Minnesota Orchestra Young People’s Concerts

BUGS BUNNY AT THE SYMPHONY

Dear Teachers and Homeschool Parents;

The following materials are designed to help you prepare your students for the Minnesota Orchestra Young People’s Concert you are attending May 21-22, 2014 Bugs Bunny at the Symphony. The concert celebrates Warner Bros. cartoons from the late 1920’s to early 1960’s, a period known as the “Golden Age of American Animation”, with focus on cartoons that feature classical music and concert settings.

We hear from many people who grew up during this “Golden Age” that cartoons provided among their first experiences with classical music. Because of this, and because the animations from this era are true works of art in themselves, we are very happy to present the Bugs Bunny at the Symphony program for you and your students to enjoy!

The concert will feature the Minnesota Orchestra live on stage, with the animated cartoons projected on a large screen. We welcome guest conductor and producer George Daugherty to Orchestra Hall for these concerts.

We hope your students will be inspired, as past generations have, by the great music featured in these cartoons, and that they will enjoy the unique opportunity to hear it performed live by one of the world’s greatest orchestras!

Warmly,

Mele Willis
Manager of Outreach & Educational Partnerships
Minnesota Orchestra
mwillis@mnorch.org
PERFORMERS

The Minnesota Orchestra

The Minnesota Orchestra, now in its second century, ranks among America’s top symphonic ensembles, with a distinguished history of acclaimed performances in its home state and around the world; award-winning recordings, radio broadcasts and educational outreach programs; and a visionary commitment to building the orchestral repertoire of tomorrow. In 2014, its recording of Sibelius Symphonies No. 1 and No. 4 under the direction of former Music Director Osmo Vänskä won the Grammy Award for Best Orchestral Performance, a first in the Orchestra’s history.

Founded as the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, the ensemble gave its inaugural performance on November 5, 1903, shortly after Baseball’s first World Series and exactly six weeks before the Wright brothers made their unprecedented airplane flight. The Orchestra played its first regional tour in 1907 and made its New York City debut in 1912 at Carnegie Hall, where it has performed regularly ever since. Outside the United States, the Orchestra has played concerts in Australia, Canada, Europe, the Far East, Latin America and the Middle East. Since 1968 the ensemble has been known as the Minnesota Orchestra.

The Minnesota Orchestra’s international tours have reaped significant praise, most recently in August 2010. During a critically-lauded tour of European festivals, the orchestra performed at the Edinburgh International Festival, Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw and the BBC Proms in London – before stomping crowds totaling 12,000 for two concerts at Royal Albert Hall, one of which culminated in a performance of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. Critic John Allison subsequently wrote in “The Sunday Telegraph”, “The Minnesotans are among the world’s most cultivated bands. And under Vänskä... their Beethoven Ninth was everything one hopes for but seldom hears in this towering masterpiece.”

The ensemble presents nearly 200 programs each year, primarily at its home venues of Orchestra Hall in downtown Minneapolis, and its concerts are heard by live audiences of 400,000 annually. Its Friday night performances are broadcast live regionally by Minnesota Public Radio – a weekly tradition for more than 35 years – and many programs are subsequently featured on American Public Media’s national programs, SymphonyCast and Performance Today. In 2012, the organization launched Minnesota Orchestra Music on Demand, offering downloads of select major works recorded live in concert and available online.
George Daugherty is an Irish-American conductor, director, producer and writer. He has conducted many of the major symphony orchestras throughout the United States and Canada, as well as in Europe and Australia. Since 1990, he has been notable for creating symphony orchestra concerts which combine film and multimedia with classical music. Among his most successful concerts in this genre, Bugs Bunny on Broadway, and its sequel Bugs Bunny at the Symphony combines classic Warner Bros. Looney Tunes projected on a large screen accompanied by a live orchestra performing the original score. This production has toured the world continuously since 1990 and has played to a total international audience of two million people.

