MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA
2011 – 2012 Young People’s Concerts

The Tin Forest

THE MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Courtney Lewis, Conductor
Mayor R. T. Rybak Narrator
David Kamminga, Narrator

November 9 & 10, 2011
10:00am and 11:35am

The Minnesota Orchestra gratefully acknowledges generous support from:
June 1, 2011

Dear Teachers and Homeschool educators;

Here are curriculum materials for the first Minnesota Orchestra Young People’s Concert of the 2011-2012 season, *The Tin Forest*.

Throughout the 2011-2012 season, and particularly with this concert, we celebrate 100 years of Minnesota Orchestra Young People's Concerts. The first concert was held November 24, 1911, and we have presented regular programs for young members of our community ever since.

Our concert opens with the overture to the opera *Der Freischütz* by Carl Maria von Weber. It’s a showpiece for the orchestra, and was part of the very first YP concert in 1911.

Next is Igor Stravinsky’s quirky version of “Happy Birthday”.

Minneapolis Mayor R. T. Rybak joins the orchestra as celebrity narrator for Steve Heitzeg’s *The Tin Forest*, originally commissioned by WAMSO (Minnesota Orchestra Volunteer Organization) as a small ensemble piece for the Kinder Konzert series, and later re-orchestrated by Steve Heitzeg for large orchestra. Mayor Rybak narrated the first large orchestra performance in 2003 as we launched the Minneapolis UPbeat program, and we are pleased that he returns to the stage at Orchestra Hall to help us mark our Young People's Concert centennial.

The concert concludes with Benjamin Britten’s *Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra*, narrated by David Kamminga, recently retired from the Minnesota Orchestra after many years of playing and involvement in Education and Outreach programs.

We hope these materials are helpful as you prepare your students for the concerts. On behalf of the entire Minnesota Orchestra, best wishes for a great 2011-2012 school year!

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2011-2012 Young People’s Concerts

The Tin Forest

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MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA
2011-2012 Young People’s Concerts

The Tin Forest

Concert Program

Weber
Overture to Der Freischütz

Stravinsky
Greeting Prelude
(or “Happy Birthday”)

Hietzeg
The Tin Forest
Mayor R. T. Rybak, Narrator

Britten
The Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra, Opus 34
David Kamminga, Narrator
Performers

The Minnesota Orchestra, now in its second century and led by Music Director Osmo Vänskä, 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.

The 98-member ensemble performs nearly 200 programs each year and its concerts are heard by live audiences of 400,000 annually. Its Friday night performances are broadcast live regionally by Minnesota Public Radio, and many programs are subsequently featured on American Public Media’s national programs, Symphony Cast and Performance Today.

In addition to traditional concerts, the Minnesota Orchestra connects with more than 85,000 music lovers annually through educational programs including Young People’s Concerts (YPs), Target Free Family Concerts and Kinder Konzerts. In the last decade more than half a million students have experienced a Minnesota Orchestra YP.

Musicians also engage in such Minnesota Orchestra-sponsored initiatives as the Adopt-A-School program (founded in 1990), Side-by-Side rehearsals and concerts with young area musicians, and the UPbeat program, which establishes multi-year relationships with communities throughout the Twin Cities and around the state.
Performers

Courtney Lewis, conductor

Born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, Courtney Lewis has worked with orchestras and chamber ensembles from London to Venezuela, earning recognition as one of today’s top emerging conductors. He is founder and music director of Boston’s acclaimed Discovery Ensemble, a chamber orchestra with the unique mission of introducing inner-city school children to classical music while bringing new and unusual repertoire to established concert audiences. He recently completed his second season as Zander Fellow with the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, a prestigious conducting apprenticeship under the ensemble’s music director, Benjamin Zander. In addition to his work with the Boston Philharmonic, he has assisted Zander with the London Philharmonia, Toronto Symphony, Saint Louis Symphony and Símon Bolivar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela.

In November 2008 Lewis made his major American orchestra debut with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, leading a series of five concerts. He subsequently spent several weeks assisting conductors David Robertson, Marc Albrecht and Yan Pascal Tortelier. In recent seasons he has also worked with the BBC Philharmonic, Tulsa Symphony and Liverpool Mozart Orchestras, as well as smaller groups including the Nash Ensemble and Alban Berg Ensemble.

Lewis attended the University of Cambridge, where he studied composition with Robin Holloway and clarinet with Dame Thea King, graduating at the top of his year with starred first class honors. After completing a master’s degree with a focus on the late music of György Ligeti, he attended the Royal Northern College of Music, where his teachers included Sir Mark Elder and Clark Rundell.
Performers

**David Kamminga**

David Kamminga joined the Minnesota Orchestra in 1967, after holding positions with the New Orleans Philharmonic and New Orleans Opera Orchestra, the Santa Fe Opera Orchestra and the American Wind Symphony. He was a member of the Orchestra for over 40 years, retiring in 2011.

He has toured Europe, Asia and South America with the New York Philharmonic. As a chamber musician, he has performed at several Sommerfests and Kinder Konzerts and numerous seasons of the Grand Teton Music Festival in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and is a member of the Nicollet Avenue Wind Quintet. He serves on the faculty of the University of Minnesota.

Kamminga attended Calvin College in his native Michigan, studying with Jerry Garcia, and Michigan State University, where he worked with Douglas Campbell.

In November 2007, Kamminga was featured with horn section colleagues in performances of Schumann’s Concertstück for Four Horns, with Gilbert Varga conducting. He was an enthusiastic participant in the Orchestra’s Education programs. He continues a long tradition of Orchestra members narrating this piece and others on Young People’s Concerts.

**Mayor R. T. Rybak**

R. T. Rybak was first elected Mayor of Minneapolis in 2001 in his first run for public office, and was re-elected in 2005 and 2009.

Born in Minneapolis, he has said he first became interested in becoming mayor at the age of 13. After graduating from Boston College in 1978, he worked as a journalist for the Minneapolis Tribune in the 1970s and 1980s, and later managed the Twin Cities Reader. He headed Internet Broadcasting Systems, which started as an online division of Minneapolis television station WCCO, and has also worked as an internet strategist at Minnesota Public Radio.

The “About the Mayor” section of the City of Minneapolis’ website lists several accomplishments as mayor, including recruiting Allina and the Global Marker to the Midtown Exchange on Lake Street, launching the Minneapolis 311 phone system, and others including expanding the police force and housing.

He first appeared with the Minnesota Orchestra in March 2005 as guest narrator for the World Premiere of the full orchestra version of Steve Heitzeg’s *The Tin Forest*, also marking the launch of the Minnesota Or-
On October 1, 1911, the *Minneapolis Journal* announced that “a band of public spirited Minneapolis women” had raised $2500, and formed a group called the “Young People’s Symphony Concert Association” (YPSCA) specifically to present concerts for young people by the Minneapolis Symphony (now the Minnesota Orchestra). The orchestra had performed concerts for students while traveling in other communities, but concerts had not been presented for students in Minneapolis.

The group chose November 24, 1911, as the date of the first of five concerts. Tickets ranged from ten to fifty cents each, and went on sale November 18. According to the *Minneapolis Evening Tribune;*

> An avalanche of school children, teachers, and principals descended…today at the sale of seats for the first of the children’s symphony concerts to be given in the auditorium, and over 2,000 seats, which it had been calculated it would take three days to dispose of, were cleaned up in half an hour. The demand for seats was so much larger than was expected that only 10 of the 65 public schools in the city could be provided with tickets.

