



Philharmonia

Orchestra Unwrapped

**Student
workbook**

Theme of the concert

Music, Identity and Legacy: the Philharmonia's 80th Birthday!

The theme of the 2025/26 concert is centered around the history of the Philharmonia Orchestra, which was founded in 1945 by Walter Legge and is 80 years old in 2025. Legge worked for a company called EMI, which was responsible for making recordings of classical music.

Many of you will listen to music on a daily basis – perhaps through the radio, television, games or online, depending on your age. Sites like Spotify, Apple Music and Youtube have millions of users

across the globe, giving you instant access to so many different artists. Before these online systems were invented, music of all genres could be bought physically – initially on an LP disc, then cassette tape, then CD. It is amazing to think how much this area of life has changed in the last 80 years!

The theme of the concert is 'Music, Identity and Legacy' – or in other words 'It's Our 80th Birthday!' The pieces have been chosen to take us on a journey through time linking to the exciting history of the Philharmonia, from 1945 to today – a history you are all part of by being part of the *Orchestra Unwrapped* project!

The pieces in this concert all have special meaning to the Philharmonia during its 80-year history and these are outlined below:

Composer	Piece title	Date composed	Link to Philharmonia
Mozart	Don Giovanni (Overture)	1787	Performed at the first Philharmonia concert in 1945.
Beethoven	Symphony No. 5 (Movement 1)	1804-08	The Philharmonia's recording of this piece is on the Voyager Golden Records which were sent into space in 1977.
Stravinsky	The Firebird Suite (Finale) (1919 version)	1910 with revisions in 1911, 1919, 1945	Performed in Leicester's De Montfort Hall for the first performance there by the Philharmonia in 1995.
Elgar	Enigma Variations (Theme, IV, XI, VII)	1898-99	Performed at Bedford Corn Exchange for the first performance there by the Philharmonia in 1995.
Ortiz	Papalotes	2012	Gabriela Ortiz is the Philharmonia's Featured Composer for the 2025/26 season.
Shigihara	Grasswalk from Plants vs. Zombies	2009	Music in gaming points to the future and how classical music plays a key role in new technologies.
Silvestri	Theme to the Avengers	2012	The Philharmonia has recorded over 150 film soundtracks, and this piece from <i>The Avengers</i> is a good example of their work in this area. The Philharmonia were the orchestra performing much of the music to the <i>Avengers: Age of Ultron</i> film. Check out more here ►
Bizet	Carmen Suite (Les toréadors)	1875	This piece was played in the first <i>Orchestra Unwrapped</i> concert in 2012.

Concert etiquette

Tuning

Fill in the table below from your learning about the orchestra tuning:

What does the orchestra do?	What does the audience do?	What does the conductor do?

The Conductor

What happens when the conductor enters the stage?
Complete the table below.

What does the orchestra do?	What does the audience do?	What does the conductor do?

When do I clap?

Sometimes there are small pauses in the music, and it can be tempting to clap at these points. However, the music is not over yet. The conductor will stay animated during a pause, and this is a clue to the audience that the music is not yet over, and they should not clap. When the conductor relaxes by lowering their baton (and the orchestra relax and lower their instruments), that is usually the time to clap!

Short 5-minute task: Orchestra Fails


Watch the video – what happens?

What does the orchestra do?	What does the audience do?	What does the conductor do?

Why do you think it is important to stay quiet during the music, and to only clap at the end of a piece?

Medium 20-minute task: Role Play and Rules

Use the space below to write down the thumbs up (good behaviours we should follow) and thumbs down (poor behaviours we should avoid).

Thumbs Up 	Thumbs Down 

Longer 45-minute task: Mini Concert

Your teacher will guide you through this task. After the concert, use the space below to consider what you have learnt about how a concert happens.

What have I learnt?

What do I need to remember?

Any other points?

Mozart

Short 5-minute task: Listening and Responding

- Is the music loud (***forte***) or quiet (***piano***) at the start? Does it change?
- Is the music fast or slow?
- What instrument families are playing?
- What kind of feeling does the music give you?

Medium 20-minute task: Footsteps Composition Challenge

Sustained chords	Dotted rhythms
Clap: 1 2 3 4 5 Silence: 6 7 8 <i>Repeat</i>	Clap: 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and <i>Repeat</i>

Effect for our footstep composition:

How are we making this effect?

