

Ainsworth Concerts for Youth

MARCH
12-15
2024

TEACHER GUIDE

The ESO's annual Ainsworth Concerts for Youth are made possible with support from the S.E. (Stu) Ainsworth Family.

Additional support for this project is provided by ComEd, an Exelon Company, and a Fanny R. Wurlitzer Foundation Fund Grant found at DeKalbcf.org.



OTTO
Expect Excellence.

THE PEPPER
FAMILY
FOUNDATION

ARK Technologies, Inc.

*Willow Springs
Charitable Trust*


JOHN B. SANFILIPPO
& SON, INC.

k Kairos
Counseling
Center


ILLINOIS
ARTS
COUNCIL
AGENCY

ELGIN
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Chad Goodman, Music Director

Dear teachers,

January 2024

Welcome back to the Hemmens Cultural Center!

Thank you for sharing incredible music with your students, our community, and your Elgin Symphony Orchestra at the Ainsworth Concerts for Youth. This Teacher Guide is intended to help you prepare your students for the concert, and to help maximize their understanding, excitement, and curiosity.

Storytellers of the Symphony

Have you ever watched a movie without the music? The difference is palpable: the emotional heights and depths are flattened, the tension and suspense diminished, and the overall impact seems to just...miss. Filmmakers and composers are experts at using musical devices to dictate our emotional landscape, both in obvious and subtle ways. Even before the age of film, composers were utilizing musical tools to create narratives, to spark the imagination, and to capture the highs and lows of the human experience. They were telling stories through sound.

The art of storytelling goes far beyond the words, the plot summary, or the narrative twists and turns—though these elements are important, too. Great storytelling both paints a clear picture and allows for individual interpretation; it hits the sweet spot between being painfully literal and confusingly vague. A great story puts you, the audience, in the world of the story with vibrancy and detail in color, sound, feel, even smell and taste.

Just as storytellers evoke this suite of images and episodes through words, composers do through sound. (And both use well-placed silences, too!) Each choice of pitch, rhythm, timbre, and dynamic makes a difference as these elements come together to tell a story through music. What if Tchaikovsky hadn't been so fastidious in separating the different conversation partners—or maybe if he had used mallet instruments instead of pizzicato strings? Puccini specifically chose the cello and violas the main opening soloists—why not harp and flute? What would the music have lost without the deadening thud of the bass drum, coupled with the fog-horn of the tuba?

As we explore music of Tchaikovsky, John Williams, Puccini, and Rossini, we aim to do more than simply perform great music. (Thought that will definitely happen.) We hope to spark curiosity and a sense of wonder in your students—to give the license to be creators and creative artists themselves, whether they are making music or consuming it. Using familiar concepts from literature, storytelling, and narrative art, we hope to give them tools to uncover fascinating new insights and tantalizing details about the music that keep them coming back for more.

Our goal isn't for them to "get it" and be able to simply explain back the story of each piece. Rather, it's for them to see the big picture: the world of possibility, of divergent meaning, of multiple perspective, and of ambiguity. We want to incite their *expert noticer* ethos, encouraging them to create meaning from sound, rather than to simply memorize what some Very Important Person has told them about it. And if they ascribe different meaning to art than you or I do? Great! We'll embrace this, knowing that it's in exploring and grappling with meaning on their own that they grow the most.

Thank you for partnering with your Elgin Symphony Orchestra as we explore *Storytellers of the Symphony*
See you in March!



Matthew Sheppard
msheppard@eyso.org

TEACHER GUIDE: A User's Manual

1. **Get to know the music.** Before diving in with specific strategies and concepts, take some time familiarizing yourself with repertoire that's new to you. Just as you would with any other piece that you're teaching, listen a few times and develop your own relationship with the music before introducing it to your students. When you're passionate about it, they'll know.

Look for the links, or find your own on Spotify and YouTube

2. **Choose (and use) what works for you.** You know your students best! Think of this guide as a way to jump-start your creativity and imagination, rather than a one-stop-strategies-shop. Try to view it as an open-ended set of possibilities, rather than a prescribed curriculum and lesson plan from start to finish.
3. **Make it your own.** Do you see connections to repertoire and concept you're studying? Great—run with it! Teaching this music works best when it's integrated with your classroom work, rather than as a separate break out. If you find yourself saying "OK, now it's time to put our music away and prepare for the ESO concerts," there may be more opportunities to make connections *with* your music.
4. **Listen in class.** Students aren't rehearsing this music in class every day—they won't just "get to know it" organically without intentional listening during class. Choose a few targeted moments Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony each day to listen to and unpack, or listen to a new section of the Rossini each day for a week. A long-term, multi-week exploration will go a long way.

5. **Don't feel the need to do it all.** Be targeted in your approach: go deeper with one piece or concept, rather than feeling the need to get to everything. The objective of this guide is to maximize the student experience, but that might mean different things for your students. Can you take the concepts of timbre and apply them to a piece you're singing/playing right now? Do it, and leave one of the other concepts for the concert.

Concepts
Look for this box with the 30,000 foot overview for each piece



6. **Remember: there's no expiration date.** This Teacher Guide doesn't go bad at the end of the concert—keep using it if it works for you. It can be especially meaningful to return to these concepts *after* your students have heard the entire piece live.

7. **Talk to other teachers.** There are a few targeted "cross-curricular hints" in this guide; you'll certainly uncover more possibilities. Find a cross-curricular connection that works for you? Let me know, and we'll spread the word. Building with and on the work of our colleagues benefits our students.
8. **Trust the music.** This music is compelling, exciting, and captivating. The Teacher Guide includes a few introductory strategies to alleviate possible friction points, but ultimately, the best ambassador for the music is...well, the music. If you find yourself spending more time listening and unable to cover all the strategies and concepts, that's a win. Remember, we'll explore this together at the concert, too.

And as always, stay in touch.

Did you discover something new that really worked for your students? Want to get clarity on a concept or go deeper on a piece of music? Looking to talk shop about music and education? Let me know; I'd love to hear from you.



Big Concept: Simulation as Imagination

One neat thing about art and storytelling is that it allows us to simulate the experience of something without actually experiencing it. When we read a great book, watch an impactful movie, or listen to a piece of music that moves us, we experience emotions that might simulate the real story...whatever that might be! How is it that these “fake” experiences can move us so powerfully? We want to lay the groundwork for your students to engage deeply with this music, and we do it through the concept of simulation.

