

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

Meet the Orchestra 2016

Teachers' Pack by Paul Rissmann

This May, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra will present a brand new, action-packed children's concert featuring some of the most fantastic orchestral music. The programme includes:

Copland	Hoe Down <i>from Rodeo</i>
Prokofiev	Montagues and Capulets (excerpt) <i>from Romeo and Juliet Suite 2</i>
Beethoven	Symphony No.7 2 nd Mvt – Allegretto (excerpt)
Grainer	<i>Theme from Dr Who</i>
Bizet	Les Toréadors <i>from Carmen Suite 1</i>
Dukas	The Sorcerer's Apprentice (excerpt)
Rimsky-Korsakov	The Flight of the Bumblebee
Paul Rissmann	BAMBOOZLED! – audience participation piece*
Rossini	William Tell Overture (excerpt)

*A Very Important note about BAMBOOZLED!

This is the audience participation piece in our concert. This music has been written especially for Primary School children to perform with a professional orchestra. I have created a separate, multi-media resource which will teach BAMBOOZLED! to your class. Please follow the links on the MSO website to view or download the PREZI file – which will run on any computer, tablet or phone.

BAMBOOZLED! is music your students will perform with the MSO.

4 Creative Projects

This pack has been created to enhance the concert experience for your class and contains several projects for you to explore together. All of these activities will work well pre or post concert, and if time is short please focus entirely on learning BAMBOOZLED! before the concert and use this pack once you've visited the MSO.

Overleaf, you will find four projects inspired by:

- Copland – Hoe Down
- Prokofiev – Romeo and Juliet
- Beethoven – Symphony No.7
- Rossini – William Tell Overture

Many of these projects use melodies and rhythms taken directly from the score while others are more analytical and will involve listening to and discussing some of the music in class.

I hope you have lots of fun with our concert repertoire.

We look forward to making music with you in Hamer Hall.

Paul Rissmann
February 2016

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PROJECT ONE

Aaron Copland - *Hoe Down from Rodeo*



Born in Brooklyn New York in 1900, Aaron Copland was one of the first composers to write music that sounded truly American. Copland's energetic style and quirky rhythms sound (and feel) so American and *Hoe Down* is a brilliant example this. Originally written for the ballet *Rodeo* in 1942, its score includes many traditional folk tunes. But despite sounding all-American, several of those melodies actually have roots from elsewhere.

1. Use the Source

One of the most prominent melodies in *Hoe Down* comes from Scotland, where it is known as *Mrs MacLeod's Reel*. A 'reel tune', is a traditional Scottish dance melody – usually performed at break-neck speed. You can easily find many performances of this old tune online – simply Google it.

Before you listen to Copland's *Hoe Down*, I'd recommend watching a performance of *Mrs MacLeod's Reel* on YouTube.

Points for discussion

- which instruments are playing the music?
- how does this music make you feel?
- does it sound like suitable music for dance?

2. The Rodeo

Discuss what an American rodeo is with the class. *What happens at a Rodeo? What would it look like? What sounds would you hear?*

Now listen to a recording of Copland's *Hoe Down* (again, there are many performances available online).

