

DISCOVERY CONCERTS  
INDIANAPOLIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Community Health Network

STUDENT PACKET



# SYMPHONIC STORIES

2025

*Su-Han Yang, Conductor*

INDIANAPOLIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
32 E. WASHINGTON ST., SUITE 600 | INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46204

Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra  
Discovery Concert 2025

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## Meet the Symphony

The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1930 and became a professional orchestra with salaried musicians in 1937. Today, the ISO is the largest performing arts organization in Indiana and performs hundreds of concerts every year including classical, pops, and film. There are 74 musicians in the Orchestra and they come from all over the world.



It was originally built in **1916**, designed by Indianapolis architects Rubush & Hunter. They also designed neighboring buildings on Monument Circle like Circle Tower, The Columbia Club, and the Indiana Repertory Theatre.

The theatre was built as **one of the first** motion picture palaces west of New York City.

The original theatre had **3,100 seats** and was a majestic venue for films and live acts. In 1928, the first movie with sound ever shown in Indianapolis, *The Jazz Singer*, was shown at the theatre.

They showed films for **65 years** before closing in 1981.

After the first renovation was complete in **1984**, the Hilbert Circle Theatre became home to the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra.

There are now only **1,660 seats** in the hall.

**Fun Fact:** Most of the exit signs are restored original Tiffany glass and the stairs are restored original Italian marble!



# Georges Bizet

(1838 – 1875) | PRONUNCIATION: zhorzh bee-ZAY

Listen to *Overture to "Carmen"* here



- » Bizet’s father was a wig maker and a voice teacher, while his mother was a talented pianist. This musical environment helped Bizet develop his love for music early on.
- » Even though Bizet loved music, he also loved to read books. His parents wound up hiding his books so that he would spend more time on his music!
- » By the time he turned ten, Bizet was accepted into the Paris Conservatory where he studied hard and began to write his own compositions.
- » When Bizet was 29, he moved to Rome, where his music was inspired by the beautiful mountains and the rich history of the city.
- » Unfortunately, he struggled with poor health throughout his life and often complained about the air in Paris making him feel sick!
- » His most famous opera is “Carmen” and when it was first premiered, reviews were terrible and critics said there were no good tunes in the piece.
- » In the middle of the night during the first round of “Carmen” performances, Bizet passed away at a young age of 36.
- » Four months later, “Carmen” was performed in Vienna, Austria, and it was a smashing success!

## OTHER PIECES BY GEORGES BIZET

- ♪ *Habanera from “Carmen”*
- ♪ *March and Chorus from “Carmen”*
- ♪ *L’Arlésienne Suite (multi-movement)*

### Write down your thoughts and feelings on Bizet’s music!

Utilize musical elements when writing below (dynamics, tempo, instrumentation, emotion, rhythm, melody, etc.)

PIECE TITLE	WHAT DID YOU LIKE ABOUT THE MUSIC? DID SOMETHING STAND OUT TO YOU?	WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE? CAN WE MAKE IT EVEN BETTER?



# Sergei Prokofiev

(1891 – 1953) | PRONUNCIATION: SIR-gay pro-KUFF-ee-ehv ZAY

Romeo and Juliet, Suite No. 2, Op. 64  
 “Montagues & the Capulets” here



- » Prokofiev grew up in Sontsovka, a small village in Ukraine where he showed musical talent from a young age.
- » He began studying the piano with his mother when he was just three years old and composed his first piece at the age of five!
- » By the age of nine, he had written his first opera, *The Giant*, after hearing Tchaikovsky’s *The Sleeping Beauty*.
- » At age 13, Prokofiev enrolled at the prestigious St. Petersburg Conservatory and studied with the Russian composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov.
- » After graduation, he traveled around Europe to learn more about music. However, World War I and the Russian Revolution made living and working in Russia very difficult.
- » As a result, Prokofiev decided to move to the United States in 1918. He hoped he would be able to compose in peace.
- » He eventually returned to Russia in 1932, where he produced some of his finest works including *Peter and the Wolf* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

## OTHER PIECES BY SERGEI PROKOFIEV

- 🎵 Peter and the Wolf, Op. 67 (multi-movement)
- 🎵 Cinderella, Op. 87 (multi-movement)

**Write down your thoughts and feelings on Prokofiev’s music!**

Utilize musical elements when writing below (dynamics, tempo, instrumentation, emotion, rhythm, melody, etc.)