Schools let out early on November 24 so that students could attend the concert, which began at 3:45 pm. Some came in carriages, but most walked to the Minneapolis Auditorium on 11th street. The concert was designed and conducted by the Orchestra’s music director Emil Oberhoffer. Due to demand, a repeat performance was scheduled.

The first concert included music by Haydn, Delibes, Lalo, Tchaikovsky, Massenet, Berlioz, Dvorak, and a portion of the Overture to *Der Freischütz* by Carl Maria von Weber. Gold Medal Flour, a product of Minneapolis based General Mills Co., advertised on the program.
Other milestones in Young People’s Concert history:

1928: With the beginning of the Great Depression, the Minneapolis Board of Education faced a $128 deficit for unsold tickets, and no concerts were planned for the 1929-1930 season. Thanks to Miss Effie McGregor, then Principal of Burroughs Elementary school, the PTA agreed to guarantee the tickets for 25 cents, and concerts resumed for the 1930-31 season.

1930: Concerts moved to Northrop Auditorium on the campus of the University of Minnesota, and remained there until Orchestra Hall opened in 1974.

1931: The St. Paul school district was invited to participate in Young People’s Concerts. Previously, concerts were primarily attended by students from the Minneapolis schools.

1939: The University of Minnesota radio station began broadcasting 15 minute concert previews so students could listen in their classrooms in advance of the concert.

1942: In the midst of the Second World War, concerts were required to start at 1:30PM since it was the only time Minneapolis streetcars could run. Also, during that same time, one concert had to be delayed because school teachers were responsible for distributing mileage gas coupons, part of the rationing system during WWII.

1949: First mention of the Art Project, in which students listened to music, and responded by creating visual artworks. Over 300 artworks were displayed at Northrop Auditorium at one time.

1955: YPSCA began the School Music Auditions, resulting in one student winner being selected to perform as soloist with the Orchestra at a Young People’s Concert the following year. The School Music Auditions are still an important part of YPSCA’s mission, and the Young People’s Concert series.

1968: The Minneapolis Symphony was re-named the Minnesota Orchestra.

1975: Young People’s Concerts were first performed in the Orchestra’s new home, Orchestra Hall.

1978: The 75th anniversary of the Minnesota Orchestra was celebrated. A formal picture of the orchestra musicians was taken and turned into a jigsaw puzzle. Puzzles were sold, with profits supporting the orchestra.

Who wrote the music?
Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826) was a German composer, conductor, pianist, guitar player and music critic. He wrote music that bridged the Classical style of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, with the Romantic style of Schubert, Wagner and Brahms.

His father, Franz Anton von Weber, was a musician and theater director in Hamburg, Germany. Franz’ brother had four daughters who all became singers. One of these, Constanza, married Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Weber's family moved frequently, but he maintained his studies in music, at one point studying with Michael Haydn, older brother of the famous Franz Joseph Haydn. Weber published his first piece of music at age 12, and wrote an opera at 14. By 20, he was Music Director of the theater in Breslau, Germany.

Weber was a noted composer during his lifetime, travelling throughout Europe, and holding many prominent positions.

What is the music about?
Weber’s opera *Der Freischutz* premiered in Berlin in 1821, and was very successful. It was subsequently performed throughout Europe, and by 1850, had been performed in Australia, South Africa and Brazil. It was one of the first truly German operas, both in story and in musical style. The story of the opera was based on a German folk tale about a hunter who makes arrangements with the underworld in exchange for a set of magic bullets that never miss their mark. The music is based on German folk music, and also reflects the supernatural quality of the story. Performances of the full opera are rare today, but the Overture is heard frequently in concerts.
SYNOPSIS
A full synopsis of *Der Freischütz* can be found on Wikipedia. This brief synopsis may be useful as you introduce the various sections of the overture:

Max is a forester, living in the forest in “olden times”. He has just been beaten in a shooting contest by a peasant, who “rub[s] it in”. Max wants to marry Agathe, and also become head forester, but neither is possible unless he wins a shooting contest the next day, which will be attended by Prince Ottokar himself. Max loves Agathe deeply, and is in despair because his shooting ability seems to have declined lately.

Another forester named Kaspar, who has a sinister appearance, approaches Max and says that if he will meet at midnight in Wolf’s Glen (a very spooky place) he can get some “magic bullets” that never miss their mark, and can ensure that Max will win the upcoming contest.

Meanwhile, Agathe waits for her friend Max, who she loves deeply. He arrives, and she warns him not to go to Wolf’s Glen because it is “haunted”.

Later that night, in Wolf’s Glen, we meet Zamiel, who is a very evil character. He molds seven magic bullets for Max. Six will hit whichever target Max chooses, and one will go where Zamiel chooses.
The day of the shooting contest arrives, and Agathe is in her wedding dress, hoping that Max will win the contest, and as a result win her hand in marriage. Max has already used his first six bullets to “show off” his shooting ability to the prince. Only the seventh bullet remains for the contest.

The Prince points to a flying dove, declaring it the target for the contest. Agathe shouts for Max not to shoot, saying that the bullet will hit her if aimed at the dove, but Max has already pulled the trigger. Agathe falls, (and the audience gasps), but she is not wounded, she has just fainted. The real victim of the last shot is Kaspar, who has climbed a tree to watch the contest. It turns out that Zamiel has no power over the seventh bullet after all, because Max didn’t come to Wolf Glen of his own free will, rather he was tempted to go there by Kaspar. Kaspar, as a result, falls from the tree, dead, the victim of the seventh bullet.

Max tells Prince Ottokar the whole story, and is forgiven. He can marry Agathe if he leads a “clean life” for one year.

On the left: A sketch of Agathe’s wedding dress as designed by fashion house Viktor & Rolf, Dutch duo, Viktor Horsting and Rolf Snoeren. On the Right: The costume was first used during the May 30th, 2009 Der Freischütz premiere at the Baden-Baden Opera House in Germany. The costume incorporates over a million Swarovski crystals!
1. Weber’s overture to Der Freischutz was written after the rest of the opera was completed. It contains music that sounds like German folk-song, reflecting the rural setting of the story, and also some very “spooky” music reflecting the supernatural elements of Zamiel, Wolf’s Glen, and the magic bullets.

What is an Overture?
By Joanna Cortright

The term “overture” means “opening piece”.

It is the music that introduces an opera, ballet, play, musical or oratorio, and is played by instruments.

400 years ago, when opera was a new idea, the overture was a short fanfare played to get the audience’s attention and to let them know the opera was about to begin. In those days, going to the opera was a huge social occasion. Meeting people and talking with them was something that everyone did. Something had to be done to quiet everyone down!

Over time, the overture grew in length and importance.

The Italian overture had three movements arranged in a fast-slow-fast pattern. This musical form later grew into the form for the Symphony.

As more composers created operas, the music of the overture was more often linked to the themes, emotions, mood, characters and the story of the opera. Weber was among the earliest composers to incorporate themes from the rest of the opera into the overture.
2. The music of the Overture sets a mood, or emotion, in the ears of the listener. Musical themes that represent characters and locations in the opera are presented in the Overture. As a result, the overture is a summary of the rest of the opera.

Listen to these sections, and familiarize students with the story as you go.

**Setting the Mood**

**Introduction (0.00-1.00)**

This is a mysterious sounding section, with two phrases, each with an ascending question, followed by a descending answer.

