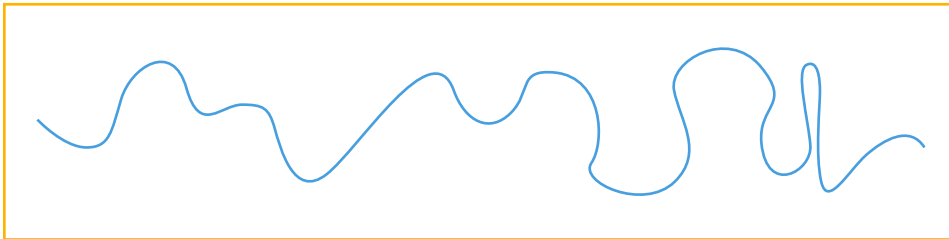
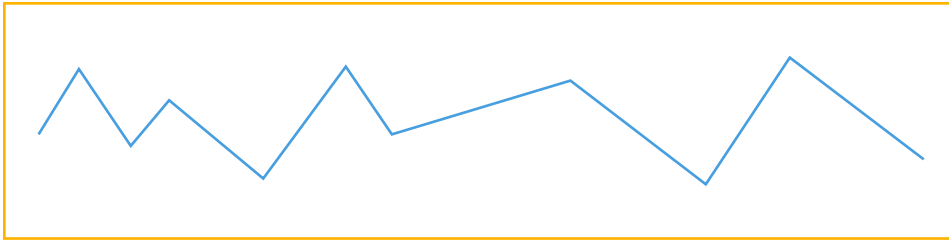
- 1:** Remind or explain to students that music is made up of different parts or elements, and a melody is one part of music. A melody is a sequence of notes that make up a song or a piece of music.
- 2:** Reinforce the concept by explaining that we can’t clap a melody. If we try to clap the song Happy 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 varies 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.

## Activity #3

# *Blood is thicker than water*, from *Gia Đình* by Oswald Huynh

**4:** Explain that we can use lines to indicate 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 demonstrations with students.



## Learning Targets —

I can define “tone painting”

*The Block* is a short orchestral piece based on the visual art of Romare Bearden (1911–1988). Most of Bearden’s work reflects Black American culture in urban cities as well as the rural American south. Although Bearden was born in Charlotte, North Carolina, he spent most of his life in Harlem, New York. With its vibrant artistic community, this piece aims to highlight the rich energy and joyous sceneries that Harlem expressed as it was the hotbed for Black American culture.

This piece is comprised of six paintings that highlight different buildings (church, barbershop, nightclub, etc.) in Harlem on one block. This is called “tone painting,” meaning that Simon’s music is meant to help the listener picture something specific while listening to his piece. Bearden’s paintings incorporate various mediums including watercolors, graphite and metallic papers. In the same way, this musical piece explores various musical textures which highlight the vibrant scenery and energy that a block in Harlem or any urban city exhibits.

## The Block: paintings by Romare Bearden —



Each of the six panels of *The Block* presents an aspect of life in Harlem, depicting neighborhood institutions, including the Evangelical church, the barbershop, and the corner grocery store. Bearden took artistic license in revealing the private moments of apartment life as well as the exuberant humanity that existed in a single city block.

## DRAW YOUR OWN BLOCK!

### Materials Needed —

Paper, drawing utensils

As you listen to *The Block* by Carlos Simon, look at each painting in Bearden’s set. Listen to how the instruments bring each scene to life and tell a story about each place.

Think about where you live—do you live in an apartment? A house? A condo? Note to teachers: this activity works with your school, too—if it is more appropriate for your students, have them draw a hallway or another location at your school instead of their homes.

Choose 3–6 different places around where you live. This list can include stores, restaurants/coffee shops, parks or any other locations around where you live.

Draw these locations. As you draw, think about your neighbors, the colors and everything you normally see when you look around these places. You can divide your paper into different sections or use different pieces of paper for each location you choose to draw.

Once you’ve drawn your “block,” choose a piece of music—classical nor not—that you think pairs well with your “block.” Do not just simply choose your favorite song; choose a song that you think best represents the places you drew.



### Learning Targets —

I can use my singing voice  
I can sing a song individually and with my class

### Learn About 29:11 International Exchange —

29:11 International Exchange is a musical ensemble based in South Africa and the United States. Its mission is to facilitate hope and reconciliation through musical performance and collaboration, artist development and cross-cultural relationships. By recognizing that each of us is worthy of understanding and love, we can bridge the ideological, racial and socio-economic gaps that divide us, and live together as citizens of the world.