Your students likely know simulations through video games. Sometimes, the simulations incorporate some fantastical element to them—a simulation of an alternative reality rather than a possible lived experience. But in the 21st century, we use simulations for all sorts of different things:

- **Pilot training** = flight simulators (a chance to learn how to fly without risking lives and equipment)
- **City planning and management** = SimCity (a chance to explore budget, infrastructure, and technological development)
- **Exercise** = Wii Tennis or bowling (a way to exercise in your living room!)
- **Financial predictions** = Stock market games (common in high school economics courses)
- **Architecture and design** = scale designs (making buildings from “unusual” materials (balsa wood, paper towel rolls, egg crates, uncooked pasta, cardboard, etc.)
- **Ecosystem management** = terrariums and habitat restoration (building a terrarium or contained environment)
- **Musical instrument learning** = phone keyboards or practice instruments (electronic drumsets, iPad keyboards, Guitar Hero, or even instruments made from household materials like these [elastic band guitars](#), [paper straw panpipes](#), [lolly stick harmonicas](#), [wooden spoon maracas](#), and [tin can drums](#)!)



Consider exploring these, perhaps partnering with a colleague from another department. Make them real strategies for learning about simulating experiences and emotions by connecting the dots after the fun.

Hint: *this is a great opportunity to make cross-curricular connections. Check in with the classroom teacher: are they exploring different cultures through geography or history? Ask how today’s technologies allow us to experience worlds beyond the one we can physically touch.*

? Asking big questions... ?

1. *Why was it valuable to have this as a simulation of an experience instead of doing it only IRL (in real life)?*
2. *How was the experience applicable to an IRL version?*
3. *How did it NOT replicate the IRL version?*
4. *Did you experience the same emotional highs and lows that you would IRL?*
5. *How might using a simulation prepare you for the IRL version?*

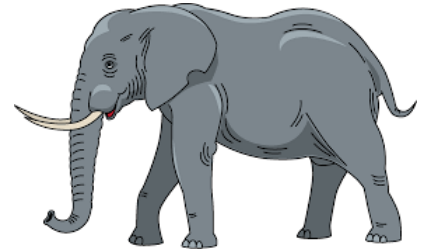
And of course, you can tie this into any musical performances! Ask students how they might simulate a performance of a piece, maybe one they’re playing. How can they practice this drum pattern, or these Orff instrument patterns, or this song, or that handframe/embouchure, without doing it IRL?

WORD OF THE DAY: Audiation as Simulation

Audiation (n): a cognitive process by which the brain gives meaning to musical sounds; hearing music through recall or creation without the sound being physically present.

Audiation allows us to simulate music in our minds—and to bring it to life! Encourage your students to explore audiation as a simulator in a few different ways:

- 1. My favorite song.** Have them think about their favorite song. Encourage them to write down what they like about it using specific musical language (“It has a strong beat; there are lots of drums; the melody is catchy” etc.), then see if they can describe the song using only words. This will help them imagine the song in their minds over and over again, being specific about what they hear.
- 2. No elephants!** Instruct them to NOT think about an elephant. Then, ask them if any of them pictured an elephant right away. (Of course they did! That’s mostly for the fun of it.) Ask how many of them are picturing a specific elephant—like the exact one at the Brookfield Zoo. Most won’t be. How they can possibly create an image of something that isn’t physically present? Explore that question with them: what allows them to create an image in their “mind’s eye?”
- 3. Twinkle Variations.** Ask them to think the song *Twinkle, Twinkle* (or any other famous kid’s song). Have them see if they can imagine singing it first, in their own voices. Then, have them try to imagine it in YOUR voice. Sing it and ask—were they successful? Try different instruments, too: piano, violin, drums, flute, trumpet, etc. If you’re really ambitious (or have an advanced group), see if they can hear it in a minor key.
- 4. Fill in the blank.** Sing part of a melody—something you’re studying, or a famous tune. (*Ode to Joy*, *Happy Birthday*, *Twinkle Twinkle*, etc.) Leave out the last phrase. Ask them to all fill in the blank in their heads—how does it go? Sing it and ask if they were right. Then, try it with a different song or left-out phrase, but have them think it and then sing it back.
- 5. Missing notes.** Write a melody or a scale on the board. Have them sing it all together. Then, erase one note. Ask them to sing with just that note missing. For those who had success, ask how they did it—the answer is always “I imagined the missing note.” Keep erasing more and more notes. (This is a great “rhythmic pulse” exercise, too—write 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 on the board, have them clap/speak only certain beats in time.)



And of course, there’s always sightsinging!

Remember: audiation is musical imagination. We’re cultivating not only their inner musician, but also their creativity and sense of internal storytelling and imagination.

Resources for further thinking about simulation and teaching:

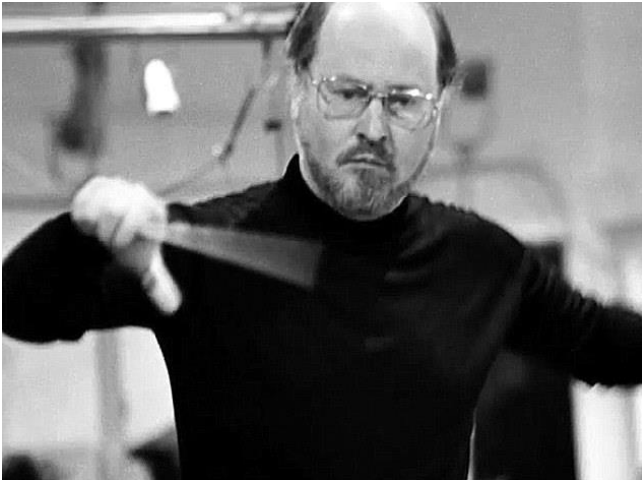
- [Simulation as Teaching Strategy](#) (Kent State University Center for Teaching and Learning) is a neat article chock-full of general philosophy and thinking on using simulation for teaching. Many of the specifics are geared toward older students, but the big picture ideas are clearly explained, and it’s chock full of great links.
- [PhET Interactive Simulations Project](#) (CU Boulder) has loads of actual simulations in math and science. Check out the “Physics” category to see some really neat and applicable simulations about sound waves.
- [World Upside Down](#) has a neat set of lesson plans on audiation for elementary music lessons, including a cool 75-second video by PBS Kids’ SteveSongs.

Storytellers of the Symphony

We humans love drama. In both music and theater, drama has long been a way to explore the highs and lows of the human experience...but in a way that avoids the same potentially life-altering consequences as the real experience might have. Storytelling, including music and theater, helps us be empathetic—it helps us learn from others and gain an understanding of their feelings, of their worlds.

At the ESO, we'll spend lots of time listening to and exploring the music of composers Pyotr Ilych Tchaikovsky and John Williams—two composers who *really* knew how to capture the highs and lows of the human experience!

