

KEY STAGE 2 & KEY STAGE 3 SCHOOLS' CONCERTS

Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Monday 10 February 2025, 11am & 1:30pm
Tuesday 11 February 2025, 11am & 1:30pm
Wednesday 12 February 2025, 11am & 1:30pm

John Williams (born 1932)

HEDWIG'S THEME (FROM HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE) (2001)

We're starting here in England: Platform 9 ¾ at King's Cross Station, to be precise! John Williams is one of the world's best-known composers, and even if you don't know his name, chances are you'll know his music for films like *Indiana Jones*, *Star Wars*, *War Horse* and (of course) the 2001 film of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. No composer in the world is better at using all the sounds of a big orchestra, and writing some great tunes too.

You all know the story, and we're sure you'll know the music when you hear it! John Williams never went to Hogwarts, but he can certainly conjure up some magic...

What to listen out for:

Harry's theme - The very first thing you hear. Recognise it? Film and opera composers often give characters their own tunes (or "motifs") that reappear whenever the character appears- it helps tell the story. We all know who's the hero here!

Wizardry - Why does the music sound so magical? John Williams uses an instrument called the celeste (it's like a tiny piano) that makes a glistening, mysterious sound.

What else could I listen to?

There are thousands of great movie scores out there, and they're often just as good without the pictures. We'll be hearing some more in this concert, but you could also try John Williams's music for *War Horse* or *Jurassic Park*.

Ronan Hardiman (b.1961)

LORD OF THE DANCE (1996)

Next stop: Ireland! If you've ever watched the Eurovision Song Competition (and 'fess up - who hasn't?), you might have seen those little films they show between each song to capture the spirit of the host country. In 1994 that country was Ireland, and instead of a film, they had a stunning new dance routine inspired by traditional Irish folkdance. *Riverdance* became a worldwide sensation - a combination of Celtic style and thrilling dance moves - and its star Michael Flatley became famous as "Lord of the Dance".

What to listen out for:

Irish sounds - Ireland has an amazing heritage of folk music, often played on quite simple instruments such as the fiddle (violin), flute and bodhrán drum. Which instruments take the lead here?

Dancing rhythms - this is dance music, so the rhythm is vital: the music gives the dancers something to follow. The bouncing rhythms of the Irish reel provides the energy here - feel free to tap your toes as you listen!

What else could I listen to?

Folk dances have inspired composers of all nations. Have a listen to Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances* (from Czechia) and Gustav Holst's *St Paul's Suite* (from England).

Jacques Offenbach (1819-1880)

INFERNAL GALOP (CAN-CAN) (FROM ORPHEUS IN THE UNDERWORLD) (1858)

Now we're hopping the Channel to France. Have you ever been to see a musical at the theatre? The French composer Jacques Offenbach basically invented them. He was a huge star in 19th century Paris, and he wrote over a hundred crazy comic operas ("operettas") that audiences found either shockingly rude or outrageously funny. But they all came out whistling the tunes!

In Offenbach's most successful show, *Orpheus in the Underworld*, the gods of Ancient Greece take a holiday in Hell – and find that behaving badly is a lot more fun than they'd thought. The most popular dance in the Underworld is the scandalous, high-kicking Infernal Galop (better known today as the "Can-Can"). This was as naughty as it got back in those days – and we think you'll recognise it!

What to listen out for:

High and low - Offenbach uses both the bright, squeaky sound of the orchestra's smallest instrument, the piccolo, and the loud, boisterous sound of the trombones (in the brass section), some of the biggest instruments in the orchestra.

Building a mood - The music isn't always loud, but the energy never flags. How does Offenbach keep the excitement building?

What else could I listen to?

Offenbach was a brilliant storyteller. For a very different side of his special magic, try the beautiful *Barcarolle* (boat song) from his opera *The Tales of Hoffmann*.

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

SCÈNE (FROM SWAN LAKE) (1877)

Our next journey is our longest so far: to the graceful, romantic world of classical ballet in 19th century Russia. The Russian composer Tchaikovsky loved the ballet. He was a shy and nervous man, but when he found a good story, he could write some of the most thrilling and magical music of all time.

In 1877 Moscow's famous Bolshoi Ballet gave him a fairy-tale story of an enchanted swan and a handsome prince, and asked him to turn it into a ballet. You just need to know that in this bit, it's a summer night, and Prince Siegfried has just caught sight of a flock of swans in the mist across a woodland lake. He

doesn't know yet that one of them is really the beautiful Princess Odette, under a magic spell.