Warner Bros. Cartoons, Inc. was the in-house division of Warner Bros. Pictures during the “Golden Age of American Animation” (late 1920’s through early 1960’s). One of the most successful animation studios in American media history, Warner Bros. Cartoons was primarily responsible for the Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies theatrical cartoon short subjects. The characters featured in these cartoons, including Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Porky Pig, Wile E. Coyote and the Road Runner, are among the most famous and recognizable characters in the world. Warner Bros. currently owns the rights to equally famous characters Tom and Jerry. Many of the creative staff members at the studio, including directors and animators such as Chuck Jones, Fritz Freleng, Robert McKinson, Tex Avery, Robert Clampett and Frank Tashlin are considered major figures in the art and history of traditional animation.
Warner Bros. animation characters you will meet at the **Bugs Bunny at the Symphony** concert:

- **Bugs Bunny**
- **Daffy Duck**
- **Elmer Fudd**
Character biographies (from Wikipedia):

**Bugs Bunny** has appeared in more films (both short and feature-length) than any other cartoon character, and is the ninth most-portrayed film personality in the world. Bugs is a gray hare or rabbit, famous for his flippant personality, a pronounced New York accent, and the catch phrase, “Eh... What’s up, doc?” He first appeared in the film *A Wild Hare* (1940). Robert McKimson created Bugs’ definitive character design, and Mel Blanc originated Bugs’ voice.

**Tom and Jerry** cartoons were created by William Hanna and Joseph Barbera for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, with a total of 114 short cartoons produced between 1940 and 1957. The series features comedic fights between Tom (a house cat) and Jerry (a mouse).

**Daffy Duck** is a black duck with a white neck ring, who speaks with a strong lisp. Daffy often appears as either a friend or an enemy of Bugs Bunny, depending on the situation. Daffy’s first cartoon appearance was in 1937, in *Porky’s Duck Hunt*.

**Elmer Fudd** is one of the most famous Looney Tunes characters. His aim is to hunt Bugs Bunny, but usually ends up injuring himself instead. He has an unusual speaking voice (created by Mel Blanc), replacing his Rs and Ls with Ws, often referring to Bugs as “that cwazy wabbit.”
Mel Blanc (1908-1989) was the voice of many Warner Bros animated characters including Bugs Bunny, Elmer Fudd, Porky Pig and many, many more. His nickname is “Man of a Thousand Voices” and he is regarded as one of the greatest voice actors of all time. He grew up in San Francisco and Portland, Oregon, and began experimenting with voices at age 10. He dropped out of high school to become an orchestra conductor and vaudeville performer, and began to work in radio in 1927. In 1936, he joined the production company producing animated short films for Warner Bros. He first voiced Bugs Bunny in the 1940 film A Wild Hare, and continued to create many characters for Warner Bros animated films.

Watch Mel Blanc in a 1981 appearance on the David Letterman Show. He talks about his many voices, and how Warner Bros. animations were produced: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZeAM1vwEcFg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZeAM1vwEcFg).

Information about Warner Bros. animation from this interview with Mel Blanc:

- One 6 ½ minute cartoon took 125 people working for 9 months.
- One cartoon originally cost $50,000 to produce, but comparable cost today could be 10 times as much.
- Warner Bros used the “full animation” technique, where every individual cell was drawn. This is in contract to “partial animation” where usually only one in 10 cells is drawn. Do a Youtube search for “partial animation” to compare this technique with full animation.
- Blanc says that the voices for the animations were recorded first, and the animations were then drawn to match.
Carl Stalling (1891-1972) was an American composer and arranger for music in animated films, and is most closely associated with Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies shorts produced by Warner Bros. He averaged one complete score each week for 22 years.

Preparing students for the Bugs Bunny at the Symphony Concert:

These materials will focus on four of the major animated “shorts” on the program:

- **“BATON BUNNY”** stars Bugs Bunny as a symphony orchestra conductor, conducting the “Warner Bros. Symphony Orchestra” playing “Morning, Noon and Night in Vienna” by Franz von Suppé.

- **“RHAPSODY RABBIT”** stars Bugs Bunny as a concert pianist, playing “Hungarian Rhapsody #2” by Franz Liszt.

- **“TOM AND JERRY AT THE HOLLYWOOD BOWL”** stars Tom conducting an all-cat orchestra at the Hollywood Bowl, playing Johann Strauss’ Overture to “Die Fledermaus”. Jerry also appears as a conductor trying to take over the podium.

- **“THE RABBIT OF SEVILLE”** stars Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd, who find themselves on stage during the Overture to the Barber of Seville by Rossini.
Other short clips will also be included in the concert, including very short excerpts featuring French skunk *Pepe Le Pew*, and an excerpt from “Zoom and Bored” featuring Wile E. Coyote and the Road Runner ([http://www.supercartoons.net/cartoon/257/zoom-and-bored.html](http://www.supercartoons.net/cartoon/257/zoom-and-bored.html))

**Cartoon setting:**

The Hollywood Bowl is the setting of “Baton Bunny”, “Tom and Jerry at the Hollywood Bowl”, and “Rabbit of Seville”. It is a famous outdoor amphitheater in the Hollywood area of Los Angeles, California, not far from Warner Bros studios. It is home to many performances each year. It includes a distinctive bandshell, originally built in 1929. Hollywood Bowl includes outdoor seating for over 18,000 people.