PIECE TITLE	WHAT DID YOU LIKE ABOUT THE MUSIC? DID SOMETHING STAND OUT TO YOU?	WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE? CAN WE MAKE IT EVEN BETTER?



# Chen Yi

(b. 1953) | PRONUNCIATION: chen yee

Listen to Romance of Hsiao and Ch'in here



- » Born in Guangzhou, Chen Yi is the daughter of two classical-music-loving medical doctors who made sure she was exposed to as much Western and Chinese culture as possible.
- » Besides her study of Western music via the violin, she steeped herself in European novels and other literature, and, of course, the Chinese classics.
- » She grew up during a time of significant upheaval, yet Chen Yi showed a strong passion for music from a young age.
- » During the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-1977), she and her siblings labored in the countryside, all the while playing revolutionary songs on the violin.
- » With the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1977, Chen Yi became a student at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, where she studied Western classical and traditional Chinese music.
- » In 1986, Chen Yi moved to the United States to further her studies, where she later earned a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Columbia University in New York.
- » She was one of the first female composers from China to gain international recognition, and her work has been performed by numerous prestigious orchestras around the world.

## OTHER PIECES BY CHEN YI

- 🎵 Suite from China West (multi-movement)
- 🎵 Symphony No. 2

### Write down your thoughts and feelings on Chen Yi's music!

Utilize musical elements when writing below (dynamics, tempo, instrumentation, emotion, rhythm, melody, etc.)

PIECE TITLE	WHAT DID YOU LIKE ABOUT THE MUSIC? DID SOMETHING STAND OUT TO YOU?	WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE? CAN WE MAKE IT EVEN BETTER?



# Camille Saint-Saëns

(1835 – 1921) | PRONUNCIATION: cah-meal san-songs

Listen to the Danse macabre, Op. 40 here



- » Saint-Saëns’ father was a government clerk who died three months after his birth. His great-aunt Charlotte moved in with him and his mother, and was the first to introduce him to the piano.
- » Like Mozart, Saint-Saëns was a child prodigy! At two and a half years old, he could pick out tunes on the piano, composed his first piece at age 3, and by the time he was 10, he had memorized all of the Beethoven piano sonatas!
- » When he turned 13, he entered the Paris Conservatory where he developed a deep understanding of music theory and composition.
- » Saint-Saëns was a versatile musician, writing music for various genres, including symphonies, concertos, operas, and chamber music.
- » Franz Liszt even called him “the greatest organist in the world!”
- » Working in Paris, he founded a society that supported an entire new generation of French composers. He was also a prominent advocate for the music of his contemporaries and played a significant role in promoting the works of younger composers.

## OTHER PIECES BY CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

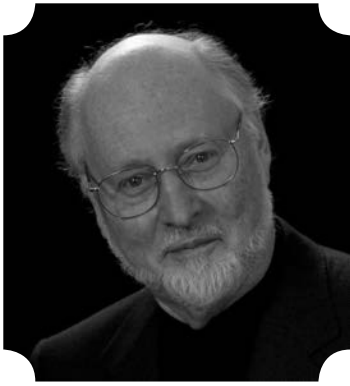
🎵 **Symphony No. 3 “Organ” (multi-movement)**

🎵 **Carnival of the Animals, R.125 (multi-movement)**

**Write down your thoughts and feelings on Saint-Saëns’ music!**

Utilize musical elements when writing below (dynamics, tempo, instrumentation, emotion, rhythm, melody, etc.)

PIECE TITLE	WHAT DID YOU LIKE ABOUT THE MUSIC? DID SOMETHING STAND OUT TO YOU?	WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE? CAN WE MAKE IT EVEN BETTER?