Star Wars (Main theme)



John Williams

b. February 8, 1932 (Queens, New York)

- One of the world's great film score composers
- Second only to Walt Disney for the most Academy Award nominations
- His film scores include *Star Wars*, *Jaws*, *E.T.*, *Schindler's List*, *Indiana Jones*, *Jurassic Park*, *Home Alone*, *Harry Potter*, and more
- Studied at Eastman and Julliard before heading to LA, where he worked with the greats: Franz Waxman, Bernard Hermann, Elmer Bernstein, and Henry Mancini

NEORomantic compositional language, heightening emotional expression/experience through:

- NEO because it came after "Modernism"
- Recognizable harmonies
- Clear melodies
- Motifs to recall specific ideas or characters
- Moments of tension and resolution
- "Hero's Journey" narrative: a forward journey through trials and tribulations
- Film scores—music written to accompany and amplify a visual genre

Symphony No. 4 in F minor



Pyotr Ilych Tchaikovsky

b. May 7, 1840 (Hotlinks, Russia)

d. November 6, 1893 (St. Petersburg, Russia)

- Primarily symphonic and ballet composer
- Head of the Moscow school of Russian nationalism
- Composed 7 symphonies (many with programmatic overtones), 3 ballets, 11 operas, multiple narrative overtures, and 4 sets of incidental music to plays
- Studied at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, then taught at the Moscow Conservatory from its opening year—a counter to the "Mighty Handful" of Russian nationalism

Romantic compositional language, heightening emotional expression/experience through:

- Recognizable harmonies
- Clear melodies
- Motifs to recall specific ideas or characters
- Moments of tension and resolution
- "Hero's Journey" narrative: a forward journey through trials and tribulations
- Ballets—music written to accompany and amplify a visual genre + programmatic symphonic works, which tell a story by themselves

Star Wars (Main Theme)

With some of the most iconic music in all of movie-dom, you have a lot to work with. Try exploring one or more of these big concepts.

1) Audiation, simulation, and imagination

This is a great starting point to get the creative juices flowing—to spark imagination. Especially for students who are familiar with *Star Wars*, you can excite them by having them recall—without audio, visual, or video prompts—elements of the story, sounds, and scenes.



2) Musical character: *Star Wars* simulator

Ask your students to picture a character from *Star Wars*. (Pro tip: pick the student wearing a *Star Wars* t-shirt...) Have them imagine how that character looks AND sounds. They'll think voice first—that's fine.

Next, play a snippet of music for them—any snippet from Frank Lehman's astounding [Complete Catalogue of the Musical Themes of Star Wars](#), an interactive and clickable list of...well, everything. If you're not sure where to start, try The Imperial March (10a). Ask them what they imagine. How does each these themes capture the specific mood or feeling of the character/idea? Encourage students to be specific with musical elements. Consider having some of your *Star Wars* fluent students explain (succinctly) the person/idea, and then have someone who doesn't know the movies draw the musical connections. Here are a few of my favorites:

- [The Imperial March / Darth Vader](#)
- [Princess Leia](#)
- [The Force](#)
- [TIE Fighter Attack](#)

3) Leitmotifs and themes

Leitmotif (n): a recurring theme within a composition (musical, visual, or literary) that is associated with a specific person, idea, place, or item. Examples include:

- Prokofiev's use of themes in *Peter and the Wolf*
- John Williams's approach in the *Star Wars* movies, as [documented](#) by musicologist Frank Lehman
- Richard Wagner's use in his operas, most famously in *The Ring Cycle*
 - Thoroughly documented in [clickable audio files](#) at UTexas. Try starting with Valhalla (majestic and noble), Siegfried (noble but doomed), Rhine (river music), Giants (well...they're giants!), and Dragon (often a "serpent" dragon)
 - Helpful [described and demonstrated](#) by the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra
- The Marvel Cinematic Universe, in this excellent [video compilation](#).
 - Note #1: there description of the YouTube video gives you some additional options
 - Note #2: the comment section is fascinating in that so many people identify and also desire more powerful connections between music and story
 - Note #3: these movies are typically rated PG-13—please be aware if you use them with your students



Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 4

First movement

Just as in the music of *Star Wars*, there is a ton to explore in Tchaikovsky's masterful Fourth Symphony. This year, we'll explore two sections in particular: the introduction of the first movement, and the joyfully boisterous third movement scherzo.

Symphony (n.): an elaborate musical composition for full orchestra, typically in four movements; also short for symphony orchestra as in "the Elgin Symphony (Orchestra)"

INTRODUCTION

This is one of the most iconic openings in all of the Western symphonic canon—and with good reason! The [opening](#) encompasses a tremendous range of emotions:

- Sheer power, in the brilliant **timbre** of the brass and intensity of the **dynamics**
- Fanfare and majesty through **rhythm**: a traditional fanfare of a long hold followed by short repeated notes (expert listeners will notice a connection between this fanfare opening and the beginning of *Star Wars*)



- Narrative direction through **harmonies** that are constantly shifting, both unstable and in flux
- Drama through the immensely powerful **silences** that punctuate the sound

Guided listening

1. Have your students close their eyes and listen to the opening of the symphony. What words, ideas, and emotions came to mind as they listened? Is it...
 - a. Loud or soft?
 - b. New or old?
 - c. Bright or dark?
 - d. Simple or busy?
 - e. Moving or still?
 - f. Monotone or colorful?
 - g. Slow or fast?
 - h. Powerful or weak?
 - i. Dramatic or boring?
 - j. Foreboding or joyous?
 - k. Excited or anxious?
 - l. And add your own!
2. Take it to the next level by asking students to back up their answers with evidence from the music. Ask them to describe what makes it powerful or foreboding rather than weak or joyous.



Setting the stage

One thing that makes Tchaikovsky's opening incredible is that it leaves *so much* space open to the imagination as to what might come next. Ask your students to craft a story based only on this opening. What musical clues in the introduction help lay the groundwork for the story? Pin them down: ask them to defend their story that follows with evidence from the introduction! This can be specific notes, rhythms, or just the general tone.



One of the neat things is that there is no right answer (though there could be wrong answers), as long as the students are creatively drawing inspiration from the sounds of the introduction.

Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 4

Third movement (Scherzo: Pizzicato Ostinato)

THE TITLE

Sometimes, we can learn a lot about a piece just from its title! In the third movement of Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony, he gives us a few big hints right off the bat:

- *Scherzo*: a fast, playful, vigorous composition in three, usually as a middle movement in a symphony
- *Pizzicato*: plucking the strings of an instrument that is typically bowed, i.e. the violin
- *Ostinato*: continued repetition of a single musical motif, phrase, or idea

So, for your students, that intimidating Italian title "Scherzo: Pizzicato Ostinato" is just "Playfully Plucking—Permanently!"