![Original Hollywood Bowl bandshell](image1)

![Remodeled bandshell, 2005](image2)

**Program details and teaching strategies for each cartoon:**

**Baton Bunny**


Plot (from Wikipedia):

Bugs Bunny is about to conduct "The Warner Bros. Symphony Orchestra" in a performance of Franz von Suppe’s “Morning, Noon and Night in Vienna” at the Hollywood Bowl. When he finishes his elaborate preparation, he starts to conduct, but is interrupted by someone in the audience coughing loudly. Bugs then holds up a sign saying "Throw the bum out!". Other problems plague Bugs' conducting, notably a bothersome fly and some awkward cuffs that keep falling off. The fly eventually lands in Bugs' nose. Bugs loses his sanity and attempts to kill the fly, crashing into the orchestra and the instruments as he does so. As the music comes to a stop,
Bugs bows for the crowd but instead of applause, he hears only crickets chirping. Bugs looks around and then sees that the seats are empty and the crowd has gone, though he does hear faint clapping - coming from the fly. He bows to the fly, and the episode ends.

“Baton Bunny” is in some ways a spoof of orchestra conductors:

Conductor Bugs begins to conduct only after elaborate preparation: from selecting a baton, and putting chalk on the end as one would with a pool cue, to shirt cuffs that become detached, to a very annoying fly that derails the performance. Watch how the conducting gestures, big, small, intended and “accidental” all have a huge effect on the sound the orchestra produces. The cartoon also includes an audience member coughing as the performance begins, which prompts conductor Bugs to hold up a sign, “Throw the Bum Out”.

You may wish to watch a “real” conductor leading this piece:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7S-iWuvFhzE

You will see some of the real life conventions/concert formalities that are spoofed in the cartoon. This is conductor Ricardo Muti, conducting the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra at the famous annual New Year’s Concert in Vienna.

Conductor conventions, and cartoon spoofs:

- **Real concert:** Conductor often wears a formal black tuxedo with “tails”.

  **Cartoon concert:** Conductor Bugs Bunny wears a bright yellow tuxedo.
• **Real concert**: Conductor enters, shakes hands with lead musicians, bows to the audience, and gives the audience a few moments to settle in. And, after a few adjustments, begins to conduct.

  **Cartoon concert**: Conductor Bugs enters, bows to the audience, and holds up a “Throw the Bum Out” sign when someone coughs. He selects one of several batons as if he were selecting a pool cue (he even chalks it like a pool cue), and finally begins to conduct.

• **Real concert**: Conductor uses gestures to indicate/support dynamics, tempo, and interpretation of a piece.

  **Cartoon Concert**: Bugs conducts with exaggerated gestures, and sight gags, especially involving the pesky fly. All gestures, intentional and accidental, have a big effect on the cartoon orchestra.
- **Real concert:** At the end of the piece, the audience applauds, the conductor faces the audience and bows, and often acknowledges the orchestra, and especially acknowledges any soloists.

*Cartoon Concert:* Conductor Bugs finishes the piece, turns and bows to the audience, but realizes they have all left! The audience area of the outdoor amphitheater is so quiet that crickets can be heard chirping as they do on a quiet summer night. This is a standard gag in other Looney Tunes cartoons. Even to this day, when a performance of some kind falls flat, and the audience responds unenthusiastically (or not at all), people refer to the situation as “crickets.”

**Exploring the music:**

*Morning, Noon and Night in Vienna* was originally the overture to a light operetta by Franz von Suppé (see biography below). The operetta has since largely disappeared, but the overture remains a popular concert piece. (The music of the overture was not connected with the plot or the music of the operetta, so there is not a musical depiction of morning, noon or nighttime, as the title might suggest.)

There are three main sections of *Morning, Noon and Night in Vienna.*

(Timings are based on this video: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SiWuvFhzE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SiWuvFhzE))

- **0:00-1:00:** A very loud and important sounding **INTRODUCTION**, with pairs of soft notes interspersed.
- **1:00-4:00:** A beautiful melancholy **WALTZ** section featuring a solo cello accompanied by the orchestra. (In the “Baton Bunny” soundtrack, the cello is replaced by the violin section.) The composer marks this section “Andante Amoroso”, which means “walking tempo” and “lovingly” of “affectionate.”
- **4:00** Music of the introduction returns briefly.
- **5:00-end:** A fast-paced **MARCH**.