Longer 45-minute task: Composition – Who is Don Giovanni?

Listen and Discuss

1. Based on the overture, what do you think Don Giovanni is like as a person?
2. What kind of story might the opera be about?
Is the opera likely to be a comedy, a love story, or full of drama?

Set out 3 moments in your story in the top row,
then your musical ideas in the bottom row.

Remember to think about:

- i. Tempo (fast/slow)
- ii. Dynamics (loud/quiet)
- iii. Pitch (high/low)
- iv. Texture (how many sounds at the same time)

Beethoven

Short 5-minute task: Musical Motifs

The movement opens with a very famous musical idea (sometimes called a musical motif). This has 3 short notes, followed by a longer note, and is repeated a tone lower after a pause:



How many times can you hear this motif in the opening section of the piece? Use your fingers to count or write down a tally here.

Are all the repetitions the same, or does Beethoven make some changes? Have a think and be ready to discuss your ideas.

Medium 20-minute task: Art Challenge

Your teacher will give you the resource you will work on for this challenge.

Longer 45-minute task: Morse Code Alien Communication

Beethoven's opening rhythm can be seen as a musical code – have a go practicing it:

Short – Short – Short – Looooonnnngggg

Short – Short – Short – Looooonnnngggg

Did you know this links to Morse Code – a way of spelling out letters using short and long beeps? Pretty cool! This piece was sent as a recording into space by the Philharmonia in 1977. Your task is to write some music to go alongside it to communicate with aliens that the spaceship might find.

Use the morse code on the next page to work out which letter Beethoven's motif is linked to, then try spelling some different words:

Step 1: In pairs, try communicating a common word like 'Hey' or 'Cat' using body percussion, blinking or using your voice. Can the other person guess your word?

Step 2: then try to make a melody out of this rhythm using different pitches

Step 3: then add different dynamics and tempo changes to add more complexity

Step 4: try to then do this with a longer phrase to communicate to the aliens

Morse Code

A ■ ■■■
B ■■■ ■ ■ ■
C ■■■ ■ ■■■ ■
D ■■■ ■ ■
E ■
F ■ ■ ■■■ ■
G ■■■ ■■■ ■
H ■ ■ ■ ■
I ■ ■
J ■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■
K ■■■ ■ ■■■
L ■ ■■■ ■ ■
M ■■■ ■■■

N ■■■ ■
O ■■■ ■■■ ■■■
P ■ ■■■ ■■■ ■
Q ■■■ ■■■ ■ ■■■
R ■ ■■■ ■
S ■ ■ ■
T ■■■
U ■ ■ ■■■
V ■ ■ ■ ■■■
W ■ ■■■ ■■■
X ■■■ ■ ■ ■■■
Y ■■■ ■ ■■■ ■■■
Z ■■■ ■■■ ■ ■

Stravinsky

Short 5-minute task: Musical Moods

Your teacher will play you three short extracts from this piece. Complete the table below:

	Extract 1	Extract 2	Extract 3
Quiet (piano) or loud (forte)?			
Calm or exciting?			
Fast or slow?			
Instruments used?			
What's happening in the story?			

Medium 20-minute task: Firebird Sound Shapes

Your teacher will allocate you a character from *The Firebird*. Try to create a short musical moment to represent your character using the sounds and instruments allocated to you by your teacher.

- **Firebird (magical)** – shimmering glockenspiel, vocal trills
- **Prince Ivan (hero)** – fanfares on brass, drumbeats or claps
- **Evil wizard (danger)** – low pitches sounds, stomps, clashes
- **Final celebration (joy)** – percussion (maracas, tambourines, triangles), rhythmic dancing

Longer 45-minute task: Firebird Soundtrack Story

Your task as a class is to put together the story of *The Firebird*. Your teacher will split you into different groups to outline the story of *The Firebird*:

1. Prince Ivan meets the Firebird – magical
2. The Firebird agrees to help Prince Ivan – they work together
3. The Evil Wizard appears – danger!
4. The Firebird casts her spell – magical, tension
5. Celebration – the kingdom is saved

You should then work on creating a short performance (1-2 minutes) for your scene, which might include:

- Narration, drama or ballet
- Instrumental or body percussion/vocal sounds
- Changes in mood to help tell the story
- Artwork using the story
- Then put your piece together with the other groups to perform the full Firebird story