Point out to students that the music is all in unison, with no harmony. Discuss how this affects the emotional quality of the music.

What mood or emotion is suggested for the opera by this opening music? Will the story be happy, sad, mysterious, or funny? Will it be a relaxed, peaceful story, or one with tension and emotional ups and downs?

The dynamics (louds and softs) play an important role in this short section of music. Listen to the section and have students indicate the piano (soft) sections by crouching low, arms and legs tucked in. Indicate the crescendos (getting louder) by growing taller, arms gradually outstretched. Indicate the forte (loud) sections by standing tall, with arms up and fully outstretched.


Setting the Scene

Horn Chorale (1.05-2.35) and Wolf’s Glen music (2.35-3.40)

The four-member horn section plays a beautiful Chorale (hymn-like) section, which is heard throughout the opera when the action takes place in the peaceful woodland setting of the woodsmen and hunters.

Contrast the Horn Chorale with the ominous section at 2:35, which is the music heard during the “Wolf’s Glen” scene later in the opera. Note the *tremolo* strings (playing with bow moving back and forth as fast as possible) and the low notes in the timpani and *pizzicato* (plucked) string basses that add to the “spooky” character. Notice how dynamics play an important part in this section.

Horn Chorale (for four horns in C)
Art project:

An opera scene designer for *Der Freischütz* has the job of deciding what the stage will look like in the peaceful forest scenes, and also the dark, spooky Wolf’s Glen scene. Suggest that students draw a stage design (or, simply a picture) of the peaceful woodland on one half of a sheet of paper. On the other half, they will draw the dark, spooky Wolf’s Glen. Their scene designs should reflect the mood of the story, and also the music.

“Lovers in the Woods” as performed by the Bonn Opera House (Bonn, Germany) in January 2001. The forest is portrayed with lighting effects off of the black and white photographic background. Go here for more information about this unique design: http://www.omm.de/veranstaltungen/musiktheater20002001/BN-der-freischuetz.html
Photography by Thilo Beul
Introducing the main characters
Max in despair (3.40-4.45) and the lovely, innocent Agathe (4.45-5.17)
Max’s despair at the possibility of losing the shooting contest, and losing Agathe as a result, is captured by the “stormy”, syncopated music in this section. The syncopation (see example below) makes for a very nervous, unsettled quality. After a blast from the horn section (4.39), Agathe’s very sweet, angelic music is played by a solo clarinet.

Character study activities:
Play these two sections of the music before outlining the story. Ask students to describe what the characters might be like, based on the music. The blast from the horns is the indicator that we are changing from one character’s music to another’s. You may wish to start with basic questions: “Which theme is for a male character, and which for a female?” Or, “Which character is very nervous?” Brainstorm other possible character traits after that. Relate Weber’s story after students brainstorm their ideas. Draw pictures of Max and Agathe, as inspired by the story and the music in these two sections.

Max and Agathe eventually triumph (5.17-6.00)
At the end of the story, when Max and Agathe are finally allowed to marry, the music is triumphant, while still keeping a folk-like character. This melody (see below) begins quietly, with some of the nervous energy of Max’s music heard earlier. It will return in a bigger, more intense version at the end of the opera.

The action unfolds (6.00-8:36)
The music associated with the scenes and the characters re-appears in various combinations in this section. As you listen to this section, ask students to identify the themes they have heard when they were introduced earlier in the overture.

Ending (8.36-end)
As you listen to the section, above, (especially for the first time), tell students that it will be very obvious when the triumphant, closing music begins. You may wish to say that it comes after the quietest, darkest, part of the music is heard. Have students raise their hand when this “ultimate triumph” music is heard.
Igor Stravinsky
Greeting Prelude

Who wrote the music?

Igor Stravinsky was one of the most influential composers in history, credited with helping create a daring new, unique sound for orchestra music at the beginning of the 20th century. Time Magazine included him in the list of 100 most influential people of the 20th century.

He was born in Oranienbaum, a Russian village on the Gulf of Finland in 1882, where his family often spent the summer. His first name likely comes from the fact that he was born on the day commemorating St. Igor in the Russian calendar. Stravinsky’s father was a noted opera singer in his day, and young Igor became familiar with the great opera repertoire as a result. He began piano lessons at age nine, and apparently preferred to make up his own music at the keyboard instead of practicing the lessons his teacher assigned.

He was especially drawn to nature, writing in his autobiography, “I loved best the violent Russian spring that seemed to begin in an hour and was like the whole earth cracking. That was the most wonderful event of every year of my childhood.” Many people think this interest in the primal quality of nature came through in Stravinsky’s music. Stravinsky did not originally intend to choose music as a career, entering the university as a law student. He remained intensely interested in music, and was encouraged by Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov, the prominent Russian composer.

Stravinsky is perhaps best known for his three ballet scores, “The Firebird” (1909), “Petrushka” (1911), and “The Rite of Spring” (1913).

Stravinsky moved to France in 1920. He became an American citizen in 1945, and lived in Hollywood, California.
What is the music about?

“What Happy Birthday to You”, according to the 1998 Guinness Book of World Records, is the most recognized song in the English language. The melody comes from the song “Good Morning to All” composed by sisters Patty Hill and Mildred J. Hill in 1893. Patty was a principal in Louisville, Kentucky, and Mildred was a pianist and composer. The song may be based on earlier versions from the mid-1800s, and is now firmly planted in American culture.

In addition to being a composer, Igor Stravinsky was well known as a conductor. In 1950, he was conducting a rehearsal of Tchaikovsky’s Second Symphony at the Aspen Music Festival in Colorado. One of the members of the orchestra had just become a new father, and as some orchestras will do to mark such an occasion, at the beginning of the rehearsal, instead of playing the piece they are scheduled to rehearse, they surprised the new father with a spontaneous version of “Happy Birthday”. Coming from a country where “Happy Birthday” is not a tradition, Stravinsky was very surprised when he heard this instead of the somber music of Tchaikovsky. He thought the orchestra members were playing a joke on him, instead of congratulating one of their members.

He must have enjoyed the surprise, because he wrote the “Greeting Prelude” based on “Happy Birthday” for a concert honoring the 80th birthday of the great conductor Pierre Monteux, held April 4, 1955.

Stravinsky’s piece helped celebrate his own 80th birthday at a New York Philharmonic Young People’s Concert titled “Happy Birthday Igor Stravinsky” hosted and conducted by Leonard Bernstein.

At the Tin Forest concerts, the orchestra will perform the “Greeting Prelude” in honor of the 100th birthday of Minnesota Orchestra Young People’s Concerts.
Listening to the Music

Students will undoubtedly know “Happy Birthday”, but you may wish to prepare them to “expect the unexpected” with Stravinsky’s version of it.

Stravinsky is known for completely changing the sound of orchestra music with his pieces. Among his most famous pieces is the “Rite of Spring”, which was so new, so dissonant and violent sounding that a small riot broke out in the audience at the first performance in 1913. People who expected a nice melody and harmony never got what they expected with Stravinsky, and students who are expecting to hear a “normal” version of “Happy Birthday” will also be surprised.