Before watching the cartoon, consider exploring the music using a **Descriptive Review** process. The following approach was adapted from materials created by Joanna Cortright for other repertoire on the Minnesota Orchestra’s Young People’s Concert series.

**Activity #1: Listen and describe the music**

1. **Do not reveal the title** or details about the music before you listen!
   Introduce the process and remind students of appropriate brainstorming practices: all responses have equal worth and all voices should be heard. As they talk about the music, students will describe what they hear without making judgmental statements. Tell students that together they will have many things to say about this music!
2. Write the inquiry questions (“DESCRIBE”, “QUESTION” and “SPECULATE” on chart paper, with one question at the top of each of 3 columns. (Using paper allows you to save responses for a later activity.)

   **DESCRIBE.** What do you notice? What’s going on in the music? (Describe without judgment).
   **QUESTION.** What questions to you have about the music” (“I wonder…”)
   **SPECULATE.** What is the meaning of the music? (Speculate about what the composer wants you to feel, know or understand. What is s/he expressing?)

3. Read the FIRST question (DESCRIBE), and then play the entire introduction (first minute of the piece) as students reflect and jot down their responses. After listening, repeat the question and ask for responses.

   - Write student comments on the board or on paper charts. Do not explain the music or add your own words or ideas, but prompt further responses by asking clarifying questions. (“Tell me more about that. What did you hear that made you say that? What else did you hear?”) Note that the role of facilitator is often a difficult one!
   - If you edit to shorten a response as you write, check with the responder for their approval.
   - If a thought is repeated, just add an X to that response.

4. Continue the process, recording student **QUESTIONS** in the 2nd column, and student **SPECULATIONS** in the third column.

5. Repeat the process using the waltz section of the piece, as well as the fast-paced march section.

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**Activity #2: Speculate and Write**

Before engaging students in a writing activity about the overture, select a writing prompt from this list or create your own. For each activity selected, use all three parts of the overture (Introduction, Waltz and March), resulting in a three-part scenario.
• Imagine this music is from a movie sound track. Write a summary of the story that fits the music. Think about and describe the setting, key characters, plot and action in detail. Plot should reflect each of the three sections of the piece (introduction, waltz and fast-paced march.)

• Imagine that you are walking down the hallway at school. As you pass an open classroom door, you hear this music. The class is watching a video and you begin to “see” the video’s images in your mind. Write a paragraph about what is happening in that video. Again, use all three sections of the piece.

• Think about color and let the music paint a picture in your mind’s eye. Imagine the colors in your imaginary picture, and describe them in details. For example, if you hear “blue”, what kind of blue is it? (Sky blue, deep blue, navy blue, frosty snow-shadow blue?). Use the detailed color words to write a description of the “colorful” music. Your description can be a paragraph or a poem.

• If you heard this music while watching a TV commercial, can you imagine and describe, 1) the product that is being sold, and 2) what’s going on visually in the commercial? Write a description of the commercial and how you came to these conclusions.

1. Ask students to discuss and define the word “speculate.” They can look it up in an online dictionary, [verb: to think or wonder about something; to think about something and make guesses about it; to form ideas or theories about something when there are many things you don’t know about it).

2. Read the third question in the Descriptive Review process (SPECULATE). Tell students that they will respond to a prompt, by speculating about the music and writing their interpretation and understanding of what the composer might be expressing- what s/he wants listeners to think, imagine and/or feel. Keep the time short- five minutes is enough. Students can work as individuals, pairs, or in small groups.

3. Ask for volunteers to read their responses out loud. Post their work near the Descriptive Review charts. Congratulate them on their focused speculating and thinking!

4. Ask students if they would like to know who wrote the music, and for what purpose. (They always say “YES!”) Your explanation of the music might include:
   • It was written as the overture (opening music) to a light hearted operetta.
   • Possibly, the composer wanted to start and end this music with a “bang”, with a nice warm melodic section in the middle.
   • The beginning few notes, especially, are designed to get the audience’s attention. Did the composer succeed?

Activity #3: Conducting

Teach student the conducting patterns appropriate for each of the three main sections of the overture. Invite individual students to be a “Baton Bunny” and conduct in front of the class!

• The INTRODUCTION is in a 4/4 meter. The conducting pattern is below.
• The **WALTZ** section is written in 6/8 meter, but students can conduct in a traditional ¾ meter. The conducting pattern is:

![Waltz Conducting Pattern](image1)

• The closing **MARCH** section is in a 2/4 meter. The conducting pattern is:

![March Conducting Pattern](image2)

Here is the complete Baton Bunny cartoon, on bing:

Franz von Suppé’s parents named him Francesco Ezechiele Ermenegildo Cavaliere di Suppé-Demelli when he was born on April 18, 1819, in Austria. His father was a civil servant in the service of the Austrian Empire. Suppe simplified and Germanized his name while living in Vienna, changing “Francesco” to “Franz”, and "cavaliere di" to "von".