What to listen out for:

Pure emotion - Tchaikovsky captures the mystery of the scene with a sad, sweet tune – first played by the oboe, one of the thin black woodwind instruments) in the middle of the orchestra.

Background colours - Tchaikovsky paints a mood of mists and moonlight around the tune. The violins make a shimmering sound (called tremolando) and the harp ripples like water. Then things start to get stormy...

What else could I listen to?

The *Swan Lake Suite* has lots of the best bits from *Swan Lake*, but Tchaikovsky's music is so wonderful that you could easily listen to the whole two-and-a-half hour ballet from beginning to end!

Yasushi Akutagawa (1925 - 1989)

ALLEGRO (FROM TRIPTYQUE) (1953)

Japan has a rich and ancient musical culture, and it's also home to some truly superb musicians in the western classical tradition – like the CBSO's Music Director Kazuki Yamada! The composer Yasushi Akutagawa was the son of a famous Japanese writer, but he chose to devote his life to music: teaching and conducting amateur orchestras, as well as writing music of his own. He wrote this piece in 1953, shortly before he travelled to study in Russia.

The title *Triptyque* means a picture in three sections. The first section (or "movement") is titled *Allegro* – which in Italian, the traditional language of western classical music, simply means "Fast".

What to listen out for:

Speed – you can't miss the energy in this music. How does Akutagawa grab the attention, and keep us listening as the music speeds forward?

Strings – Akutagawa deliberately uses only the instruments of the orchestra's string section: violins, violas, cellos and basses. How does that change the sound?

What else could I listen to?

First, have a listen to the rest of *Triptyque*. If you like the sound of strings alone you might try the haunting *Requiem* by another great Japanese composer, Toru Takemitsu.

Rahul Dev Burman (1939-1994)

YAMMA YAMMA (1981)

The CBSO is Birmingham's orchestra, so naturally we love Bollywood! We were one of the first symphony orchestras to play music from the Indian film industry, and in 2004 we brought the legendary A.R. Rahman to Birmingham for his first public performance with a western classical orchestra. We've recorded the music of Mohammed Rafi, and we've played many, many songs by Rahul Dev Burman – or as he's better known, RD Burman, the genius from Kolkata who created some of the best-loved hits in Indian cinema.

If you know the 1981 action movie *Shaan*, you'll already know this song – it was sung in the movie by the great Mohammed Rafi. We don't have him here today, but we do have the full CBSO...

What to listen out for:

Action – you can tell from the beginning that Burman means business! Swirling patterns and a lively rhythm from the percussion section help get the pulse racing here.

Violins – They're the most numerous instrument in the orchestra and in Bollywood scores they often play very high and very energetically to get the tune across and make the music shine. They certainly do here!

What else could I listen to?

The CBSO's album *Orchestral Qawwali* is a glorious blend of Sufi poetry and symphony orchestra – a very different style of music from the Indian subcontinent, performed with just as much passion!

Teresa Carreño (1853-1917)

MI TERESITA (LITTLE WALTZ) (1896)

From India to the Americas! Teresa Carreño was born in Caracas, Venezuela, but her parents spotted her musical talents early on and moved to New York so that she could study. Before long, she was famous herself, playing the piano to huge audiences at the age of eight. She soon started writing her own music, too, and during her career she played across America and Europe as well as in Britain, Russia, Cuba, New Zealand and Australia. One British conductor said that she "looked like a queen among pianists – and played like a goddess".

But you don't have to make a big noise to be a star! Many of Carreño's own pieces were short and gentle. She wrote this waltz some time before 1896, after hearing her daughter Teresita playing the piano. Today, we're going to hear it played on the harp.

What to listen out for:

Skilful fingers – the harp has more than 45 strings and every one has to be plucked by hand. Our harpist Katherine makes it sound easy (but that's because she's so good...)

Gentle rhythms – we've heard some very lively dances today but this one is different: a slow, delicate dance. Katherine plays the dance rhythm with one hand, and the tune with the other.

What else could I listen to?

There's lots of gorgeous, magical music for harp: the French composer Maurice Ravel's *Introduction et Allegro* is one of our favourites. He was a friend of Teresa Carreño's, too.