# John Williams

(b. 1932) | PRONUNCIATION: john will-yums

Listen to Harry's Wondrous World here



- » John had a love of music from a young age because his father was also a musician (a jazz drummer and percussionist) and he gave young Williams piano lessons.
- » Aside from piano, he learned to play the cello, trumpet, and trombone – and even formed a band with his friends!
- » He was suddenly drafted into the Air Force at age 19 while studying music at UCLA. While he served for three years, he played piano, conducted, and arranged music for the U.S. Air Force band.
- » Following his service, John moved to New York City to further his career as a musician and composer.
- » He eventually moved back to Los Angeles and spent his time playing in studios and writing musical scores for movies. He has written musical scores for over 100 films (including *Star Wars*, *Superman*, *E.T. the Extra Terrestrial*, *Harry Potter*, and *Jurassic Park!*)
- » He was a guest conductor here at the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra in our 2017-2018 season!

## OTHER PIECES BY JOHN WILLIAMS

🎵 *Theme from Jurassic Park*

🎵 *Imperial March, from Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*

🎵 *Theme from Jaws*

### Write down your thoughts and feelings on John's music!

Utilize musical elements when writing below (dynamics, tempo, instrumentation, emotion, rhythm, melody, etc.)

PIECE TITLE	WHAT DID YOU LIKE ABOUT THE MUSIC? DID SOMETHING STAND OUT TO YOU?	WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE? CAN WE MAKE IT EVEN BETTER?





# Florence Price

(1887 – 1953) | PRONUNCIATION: flor-rence price

Listen to *Dances in the Canebrakes, No. 2 "Tropical Noon"* (Arr. W.G.Still) here:



- » Born in Little Rock, Arkansas, Florence loved music from a young age. Her mother taught her how to play to piano and by the time she was a teenager, she was already performing in concerts, being recognized as a prodigy.
- » While attending Capitol Hill School, she published her first composition when she was eleven.
- » Florence entered the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Massachusetts when she was fourteen to study music.
- » By the time she was 23, she was offered a position as Chair of the Music Department at Clark University in Atlanta, Georgia.
- » Her music was special because she blended classical music with the rich sounds of African American spirituals and folk songs.
- » While Florence seemed to do very well in her career, she faced many challenges because she was a Black woman in a time when many people did not treat everyone equally.
- » But she didn't let that stop her. She worked hard, believed in her talent, and inspired others with her music and let her culture and influences shine through her music.
- » In 1933, Florence became the first African American woman to have her symphony performed by a major orchestra. Florence was the first black female classical composer to achieve this level of recognition in the United States and Europe.

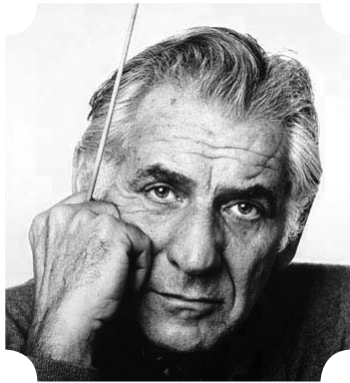
## OTHER PIECES BY FLORENCE PRICE

- 🎵 *Symphony No. 1 in E minor (multi-movement)*
- 🎵 *Suite of Dances (multi-movement)*

**Write down your thoughts and feelings on Florence's music!**

Utilize musical elements when writing below (dynamics, tempo, instrumentation, emotion, rhythm, melody, etc.)

PIECE TITLE	WHAT DID YOU LIKE ABOUT THE MUSIC? DID SOMETHING STAND OUT TO YOU?	WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE? CAN WE MAKE IT EVEN BETTER?