He spent his childhood in Zadar, now part of Croatia, where he had his first music lessons and began to compose at an early age. As a boy he had no encouragement in music from his father, but was helped by a local bandmaster and by cathedral choirmaster.

Working in Vienna, Suppe was active as a composer and conductor, often leading performances of his own operas.

Franz von Suppé died in Vienna on May 21, 1895.

**RHAPSODY RABBIT**

Created 1946
Plot synopsis (from Wikipedia):

Bugs Bunny walks onstage to applause, and prepares to play the grand piano. Throughout the cartoon he runs through a large assortment of visual gags while continuing to play the Hungarian Rhapsody #2 by Franz Liszt. The first gag involves an apparent (off-screen) audience member who coughs and hacks loudly just as Bugs is poised to play (similar to “Baton Bunny”).

Although the film is mostly pantomime, Bugs speaks a few times (voice of Mel Blanc). At one point he is interrupted by the ring of a phone, and responds, "Eh, what's up doc? Who? Franz Liszt? Never heard of him, wrong number." When playing a famous three-note idea in the middle of the piece, Bugs accompanies his piano playing by singing, "Fi-ga-ro! Fi-ga-ro!"

A mouse appears and pesters Bugs the rest of the way, although the first ("slow") half of the piece is played nearly "straight", with just a few small gags. Bugs stops at the very short pause in the piece, acknowledging the applause of the audience. Before he can begin the "fast" part of the piece (where the gags accelerate), the mouse instigates a major musical shift, to a “Boogie-Woogie” number. Bugs joins in, although he eventually traps the mouse (which responds by playing "Chopsticks" while still trapped) and seemingly disposes of the pest with dynamite; when the mouse begins quietly playing "Taps" and stops one note short, Bugspeeks inside and the mouse "plays" the final note by hitting Bugs with a mallet. Bugs then returns to playing the Rhapsody. As the pace picks up, he speaks to the camera: "Look! One hand! ... NO hands!" The camera pulls back, and he is deftly playing the piano keys with his toes.

Nearing the end of the Rhapsody, he is in shock after turning to the finale page which consists of scrambled notes, nearly impossible to read. Bugs takes off his shirt, oils his hands, and prays in preparation for tackling this difficult music. Just as he is ready to play, he is startled to hear the frenzied finalé playing, behind him. It’s the mouse, complete with tie and tails, playing a toy piano that plays like a normal-sounding piano. Cut back to Bugs after the full-orchestra finalé, and he disgustedly plays the three single notes that actually end the piece.

Who Wrote the Music?
Franz Liszt was a 19th century Hungarian pianist, composer, teacher and conductor. He is considered to be among the greatest pianists of all time.

Franz Liszt was born in Hungary in 1811. His father was a musician, was for a time in the service of Prince Esterhazy, and knew the great composers Haydn and Beethoven personally. When he was six years old, young Franz began listening attentively to his father’s piano playing and showed an interest in music. He began playing the piano at age seven and began experimenting with composition a year later.

He appeared as a concert soloist at age nine, after which some wealthy patrons offered to provide money so he could study in Vienna with Carl Czerny, who had been a pupil of Beethoven. Liszt gave his first performance in Vienna in 1822, which was a great success. He attended a concert in 1832 by the famous violinist Niccolo Paganini, and was inspired to become a virtuoso piano performer. During this time, pianists were expanding their technique, playing more and more difficult music. One technique is described as the “three-hand effect”, because the pianist is playing so many notes it sounds like they have three hands. Liszt’s piano music is among the most “flashy” ever written, yet he is considered to be a truly “great” composer.

While having a somewhat stormy personal life, Liszt became a sensation throughout Europe, with performance tours reaching their height in the early 1840’s. Women in the audience fought over his silk handkerchiefs and velvet gloves, ripping them to shreds as souvenirs. Witnesses at his concerts later said that his playing raised the mood of audiences to a level of mystical ecstasy. He often performed his own compositions, which are still a major part of the repertoire for pianists, and are considered to be “showpieces” to demonstrate the musical and technical skills of the pianist.