Alberto Ginastera (1916-83)

MALAMBO FROM ESTANCIA (1941)

Alberto Ginastera came from Argentina, where *Estancia* means an estate or ranch – a huge cattle farm spread over the *pampas*: rolling, grassy plains (Argentina is still where lots of the world's corned beef comes from). But this is music from a ballet, written in 1941, and it's quite hard to find dancing cows. So it's about the folk who work on the farm: rounding up the cattle, reaping the corn, working hard and playing hard. In a word – cowboys (though in Argentina, they're known as *gauchos*)

A *Malambo* is a wild, energetic dance where *gauchos* let their hair down – and show off some incredible moves, still wearing their cowboy boots. In the final scene, everyone cuts loose!

What to listen out for:

Hit it – listen out for the jangle of the tambourine and the wooden, rattling sound of the xylophone – both in the percussion section, at the very back of the orchestra.

Yelling brass – the brass section, near the back of the orchestra, contains some of the loudest and most brilliant instruments. As the dance speeds on, Ginastera makes them seem to yell and shout.

What else could I listen to?

Ginastera's American friend Aaron Copland wrote another colourful cowboy ballet – *Rodeo*. The final *Hoe-Down* captures all the excitement of *Malambo*, but with a US accent.

John Williams (b.1932)

IMPERIAL MARCH FROM STAR WARS EPISODE V (THE EMPIRE STRIKE BACK) (1980)

When George Lucas made the first ever Star Wars film in 1977, no-one knew that one day it'd be a huge intergalactic epic featuring 12 movies, TV series, cartoons and (of course) Baby Yoda. But John Williams could tell it was something big, and when he was asked to write the music he came up with a whole series of memorable tunes to portray the many different characters (just as he did with Harry Potter, two decades later).

In *The Empire Strikes Back*, the Dark Side of the Force – led by the terrifying Darth Vader and the evil Empire that he serves – is winning the struggle. John Williams had to come up with music that would convey the power and terror of the imperial forces, and this is how he did it...

What to listen out for:

On the March – for centuries, armies have moved to the steady, regular rhythm of the March: four beats, left-right, left-right! Naturally, Williams asks the orchestra to pound out a stern march-time beat.

Sound the trumpets – Armies on Earth have often used trumpets and drums to signal during battle, so in the march of this intergalactic army, the orchestra's trumpets play a powerful part.

What else could I listen to?

Like the films, John Williams' music for *Star Wars* explores all sorts of moods – joyful, heroic, romantic, playful and mysterious, as well as terrifying! Williams' *Star Wars* Symphonic Suite gives you a taste of the whole story.

Edward Argenziano (b.1958)

STINKIN' GARBAGE

"What a crazy idea!" says the American composer Edward (but we can call him Ed) Argenziano – "A hot percussion ensemble played on nothing but metal garbage cans!" Well, he wrote it, so he should know. Ed is a well-known music teacher in the USA, as well as a composer. But he's also a brilliant percussionist, and he knows that if you hit anything, it makes a sound. And if it makes a sound, it can make music! What better way to show that than by proving that even garbage cans – metal rubbish bins – can be musical instruments?

That's the idea: now here's the sound. The CBSO's percussion section usually hangs out at the back of the orchestra, playing everything from huge drums to bells, xylophones, whistles, paper bags, wood blocks...you name it, really. But now they're up front – taking out the garbage.

What to listen out for:

Trash sounds – so what do garbage cans actually sound like? They don't all sound the same. Try and work out which ones are making which sound, and why.

Eye music – music like this isn't just fun to hear. It's incredibly physical to play, making it fun to watch, too! How do the players create these sounds? How do they stay in touch with each other when they're all playing? Use your eyes as well as your ears to find out.

What else could I listen to?

Why just listen? The American composer Steve Reich goes one better than using garbage cans in his *Clapping Music* – he uses no instruments at all. Seriously: all you need to play it is two pairs of hands and a memory for rhythm. Over to you...

Klaus Badelt (b.1967)

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN (2003)

That was Stinkin' Garbage, but we're going to finish by searching for treasure. As you probably know, Captain Jack Sparrow is a pirate – and whether he's dealing with phantom ships, ancient curses, or young love, Jack goes for it with a glint in his eye and a mischievous grin. And so does the German film composer Klaus Badelt. He composed all the music for this two-and-a-half hour long movie in just 30 days!