Elgar

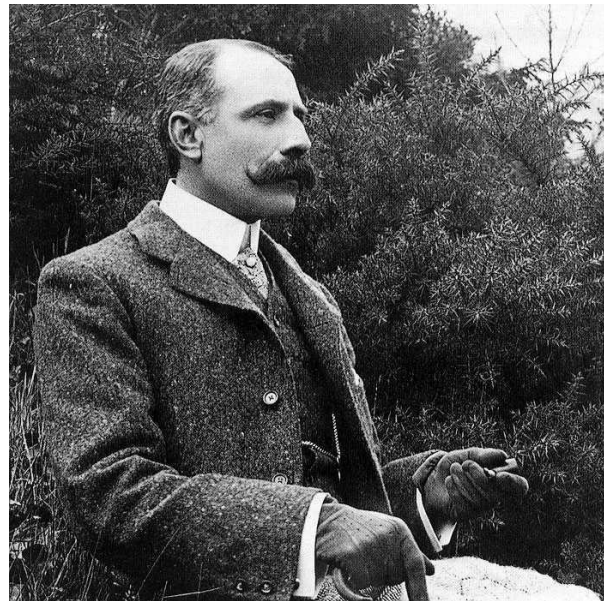
Short 5-minute task: Matching Moods

Your teacher will play you different extracts of music and ask you to think about what mood the music you are listening to creates.

Medium 20-minute task: Listening to Variations

Listen to variations on *Happy Birthday*. How has the music been changed? Think about:

- Is the tempo fast or slow? Does it slow down or speed up?
- Are the dynamics loud or quiet? Does it gradually get louder or quieter?
- What instrument plays the Happy Birthday tune? Is it changed at all?
- What instruments accompany the tune?
- Is the music in a major or minor key?



Polka	Film music	Ragtime	Tango

Longer 45-minute task: Musical Links

Your task is to choose a person (a friend, relative or yourself!) or an animal which you will represent in music. Think about:

Choose:

- **Mood:** Is the person loud, funny, quiet, dreamy?

Then consider how to achieve this mood musically:

- **Tempo:** Fast/slow?
- **Pitch:** High or low sounds?
- **Instruments:** What instrument suits their personality?
- **Dynamics:** Loud/quiet?
- **Rhythm:** sustained chords or dramatic beats?
- **Melody:** smooth (like a scale) or jumpy with leaps between notes?

You can use the instruments and equipment as shown by your teacher to help you make your piece.

If you are looking for inspiration, consider using the start of the *Happy Birthday* piece for your composition.

If you are looking for a challenge, try using Elgar's opening theme below to start your ideas off. Remember the key signature – Bs should be played as B flats.

(rest) Bb G C A (rest) D Bb A C (rest) Bb
D G A

You might want to make notes on your composition, or use a drawing (graphic score) to help your thinking. Use the next page to do this. Good luck!

My piece of music about _____

Short 5-minute task: Kites

How does the music match the title of 'Kites'? Try to use musical vocabulary to justify your answers.

Medium 20-minute task: Kite Orchestra

1. Choose three different kite actions – for example the kite struggling to get airborne, the wind catching the kite, it crashing to the ground
2. Match these actions to a specific sound – this could be body percussion, vocally or using classroom instruments
3. Perform your three-part kite story to the class and ask your friends to say what is happening in your music.

Longer 45-minute task: Creative Writing

1. Choose your point of view

- ☐ I am the kite (first person)
- ☐ I am the child flying the kite (first person)
- ☐ I am watching someone flying the kite (third person)
- ☐ Other: _____

2. Where is the kite flying?

Draw or describe your setting below (e.g., over a beach, through the clouds, into a storm, across a magical land)

Draw /describe it here:

3. Senses – What can the kite see, hear, feel?

I can see...

-

I can hear...

-

I can feel...

-

4. Interesting words and phrases

Pick three powerful or interesting words/phrases you want to use in your writing:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Challenge: Use a simile or personification
(e.g., “The kite danced like a bird on the wind.”)

5. Plan your kite’s journey

Part of the Story	What Happens?	Describe It (with feeling!)
Beginning	The kite takes off	
Middle	The kite’s adventure	
End	What happens at the end?	