Liszt retired from the concert stage as a pianist at age 35, devoting his time to composition, teaching and conducting. He lived until the age of 74.
There are several references to Franz Liszt in *Rhapsody Rabbit*:

1. In the cartoon, Bugs is portrayed as performing a piano recital. A recital is a concert program that features an individual musician, such as a pianist. Or, a recital can also be a program with an instrumental soloist or singer, accompanied by a piano. Franz Liszt was famous for performing his own music in recital, much like Bugs in this program.

2. Liszt was known to be quite a showman, and apparently audience goers would fight over his gloves, to keep as souvenirs. When Bugs removes (several!) gloves before performing, this is a reference to Liszt.

3. During his performance, Bugs gets a phone call and replies, “Franz Liszt, never heard of him…”

4. At one point Bugs says, “Look, no hands” and is playing the piano with his toes. Perhaps this is a reference to the super showmen of the piano, such as Liszt, who would dazzle their audiences with special effects. His hands become “tied in knots” at one point due to the complicated nature of the music. Also, seeing the horrifically difficult music for the final section, Bugs takes off his shirt, oils his hands and prays briefly before playing the section.
Exploring the music of Liszt’s Hungarian Rhapsody #2:

- **What is a “Rhapsody”?**
  A rhapsody is a one-movement work that is episodic yet integrated, free-flowing in structure, featuring a range of highly contrasted moods, color and tonality. An air of spontaneous inspiration and a sense of improvisation make it a free sounding piece.
  Franz Liszt wrote 19 Hungarian Rhapsodies for piano solo, which were especially popular. Liszt himself performed these on his recital programs. He often based the pieces on Hungarian folk themes.

- **Hungarian Rhapsody #2** is the most famous of Liszt’s 19 Hungarian Rhapsodies. According to Wikipedia, “Few other piano solos have achieved such widespread popularity, offering the pianist the opportunity to reveal exceptional skill as a virtuoso, while providing the listener with an immediate and irresistible musical appeal.” Due to its popularity and extreme level of difficulty, it has become the “unofficial standard” by which all pianists are judged.

- **Form:** The Hungarian Rhapsody #2 has the same form as many other Rhapsodies. It has two sections, an opening slow section (called the “lassan”), followed by a very difficult fast section section (called the “friska”). In Rhapsody Rabbit, Bugs pauses between the two sections, and the audience applauds.

The fast “friska” section from Hungarian Dance #2.
**Piano Olympics!**

Explain to students that part of the reason this music was written, was for Franz Liszt to “show off” his amazing skill as a pianist. The two sections of the piece (slow and fast) show off two different sides of the pianist’s skill. The slow (lassan) section offers the pianist the opportunity to show their skill at playing expressively, and the fast (friska) section offers the chance to show off extreme technique while playing fast.

Below are four Youtube performances by famous pianists. Play the first minute or so of the slow opening section from each, and have students discuss which performance they think is most convincing. Or, have students give each pianist a numeric rating for each of several aspects of their playing (just like the Olympics). Total up the points that the students award, and determine Gold, Silver and Bronze medals.

**Categories for awarding points:**

**Lassan (slow) section:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance aspect</th>
<th># of points awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Piano tone: big, rich, dramatic</td>
<td>(1-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic contrast (full range of louds and softs)</td>
<td>(1-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Free” feeling- does the music sound improvised?</td>
<td>(1-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity: are the fast sections clean and clear sounding?</td>
<td>(1-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>(1-10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Friska (fast) section:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance aspect</th>
<th># of points awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarity: are all the fast notes heard clearly?</td>
<td>(1-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the music have a dance quality?</td>
<td>(1-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the music sound free and improvised?</td>
<td>(1-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the music “sparkle”</td>
<td>(1-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>(1-10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Suggested Piano Olympics contestants:

- Vladimir Horowitz, one of the greatest pianists of the 20th century, plays the piece in a Carnegie Hall recital from 1953:
  
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHGnYQLLzc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHGnYQLLzc)
  
  Slow Section: 0:00-4:08   Fast Section: 4:08-8:59

- Lang Lang, a phenomenal young pianist of today:
  
  [http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Liszt+Hungarian+Rhapsody+2&view=detail&mid=862C6201C231F0C34FD1862C6201C231F0C34FD1&first=0&FORM=NVPFVR&qpt=Liszt+Hungarian+Rhapsody+2](http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Liszt+Hungarian+Rhapsody+2&view=detail&mid=862C6201C231F0C34FD1862C6201C231F0C34FD1&first=0&FORM=NVPFVR&qpt=Liszt+Hungarian+Rhapsody+2)
  