1. Listen to Stravinsky’s arrangement of Happy Birthday with no introduction. Prepare students by saying that they will hear an unusual version of a very famous tune. After identifying the tune itself, and with two or three more listenings, help students discover the following “road map” and some of the “surprises” in the piece:
   - There are three verses of Happy Birthday.
   - The first and third verses are similar. The notes of the melody are passed from instrument to instrument, and are not always in the expected range (the fourth note, for example, is an octave higher than expected). The string instruments interject bits and pieces of the melody as accompaniment, especially in the third verse.
   - In the second verse, the melody is played by the very low instruments (string bass, tuba, bassoons) and the rhythm is a bit different from the original song (“Happy Birthday” is in triple meter. Stravinsky has set it in duple meter in the second verse.)
   - The very end of Stravinsky’s version ends on the “wrong” chord- it doesn’t quite resolve as expected.
Make a list of things in Stravinsky’s piece that are the same as a “usual” Happy Birthday, and a list of things that are different.

For younger students, you may want to have them react with a “SURPRISE!” gesture on the surprise note (see example below).

Traditional Happy Birthday

![Traditional Happy Birthday notation]

Stravinsky’s Happy Birthday (1st verse)

![Stravinsky’s Happy Birthday (1st verse) notation]

Stravinsky’s Happy Birthday in duple meter (2nd verse)

![Stravinsky’s Happy Birthday in duple meter (2nd verse) notation]

Compare Stravinsky’s arrangement to visual art.

Once students have discovered how Stravinsky altered “Happy Birthday” in his version, compare this approach to some examples of visual art by his contemporary, Pablo Picasso. Compare how Picasso took bits and pieces of a subject and re-arranged them in his paintings, in much the same way Stravinsky rearranged the elements of “Happy Birthday”. Both Stravinsky and Picasso created something that is recognizable, but with some unexpected surprises.
Compare this photograph of Ambroise Vollard, with Picasso’s painting of the same person. What elements are the same, and what has Picasso “re-arranged”?
3. Create new student arrangements of “Happy Birthday”. If you have access to classroom melody instruments, teach students to play “Happy Birthday” in the usual manner. Have some students create accompaniments with other instruments.
Students can also create their own Stravinsky-like arrangements by altering notes, changing range, experimenting with rhythm, etc. Have a classroom concert of the various versions arrangements of “Happy Birthday”.

4. More Stravinsky:

- Minnesota Orchestra Young People’s Concerts will feature a complete performance of Stravinsky’s ballet *Petrushka* in March, 2012.

- Watch a performance of Stravinsky’s *Greeting Prelude* as it began an 80th birthday tribute by Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic as part of their Young People’s Concert series. The clip can be found by doing a youtube search for “Bernstein. Stravinsky 1/6.” The subsequent clips contain much more information about Stravinsky and performances of his music from the same program. The complete series of Bernstein Young People’s Concerts (VHS or DVD) can be purchased or found in libraries.

- Disney’s *Fantasia 2000* includes a segment called *Firebird Suite*, with excerpts from Stravinsky’s *Firebird* ballet. Students will hear an amazing range of music from this piece, from beautiful melody to pounding, violent rhythms. Disney’s original *Fantasia* contains a segment based on Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring*. This is one of Stravinsky’s most famous pieces, and was very controversial at the time it was first performed. The conductor at the first performance was Pierre Monteaux, whose birthday Stravinsky celebrated with the Greeting Prelude. In addition to Stravinsky’s version of “Happy Birthday”, he also wrote an arrangement of “The Star Spangled Banner”. This piece is easily found on youtube. Some folklore has arisen about this piece. After the first performance in Boston, Stravinsky was warned that there was a Massachusetts state law making it illegal to alter the piece in any way. The legend surrounding this event has grown over the years to the point where people say Stravinsky was jailed because of the unusual harmonies in his arrangement, but this is apparently not true. If you listen to the piece, however, you will hear that the harmonies are imaginative. Compare the arrangement of the *Star Spangled Banner* with the *Happy Birthday* arrangement.
Steve Heitzeg
The Tin Forest
for narrator and orchestra

The Tin Forest
Preparation Guide for Young People’s Concerts
By Joanna Cortright

Who created the music?
The musical story The Tin Forest was composed by Emmy Award-winning composer Steve Heitzeg, who was inspired by a children’s book of the same name by Helen Ward. Named “Composer of the Year” at the 2000 Minnesota Music Awards, Heitzeg is recognized for his orchestral and chamber music written in celebration of the natural world, with evocative and lyrical scores frequently including naturally-found instruments, such as stones, birch bark wind chimes, acorns, manatee bones, sea glass shards and sea shells. An advocate for the “peaceful coexistence of all species through music,” Heitzeg has written more than 90 works, including compositions for orchestra, chorus, chamber ensemble, and for PBS films.

During the fall of 2001, the composer was searching for a story to set to music to fulfill a Kinder Konzerts commission from WAMSO, Minnesota Orchestra Volunteer Association. Heitzeg discovered Helen Ward’s recently released book “The Tin Forest” and was immediately drawn to the themes addressed through the story and the art work. The piece was first performed in fall of 2002 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Kinder Konzerts. In 2004, the Minnesota Orchestra commissioned Heitzeg to revise his piece for full orchestra. This is the version you will hear at the Young People’s Concerts. For more information on Heitzeg, go to www.steveheitzeg.com.

Audio Clips
The full orchestra version of “The Tin Forest” has not been recorded. The Audio Clips section of our curriculum materials contains two brief examples of the piece in its Kinder Konzert small ensemble version. You will hear the opening “grey” music, and the Ecodance.
Who created the story?
The *Tin Forest* was written by British author Helen Ward and illustrated by Wayne Anderson. Ward received her training as an illustrator at Brighton School of Art, under the direction of well-known children's illustrators Raymond Briggs, Justin Todd, Chris McEwan, and John Vernon Lord. In 1985, her final year at Brighton, she was awarded the first Walker Prize for Children's Illustration. She recently won the British National Art Library Illustration Award for her version of Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* in the Templar Classics series. She was a commended author in the same category for her illustrations of the Aesop fable *The Hare and the Tortoise*, which she also retold. Other books by Helen Ward include, *Varmints* (2008), *The Dragon Machine* (2005), and *The Rooster and The Fox* (2003).

What is the story about?
On the surface, *The Tin Forest* seems a simple story, but it is filled with deeper meaning and addresses many contemporary issues. The story is about making the best of what you have, but never losing your dream. An old man lives in a junkyard and is very unhappy in that gray and rainy place. He yearns to live in a tropical forest – a paradise of trees, plants, flowers, and animals. But he spends his days sorting, sifting, burying, and burning things no one else wants. Then, a piece of junk inspires an idea. The old man begins to build a forest from all the garbage. Gradually he makes a sculpture garden from recycled junk. Sheet metal, gears, nuts and bolts, pipes, wire, old light bulbs, and other things are transformed into trees, flowers, animals, insects, and birds. There is even a mechanical toucan. One day, a real toucan visits the tin forest and drops some seeds. He leaves, but brings his mate with him the next day with even more seeds. Nature takes over and soon the old man’s dream becomes a reality as a live forest grows up amongst the tin forest – with real plants, animals, insects, and birds.

The level of artistry of the text and illustrations is outstanding. The book presents ideas and concepts that parents and educators want their children to learn about, think about, know about, experience, and eventually embrace. Though the ideas are complex, Ward and Anderson present them in a simple and universal way. The story communicates hope to children and empowers listeners and readers to see that any of us can have a dream and make things change if we are willing to do the work.
How will the music tell the story?