If you've seen the film, you'll already know what this music is about – but even if you haven't, it's easy to guess that we're in for adventure on the high seas. That calls for the whole orchestra. All together now: Arrrrrrrrrr!!

What to listen out for:

Adventure – a pounding rhythm sets your pulse racing; then the brass instruments shout out a real swashbuckler of a tune.

Musical storytelling – try and guess which bit of the music tells the love story between Will and Elizabeth, and listen out for the clash of swords and the deep, shimmering sound of the gong (or "Tam Tam"), the big circular percussion instrument at the back of the orchestra (it's about the size of a ship's wheel).

What else could I listen to?

Composers have always loved tales of seafaring adventure. For a splash of salt water, listen to Wagner's overture *The Flying Dutchman*, or another great film score: *The Sea Hawk*, by Erich Wolfgang Korngold.

THE COMPOSERS

Name: **John Williams (born 1932 – age 93)**

Nationality: **American**

Interesting facts:

- He started out by playing piano in the band of the US Air Force – and playing jazz in New York clubs.
- Only Walt Disney has ever been nominated for more Oscars than John Williams.
- He's the oldest person ever to have been nominated for an Academy Award (when he was 90).
- He can play piano, bassoon, cello, clarinet, trombone, and trumpet.

▶ What instrument(s) can you play?

▶ What's your favourite piece of film music, and why?

Name: **Ronan Hardiman (born 1961 – age 63)**

Nationality: **Irish**

Interesting facts:

- His dad worked for Irish TV but Ronan didn't start out as a full-time musician – in fact, he wrote *Lord of the Dance* in his spare time, while working in a bank!
- He's composed music for many TV adverts, including Coca Cola and Guinness.
- He wrote the music for *Lord of the Dance* in just fifteen days.
- Ronan also wrote the theme tune for the RTE (Irish television) news.

▶ Do you have to be a full time musician to make music?

▶ What's your favourite bit of music from a TV advert?

Name: **Jacques Offenbach (1819-1880)**

Nationality: **French**

Interesting facts:

- He was born in Germany and was named Jakob, but he adopted France as his home and changed his name to Jacques.
- He played the cello incredibly well, and performed for kings and queens all over Europe.
- He wrote over 100 operettas (comedy operas), including one about a singing dog and another about a carrot that comes to life and becomes king.
- He loved his pet dog, a borzoi called Kleinzach, and always took him to rehearsals.

▶ Does the Devil really have all the best tunes?

▶ Do you have a pet – and do they have a favourite piece of music?

Name: **Pyotr Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)**
Nationality: **Russian**

Interesting facts:

- Tchaikovsky trained as a lawyer and always worried that his music wasn't good enough, even when it became world famous.
- He once composed a piece (his 1812 Overture) for full orchestra, brass bands, the bells of a nearby cathedral and several (real) cannon.
- Tchaikovsky visited England three times but he thought London was "gloomy and depressing". He liked British food though – "tasty and filling!"

- ▶ What's the strangest sound you have ever heard in a piece of music?
 - ▶ Can you tell what country a composer is from just by listening to their music?
-

Name: **Yasushi Akutagawa (1925 - 1989)**
Nationality: **Japanese**

Interesting facts:

- Akutagawa's father Ryūnosuke wrote the novel Rashomon – later adapted into one of the most admired of all Japanese movies.
- Akutagawa's composition teacher Akira Ifukube was a famous film composer – he created the monster Godzilla's famous roar!
- Akutagawa wanted to study in Russia, which was illegal at the time, so he entered the country secretly and made contact with several major composers.
- He had a side career as a TV presenter.

- ▶ Can you think of any pieces of music inspired by books or stories?
 - ▶ What special skills does a composer need to write film music?
-

Name: **R.D. Burman (1939-1994)**
Nationality: **Indian**

Interesting facts:

- When Burman was a baby, his parents nicknamed him "Pancham" (a term from Hindustani classical music) because they said he could cry five different notes.
- He wrote his first film song when he was just 17.
- He could play the sarod, the tabla and the harmonica (mouth organ)
- Some of his musical scores include beer bottles, sandpaper, bamboo sticks and tea cups!