  Slow section: 0:00-4:20   Fast Section: 4:20-9:06

- Jung Lin, a composer/pianist from Taiwan
  
  
  Slow section: 0:10-4:56   Fast section: 4:56-9:39

- George Li, a very young pianist, plays the piece as part of an international piano competition in 2010, which he won: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wInRsT0M7Qg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wInRsT0M7Qg)
  
  Slow section: 0:00-4:02   Fast section: 4:02-8:32

A youtube search for “Lizst Hungarian Dance #2” will show additional options, including Liszt’s arrangement of the piece for full orchestra.
TOM AND JERRY AT THE HOLLYWOOD BOWL

Tom and Jerry at the Hollywood Bowl is a 1950 American one-reel animated cartoon and is the 52nd Tom and Jerry short directed by William Hanna and Joseph Barbera. The cartoon, as the title suggests, is set at the Hollywood Bowl in California, where Tom is conducting a large orchestra. The cartoon was animated by Kenneth Muse, Irven Spence, Ray Patterson and Ed Barge. It was released to theaters in September 16, 1950 and reissued in 1957. The music was scored by Scott Bradley, making use of Johann Strauss II’s Overture to Die Fledermaus.

The plot of the cartoon involves conductor Tom trying to maintain control of the orchestra, fighting off advances of Jerry, who also has a baton and is dressed as a conductor.

Watch three “real” conductors lead this piece. All three are considered to be among the greatest conductors of their eras:

- Nicolas Harnancourt conducts the overture from an opera production, where the orchestra performs from the orchestra pit.
  
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkLYOD9HP3I

- Carlos Kleiber conducts the piece as an encore from a concert by the Bavarian State Orchestra on tour in Tokyo.
  
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OqJK_s7I9EY

- Herbert von Karajan conducts the Vienna Philharmonic at the 1987 New Year’s Concert.
  
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sHF5LP53LZY

Watch the first minute of each with your students, and possibly also the last minute of each.

Explain that these are three of the most famous orchestra conductors of all time. Ask students:

- What do you notice about each conductor? (No judgments, just “what do you notice?”)

- What are some of the things each does differently? (again, no judgments, just what are some differences?)

- Do the three performances of the piece sound the same or different from each other, and if different, how?
• If you were the composer of this piece, which conductor would like to have conduct your piece, and why?

• If you were playing in the orchestra, which conductor would you most like to have conduct you, and why?

Watch Tom and Jerry at the Hollywood Bowl:

http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1v6b2_tom-jerry-52-the-hollywood-bowl_fun

Are there any ways in which Tom or Jerry look like the “real” conductors you saw?

Are there any ways in which the instruments of the cartoon orchestra look similar to the “real” instruments you saw?

Overture to Der Fledermaus by Johann Strauss Jr.

Memorial to Johann Strauss Jr., Vienna

Johann Strauss Jr. (1829-1899) was an Austrian composer of light music, particularly dance music and operettas. He wrote over 400 waltzes, polkas and other kinds of music in addition to operettas and ballet. During his lifetime, he was known as “The Waltz King”. Among his most famous waltzes are The Blue Danube, Emperor Waltzes and Tales from the Vienna Woods.

Strauss was discouraged from studying music by his father, who was a professional musician himself. It was thought that the elder Strauss hoped his son would choose a profession with more financial security. Eventually, Strauss Jr. became more famous than his father, and is credited with popularizing the waltz in Vienna in the 1800s.

Die Fledermaus (“The Bat”) is an operetta first performed in 1874. The popular overture is often performed separately.

Listening activities:
• **Waltz or No Waltz?**

Johann Strauss is often referred to as the “Waltz King”, and his music includes some of the most famous waltz melodies ever written. A waltz is a kind of ballroom dance in triple (3/4) meter. There is usually a strong feeling of: “ONE-two-three ONE-two-three”.

Listen to a recording of *Die Fledermaus Overture* or watch “Tom and Jerry at the Hollywood Bowl”. Explain that in the music, there are waltz sections that have the strong “ONE-two-three ONE-two-three” waltz feeling, and other music that is *not* a waltz. Have students develop a gesture (swaying in their seats, back and forth on each strong beat, or other gestures) when the waltz music begins.

If you are using the “Tom and Jerry at the Hollywood Bowl” cartoon, the music is as follows:

- **0:00-0:41** (Opening Credits) This music is from a different piece, (*Les Preludes*, by Franz Liszt, the composer of the Hungarian Rhapsody #2 featured in “Rhapsody Rabbit”).