### Learn a Song by 29:11 —





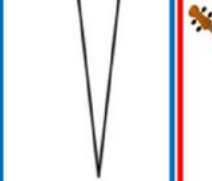















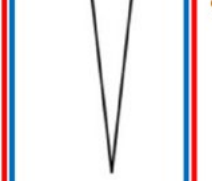

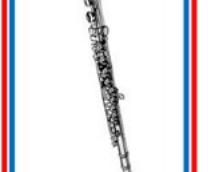





When you come to Orchestra Hall in February, you will have the opportunity to sing *Shosholoza* with 29:11 and the Minnesota Orchestra!

# PRINTABLES



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

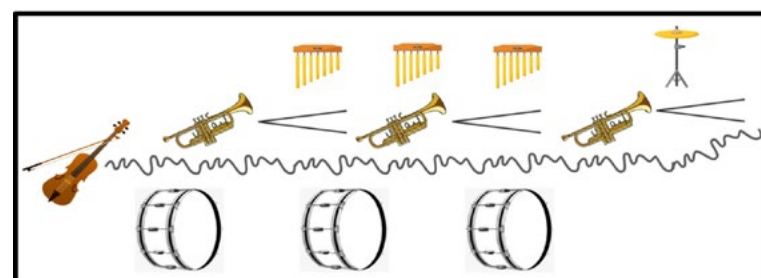
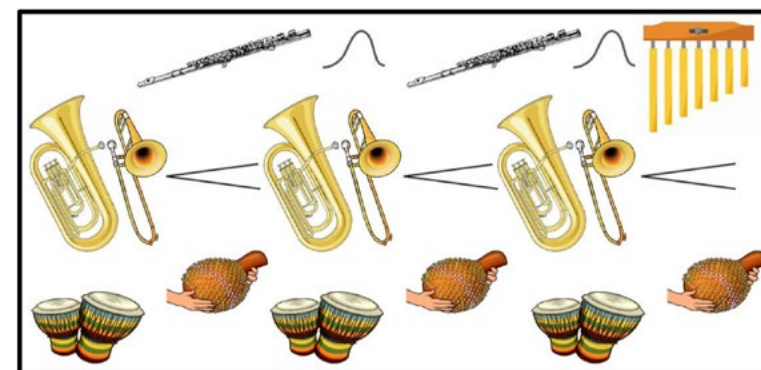
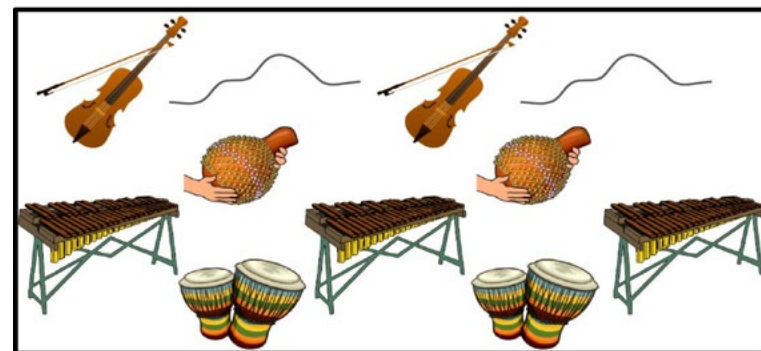
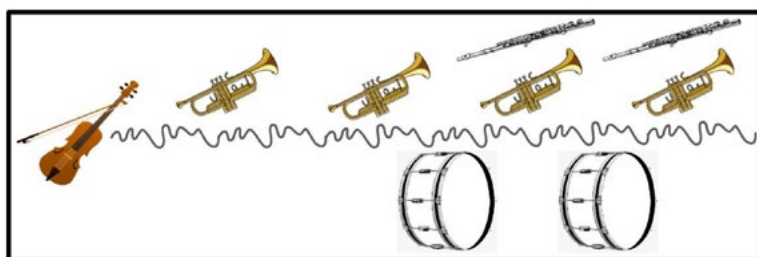
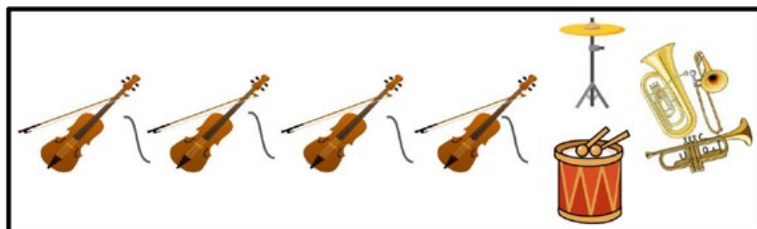
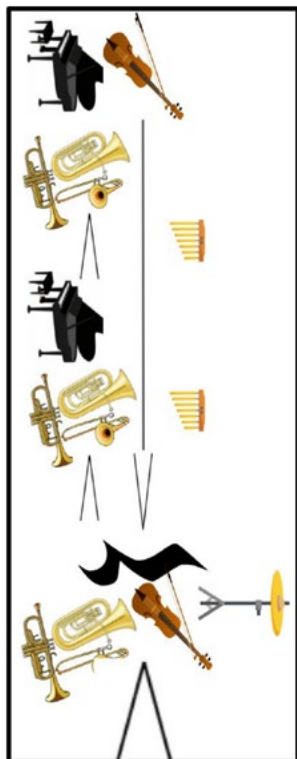
# LISTENING MAP FOR *MARCH* FROM *THE NUTCRACKER* BY TCHAIKOVSKY