Possible words to use

Adjectives: bright, swirling, high, colourful, floating, tangled

Verbs: soared, dipped, tugged, spun, drifted, raced

Prepositions: above, below, through, between, across

Feelings: free, scared, excited, peaceful, wild

Shigihara

Short 5-minute task: Sound Detective

Listen to the opening 16 seconds of this piece. Try to follow the music below – each bar has 4 beats in it. Try to add labels to the music below by writing the instruments you hear on the music. Use the options below to help you.

- Solo piano
- Pizzicato (plucked) strings
- Low strings
- Sustained strings
- Consider – real instruments, or from a computer?

We are proud to be playing this *BBC Ten Pieces* work, and as a Ten Pieces champion, we encourage all schools to explore all the pieces on offer.

B B C

BBC Ten Pieces ►

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the opening of the piece 'Shigihara'. Both systems are in 4/4 time and begin with a piano (p) dynamic marking. The first system includes a first ending bracket over the final measure. The notation consists of a treble and bass staff joined by a brace, with various note values and rests indicating the melody and accompaniment.

Medium 20-minute task: Rhythm Composition

Compose your own 4 bar rhythm using 1 rhythm from *Grasswalk* as inspiration.



Try to write your rhythm down:

Longer 45-minute task: Build a battle scene!

In groups, choose 2-3 instruments or sounds to your for your composition.

Your story for the battle scene should have a beginning, middle and end:

1. Start calm with the house and plants enjoying the sunshine
2. Add a middle section where the zombies appear
3. Add an ending – do the zombies reach the house, or do the plants win and save the day?

Try to create music to accompany this scene, using pitched and/or unpitched instruments and body percussion. Use the space below to write down your ideas.



Silvestri

Short 5-minute task: what happens next?

Your teacher will play a few seconds worth of music.
Complete the table below.

Remember:

- Instrument family/instrument name
- Dynamics – loud/quiet
- Melody – going up or down?
- Is the music repetitive?
- What is the tempo? Does it change?

What can I hear?	What happens next?

Medium 20-minute task: Superhero Melodies!

The interval of a fifth is used frequently by composers writing music for superhero films. Your teacher will play you some examples. Using this same interval, try writing your own superhero melody. Your notes need to be a fifth apart from each other – for example:

C – G, D – A, E – B, F – C, G – D, A – E

If you have created a melody using one interval of a fifth, try adding a second one on different notes to give your melody even more variety.

Can you work out why the interval B – F sounds different to the interval C – G?

Hint... count the number of notes (include black and white keys if you're using a keyboard or piano) between each of these pairs of notes.
Are they the same?

Longer 45-minute task: performing The Avengers Theme

Section 1 – 0:00-0:52

Note	Play with this finger
G	First (Thumb)
A	Second
B flat	Third (Middle)
C	Fourth
D	Fifth (Little)

Section 2 – 0:52-end

Note	Play with this finger
E	First (Thumb)
F sharp	Second
G	Third (Middle)
A	Fourth
B	Fifth (Little)

Bizet

Short 5-minute task: Class Percussion

Try being the triangle, cymbals and timpani in this piece. Your teacher will put you into groups.

Group 1: Triangle (top line)

Group 2: Cymbals (bottom line)

Group 3: Timpani

Medium 20-minute task: Comparison Task

The two pieces – ‘Les toréadors’ and ‘Habanera’ might come from the same piece (the opera *Carmen*) but they sound very different. Your teacher will play you an extract from each – have a go at making comparisons in the table below.

Musical Element	Les toréadors	Habanera
Tempo (Speed)		
Mood (Feeling)		
Rhythm		
Instruments (Sound)		
Dynamics (Loud/Soft)		
Melody (Tune)		
Dance Style		
Character Theme		

Which piece do you prefer? Give a musical reason to justify your answer.

Longer 45-minute task: Composition Contrast

Your task is to write a piece of music with
a contrasting middle section:

ABA Form

- “A” section = first musical idea
- “B” section = contrasting idea (different mood, tempo, volume, or sound)
- “A” returns = repeat of the first idea

A section ideas	B section ideas




Women Composers

A Short Introduction to Women Composers

Watch the video shown by your teacher. Use the space below to write down the things you find interesting from the video.