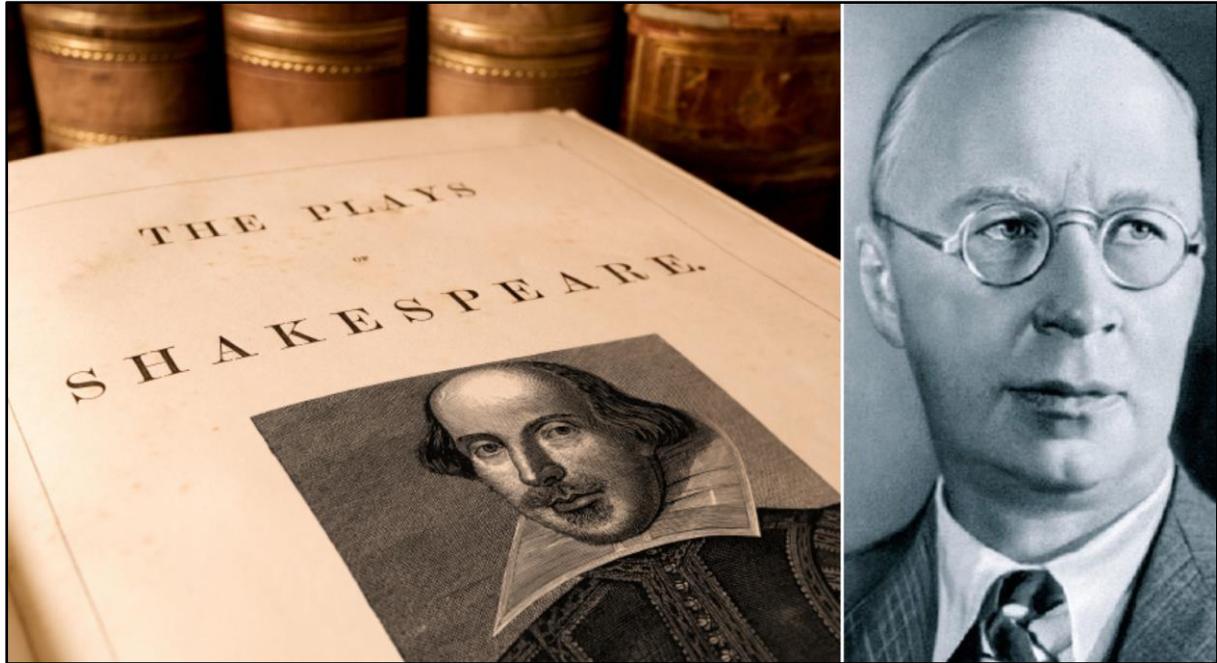
Points for discussion

- can the children hear any connections between the old Scottish folk tune and Copland's music?
- does Copland's music sound like a rodeo?
- can you hear the sound of the horse in the orchestra?
- after 2 minutes into the piece, the music suddenly gets slower and slower and comes to a brief stop. *What do you think is happening at that point? (I think the poor horse is exhausted and decides to go for a sleep!).*

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PROJECT TWO

Serge Prokofiev - The Montagues and Capulets



Serge Prokofiev is one of the great musical figures of the 20th century. Born in Russia in 1891, Prokofiev was able to craft both highly popular and wildly contemporary sounds

Prokofiev was a great musical storyteller (he's the man who wrote *Peter and the Wolf* after all) so it's not surprising that the work of William Shakespeare would provide considerable inspiration to him. Shakespeare's legendary tale of two young lovers from rival families has inspired countless artists and musicians, yet transforming *Romeo and Juliet* into a ballet turned out to be an enormous challenge for Prokofiev and the process took many frustrating years.

The original commission came from the Bolshoi Theatre in 1934. A year later Prokofiev proudly presented them with 52 piano pieces inspired by Shakespeare's play. Incredibly (considering how popular the work is now) his music was rejected - they said it was un-danceable. However much of their negativity was fuelled by the fact that Prokofiev had altered the narrative of Shakespeare's play – as he had given it a happy ending! He is famously quoted as saying – '*Living people can dance, dead people can't*'.

So it wasn't until 1938 that the ballet was first performed. During this huge genesis, Prokofiev worked tirelessly on orchestrating his music for large orchestra and crucially, he restored Shakespeare's tragic ending.

During Meet the Orchestra, the MSO will perform the most famous movement of Prokofiev's score - *The Montagues and Capulets*.

Recreate The Montagues and Capulets in class

Prokofiev's music embodies the rivalry between the two families. Although the orchestra sound highly virtuosic, when stripped back to basics – the core ingredients of his music can be easily played on classroom percussion.

Overleaf is a recipe for performing a simplified version of *The Montagues and Capulets*. The material has been transposed to fit well onto classroom instruments such as xylophones and glockenspiels.

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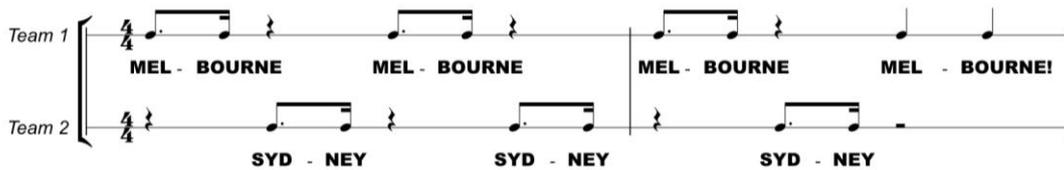
1. Start with the RHYTHM

Prokofiev uses a repetitive, dotted rhythm in his melody.