# Leonard Bernstein

(1918– 1990) | PRONUNCIATION: len-nard burn-styne

Listen to *Overture to "Candide"* here



- » Leonard’s father sold wigs and beauty supplies, and wanted his oldest son to take over the business. Despite this, his father took him to many orchestra concerts, one of them being a piano performance that captivated him.
- » Though his family didn’t have a piano at first, he couldn’t stop playing it when they acquired one.
- » After Leonard (or Lenny as his friends called him) composed the class song for his high school graduation, he went on to study music at Harvard University. He went to the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia after that to study piano, conducting, and composition.
- » Lenny got his big break when he was the assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic at just 25 years old. At the last minute with just a few hours’ notice, he stepped in to conduct a concert in Carnegie Hall that was broadcasted live over the radio all across America.
- » When Lenny was eventually named music director of the New York Philharmonic, becoming the first American to be appointed principal conductor of the Philharmonic.
- » He had a passion for teaching as well! He used television, which was brand new at the time, to bring classical music to a very wide audience through his “Young People’s Concerts” series on CBS.

## OTHER PIECES BY JOHN WILLIAMS

♪ *America from "West Side Story"*

♪ *Symphonic Dances from "West Side Story"*

### Write down your thoughts and feelings on Lenny’s music!

Utilize musical elements when writing below (dynamics, tempo, instrumentation, emotion, rhythm, melody, etc.)

PIECE TITLE	WHAT DID YOU LIKE ABOUT THE MUSIC? DID SOMETHING STAND OUT TO YOU?	WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE? CAN WE MAKE IT EVEN BETTER?

MEET YOUR CONDUCTOR:

## Su-Han Yang



### Why did you choose music and why conducting?

Because I found music the most beautiful and inspiring thing, and among all kinds of music, I love orchestral music the most, so I choose conducting. I think music is a universal language that everyone can use to communicate and tell their own story and unites us in the world.

### What's so important about storytelling?

Because everyone has a story! It's just a matter of how you deliver your story. I choose to music because so many people, including me, choose to tell their stories through music, rather than through words and I have the great honor of bringing amazing composers' pieces that contain aspects of their stories to the audiences around the world!

### How do you think music enhances storytelling?

Music inspires you with more imaginations, and it helps storytelling.

### Do you have a favorite story that you were told as a child?

One comes to mind, which is a Taiwanese folktale called "Selling fragrant farts". If you'd like to read the English version of the story, check it out here!



### What's your favorite book and why?

My favorite book is "If on a Winter's Night a Traveller", a novel by Italo Calvino. The structure and the storytelling of this novel is so unique and innovative. There are dozens of chapters which are written in extremely different styles. It seems like they are written by various authors telling individual stories which are not connected to each other at all. Then there is another story line connecting them throughout the novel. It gave me a whole new experience of reading a novel.

### What's the story of you coming to Indianapolis?

My teacher encouraged me to apply for the job opening. I have never been to Indianapolis before, but it couldn't have worked out any better! Since my sister studies at Indiana University, I ended up getting to work with a world-class orchestra and also live close to family at the same time!

MEET YOUR NARRATOR:

## Sampson Leringston



### What do you do for a living?

For a living, I host history tours here in the greatest city in the world Indianapolis, Indiana, that I call "Walk and Talks." We explore different neighborhoods and take a look at our inspiring history that is hiding all around us here in Indianapolis. We love to talk about black history, women's history, indigenous history, and any type of history that tends to get overlooked when we tell our stories.

### What's so important about storytelling?

Storytelling is so important because our stories are so important and that means being able to tell them and share them has tremendous value. Everybody has a story. Every city has a story, and I am just so honored that I get to tell my story as well as my city's story every single day.

### How do you think music enhances storytelling?

One of the things that really elevated the history tours that I give was when I started to play the jazz from Indiana Avenue on our Indiana Avenue tours. It really is the perfect soundtrack for that experience and I think every experience has a perfect sound and that's what makes music so special.