The power of pronunciation

It's unusual for students to be able to pronounce every composer name and title of a piece on an orchestral concert. That's OK—just help them out by walking them through the pronunciation. It doesn't have to be perfect: the goal is to keep them from being intimidated by the title or composer name, so that they can use it regularly moving forward. Have a little fun with it—they'll come to enjoy saying "Scherzo: Pizzicato Ostinato" if you do!

THE STORY

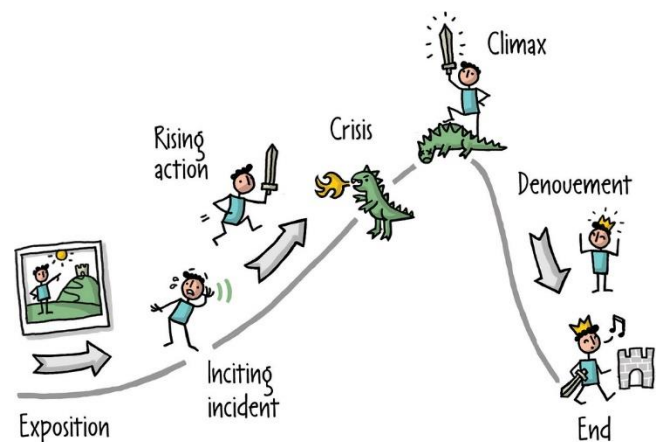
It'll come clean: there's no real story or specific narrative to this music—at least not one that Tchaikovsky came up with. But, great composers utilize aspects of narrative arc and storytelling to make the music compelling, and Tchaikovsky does that brilliantly. He uses clear and identifiable different voices (the different instruments), and he puts them in a variety of situations: moments where everyone agrees, when they all argue, and even when they run out of things to say and have to cede the floor to a new instrument family!

As you're exploring this piece, you can encourage students to develop their sense of the story based on what they hear. That's the beauty of music: it gives us an idea, then it leaves space for us to be creative and fill in the gaps!

Designing a narrative without any words

Tchaikovsky draws on traditional narrative form for his third movement—a form that might be familiar to your students not only from musical experiences, but also from literature. The musical form of *Scherzo: Pizzicato Ostinato* takes us on a journey. Listen with your students: what is the arc of that journey? Try these strategies to get them going:

- **Draw** the physical/geometric shape of a compelling story. (Lots of possible answers here—the beauty is in the *why*.)
- **Listen** with eyes closed, then raise hands at moments of change. What *musical elements* changed at those moments, and how did it impact the *affect* of the piece?
- **Write** a narrative story that you could set to this music. Identify characters, setting, plot points, and resolution. Have students perform their stories over a recording. (This is a good partner activity.)



Use the next page of this guide as a handout for your students about members of the string family.

THE STRINGS

This quick and brilliant movement tells its story by wonderfully showcasing many instruments in the symphony orchestra. In particular, Tchaikovsky features the instruments of the string family: the violin, viola, cello, and bass.

All four instruments operate in the same basic way: musicians hold them against their bodies, and their left hands manipulate the pitch (high soprano sounds and low bass sounds), while their right hands produce sound by either using the bow (a wooden stick with hair on it), or by *pizzicato* (plucking). In a symphony orchestra, the strings play together as a section, with everyone playing the same notes, rhythms, dynamics, and articulations at the same time.



The **Violin** is the smallest, playing high pitches and melodies with virtuosic ease. Symphony orchestras have more violins than any other instrument—sometimes as many as 32 of them divided into two sections. It’s one of our two “shoulder instruments”, played either standing or seated. [Listen to and learn about the violin.](#)

The **Viola** is our second shoulder instrument and the next smallest, with rich tone and warmth that help support the middle register of the symphonic ecosystem. Violists read a special musical clef called “alto clef” which is perfect for their middle-range voice. [Listen to and learn about the viola.](#)



The **Cello** is the second largest, and it is the only string instrument that you have to sit down to play! Its noble and strong character can both support the other instruments and cut through the orchestra as a solo voice. [Listen to and learn about the cello.](#)

The **Bass** is the largest of our string family, and it has to be played standing up, it’s so tall! (Some players use a tall stool to help support it.) The bass is the foundation and heartbeat of the orchestra. While they don’t always have the spotlight, they’re the instruments that everyone else in the orchestra is always listening to! [Listen to and learn about the bass.](#)



? Do you remember... ?

1. Which string instrument is the biggest?
2. Which instrument has the most players in the orchestra?
3. Are all string instruments always played sitting down?
4. What instrument usually has the melody?
5. Which instrument is the heartbeat of the orchestra?
6. Which string instrument has a special clef to read its notes?

Intermezzo from *Manon Lescaut*

Giacomo Puccini

b. December 22, 1858 (Tuscany, Italy)

d. November 29, 1924 (Brussels, Belgium)

- One of the world's great opera composers
- Followed in the incredible Italian operatic traditions of Donizetti, Rossini, and Verdi, ultimately eschewing the over-the-top fantastic operas of the mid-1800s to develop his own style of *verismo* (true to life) opera
- His operas include *La bohème*, *Tosca*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Turandot*, *Gianni Schicchi*, and *Manon Lescaut*
- Came from a musical family of church and professional musicians stemming back to the early 1700s

Late-Romantic *verismo* compositional language, aiming to portray authentic emotional experiences from day to day life, rather than fantastical, mythological, or farcical storylines or characters

- Recognizable harmonies
- Clear melodies
- Through-composed (non-stop) but with clearly identified structures and patterns
- Motifs to recall specific ideas or characters
- *Verismo* narrative: a journey through “real life” that often ended poorly for his characters

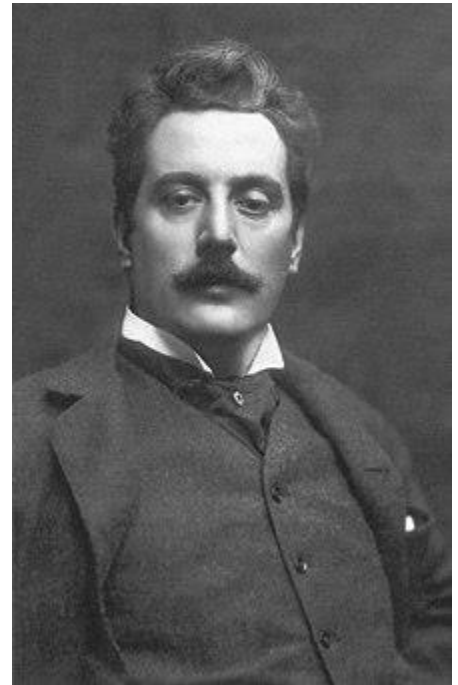
THE OPERA

This one definitely has a story to go with it. As is the case in many operas—*verismo* and otherwise—it's pretty topsy-turvy. The (*really*) short synopsis is this:

- Boy (des Grieux) meets girl (Manon Lescaut); they fall in love
- Girl leaves boy for Evil Rich Man (Geronte); boy rescues girl as their love is rekindled
- Evil Rich Man sends girl and boy to prison at Le Havre
- Boy and girl are sent to the deserts of Louisiana where they perish of thirst

There are some plot holes (deserts in Louisiana?!) and the real story is far more complex—use your judgment on sharing the not-entirely-kid-friendly story with your students. The *Intermezzo* is from Act 2, when Manon is sent to Le Havre and des Grieux follows her. In this instrumental interlude, Puccini captures the many feelings of our characters within the story—all without words. This is truly a love song, full of heartbreak, yearning, hope, and despair.