- ▶ Do you have to come from a particular culture to enjoy its music?
 - ▶ Are we born with musical talent, or can we learn it?
-

Name: **Teresa Carreño (1853-1917)**
Nationality: **Venezuelan**

Interesting facts:

- Her full name was María Teresa Gertrudis de Jesús Carreño García.
- Although she died in New York, 21 years later her ashes were transported back to her birthplace, the Venezuelan capital Caracas.
- In 1983, a new concert hall was named after her in Caracas

- ▶ Do you have to play the piano to be a composer?
 - ▶ Why would a musician want to travel the world?
-

Name: **Alberto Ginastera (1916-83)**
Nationality: **Argentinean**

Interesting facts:

- Ginastera was born in Buenos Aires, in Argentina, but his father was Spanish and his mother was Italian.
- His opera *Bomarzo* caused a scandal in the 1960s and was banned in Argentina. It includes dancing skeletons.
- He was fascinated by the history of Latin America, and wrote music inspired by ancient Aztec rituals.

- ▶ Why might politicians want to ban a piece of music?
 - ▶ Do you have to have musical parents to be a musician?
-

Name: **Edward Argenziano (born 1958 - age 66)**
Nationality: **American**

Interesting facts:

- Ed lives in Clearwater, Florida (not that far from Disneyworld in Orlando).
- In 2014, he helped organise the music for the NFL Super Bowl halftime show, along with Bruno Mars and the Red Hot Chilli Peppers
- As well as *Stinkin' Garbage*, he's written pieces called *Dill Pickles*, *Coconut Champagne* and *A Caveman Told Me*.

- ▶ What other everyday items might you turn into musical instruments?
 - ▶ If music doesn't have a tune, is it still music?
-

Name: **Klaus Badelt (b.1967) (age 58)**
Nationality: **German**

Interesting facts:

- Badelt started out in Germany by writing music for TV adverts.
- He wasn't the only composer to work on *Pirates of the Caribbean*: he worked alongside his friend Hans Zimmer, who also wrote the music for *The Lion King* and *Dune*.
- He collects vintage synthesisers.
- He wrote the music for the closing ceremony of the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

- ▶ Some artists work best when they don't have much time. Why is that?
- ▶ Is writing music for a TV advert different from writing music for a movie - or a concert?

TIMELINE

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| <p>1740 First known orchestral concerts in Birmingham</p> <p>1783 First animal flies in the Montgolfier Brothers' hot air balloon: a (confused) sheep.</p> <p>1815 Battle of Waterloo</p> <p>1824 John Cadbury opens his first chocolate shop in Birmingham.</p> <p>1858 Offenbach: Infernal Galop</p> <p>1865 Lewis Carroll writes Alice in Wonderland.</p> <p>1877 Tchaikovsky: Swan Lake</p> <p>1886 The world's first car makes its first journey, in Germany.</p> <p>1889 Birmingham becomes a city!</p> <p>1893 Zips are invented, in America.</p> <p>1896 Carreño: Little Waltz</p> <p>1905 Cadbury invents Dairy Milk.</p> <p>1913 Mathematician Emile Borel describes the Infinite Monkey Theorem.</p> <p>1914-18 World War One</p> <p>1920 The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra gives its first ever concert!</p> <p>1937 JRR Tolkien writes The Hobbit.</p> <p>1939-45 World War Two</p> <p>1941 Ginastera: Malambo</p> | <p>1953 Akutagawa: Triptyque</p> <p>1955 First McDonald's opens in America</p> <p>1969 Humans land on the Moon for the first time.</p> <p>1976 A plague of millions of ladybirds strikes the UK</p> <p>1980 Williams: Imperial March</p> <p>1980 Burman: Yamma Yamma</p> <p>1989 First episode of The Simpsons.
Democratic revolutions in Eastern Europe.</p> <p>1991 The world's first website goes live</p> <p>1996 Hardiman: Lord of the Dance</p> <p>1997 Argenziano: Stinkin' Garbage</p> <p>1999 First recorded use of the word "blog".</p> <p>2001 Williams: Hedwig's Theme</p> <p>2003 Badelt: Pirates of the Caribbean</p> <p>2011 First full version of Minecraft is released.</p> <p>2020 Worldwide Coronavirus pandemic – masks, jabs and lockdowns...</p> <p>2021 George, a ginger cat, appointed chief mouser at Stourbridge Junction Railway Station.</p> <p>2022 Birmingham hosts Commonwealth Games. Death of Queen Elizabeth II.</p> <p>2025 School students hear the CBSO at Symphony Hall – and tell all their friends...</p> |
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THANK YOU

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