Its distinctive sound drives the music forward. Begin by listening to a recording of Prokofiev's music, and then try to clap the rhythm of the famous tune.

Before you progress to the next step, spend some time clapping and chanting this rhythm. You could even split into two rival teams like so!



2. Play the MELODY

When reduced to it's most basic form, Prokofiev's melody is simply made up of two phrases:



Although each phrase only use 3 notes, the range of the melody is quite extensive (notice how it leaps from low to high). So simplifying it further for classroom instruments with a limited range, it could even become:



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The easiest way to play the music is to divide it amongst two teams. Team 1 play phrase 1 – and Team 2 play phrase two.

To make playing it even easier on a xylophone, you could remove all the notes that are not played from the frame – leaving only the notes of the melody so you can **guarantee** there will be no wrong notes!

Try playing the melody several times in succession. Ensure that the rhythm is strong and 'tight'. Refer back to a recording of Prokofiev's music and try to emulate the style of the performance.

3. Add an ACCOMPANIMENT

Underneath his melody, Prokofiev adds a distinctive accompaniment. It sounds like a heavier version of the classic 'OOM PAH OOM PAH OOM PAH OOM PAH'.

This accompaniment is created simply by playing the three notes of each phrase like so:

The image shows a musical staff in 4/4 time. The melody consists of two phrases, each four measures long. The notes for the first phrase are A, D, F, A, D, A, F, D. The notes for the second phrase are A, D, F, A, D, A. Below the staff, the accompaniment is shown as a series of rhythmic patterns. For the first phrase, the patterns are 'OOM A' (measure 1), 'PAH D-F-A' (measure 2), 'OOM A' (measure 3), and 'PAH D-F-A' (measure 4). The same patterns are repeated for the second phrase.

Try to emulate this sound in class. The easiest way to do it is by making two further teams, with one team playing the accompaniment for PHRASE 1 and the other team supporting PHRASE 2.

Bass notes are often challenging in a Primary School, so don't worry too much if you don't have any low instruments – as long as the pitches of the accompaniment are covered it will sound just fine.

4. Design a STRUCTURE

Play the MELODY & ACCOMPANIMENT together. *How do they sound?*

If it is difficult to coordinate the two elements, add a steady pulse on some unpitched percussion to hold it all together.

Then, challenge the class to choose the best and most interesting structure for their music.

How should the music start?

What is the volume of their music?

Does it always stay the same?

How many times should we hear the melody?

Aim to make as interesting an arrangement as possible.

5. DEVELOPING the music further

There are several ways to extend this music. Here are some further ideas borrowed from Prokofiev:

- Begin with long, quiet sounds that turn into a ferocious SCREAM! Listen to the first few seconds of *The Montagues and Capulets* for inspiration.
- Can the children make two new melodic phases for their music? You could keep the rhythm and choose different notes – or keep the notes but make a brand-new rhythm.
- What about the speed of the music – is it always the same?

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PROJECT THREE

Ludwig van Beethoven - Allegretto from Symphony No. 7



Ludwig van Beethoven was born *sometime* in December 1770. It's staggering that for such an important historical figure, no one is quite sure as to exactly when he was born - as no documentation of his birth survived. He was a gifted child who was thrust into the limelight by pushy parents. His father is reported to have been dissatisfied with having a 9-year-old musical prodigy - so would often publicise young Ludwig's concerts by claiming that he was just 7. In the Beethoven household it seems there was a strong desire to keep up with the Mozarts!

Beethoven is most famous for his 9 Symphonies, which are some of the most ground-breaking works in the orchestra's repertoire. Although his 7th Symphony doesn't have the celebrity of the fiery 5th, it is still incredible music – and its 2nd movement – the *Allegretto* - is surely of his greatest hits.

1. LISTEN to Beethoven

Listen to the first 2 or 3 minutes of the *Allegretto* from Beethoven's 7th Symphony in class.

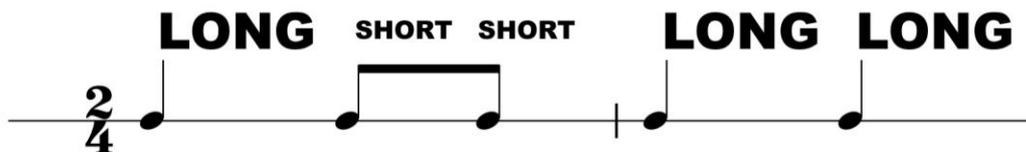
How would you describe this music?