The musical version of *The Tin Forest* is presented in short episodes, one flowing to the next. Here are the episodes and the sounds you will hear.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode Title</th>
<th>Cues from the story</th>
<th>Music sounds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 Reflective</td>
<td>“…a wide windswept plain,”</td>
<td>Music sounds lonely; blowing, windy sounds; rain stick and spring drum sound like distant storm; harp plays downward glissandos; French horn, then flute play a lonely melody.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 Tranquil</td>
<td>“In the house lived an old man.”</td>
<td>Simple melody on glockenspiel; others accompany with chords. Found sounds (plastic bottles, a potato chip bag, pop cans, glass jars, metal pipes, and paper) create a musical junk yard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3 Rainforest Dream Dance</td>
<td>“And every night the old man dreamed…”</td>
<td>Rhythmic, loud, and lively rumba-like dance; wild animal calls from trees; maracas, guiro.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4 Gloomy</td>
<td>“…the world…was still the same.”</td>
<td>Desolate; soft, slow, long tones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5 Roots and Sprouts</td>
<td>“…an idea planted itself in his mind.”</td>
<td>Slow, rhythmic motif starts in low contra-bassoons. Instruments join in as music moves upwards, and expands from soft to loud.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6 Kindness and Friendship</td>
<td>“…the wind swept a small bird.”</td>
<td>Harp plays a gentle, sweet song; other instruments carry it onwards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7 A World Lost</td>
<td>“…next morning the visitor was gone.”</td>
<td>French horn returns with mournful theme – long, sustained notes. First as a solo – then with other instruments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8 Hope</td>
<td>“That night…he made a wish.”</td>
<td>Small, bright sounds on triangle, flute, and harp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#9 Ecodance</td>
<td>“…the old man awoke to the sound of birdsong.”</td>
<td>Joyful music starts softly, but grows louder and fuller as wonderful things appear from the earth. It is music for the transformation of the tin forest into a real forest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#10 Rainforest Dream Dance II</td>
<td></td>
<td>Return of the Rainforest Rumba; joyous, lively; a celebration of life. Animal sounds from stage and the audience accent the music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#11 A World Found</td>
<td></td>
<td>Loud, sweeping, broad chords, octave melody with harp arpeggios – things are “right” with the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#12 Bright, Hopeful – the CODA</td>
<td>“There once was a forest…”</td>
<td>Similar to the opening, but now in a major key; music grows louder with feeling, then near the end shifts suddenly to the quiet glockenspiel and the tin can bell tree.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exploring *The Tin Forest*

**Overview:** The story suggests multiple themes and many possible avenues for exploration. Below are some of the core ideas and questions children can think about and respond to:

1. Where did the old man live?
2. What was his job?
3. Why was the old man sad?
4. What did he read about and dream about?
5. What is a forest?
6. What did he do to make his dream come true?
7. How did he do it?
8. How did the old man change things around him? Was it better than before? How? Why?
9. Were the trees, flowers, animals, and birds he made real?
10. Can people make a forest?
11. What really important thing happened one day?

- Understanding the story
- Building/constructing/making things from found objects (also known as junk)
- Weather themes – rainy and gray to bright and sunny
- Nature, gardens and growing, and animals
- Moods and emotions; changing moods
- Artists who have ideas for unusual art

Many teachers include these topics in their current curricula and lessons. Use the book to bring them into focus around the story, its illustrations, and the messages it communicates.
Learning Activities

A. *Get acquainted with the story*

You will need: a copy of the book; a hand drum (or keyboard instrument) to accompany movement; a recording of the Fairy Garden from Maurice Ravel’s *Mother Goose*; drawing materials; long strips of colored paper for a timeline

1. Read the story of *The Tin Forest* to the children before the concert. Take your time as you read the book and stop often for questions and comments. The illustration will help children understand the story. Invite their interpretations.

2. Tell students that at the concert, they will hear a musical version of this story. Ask them to think about what sounds a composer might use for the parts of the story they discussed.

3. Identify the characters using the illustrations from the book. Look back through the book illustrations for the old man, the tin tiger that seems to come to life when the man sits and looks at the moon, the toucans, the animals, insects, and birds.

4. Help children focus their attention on important elements of the plot, setting, and action. Use movement, sound, and gesture to act out certain key moments of the plot.
   a. Remember the windswept rainy place; move like the rain and the wind and add windy sounds
   b. Be the old man as he cleans, sorts, sifts, sweeps, and moves things around in the wheelbarrow; lift, carry, sweep, and trundle a pretend wheel barrow
   c. Be the old man laying in bed asleep and dreaming; be as still as possible
   d. The GREAT Idea!! (How would it look if you got a great idea? Can you be an idea bouncing right out of someone’s brain?)
   e. Build the forest – sawing, hammering, fitting pieces together, building upwards
   f. Imagine the toucan and fly across the plain
   g. Be the toucan eating the old man’s crumbs
   h. Show how the old man looked when the toucan first arrived
   i. Walk like the old man, quietly and sadly through the tin forest after the toucan leaves
   j. Sit down and look at the moon - make a wish in the moonlight
   k. Be the small seeds the toucans drop; grow up through the ground and bloom into a flower
   l. Move like the animals you see in the book – tigers, birds, butterflies, tree frogs, chameleons, insects, snakes
   m. Walk like the old man, happy now, moving gently through the beautiful forest, looking all around with a smile on your face
3. Read the story again with musical accompaniment. Locate a recording of Maurice Ravel’s *Mother Goose Suite*. One of the movements near the end is the “Magic Garden” or “Fairy Garden.” The piece is approximately five minutes long in the ballet version of *Mother Goose*, but only three minutes and fifty seconds long in the Suite from *Mother Goose*. The shorter version makes a better fit with the story.

   a. If you have the longer version, just start the music at CD 01:14.
   b. Before reading the book/music combination to children, practice your timing.
   c. The music ends with a glorious climax. You should arrive at the fully-grown forest along with this climax.
   d. At some point, listen to the music without the book and move with the music through the forest. Present the idea that the music might be about a journey or search through a magic forest for something important – like a special dream.
   e. Here is the scenario to guide movement and the cue numbers when the music shifts to a new idea.

   - Play the opening section of the music (00:00 to 01:03 on the short version) and ask children to move through the forest with calm, quiet steps as though they were looking for something special. The music in this section is quiet, calm, patient, in a slow tempo, moving forward and upwards in steps, but not very far.
   - Continue with the idea of a journey or a search for something important and move in a new direction to the section from 01:04 to 01:39. The melody moves higher and grows louder (crescendo) then comes to a resting-place. Maybe you are coming closer to what you are looking for in the forest.
   - At 01:39 a solo violin plays while a steady pace is heard beneath the music – step by step the music moves forward. Again, there are two slight crescendos. Walk in a new direction and keep looking high and low, up and down, around all the trees and bushes.
   - At 02:45 the music again starts very softly and smoothly. The music takes its time, but eventually the crescendo and upward melody moves listeners forward to the grand ending. Bells ring, the music is loud, joyful, and complete. You’ve found the magic place!

4. You can also focus on the plot by constructing a picture timeline using children’s drawings to tell the story visually.

   a. Ask children to draw the parts of the story they like and remember.
   b. Place a long strip (3” by 10’) of brightly colored paper on the wall as a story timeline.
   c. Talk with the children about their drawings so that you know what part of the story they have illustrated.
   d. Mount their pictures across the story line in chronological order of the plot. Print key phrases of the story along the timeline to tell the basic plot.
   e. Retell the story using the children’s picture.
Explore music, sound, and weather

Use songs and recordings to focus on the rainy environment of the story that eventually changes to bright sunny weather. Learn two musical terms, *legato* (smooth and connected) and *staccato* (detached, sharp).