Puccini's storytelling is directly tied to the opera—and the music shows it. Encourage storytelling from YOUR students with strategies on the following pages.



Fun fact: the term “topsy-turvy” was first popularized by opera! Dating back to the 16th century, it combines the word “top” (“head” with “turv” (“turned”) to create a “world turned on its head” sentiment.

Librettist W.S. Gilbert, the narrative partner to Arthur Sullivan's compositions of the famous Gilbert & Sullivan duo, used the word in their hit production *The Mikado*, moving it from esoteric into the vernacular.

LISTENING

- 1) Chunk it up.** Kicking it off with a 6-minute listen-thru is a potential turn-off. (Slow music is *hard!*) Find the part of the piece that speaks to you most strongly, that intrigues and excites you, and then share it with your students. Encourage them to be expert noticers by making two lists: 1) *what* they heard, and 2) what the *affect* of the music was.

Here are a few of the many possible starting points. Use your own recording with the approximate times listed, or click the links for specific moments in the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra's recording.

- Cello solo: the opening cry ([beginning](#))
 - Viola solo: the response ([0:38](#))
 - Orchestra sings: the first main theme ([1:13](#))
 - Tutta forza*: hearts on our sleeves ([2:02](#))
 - Cannon shots: something changes ([3:23](#))
 - Hope and possibility ([4:17](#))
 - Arrival—and danger ([4:59](#))
- 2) Use small chunks to latch on.** Once you've explored a few shorter chunks, string them together. Now, students can begin to develop a roadmap and understanding of not just individual moments, but of the overarching narrative arc.
 - 3) Use visual cues.** Take the 7 sections listed above (or ones that you devise) and create a storyboard. What auditory signals change at those moments? What sounds stand out, and what's the impact of those sounds?



AFFECT (v), AFFECT (n), and EFFECT (n), OH MY!
How does a composer affect (v.) the affect (n.), and what's the effect (n.) on the listener?

What we do affects (v.) others: this is at the core of Newton's Third Law of Action and Reaction. The choices—like instrumentation or tempo—that Puccini and other composers make have an impact.

The affect (n.) of a piece speaks to its artistic qualities: the world it outlines, and its ability to, as Leonard Bernstein wrote, “make you an inhabitant of that world—the extent to which it invites you in and lets you breathe its strange, special air.” That air? It's the affect.

Of course, the affect (n.) of a piece has an effect (n.) on our students, the listeners. What's the effect? Well, to complicate matters further, it often lives in the *affective realm*: the internal landscape, the “education in emotions...values, opinions, desires, wishes, personal knowledge, self-awareness, empathy, and understanding of others” as described by master educator Randy Swiggum. It's in the affective that music shines.

Learn more about the power of affective music education through CMP, both in [Illinois](#) and where it all began in [Wisconsin](#).



P.S. Come back to this page and use it again for William Tell!

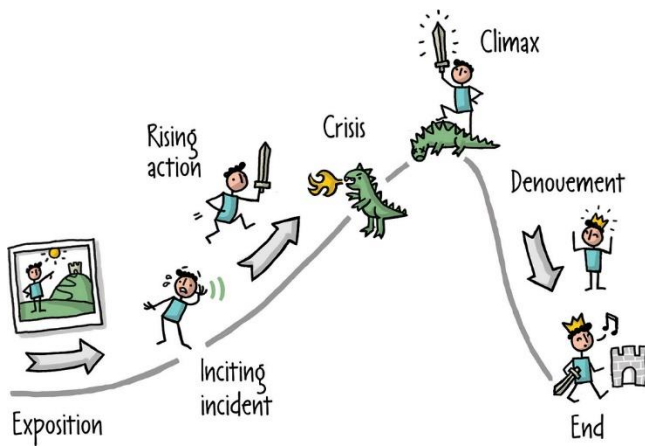
TELLING YOUR STORY

Crafting the arc

Building a musical narrative arc is hard! Explore how it's done by having students craft their own music and try to maintain the overall shape of a story.

Using body percussion or classroom objects/instruments, ask students to develop a basic outline of:

- **Characters** (Instruments—aim for them to have distinctive timbres, like hand claps vs. pencil tapping)
- **Motifs** (Rhythmic patterns—short, repeatable, recognizable, and repeatable)
- **Entrances and exits** (Who comes in/stops at what moments)
- **Dynamics** (Specific to each motif OR the overall shape throughout the performance)
- **Tempo** (steady, or changing?)



Encourage them to work together and build a form with narrative arc. They might be familiar with some of these terms from English/Literature/Language Arts classes—if not, a quick introduction might help. Have them think about their musical composition with these components.

Instruct them to work together and prepare not only their composition and performance, but also a visual explanation of it. This could be words/prose, or it could be a visual or storymap—whatever works best for them.



Which comes first, the music or the story?

Do you start by introducing your students to the music or to the story? Just like with the chicken and the egg, there's no right answer. (OK, maybe ask your science teachers about that one.) Ultimately, it comes down to what you want your students to learn, and which order and strategies will best help you reach your outcomes.

If you already do a lot of listening with your students, they may already be primed to listen to the Intermezzo from *Manon Lescaut* and conjure up a story. Then, you can compare their ideas with those of Puccini: what themes (love and loss, hope and despair, narrative arc) hold true to both? If listening to and describing music is a newer skill for your students, you can help prime them for this by telling a bit of the story first, or at least giving them a few adjectives to describe certain moments—it can be a little easier to imagine in that direction.

OK...but do I even need to tell the story?

No—and you should use your own judgment as to how much of it you do tell. (We won't talk too much about the story at our concerts.) Of course, the story adds new layers of depth and meaning. But ultimately, our goal isn't just getting "the right answer" about the story. Instead, we want to spark curiosity and imagination about music. That's what keeps us coming back to music and art: the opportunity to *widen* our world of possibilities—not just to "get it" and move on.