Challenging gender roles

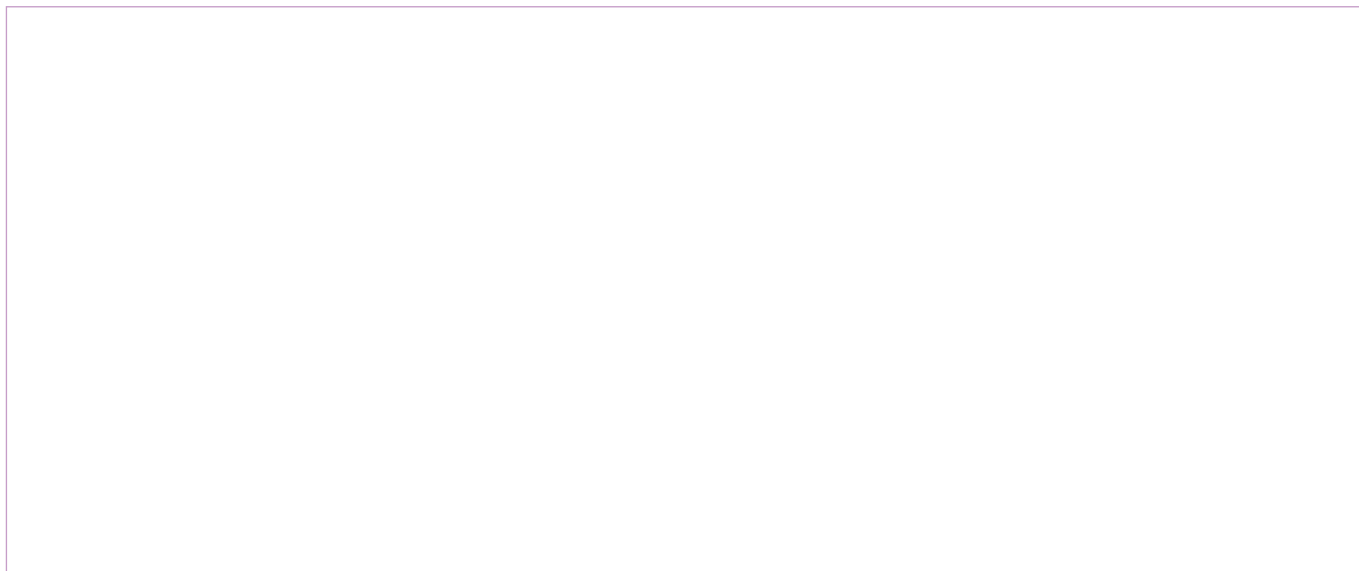
This is a quick drawing task! Look at the jobs listed below and then do a quick drawing of the person doing that job.

Fire Fighter	Surgeon (Doctor)	Fighter Pilot
		

Short 5-minute task: discussion

Question: 'Why do you think there have been fewer famous women composers than men throughout history?'

Write your thoughts below:



Medium 20-minute task: Listen and Draw

Listen to the music and answer the questions below in the space provided.

- What do you see in your mind when you hear the music?
- What colours match the music?
- Where does the music feel like it comes from (e.g. continent, country)
- Is it calm or busy?

Composer	Thoughts to questions above
Ortiz	
Shigihara	
Makeba	
Raine	
León	

Longer 45-minute task: composition

The objective of this task is for pupils to work in small groups to create their own composition inspired by a woman composer.

1. Warm Up (5 minutes)

- a. Warm your voices up as a class

2. Group Task (30 minutes)

- a. In groups:
 - i. Choose a mood for your composition
 - ii. Choose 3-4 instruments or sound sources (e.g. singing, body percussion and any classroom instruments you might have available)
 - iii. Compose a 30-second piece inspired by the composers you listened to for the short task
 - iv. Use the space below to write a graphic score of your composition

3. Performance (10 minutes)

- a. Perform your composition to the rest of the class
- b. As you listen, consider giving other groups feedback using:

WWW – What Went Well

EBI – Even Better If

Orchestra Unwrapped is made possible
due to the generous support of:

Dominic Webber Trust

Core Values

The EC Sosnow Charitable Trust

The Fernside Trust

Christian and Myrto Rochat

With thanks to our Venue Partners
for their support:



If you would like to support our Learning & Engagement
programme, please contact us on **020 7921 3903**
or **development@philharmonia.co.uk**

philharmonia.co.uk
0800 652 6717



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**