**You will need:** the book; basic drawing supplies, the song *It Rained a Mist* (included on page 38), simple percussion instruments or found sound instruments you’ve made, recording of Winter and Spring from Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons*, rhythm sticks or chop sticks

1. **The next time it rains,** observe the weather and listen to the sounds of a rainy day. Talk about what you hear.

2. **Look at the rainy, gray pictures in *The Tin Forest***. Is the rain part of a loud thunderstorm or a steady down pour without the loud noises? Imagine how the rain in the story sounds. Tell children that they will make rainy sounds like these with a song.

3. **Learn a smooth, *legato* song, *It Rained a Mist***. Sing with a slow tempo and make it sound a bit like the old man’s sad mood.
   
a. Add sounds for the soggy, rainy day. Use classroom instruments, vocal and body sounds, or some of the found sounds you’ve brought to class. Ask children to match the sounds to the song. If you have a rain stick, add that tone color to the music. Play smooth and *legato* as you sing. Introduce the term *legato*.
   
b. Learn a contrasting rhyme about the rain. Add rhythm sticks to make the detached, *staccato* sound.

   Plip, plop, raindrop, falling on the ground,
   Plip, plop, raindrop, falling all around.
   Plip, plop, raindrop, falling on the tree.
   Plip, plop, raindrop, falling on me!

d. Combine the song and poem into a three-part piece. Use a picture map to show the pattern of the whole composition. Focus the children by challenging them to perform all three sections of the music without any stops in-between.

   ![Picture Map]

   A (song)  B (poem)  A (song)

e. Relate the musical terms and the symbols for *legato* and *staccato* to the visual.
4. Use ideas about *legato* and *staccato* to introduce the second movement of Vivaldi’s “Winter” concerto from the *Four Seasons*. Listen closely and find the staccato “plip plop” rain sound in the plucked strings. This is Vivaldi’s musical description of a cold and wet winter day (it rains in Italy in the winter). Then find the smooth, *legato* sounds of the solo violin. This was Vivaldi’s musical picture for sitting indoors by a fire while the rain continued outside.

   a. Tap the *staccato* rhythm of the music. Use recycled chopsticks. Make it sound like the patter of raindrops, sharp, crisp, and detached.
   
   b. Remember the term, *staccato*. Move to the smooth *legato* melody with streamers.

5. In Minnesota, we eagerly look forward to spring when everything turns green and the birds return. Contrast the “Winter” concerto with another piece by Vivaldi, the opening section the first movement of his Spring concerto, also from the *Four Seasons*.

   a. Play the first three sections of the music (full orchestra – string solo group – full orchestra).
   
   b. Connect the music to *The Tin Forest* after it comes alive. Birds are singing, everything is green and growing.
   
   c. Dramatize the music with the following scenario.

   It’s spring in *The Tin Forest*. The old man is outside in the forest, raking, cleaning up, planting, and enjoying the lovely day. He is also thinking about the toucans that have not been around for a while. Suddenly, every creature in the forest stills. They look up and see the toucan family flying back home. They hear the birds singing their greeting. The birds, happy to be back home, fly around the old man, then leave to build a nest. The old man joyfully resumes his work, excited to see his friends once again.
6. Dramatize the music with a large group acting out the old man and the forest creatures, cleaning and doing spring activities, and three children flying about as the toucan family during the solo group section. Use a visual map to organize children’s concepts about the music.

7. Other songs that fit some of the themes in *The Tin Forest* include:

- Deta, Deta (The Moon), Macmillan (1995) Grade 3
- Springtime, Macmillan (1995) Grade 2
- Woke Up this Morning, Macmillan (1995) Grade 3
- I Have a Dream (Speech by Martin Luther King, Jr.) Macmillan (1995) Grade 5
- All Living Things, Macmillan (1995) Grade 3
- This Pretty Planet, Macmillan (1995) Grade 4
- What a Wonderful Worlds, Macmillan (1995), Grade 2
- This Land is Your Land, Woody Guthrie
- Garden Song, Silver Burdett, Grade 3
- Don’t Dump Trash, Silver Burdett, Grade 2
- Earth Is My Mother, Silver Burdett, Kdg.
- Look Out for Mother Earth, Silver Burdett, Grade 3
- Bling, Blang, Silver Burdett, Grade 3
- Falling Rain, Silver Burdett, Grade 2
Make music from found objects

You will need: a wide variety of sound sources from the classroom and kitchen, small containers such as pill bottles, boxes, margarine tubs, sticks for beaters, one large cardboard box, masking tape to tap lids on containers, beans or macaroni for rattling sounds, wire, yarn, large buttons for scraping, and other recyclable items

1. Explore the sounds you can make with everyday objects in your classroom.

2. Gather some likely sound sources and ask children how they might use them for making sound. For example:
   a. Scissors opening and closing – can you move them faster, slower?
   c. Paper makes an interesting sound – cut it, shake it, crumple it, and tear it.
   d. The dramatic play area provides pots and pans, eating utensils – they all make sounds.
   e. Find an old purse and listen to the sound of the snapping metal catch.
   f. Scrape a pencil along the wire or plastic grid of a storage box.
   g. Tap your chairs, table, floor, milk cartons, books etc. with a stick and listen to how the sound changes.
   h. Sit quietly and listen for the environmental sounds around your school – can the children identify what they hear?
   i. Bring some objects from home that might be considered junk or garbage – like the things in The Tin Forest. Challenge children to play them in different ways to make different sounds – for example, legato and staccato.

3. Develop a deeper awareness of these found sounds by grouping them. You might have snapping sounds, shaking sounds, scraping or rubbing sounds, thumping sounds, tapping sounds, jangling sounds, blowing sounds, and swishing sounds. Children can determine the categories.

4. Construct instruments from trash such as yogurt containers, seeds, pasta, boxes and tin cans, rubber bands, small bells, sand, sandpaper, old pots and pans.
5. Use these sounds to accompany short stories, and poems. For example, the swishing sounds might fit a song about rain, or the thumping sounds a story about an elephant. Or plan an accompaniment for this poem by Langston Hughes:

How thin and sharp is the moon tonight,
How thin and sharp and ghostly white
Is the slim, curved crook of the moon tonight.

- read the poem
- talk about when to use certain sounds and how to make the sounds – how long, loud or soft, fast or slow?
- read the poem again with sounds added

6. Use your found sound instruments to accompany a reading of the story. Plan what sounds and ways to play them could fit each episode. Make a list of the sounds in order. Rehearse the “musical score” several times until the pieces fit smoothly. Invite a younger class to hear your original music.