### Do you have a favorite story that you were told as a child?

My favorite story that I used to ask my mom to always tell is about when a big scary dog in Mount Vernon, Indiana would always get loose and the kids would have to run home and jump up in the trees and jump on top of cars just to get away from this dog. The dogs name was Remy, as a kid I always asked my mom to tell me stories of her childhood, I thought it was cool that my mom was once a kid too

### What's your favorite book and why?

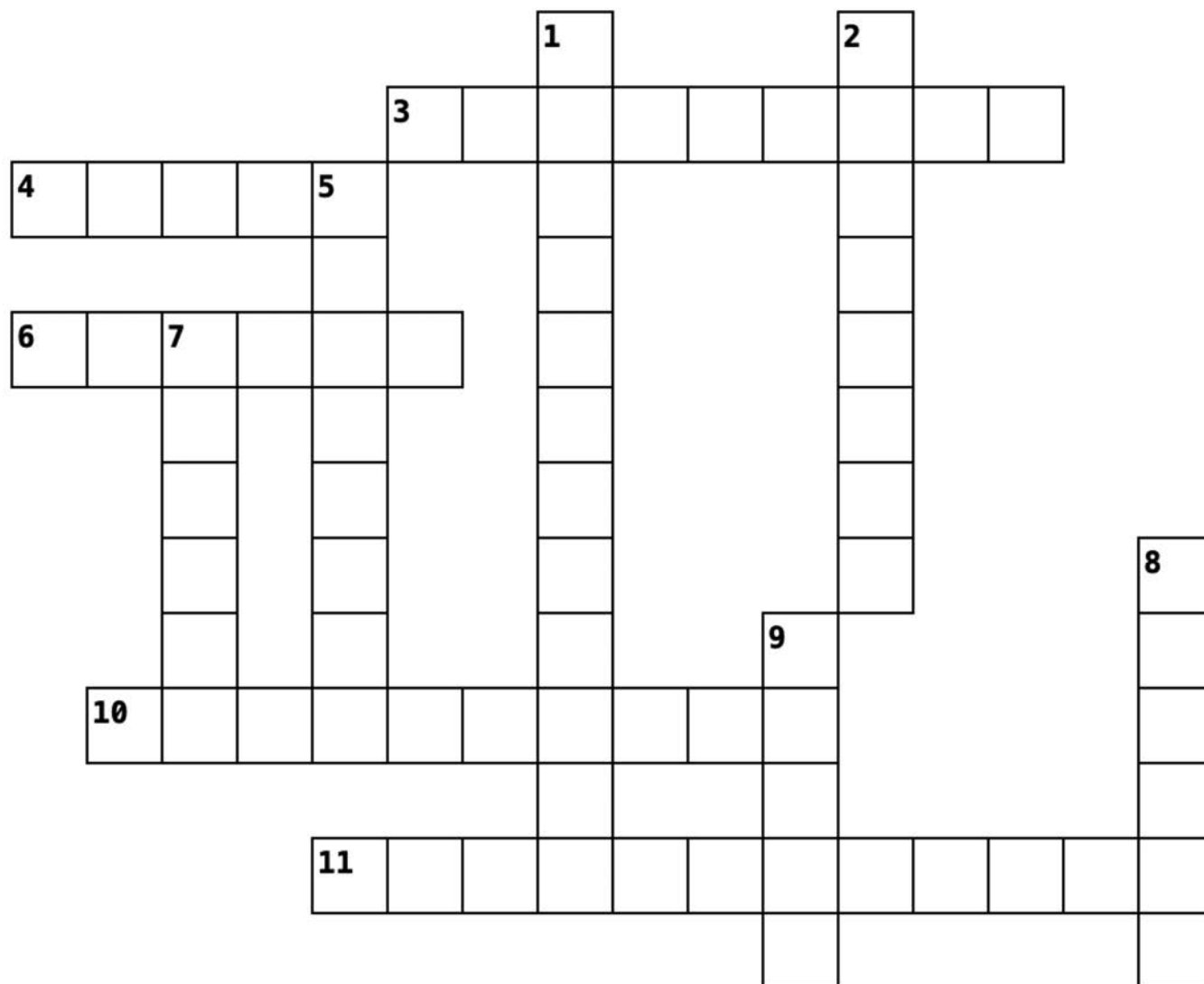
My favorite book as a kid was Holes by Louis Sachar, and I thought that book was so great and I thought the movie was good too. I really liked how they incorporated the history of the main characters families to present day.