It's OK if the story your students create is wildly different from Puccini's. In [10 Lessons the Arts Teach](#), Elliot Eisner reminds us that "The arts celebrate multiple **PERSPECTIVES**. One of their large lessons is that there are many ways to **SEE** and **INTERPRET** the world." In exploring these multiple perspectives, we celebrate the possibilities of learning and art within multiple domains, and we allow our students to see themselves within it.

Overture to *William Tell*

Gioachino Rossini

b. February 29, 1792 (Pesaro, Italy)

d. November 13, 1868 (Paris, France)

- (Another) one of the world's great opera composers
- Followed in the Italian operatic traditions of Donizetti and the Italian-ite operas of Mozart and Meyerbeer, laying the groundwork of the tradition of Grand Opera that Verdi and Puccini would later build upon
- His operas include *The Barber of Seville*, *Cinderella*, *Otello*, and *William Tell*
- Was composing by the age of 12, and entered the conservatory at Bologna shortly thereafter. Composed his first opera at 18 (!)



Late-Classical compositional language, building worlds within Classical structures, forms, and rules. Early Rossini was late-Classical, with later Rossini starting to point toward the Romantic ethos and penchant for grandiosity, while still incorporating traditional structures.

- Clear phrases, cadences, and formal structures (arias, duets, cavatinas, overtures, etc.)
- Extraordinary gift for melody through voice
- Music was used to enhance specific moments, moods, and ideas—sort of a “setting” displayed by the music—in addition to specific descriptive moments

THE OPERA

Rossini's opera is enormous: a four-hour tour-de-force for the cast and orchestra. It tells the story of legendary Swiss soldier and archer William Tell during the struggle for Swiss independence in the 14th century. Chafing under the oppressive yoke of the governor Gesler, William Tell and his family and friends band together to overthrow the governor and move forward the fight for independence.

Set in the Swiss Alps, the story begins with its famous overture quoting four themes from the opera that follows:

- **Dawn** – featuring a gorgeous cello solo (+quartet) as the sun breaks above the Alps
- **Storm** – the ferocious thunderstorm breaks with lightning, thunder, and torrential rain from all around
- **Pastorale** – the “ranz des vaches” (“call to the cows”) echoes the traditional pastorale double-reed and flute (or pan-pipe) calls from the Alpine pastures
- **March of the Swiss Soldiers** – if you know a moment from *William Tell*, this is it! The trumpets propel us forward with a call to action, followed by the jubilant outcry from the orchestra as we gallop to the finish

Check out this great [animated synopsis of the opera](#) from the Irish National Opera—it's a neat way to introduce the big plot points to your students.

Hint: this is a great opportunity to make cross-curricular connections. Check in with the classroom teacher: are they exploring storytelling, especially across different cultures? This is a great opportunity to explore ideas like narrative structure, archetypes, or historical elements of William Tell.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Listening

You can use some of the strategies from *Manon Lescaut* for *William Tell*, too, such as our Listening strategy. Try using this excellent recording from the [Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra](#) as a starting point for your listening—and make sure to tell your students that these musicians are just a few years older than they are!

- Cello solo: the darkness before dawn ([beginning](#))
- Cello quintet: the sky lightens and dawn breaks (talk about a musical/narrative metaphor!) ([1:32](#))
- Storm begins: the rustling of wind in the leaves and first plip-plops of raindrops ([3:17](#))
- Thunder and lightning! ([4:15](#))
- Cow song: the English horn and flute call and respond to each other across the Alps ([6:04](#))
- Call to arms! ([8:37](#))
- Furious fighting and scurrying ([9:49](#))

Play along with the ESO

In the final March of the Swiss Soldiers, Rossini uses a rhythmic motif—a single rhythmic idea that repeats throughout the section. Have your students learn this motif and be able to perform it along with us!

- **On the floor or at desks**, have students place their hands on their laps or on the desk.
- Encourage them to **start the motif with the same hand each time**—just like sticking in percussion!
- This is **pitched**, but they can focus on just the rhythmic element—or add pitches to make it more authentic



Have them investigate this single simple musical idea by asking questions:

- **Repetition**
 - How many times does the motif repeat itself?
 - Is it the same each time, or is it slightly different?
 - How do the slight difference give each repetition its own special feeling or sentiment?
- **Performance**
 - As you play this, should each repetition be the exact same dynamic? If not, how would you order them in loudness to softness?
 - Which note in each section (A, B, C, D) should be the “arrival note” of the motif? (Have fun with this: try making the first or last notes the loudest to demonstrate how shaping and phrasing works!)
 - Does the music feel different when we accent different arrival notes? Why, and which one makes the most “musical sense” to you?
- **Score ID**
 - Once they know the motif, show them a page of the [full score](#) that has it (pages 28-34 are great for this) Ask them 1) how many times they see this rhythmic unit, 2) how many different instruments are playing it, and 3) how many different variations (pitch) they see with it



Use the next three pages of this guide as handouts for your students about members of the woodwind, brass, and percussion families.

THE WINDS AND PERCUSSION

In his musical tour of the Swiss Alps, Italian composer Gioachino Rossini also gives us a fabulous tour of the orchestra up close and personal! This incredible story features characters from three additional families in the orchestra: the **Woodwinds, Brass, and Percussion sections.**

WIND INSTRUMENTS

All wind instruments—woodwinds and brass—operate with the same basic principle: the musician sends an air stream through the instrument, and the shape of the instrument (length, width, contour, and so much more) make the air vibrate and shimmer in a specific way, creating the pitch. Players can change the pitch by pushing down keys or valves that lengthen or shorten the instrument.

The **WOODWIND** instrument family includes the flute, oboe, clarinet, and bassoon. Just like in the strings, each occupies a specific place in their family tree and can be used to create certain sound qualities and feelings.



The **Flute** is the smallest, playing high pitches and melodies with virtuosic ease. (Listen for this in *William Tell*!) Symphony orchestras usually have two flute players, and sometimes one plays an even smaller flute called the **piccolo**. The flute is the only woodwind instrument that doesn't use a reed—and that isn't made of wood! [Listen to and learn about the flute.](#)

The **Oboe** is the smallest of the “double reed” instruments, so called because their reeds (the little part sticking out that they blow into) have two parts to them. Oboes have a particularly unique tone quality that lends a vocal quality to their sound, and that allows them to cut through the orchestra as soloists. Sometimes (in *William Tell*) we hear the English horn, a slightly larger and deeper version of the oboe. [Listen to and learn about the oboe.](#)



The **Clarinet** looks a lot like the oboe, but there are a few key differences that dramatically change its tone quality. The reed is a single reed (look at the difference between the two), and it has a bigger flared opening at the bell. The clarinet is extraordinarily versatile: it can play fast, slow, loud, soft, high, low, and everything in between! [Listen to and learn about the clarinet.](#)



The **Bassoon** is the largest of our woodwind family—four times as long as an oboe! It is our largest double reed instrument, with a similar reed to the oboe, but much larger. The bassoon can be serious and melancholy, but it can also be quirky and comical. [Listen to and learn about the bassoon.](#)



Do you remember...