7. Play a sound game with your collection of found sound instruments and a song. (The song, *Just a Little Bit of Junk*, is at the end of this guide.)

   a. Ask children to choose some of your collected sounds and hand-made instruments and place them in a cardboard box.
   b. Put the box in the middle of the circle, and ask the first child on your right to begin the game.
   c. The child closes his/her eyes and reaches into the box, choosing an instrument during the first half of the song, then plays on the second half of the song.
   d. Each child takes a turn as you move around the circle.
   e. Later play a more challenging version of the game by placing the sounds and hand-made instruments behind a screen. Children play their chosen sounds out of sight. The group guesses what sound they are hearing at the end of the song.
   f. Speak the first part of the game and sing the second. Change the words to fit the sound source, substituting rub, scrape, strike, etc. for shake.
F. **Sing songs about the natural world**

1. Learn *The Flower* (El florón), a folk song from Mexico. (Song is at the end of this guide.)

   a. When children know the song, play a simple game with a paper flower. (Flowers bright tissue and crepe paper are traditional in Mexico.) Here are directions:
      - Form a circle
      - One child remains outside the circle – the “it” for the game
      - Children stand facing inward with their hands behind their backs
      - As everyone sings the song, the child who is “it” walks outside the circle with the flower (from the tin forest, of course), and pretends to place it in every child’s hand
      - When he/she is ready, “it” really does leave the flower with one child. “It” keeps walking and making motions that look like they are giving the flower away to fool the others.
      - At the end of the song, “it” chooses a child to guess who has the flower
      - If that child doesn’t guess correctly, “it” chooses a second child, then a third child to guess.
      - The child who guesses correctly becomes the new “it” and the song is repeated
      - If none of the three guesses correctly, “it” gets another turn

2. Imagine the toucan as you sing the American folk song, *Blue Bird, Blue Bird*. Turn the song into a circle game with one child flying through the upraised arms of the rest of the class. Or a pair of children can join hands to make an open window through which the birds fly.

   Blue bird, blue bird fly through my window, Find a little friend and tap her on the shoulder,
   Blue bird, blue bird fly through my window, Find a little friend and tap her on the shoulder,
   Blue bird, blue bird fly through my window, Find a little friend and tap her on the shoulder,
   And buy molasses candy. And share molasses candy.
G. Look at art works made of recycled materials or unusual designs

Many three dimensional art works are made from ordinary, everyday materials. Looking at the work done by artists expands children’s ideas about what they can envision, plan, and create. Look at art works made from found objects. Here are some artists whose work connects to the building of *The Tin Forest*.

1. California artist Donna Keiko Ozawa’s three-dimensional works are created from a variety of found objects. The web site below includes photos of the artists at the junkyard selecting objects. One recent exhibit, titled “Works from the Dump,” came at the end of a residency at the Sanitary Fill Company in San Francisco. Another, exhibit, “Transformation/Possibility” features sculptures made from 15,000 recycled chopsticks. Find pictures of her work at [http://www.exo.net/~dozawa/](http://www.exo.net/~dozawa/). At her site go to “Work from the Dump” (Spring 2001 and Puffy Clouds are two of my favorites) and the Waribashi project (images of the artworks made from chopsticks).

2. Alexander Calder is recognized as one of the past century’s most important artists. He is best knows for his mobiles (an art form he invented when he imagined a Mattisse painting that looked like it was dancing) and stabiles, but he also created toys, jewelry, many drawings, and even household items. His large stabiles will remind you of some of the drawings in the *Tin Forest*. They are made of metal with large nuts and bolts as part of the work. His wire sculptures can inspire viewers to create their own people, flowers, animals, and other objects from simple wire. A very comprehensive collection of photographs is contained in the book *Calder’s Universe* (1976), Running Press Books. It was created by the Whitney Museum and edited by Jean Lipman and Ruth Wolfe. [http://www.artcyclopedia.com](http://www.artcyclopedia.com) is the web site for Artcyclopedia, an arts search engine and a great source. Go to the artists’ box on the home page and type in Calder. This will lead you to multiple web sites containing Calder’s artwork.
3. Frank Gehry creates buildings that look like tin forests, including one right here in Minnesota, the Weisman Art Museum on the East Bank of the University of Minnesota campus. The book, *Frank O. Gehry: Outside In* (2000) by Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan, Doring Kindersley Publishing Company, tells the story of a man with a dream. It has many pictures of Gehry’s fantastic buildings, cardboard furniture, and sculptures. You can also search for images of Gehry’s work on the Artcyclopedia web site, and in the Sculpture Garden of the Walker Art Center. Gehry created the crystal fish that lives in the glass conservatory at the Sculpture Garden.

4. Using artists’ works for inspiration, make three-dimensional junk sculptures from all the odds and ends of “good junk” you’ve collected over the years. Present the concept to children that they are recycling objects no one wants as the old man did in *The Tin Forest*, and making something new.

   **You will need:** round plastic lids or juice can tops, play dough, found objects, wire, other “stuff.”

   a. Provide children with the lid from a margarine container or a thick piece of cardboard to use as a base for their sculpture, and plenty of play dough as the medium that holds things together.

   b. Collect found objects for your sculptures such as buttons, yarn, small sticks and dowels, nuts, bolts, washers, bottle caps, straws, and safe wire. Children can add items to this collection of junk.

   c. You can introduce a topic to focus their creations. Perhaps they are building a forest, or a magic machine.

   d. Display their sculptures in a mini art show before they take them home.

   Joanna Cortright (2004)
Tin Forest Songs

It Rained a Mist

It rained a mist, It rained a

It rained all over the town -

Just a Little Bit of Junk

Just a little bit of junk, But music lives inside!

Shake it high, Shake it low, Shake it far and wide.

Flower Song

I am holding a pretty flower, pretty flower is in my

hand. And I wonder who will have it, or will it stay in my

hand?
Benjamin Britten

The Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra

Curriculum materials by Joanna Cortright, for Young People’s Concert performances of November and December 2002.

**A profile of *The Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra***

British composer Benjamin Britten (1913-1976) created *The Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra*. Britten began composing as a young boy, and was very good at working out musical ideas in his head. He grew up to become one of Britain’s most important composers. Queen Elizabeth II bestowed the title Lord Aldeburgh in 1976 to honor Britten for his contributions to English society.

Britten wrote *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* in 1946 to accompany an educational film about the orchestra. In the years just after World War II, England was trying to rebuild after the terrible bombings of the war years. The British Ministry of Education wanted to lift people’s spirits, help them remember the beauty of music, and to experience again some of the things that make life worth living. They asked Britten to write a piece that would interest children and help them learn about music and the sounds of instruments.

The music is sometimes performed with dancers portraying the featured instruments. One of Britten’s compositional techniques was to pair older, traditional English musical ideas or tunes with his 20th century compositions. He did this in *The Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra*, taking the main theme from a composition by one of England’s famous composers from the past, Henry Purcell (1658-1695). Britten borrowed the theme from the Purcell opera, *The Moor’s Revenge*, and composed a series of variations for instruments of the orchestra.

Britten created an original tune for the third section, the fugue.

The whole composition is organized into **three sections** – the theme, the variations, and the fugue.
Learning Activities: Students will become familiar with the theme, explore the order of the theme is the opening section, review concepts about musical variations, map Britten’s variations, and identify the instruments as they enter the fugue.

Materials: recording, transparency of the theme, rhythm charts of the patterns in the theme, instrument pictures, orchestra visual organizer, variations worksheet, art materials

Activity #1 – Start with the theme

1. Listen to Purcell’s theme on the recording or play it on a keyboard instrument. Display a transparency of the theme and have students follow the notation with the music. Ask them to notice some of the characteristics of the theme: the long notes moving upward in measure one, the up and down pattern of measure two and the repeated descending sequence in measures three through six. Have students use their hands to draw the contour of the theme as it plays.

2. Purcell’s theme is made up of eight, quarter and half notes.

If students have been introduced to these notes in music reading activities, make a rhythm chart of the theme and clap and chant the patterns.