- **1:00** Fast opening music of *Die Fledermaus Overture*, followed by slower oboe melody and then the return of the fast music. (Not waltz music. Instead, this music has a feeling of two beats: ONE-TWO, ONE-TWO).

- **1:55** Slow melody, still not waltz music

- **2:32** **Waltz music begins**! If students are counting or tapping the beats (“ONE-two-three, ONE-two-three) they will notice some “slow-down” spots.

- **3:25** Fast music, not waltz

- **3:44** After the tuba plays a “raspberry”, a slow waltz begins. Student waltz gestures will be slower in this section.

- **4:30** Fast music (In 2, not a waltz)

- **5:15** **Fast waltz music returns**

- **5:45-end** Coda (not a waltz)

• **Extended listening:**

One of Johann Strauss’ most famous waltzes is “The Blue Danube”. Watch this video of it performed as part of a New Year’s Concert in Vienna, complete with formal ballroom dancers: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EHFJWCCsWWQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EHFJWCCsWWQ)
Rabbit of Seville is a 1949 Warner Bros. Looney Tunes theatrical cartoon short released in 1950. It was directed by Chuck Jones and written by Michael Maltese.

The cartoon features Bugs Bunny being chased by Elmer Fudd, eventually to the stage door of the Hollywood Bowl. Bugs tricks Elmer into going onstage, and both participate in a break-neck operatic production of their chase punctuated with gags and accompanied by musical arrangements by Carl Stalling, focusing on Rossini’s overture to The Barber of Seville.

Stalling’s arrangement is remarkable in that the overture's basic structure is kept relatively intact; some repeated passages are removed and the overall piece is conducted at a faster tempo to accommodate the cartoon's standard running length. In 1994 it was voted #12 of the 50 Greatest Cartoons of all time by members of the animation field. (Wikipedia)

Rossini’s Overture to The Barber of Seville.

Watch Gustavo Dudamel conducting this piece in a live performance:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1vPgxGthXs

Listening to the music:

Rossini’s Overture to the Barber of Seville is one of the most famous opera overtures ever written, likely due in part to this very famous cartoon. It does not contain themes used later in the opera, and in fact may have been intended for a different opera all together. It does, however, capture the high energy and comedy of the opera.

Rossini apparently was known for procrastinating as he composed his overtures. There is a famous legend about an opera producer locking Rossini in a room the night before a new opera was to be performed, because the overture was not finished. Rossini was given music paper and pens, and dropped completed pages of the new overture out a window one at a time, to be copied for the waiting musicians!

The Barber of Seville overture is all melody, and it is a perfect example of the kind of music Rossini is famous for: high energy, “sparkling”, and joyful.

Here is how an early biographer described Rossini’s music:
“The first characteristic of Rossini’s music is speed -- a speed which removes from the soul all the somber emotions that are so powerfully evoked within us by the slow strains in Mozart. I find also in Rossini a cool freshness, which, measure by measure, makes us smile with delight”
-- Stendahl (1783-1842), Life of Rossini (1824)

Share the key words, in bold, with students.

Listen to the first few minutes of Rossini’s overture, long enough to hear the “big famous melody” shown below.

Listening activities:

- Tell students they are going to listen to a piece of music written hundreds of years ago, and that you think they may recognize the “big famous part” when it appears, partway in. Ask them to raise their hands when they hear the “big famous part”. If many students are familiar with this music, discuss what qualities they think this music has that makes it so famous?

- After listening, have students fill in their own versions of the quote, above:

“The first characteristic of Rossini’s music is _______________. I also find in Rossini _______________, which ... makes us ________________________.”

You may wish to start with the key words from the quote (above), adding student responses as they listen. Visit www.wordle.net to create a “word cloud” of student responses for each blank.

- Extended listening:
  o Rossini wrote another overture that has a “big famous spot”. If you listen to this clip of the William Tell Overture, students will hopefully recognize the famous melody at 9.00. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v= xoBE69WdSkQ

Musical themes in the Barber of Seville Overture:
The opening music:

Second theme:

The big famous melody:

Who wrote the music?
Gioacchino Rossini was an Italian opera composer who lived from 1792-1868. He wrote 39 operas, many in the “buffo” (comic) style. Rossini’s parents were both musicians, and like many composers, he showed musical talent at a very early age. His first opera was performed when he was only 18 years old. In 1829, while still in his 30’s, Rossini wrote his last opera, “William Tell.” Rossini remained very famous in his long retirement, and only decided to composer again late in his life.

The Barber of Seville, first performed in Rome in 1816, is Rossini’s most famous opera. It was the first Italian opera performed in the United States.

A scene from Rossini’s Barber of Seville