### What's the story of you being the LOVER of History and Indianapolis?

I just love INDIANAPOLIS and I want people to know that I love what I do. I kind of made my job up so I get to tell people what I am and who I am and I want people to know I really love doing this! So I am a lover of Indiana history because I love what I do every single day and I think that's the best way to be!

# Crossword

Use the composer biographies to help you!



## ACROSS

3. His first opera was inspired by Tchaikovsky's *The Sleeping Beauty*.
4. Florence Price's Dances in the Canebrakes was originally written for this instrument.
6. This opera was not popular at first, but it was eventually a smashing success!
10. These sugar cane of the Deep South is what inspired Florence Price's piece Tropical Noon.
11. The piece by Saint-Saëns' that directly translates as Dance of Death!

## DOWN

1. This composer is responsible to over 100 films including *Star Wars* and *Jurassic Park*!
2. What time does the clock strike when the story of *Danse Macabre* begins?
5. Bernstein wrote this at the beginning of *Candide* to introduce the audience to the themes and set the scene.
7. Prokofiev moved to the United States from this country during World War I.
8. This character took a sleeping potion to avoid an arranged marriage.
9. The violin in Chen Yi's *Romance* represents this traditional bamboo flute.

# Word Search

Find the words you solved from the crossword in this word search! There are 11 words total.

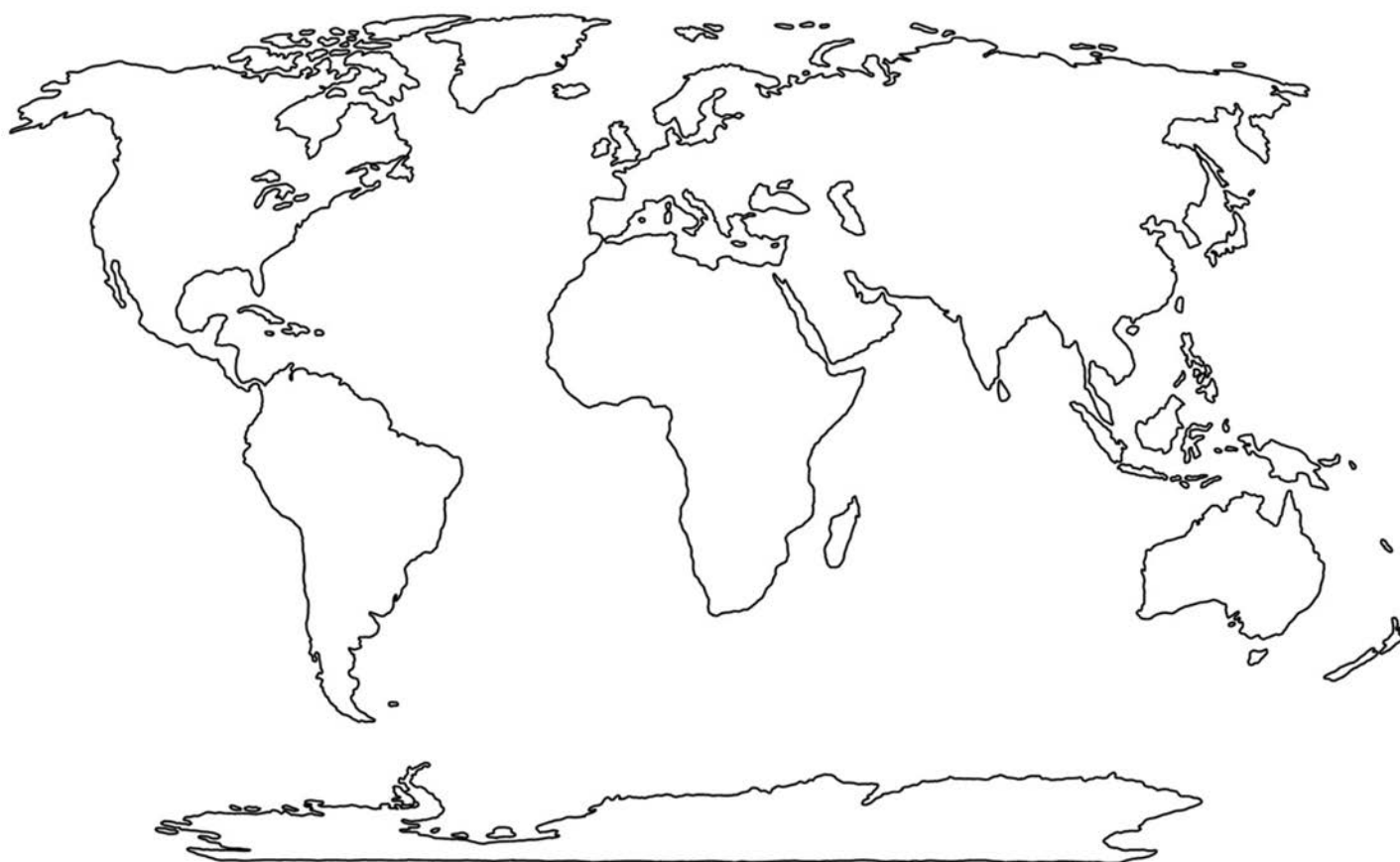
*\*Words appear vertically, horizontally, and diagonally. None of which are backwards!*