Activity #2 – Analyze the first section of the music, the THEME

1. Help students listen thoughtfully to the first section and analyze what they hear. Select the four Bowmar Instrument Charts picturing the instrument families, or use your orchestra map. (If you do not have a set of Bowmar Charts or have not made an orchestra map, use the illustrations provided with this guide and enlarge them with a photocopier.) Set them on four chairs in front of the class, then ask four students to:

- each be responsible for one of the family charts
- go to the four chairs and hold one of the charts
- use the charts to show what family is playing
- stand up when their family plays the theme
The full orchestra plays the first section, so everyone will stand. As the four families play the theme, the student with the appropriate family chart stands up, then sit down when is over. At the end, they should all stand again as the full orchestra plays. The order is:

**Orchestra * Woodwinds * Brass * Strings * Percussion * Orchestra**

2. Ask students why they think Britten had the theme played six times. (So we really know it? So we can hear how each family sounds?)

3. When students are familiar with the theme as played by the full orchestra, explore the stately mood of the theme in small groups.

- Ask students to describe the mood of the music (important, special, like a celebration, slow, march-like).
- Divide into four small groups – one for each family. Each will move in ways that fit the mood of the music when their family plays.
- Everyone can move on the opening and closing theme.
- Ask them to think about how they will change the way they move to make it look different for each group.

**Activity #3 – Learn what happens in the VARIATIONS section**

1. Britten next presents a series of variations for each instrument. Conduct classroom experiments to generate concepts about variations.

- For example, wave to the students, and ask them to wave back. Notice the different ways they wave. Choose five and perform “variations on waving.”
- Or take a walk as a group, noticing different ways of walking. Choose five and perform “walking variations.”
- Sing a short familiar song such as “Shoo Fly,” then vary the song by changing dynamics, tempo, articulation, pitch, rhythm patterns, etc. Choose five and perform “variations on a song.”
1. Look around your classroom and find some variations. For example, if at least three or four people wear glasses, ask them to stand next to each other and look at “variations on the theme of glasses.” Five different athletic shoes provide “variations of the theme of shoes.” Sweaters, backpacks, lunch boxes, pencils, and books are just a few variations in the school environment.

2. Now tackle Britten’s variations. There are thirteen variations in all. Each is played by a different instrument or instrument pair. Here are some listening ideas.

- Tell the students that there are thirteen variations. They can decide what instrument is the lead for each variation by drawing or writing what they hear as they listen. Sometimes it is a bit tricky because Britten has two different instruments playing. Use the form included with this guide. Use the pause button to allow response time and to check in with students.

- Write 13 numbers on a chart or the board with some space for responses. Put the featured instrument by each numbered variation. Tell children that their job is to identify what they think is happening in the music as each variation is played. The question to ask is “What’s going on in this music?” Pause after each to collect their responses. As they respond, refrain from editing their ideas. Take them as they come, and put them on the chart.

- Use the chart to generate ideas for movement. Divide students into 13 groups. (If you have a small class, solos are fine.) Assign each a variation for which they can choreograph movements. Play the recording so they can focus on their variation. Provide time to talk and try movement ideas. Encourage them to match their movements to what being expressed in the music. Perform the variations for each other.

- Write short stories or scenarios that fit each variation, again using ideas from the chart.

- Map the variations using drawing supplies. The task is to express the mood or ideas of each variation using shapes, lines, color, and intensity.
4. Here is the order and a short description of each variation. An *arpeggio* is a chord that is all spread out and played one note at a time, from low to high or high to low. To play strings *pizzicato* is to pluck them without the bow. And a *glissando* is an effect created by rapidly moving through a series of notes. Harps are famous for playing *glissandos*.

| Variation 1 | Woodwind family starts the variation with two flutes playing a fast, sparkly tune. The small piccolo comes in at bar 11. |
| Variation 2 | Oboes play a smooth, slow variation over string chords. Soft roll on timpani near the end. Sounds a bit sad. |
| Variation 3 | Two bubbly clarinets play *arpeggios* low to high. They sound like they are playing leapfrog. In the middle they reverse and bubble from high to low. |
| Variation 4 | Bassoons march along quickly at first, then the first bassoon plays a smooth variation and the second bassoon comments with crisp, staccato notes. |
| Variation 5 | String family takes over with first and second violins playing a brilliant Polish dance called the *polonaise*. When first violins play high, sweeping phrases, the second violins answer. *Pizzicato* chords end the variation. |
| Variation 6 | The music becomes more serious when the violas play long phrases that rise and fall. |
| Variation 7 | Cellos play a variation like a slow waltz. The phrases are long and smooth. |
| Variation 8 | String basses begin their variation slowly, then gradually speed up. Basses don’t usually get to play such agile music. |
| Variation 9 | Next is the harps turn as it plays a sweeping, majestic variation. There are many *arpeggios* and *glissandos*. |
| Variation 10 | Now it’s the brass family’s turn. French horns begin while the strings are still playing trembling tones (*tremolo*). The horns echo each other in this mysterious music. |
| Variation 11 | The mood changes suddenly as the trumpets play an exciting galloping variation. Snare drum plays an accompaniment. |
| Variation 12 | Trombones begin a quick variation that sounds like they are important and in a hurry. Tubas join in, then all the brass play rich, solemn chords. |
| Variation 13 | The percussion variation begins with timpani. The timpani are followed by the other percussion in this order: bass drum and cymbals, tambourine and triangle, snare drum and wood block, xylophone, castanets and gong, and the whip. |
Activity #3 – A FUGUE wraps it up

1. The last section of the music is a fugue based on a new tune, or subject, created by Britten. Tell students that the word fugue means "flight." In Britten’s fugue, fourteen instruments will “fly” through the music. They enter one at a time, but overlap as voices do when they sing a round. Britten's fugue really does "fly by" in a fast tempo, beginning with the tiny piccolo and ending with percussion and the brass family playing Purcell’s original theme.

2. Listen once to get the sound of the fugue in your ears. Then place pictures of the fourteen instruments across the front of the room. (You can find the list of instruments in order in the listening map included with this guide.) Listen again and hold up the instrument that is playing for children to see. (You might also want to add a fifteenth picture of the brass family since they play at the end of the fugue.)

3. Choose fourteen children and assign each to one of the instruments. They must respond quickly when they hear their instrument, holding up the picture in order. Listen and see how readily students can identify each new voice in the fugue by holding up their chart. (This is hard to do!) Use the pause button to help them through the first few times. With younger students, the teacher can manipulate the pictures in order as the music plays. Mount the fourteen pictures on the wall as a tool for visual learning throughout the rest of your preparation lessons.

4. Display an overhead of the listening map for section three to help children see how the whole section is organized.

5. When children know the fugue well, they can respond through movement. Fourteen students can each be assigned an instrument to interpret when that instrument plays during the fugue. A group representing the brass family can also join the movement piece. If the word ‘fugue’ means ‘to fly,’ or ‘flee,’ they certainly can show this in movement.

Assessment:

Students can demonstrate their understanding of instrumental tone color by matching sounds to appropriate instrument illustrations on listening maps or by manipulating charts. Students demonstrate concepts of tempo, style, and dynamics through moving to the variations and the fugue. Use the forms included with this guide and play a listening games. Cut the sections apart. As students listen, ask them to put the sections in order to demonstrate what they know.