How does it make you feel?

Is there anything unusual about the music? About its rhythm?

2. EXPLORE Beethoven's rhythm

This music is driven (almost entirely) by a single rhythm – **LONG SHORT SHORT LONG LONG**. It is played over and over – in an obsessive fashion.



Explore this rhythm with the class – clap it, vocalise it, march it - have fun finding as many unusual ways as possible to perform the rhythm.

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3. PLAY Beethoven's rhythm

Now, try playing this rhythm on instruments. Students using pitched instruments should play one or all of the following notes (but they must never change note):

A C E

When played together, these three pitches make the chord of **A minor** – which is exactly the sound we hear in Beethoven's symphony.

Using this single chord and any unpitched sounds you wish, find different ways to play Beethoven's rhythm. Think carefully about which instruments should play and what volume it is played at. Explore lots of different combinations of sounds.

Aim for your music sound as interesting as possible – don't just play the rhythm over and over with exactly the same instruments as this will soon become boring.

Find 8 different ways to play the rhythm and make a list of these combinations on the board.

Now make sure they are played in the most effective order – encourage the class to think carefully about the structure of this list.

4. Add a BASS line

If you have access to any bass (or low) instruments in school, add a bass line to this music. Begin by playing Beethoven's rhythm all the way through on the note A. Then, move to a different pitch and play the rhythm again. Any of the white notes on a piano will work well:

A B C D E F G

Then move to a different pitch for another repetition and so on. Choose the best possible notes to fit underneath the 8 repetitions the class have already made.

NB: You may of course repeat a pitch you have already played, and don't feel pressure to use all of the notes in the scale above.

5. Add a MELODY

Advanced students may also wish to make a melody to fit on top of this rhythmic music. The melody could be played or even sung.

Use any of the notes *ABCDEFGG* to make the tune, but bear in mind that the notes A, C and E will sound best – so make sure you start and end on one of these pitches.

Beethoven adds a long, smooth melody that contrasts brilliantly with the rhythmic, machine-like feel of his rhythm. Aim to make something similar.

6. LISTEN to Beethoven again

Now listen to the *Allegretto* from Beethoven's 7th Symphony again.

What does Beethoven do to keep his music sound interesting?

Does the volume stay the same?

What about his choice of instruments?



Principal Partner

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PROJET FOUR

Gioachino Rossini - Overture to *William Tell*

Da da da, Da da da, Da da da da da!

Although the overture to Rossini's opera *William Tell* last some 12 minutes, its fame is entirely founded on the final two. It's at this point that Rossini introduces his *March of the Swiss Soldiers*. The killer combination of blaring brass and an addictive galloping rhythm is instantly recognisable – even if you've never seen an episode of *The Lone Ranger* – somehow, everyone just seems to know (and love) this music.

Here are two activities to try in class inspired by Rossini's march:

1. RAP it!

Make some words to fit with the rhythm of Rossini's melody. Something like this.....

*Long ago lived man who was William Tell,
From the head of his son a green apple fell,
With a pull of his bow he would hit the spot,
William Tell - - - - was such an expert shot.*

Feel free to make better words! Your words don't necessarily have to have anything to do with the story of William Tell, but it is very important that they fit exactly with the rhythm of Rossini's melody.

Here are my words arranged into beat boxes:

1		+		2		+		3		+		4		Long	a-
go		lived	a	man		who	was	Wi -		- lliam		Tell,		From	the
head		of	his	son		a	green	a -		- pple		fell,		With	a
pull		of	his	bow		he	would	hit		the		spot		Wi -	- lliam
TELL _____						was	such	an		e -		- pert		shot!	

Overleaf, you will find a blank template to make your new text. Feel free to photocopy this and give it to the class.

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2. PLAY it!

Here is Rossini's melody transposed into an easy key for classroom instruments. Why not divide the phrases below amongst three groups or three players.

The musical score is written on two staves in 4/4 time. The notes are transposed to an easy key. The first staff contains the first two phrases, and the second staff contains the third phrase. Vertical dashed lines separate the phrases. Letter-based notation is placed above the notes to indicate fingerings or specific notes.

PHRASE 1
GG G GG G GG C D E

PHRASE 2
GG G GG C EE D B G GG

PHRASE 3
G GG G GG C D E C E G F E D C E C

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4				
+				
3				
+				
2				
+				
1				