1. Which woodwind instrument is the smallest?
2. Which two woodwinds are double reeds?
3. Which woodwind instrument ISN'T made of wood?
4. What instrument has the biggest range of possible sounds?
5. Which instrument is related to the English horn?

The **BRASS** instrument family includes the French horn, trumpet, trombone, and tuba. Just like in the woodwinds, each occupies a specific place in their family tree and can be used to create certain sound qualities and feelings.



The **French horn** looks the most complicated of all! It has a couple key differences from the rest of the brass instruments that give it a special sound quality that can be both mellow and heroic. There are usually four French horns in an orchestra, and they play all sorts of different characters: melody, accompaniment, fanfare, and more. [Listen to and learn about the French horn.](#)

The **Trumpet** is the famous “call to arms!” instrument from *William Tell*.

Trumpets have a long history of being great instruments for fanfare and heraldry both in music and in public ceremony and celebration. These powerful, loud characters often used to announce new musical moments or ideas. [Listen to and learn about the trumpet.](#)



Even though it looks really different, the **Trombone** is closely related to the rest of the brass family. The main difference is a big one, though: it uses a slide to change length (and pitch) instead of keys. This allows trombones to literally slide between notes...and it means that trombone players need to be the athletes of the orchestra, since they have to move so much! Watch for them in the Storm from *William Tell* to see what we mean. [Listen to and learn about the trombone.](#)

The **Tuba** is the largest of our brass family. It’s unique in that there is usually just one tuba player in the whole orchestra—so they have a really important role in being the foundation! Its sound is way lower than almost everyone else in the orchestra, most like the bassoon and bass from the woodwind and string families. [Listen to and learn about the tuba.](#)



? Do you remember... ?

1. Which brass instrument uses a slide to change pitch?
2. Which instrument has the least players in the orchestra?
3. Which instrument has a long tradition of fanfare?
4. What instrument has the most unique sound quality compared to other brass?
5. Which instrument has the biggest feature in the Storm from *William Tell*?

PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS

Percussion instruments have a special distinction: they're the only instruments you play by hitting them! There are dozens if not hundreds of possible percussion instruments in the orchestra, and they can actually be played in lots of different ways: hitting them, shaking them, scraping them, dipping them in water, whipping them, and much more. Today, we'll explore some of the percussion instruments we get to know in *William Tell*.



The **Timpani** is actually made up of multiple instruments, and you'll typically see four at the orchestra. Each individual drum can play a specific range of pitches, ranging from high to low. In a sense, it's a family all by itself! Like most percussion instruments, the timpani can be struck once or it can be rolled in a continuous sound. It is often used to signal something ominous, or to add power to a climactic moment. (Both Rossini and Puccini use it in this way.) [Listen to and learn about the timpani.](#)

The **Bass drum** lends both power and rhythm to the orchestra. It is an unpitched instrument, so it creates a rumbling sound...or a powerful thump! Bass drum players need to use their whole body to play the instrument—look for it in *William Tell*. [Listen to and learn about the bass drum.](#)



The **Triangle** is the instrument whose name makes the most sense. It's a triangular piece of metal that is struck by a metal stick to make a glorious, shimmering, ringing sound. Just like other percussion instruments, it can be rolled too, and you get to hear both in *William Tell*. Though the triangle is small, a good triangle player can overpower an entire orchestra! [Listen to and learn about the triangle.](#)

The **Cymbals** are some of the most iconic instruments in the orchestra. These two pieces of metal can be played in lots of different ways, but you'll mostly notice them as "crash cymbals" when they punctuate the big moments—like the March of the Swiss soldiers. [Listen to and learn about the cymbals.](#)



? Do you remember... ?

1. Which percussion instrument is the pitched?
2. Which percussion instruments can be rolled?
3. What percussion instrument can quickly overpower the whole orchestra?
4. How many timpani are usually in a symphony orchestra?
5. Which of these instruments are used in *William Tell*?

Battle of the Heroes

from *Revenge of the Sith*

John Williams

This second selection from John Williams packs a real punch in a short time. Though it's only a few minutes long, it occurs at a climactic point in the entire arc of the massive Star Wars universe: when Anakin Skywalker becomes Darth Vader, turning on his former friend Obi-Wan Kenobi in a terrifying lightsaber duel. This is the battle between good and evil in a story and franchise based on battles between good and evil.



Well, based on that, and some epic music from John Williams.

RHYTHMIC BATTLE

To help show the pull/push of good and evil, John Williams turns directly to musical elements. The meter of this piece is centered around the half note, and Williams builds a locomotive-like energy with the steady rhythmic pulse stemming from the violas in 2/2 at the top of the piece:



But, just as soon as he's built that momentum, he undermines it with the melody from the brass (later repeated in the rest of the orchestra), pivoting to 3/2 and overlaying a hemiola (dotted half-note beat) above the violas:



The push and pull between these two rhythms is at the center of the musical tension: which will prevail? You can explore this musical tension with your students, too.

- 1) **Set the meter.** Have everyone in the class clap 1 – 2 – 3. Consider having a stronger beat 1 by adding a foot stomp to the beat.
- 2) **Show the tension.** YOU clap the hemiola (1 – 2) while they all keep the meter. Ask questions like:
 - a. What made that difficult?
 - b. Did you find my part distracting or helpful?
 - c. What did it feel like when we really locked in?
 - d. Anyone who had success with that—can you share what you did to make it work?
 - e. Can you feel yourself being pulled toward my rhythm? How did you avoid getting sucked in?
- 3) **Split the class.** However you'd like—mix it up more (every other person) for advanced groups, or less (you vs. them) for groups just learning this type of rhythmic battle.

MELODIC MIRRORING

Just as he shows the tension and fight between good and evil through rhythm, Williams shows the internal tug of war in the main melody:



Write out the melody for your students and explore it together.

- 1) Sing it!** With a range of a perfect fourth and a small but comprehensive variety of movement (up, down, skip, leap, repeat), it's a good one to learn. Try pairing it with your rhythmic exercise from earlier—they can clap the steady half notes while singing this melody.
- 2) Key ID:** Ask them what key this music is in. Think about your class and what answer they'll likely give—are they in major/minor, or are they ready for key signatures? If they're thinking about key signatures, you might get "C major"...but ask them to sing the tonic and they'll recognize it's D minor. (John Williams omits the key signature, partially to emphasize the modal quality of the melody.)
- 3) Center of gravity:** Ask if there's a specific note around which the melody revolves. If they're stumped, have them look at the last two measures only. Explore how Williams continues circling from above and below, as neither the above (E) or below (C) can get the upper hand—just like in the scene from the movie.