Y F G M X F X X C N E T P Z V H E W Y E  
F O H Y L K D T A Q F G L A Q T G A I P  
J O A B B V C A R M E N R G V P B Z R Y  
Z W R F I U S J X M P E J V K P I A N O  
L F Y L I C N E V A R D O H L M S K T J  
O H K N R N Y M N B H M H U O R Q D C K  
E R R A U U E D A Z X W N S W B D C B I  
I N Z C E V S C H J H K W M U I D T J K  
Y N N Q Z H A S L O Q T I X O H O I L O  
B D J C O M M P I R R H L R J F Y M K F  
J I J L E D Z G G A A O L K U U F Z T H  
J V N S T F T V K Y C N I W Z P L Z U R  
T Q N N H N E K E S J Z A I X R B I D W  
H A N W Y S V O P W V N M U P O U F E J  
D E T T G P I U U G L M S E L K R F A T  
V C A N E B R A K E S Z U E U O V C V I  
M I D N I G H T O U Q X Z A H F E G U Z  
L N Z Q J U Q Y R M X G G K Z I D H J R  
M G M N H S A O V E R T U R E E J U L B  
Y E W T V Q A M L M G J C W T V B A B W



## Explore Further

Utilize the blank world map below, and draw a yellow star for where each of the pieces on this concert were originally written. Once you've done that, conduct basic research to find out what the origin of the stories the music were based or inspired by came from. Mark those places with a green circle. Next, find other works in any artistic mediums that were inspired by the stories or music on this concert. Mark those places with an orange star. Observe how art travel around different places and regions around the world!



# Write Your Own Story

Pick a favorite piece from the playlist and write a story to the music by identifying musical elements.

## REVIEW OF ELEMENTS OF MUSIC:

- » **Rhythm** — patterns of notes; long or short
- » **Melody** — patterns of pitches; high or low
- » **Tempo** — speed; fast or slow
- » **Dynamics** — volume; loud or soft
- » **Orchestration** — which instrument(s) or instrument families play

LISTENING MAP SECTIONS

MUSICAL ELEMENTS (TEMPO, DYNAMICS, MOOD, RHYTHM, ETC)




Some guidelines are provided below.

**STEP 1:**

Listen to the piece you selected and list as many descriptive words as you can about the music. Try to include all the different elements of music for each section of the listening map. What changes in the music? Is there anything that stands out?

**STEP 2:**


Listen to it again, stopping after each section. Write your story one section at a time complete with a beginning, middle, and end.

**STEP 3:**

Present it to the class and share what musical elements inspired your story!

