

The Orchestra for... beginners

Worksheet V

Topic: The Orchestra of the 20th century

CLASS:

NAME:

"The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra", Op. 34, is a 1945 musical composition by Benjamin Britten with a subtitle "Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell". It was based on the second movement, "Rondeau", of the Abdelazer Suite. It was originally commissioned for the British educational documentary film called "Instruments of the Orchestra" released on 29 November 1946. The work is one of the best-known pieces by the composer, and is often associated with two other works in music history: Saint-Saëns' "The Carnival of the Animals" and Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf".

The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra is scored for symphony orchestra:

- Woodwinds: piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets and 2 bassoons
- Brass: 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones (2 tenors and 1 bass) and bass tuba
- Percussion: timpani, bass drum, cymbals, tambourine, triangle, snare drum, woodblock, xylophone, castanets, tamtam and whip
- Strings: harp, first and second violin, viola, cello and double bass.

The work is structured in accordance with the plan of the original documentary film, as a way of showing off the tone colours and capacities of the various sections of the orchestra.

There is an introduction played by each major family of instruments of the orchestra and then variations that features a particular instrument in-depth, generally moving through each family from high to low. After the whole orchestra has been effectively taken to pieces in this way, it is reassembled using an original fugue with Purcell's original melody.

ACTIVITY I

Listen to the Introduction of Britten's "The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra" and put the numbers 2 to 6 to the boxes below accordingly to what section you hear:
https://content.e-me.edu.gr/wp-admin/admin-ajax.php?action=h5p_embed&id=1139446

| | | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| The whole orchestra | The brass section | The percussion section | The strings section | The whole orchestra | The woodwinds section |

Re-write the sections in the order they are presented:

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ACTIVITY II

Listen to the Fugue of Britten's "The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra" and circle the correct answer a, b or c:

https://content.e-me.edu.gr/wp-admin/admin-ajax.php?action=h5p_embed&id=1139551
LISTENING GUIDE:

1. The Theme of the Fugue is played by the: a) flute, b) piccolo, c) oboe
2. Right after the Theme is played by: a) 2 flutes, b) 2 piccolos, c) 2 oboes
3. Here the Theme is played by: a) 2 flutes, b) 2 piccolos, c) 2 oboes
4. The Theme now is played by: a) 2 flutes, b) 2 oboes, c) 2 clarinets
5. The woodwind section is completed with the: a) clarinets, b) bassoons, c) oboes
6. The Theme now is played by the: a) strings, b) violas, c) cellos
7. Right after the Theme is played by the: a) violins, b) violas, c) cellos
8. Now the Theme is played by the a) violins, b) violas, c) cellos
9. This time, the Theme of Purcell's Rondo is played by the:
a) trumpets, b) cellos, c) flute
10. We hear imitations by the: a) strings, b) woodwinds, c) brass
11. The Theme is played by the harp. Another melody is played by:
a) flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, b) oboe, clarinet, bassoon, flute,
c) bassoon, clarinet, oboe, flute
12. The Theme now is played by the: a) trumpets, b) trombones, c) horns
13. The Theme now is played by the: a) trumpets, b) trombones, c) horns
and is accompanied by the: a) brass, b) woodwinds, c) strings
14. The Theme is played now by the: a) trumpets, b) trombones, c) horns
15. We hear: a) the timpani and the snare drum, b) the snare drum and the cymbals,
c) the cymbals and the xylophone
16. At this point the Theme of Purcell's Abdelazer is played by the:
a) violins, b) flutes, c) horns

ACTIVITY III

RONDO Form: In a rondo, we hear a pleasant theme (main theme) over and over again (something like the chorus in songs), alternating with other themes that creates contrast (secondary themes). Something like the layers in a... sandwich!!!

1. Write the appropriate letter (A, B, C or D) in each box (first row) below to have a Rondo form.
2. In the second row, match the "ingredients" with the appropriate box to have a sandwich in a Rondo form... [TIP: one of them is matched more than once!!!]

Good luck and... bon appétit!!! 😊

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ACTIVITY IV

Using your imagination, draw your own Rondo form in the boxes below:

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ACTIVITY V

Listen to Henry Purcel's "Abdelazer" and underline which Theme (of the three) is heard every time. Write in the boxes below the Themes according to what you have heard:

1. a) Theme A, b) Theme B, c) Theme C [The main Theme of the Rondo form]
2. Repetition of: a) Theme A, b) Theme B, c) Theme C
3. a) Theme A, b) Theme B, c) Theme C
4. a) Theme A, b) Theme B, c) Theme C
5. a) Theme A, b) Theme B, c) Theme C
6. a) Theme A, b) Theme B, c) Theme C
7. Repetition of: a) Theme A, b) Theme B, c) Theme C

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ACTIVITY VI

Study the two pictures and note any similarities or differences between the Baroque orchestra (the first one of our journey) and the orchestra in the 20th century:



| | Baroque orchestra | Orchestra of the 20 th century |
|--------------|-------------------|---|
| Similarities | | |
| Differences | | |