  <i>mp</i>   <i>mp</i> <b>A</b>	    <b>B</b>	  <i>mp</i>   <i>mp</i> <b>A</b>	    <b>C</b>	    <i>f</i> <b>A</b>	    <b>B</b>	    <i>f</i> <b>A</b>
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# PIECE TOGETHER A LISTENING MAP TO *ONCE UPON A TIME*, FROM *FIVE MOVEMENTS IN COLOR* BY MARY D. WATKINS

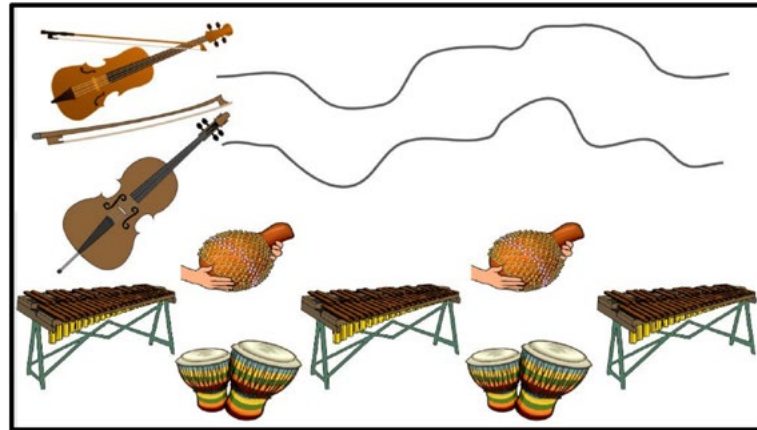
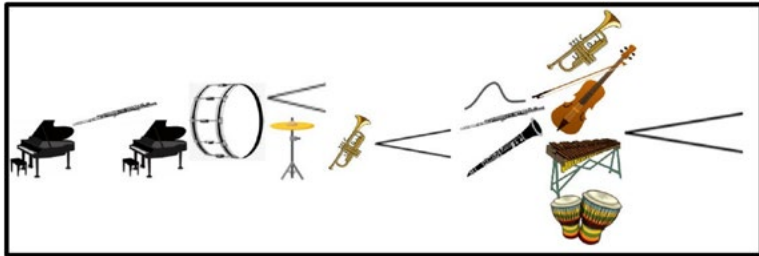
Printable #3

**Directions:** Cut out the 11 sections below. As you listen to this piece, listen carefully to the instruments you hear and put the sections in order.



# PIECE TOGETHER A LISTENING MAP TO *ONCE UPON A TIME*, FROM *FIVE MOVEMENTS IN COLOR* BY MARY D. WATKINS

**Directions:** Cut out the 11 sections below. As you listen to this piece, listen carefully to the instruments you hear and put the sections in order.



## 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.

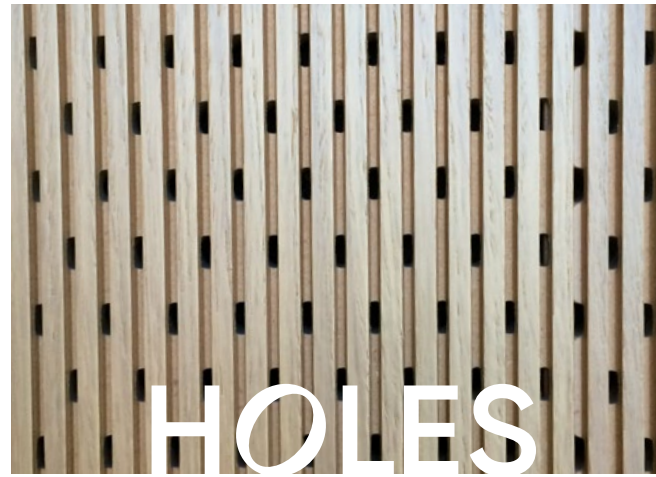
As you walk into the lobby area and into the auditorium, here are some things to look for...

## 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!