**MY STORY**


## ***Concert Etiquette Tips***




**Listen to how the sound from the orchestra is bouncing around the hall and back to you!**

**When music is being performed, be an attentive listener and watch the movements of the performers and conductor!**


**There may be times that you are invited to move along with the music and other times, you may be asked to listen quietly in your seat!**



**Wait to applaud until the piece has ended. You will know when the conductor lowers their arms and turns around.**



**Participation is encouraged when prompted, but please refrain from chitchatting while music is being performed.**



**Please remain seated until the end of the concert.**

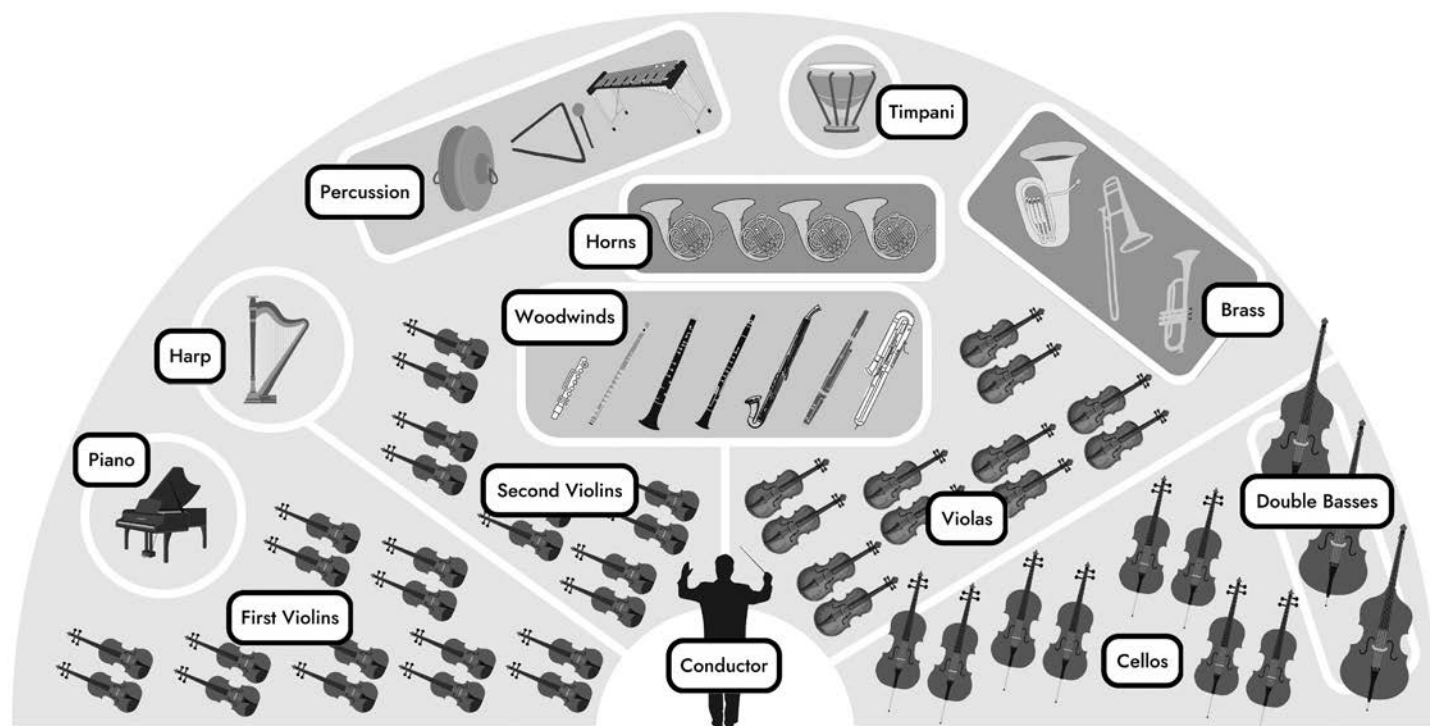


**Please, no eating, drinking, or chewing gum in the hall.**



# Orchestra Chart

Do you know where all the instruments are in our orchestra? Check out the chart below so you can spot your favorite instruments in the concert!



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