STORYTELLING

The Hero's Journey across space and time

Famously, George Lucas—the creator of *Star Wars*—drew on cultural archetypes of the Hero's Journey in crafting his mythology. Explore these cross-cultural ideas with your students, and see what connections they can make not only in *Star Wars*, but also in the other repertoire we explore—and to other stories far, far away.



What are some of the common traits of stories across multiple cultures? Can you identify archetypes—recurring characters, traits, plot points, or values—that transcend culture and time?

Ask students to share stories they learned when they were younger. What are some of the common themes across those stories? Make a day of it: share a few different stories, and then diagram on the board what things those stories held in common.



STUDENT GUIDE: Concert Day!

- 1. Take your seats early.** Watching a world-class orchestra like the Elgin Symphony Orchestra warm-up, tune, and get ready for the concert is a thrill. Don't miss it! This is your chance to ask last-minute questions of your teacher, your classmates, and maybe even members of the orchestra.
- 2. Get comfortable.** Do what you need to do to be ready for the concert: make sure your jacket and backpack are where they need to be, and that you've used the bathroom or gotten a drink of water. You won't want to miss a minute of the performance, and you don't want to distract other members of the audience, either.
- 3. Don't pollute! Wait...what?** Try to avoid "noise and visual pollution" during the concert. Think of it this way: if you went out into the forest on a wilderness expedition, you'd want everyone to be able to focus on...well, the wilderness, right? Talking would make it impossible to hear nature. Or, think of how hard it is to see the stars in downtown Chicago with all the lights. Help everyone else in the audience "see the stars" by keeping your lights under control. (This doesn't mean don't move—just be thoughtful about when and how you do it.)
- 4. Take a device break.** Leave your devices in your bags, off, or on silent—or better yet, leave them at home that day. Devices are big polluters in the concert hall, and they make it hard for everyone to concentrate.
- 5. Watch the conductor.** The conductor sends all kinds of secret messages to anyone watching carefully. Watch long enough, and you'll start to pick up on the secret conductor/orchestra language; things like:
 - Indicating which instruments should be most prominent
 - Encouraging the orchestra to play louder/softer/faster/slower
 - Leading to the big arrival points in the music
 - Inspiring different "moods" from the orchestra
- 6. Listen!** OK, this is an obvious one, but it's important! Remember, orchestral music (like lots of art) benefits from deep, repeated listening. Have you heard these pieces before in class? Great—what do you discover that's new when you hear it live? Are you hearing them for the first time today? Awesome—what surprised you the most about this experience?
- 7. Let the orchestra know you're excited—applaud!** There are lots of traditions in classical music concerts, but at our Ainsworth Concerts for Youth, you should applaud when the music stops and you want to show your enthusiasm and appreciation. You can also cheer on the musicians as they enter and exit the stage.
- 8. Talk about the concert when it's over.** This is sometimes my favorite part of a concert: the "post-concert chat" with other audience members. Ask them what they felt/noticed/experienced, and see how it compares to what you did. Remember, there isn't a right or wrong answer—each experience can be unique.

Questions? Ask your teacher or the ushers. They're here to help!

Enjoy the concert!

Matthew Sheppard



In his fourth season working with the Elgin Symphony Orchestra, Matthew Sheppard is thrilled to be on-stage for performances at the Hemmens combining his twin passions: music and education.

As the Artistic Director of the award-winning Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra (EYSO), Sheppard leads a team of dedicated educators in providing a comprehensive music education to 400 students and families annually. The comprehensive curriculum explored each year is designed not only to help student musicians develop artistically and technically, but also to prepare them for a future of complex ideas, creative risk-taking, and leadership as global citizens. This hallmark “expert noticer” approach to music led to EYSO being named Youth Orchestra of the Year for 2020 by the Illinois Council of Orchestras, and to Sheppard being awarded Conductor of the Year in 2021.

Outside of Elgin, Sheppard serves as the Artistic Director of the Hyde Park Youth Symphony, as well as Music Director of the University Chamber Orchestra at the University of Chicago and the Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company of Chicago. He has guest conducted orchestras in North and South America, including the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional del Paraguay, the Danville Symphony Orchestra, the Champaign Urbana Symphony Orchestra, the Lake Geneva Symphony Orchestra, and the Blue Lake International Youth Symphony. In 2022-23, he was a faculty member at Northwestern University’s Bienen School of Music, where he led the flagship orchestra and taught conducting courses.

As a teacher, Sheppard inspires students to nurture a deep love and understanding of music and performing through his own passion, musicianship, and conducting. Sheppard is a committee member for the IL Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance (IL CMP) project as they encourage *teaching with intention, and performing with understanding*.

Sheppard studied with Donald Schleicher as a doctoral candidate in orchestral conducting at the University of Illinois, and before that earned his master’s degree in orchestral conducting under Gerardo Edelstein at Penn State University. During that time, he held appointments as Orchestra Director at Juniata College and Assistant Conductor of the Central Pennsylvania Youth Orchestra. Sheppard holds bachelor’s degrees in Liberal Arts, Music Education, and Violin Performance from Penn State where he studied with Max Zorin.

Elgin Symphony Orchestra



The Elgin Symphony Orchestra is one of the preeminent regional orchestras in the United States. Since its founding in 1950, the organization has developed a reputation for artistic excellence, innovative programming, and a deep commitment to the social advocacy and economic development of the diverse communities that it serves.

Named “Orchestra of the Year” an unprecedented four times by the Illinois Council of Orchestras, (1988, 1999, 2005 and 2016) and winner of a 2010 Elgin Image Award, the Elgin Symphony Orchestra is respected for exceptional performance, innovative education programs, and community outreach initiatives.

Believing music and the arts have the power to inspire individuals, support communities, and enrich society, the ESO launched *Elgin: Home for the Holidays*, and has partnered on other events with Rotary International, Feeding Greater Elgin, Sherman Hospital, Downtown Neighborhood Association, and the Elgin Area Chamber of Commerce. In 1987, the ESO began Kidz Konzertz, now called Ainsworth Concerts for Youth, a children’s program that currently draws nearly 9,000 youth from nearly 60 communities. The ESO’s Musicians Care program, which began in 2010, takes musicians out of the concert hall and into the public and patient spaces of Advocate Sherman Hospital in Elgin every Thursday, including holidays, from 12-2 pm. In addition, our musicians visit Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital in Barrington every first and third Wednesday from 12-2 pm. In 2014, the ESO partnered with Gail Borden Public Library to provide free Family Concerts, and extended its Listeners Club to the Greenfields of Geneva.