



Philharmonia

Orchestra Unwrapped

**Student
workbook
2026/27**

Theme of the concert

Out of this World!

The theme of the 2026/27 concert is 'Out of this World' – a chance to hear music that makes us look up and consider life beyond our immediate surroundings. We'll be traveling to space, learning more about planets and stars, and considering myths and legends that challenge the way we see the world we live in.

As an international orchestra, the Philharmonia travels a lot when touring around the world. They even recorded music and sent this into space! The pieces in this concert all have a link to being out of this world and these are outlined below:

Composer	Piece title	Date composed	Link to Philharmonia
Richard Strauss	Also sprach Zarathustra – 'Sunrise'	1896	This opening fanfare captures a sunrise and was used in Stanley Kubrick's 1968 film '2001: A Space Odyssey'
Jessie Montgomery	'Starburst'	2012	This music pictures the rapid formation of new stars in a galaxy
Gustav Holst	Extract from 'Mars', 'Venus' and 'Jupiter'	1914-1917	These three extracts are taken from a larger work picturing seven planets of our solar system (excluding Earth)
Eleanor Alberga	'Sailing on Tethys'	2022	This is the fifth movement from Alberga's Symphony No. 1 'Strata' representing the different layers of a planet. Named after the Greek water goddess, Tethys was a very old ocean which no longer exists in the modern world
Daniel Rosenfeld (C418)	'Minecraft Medley'	2011	The virtual world of Minecraft encourages players to build structures, extract raw materials and compete with others
Ludwig van Beethoven	Creatures of Prometheus – 'Overture'	1801	This is the opening piece from this Ballet, based on the mythical story of Prometheus who stole fire from Zeus to help make mankind
John Williams	Star Wars – 'Theme'	1977	Star Wars follows the story of the Rebel Alliance against the Galactic Empire in an epic science fiction film franchise

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?

Strauss – Sunrise

Short 5-minute task: Sunrise Listening Challenge

“What do you think a sunrise sounds like?”

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

Medium 20-minute task: Sunrise Soundscape Performance

Sunrise Element	Sound idea
Night-time	Body percussion heartbeat
First light	Finger tapping
Birds waking	High pitched vocal sounds
Sun rising slowly	Glockenspiels/chime bars
Full daylight	Regular rhythm using clapping and stomps

Longer 45-minute task: Performing and Composing a sunrise

1. A low drone on the note C
2. A rising 3 note trumpet melody, using notes C – G – C (where the last C is an octave higher)
3. Two chords – C major (CEG) followed by C minor (CEbG)
4. A timpani roll and dramatic moment using the notes C and G

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of five measures. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Trumpet:** Measures 1-3 are rests. Measure 4 contains a half note C (middle C). Measure 5 contains a half note G (one line above middle C).
- Organ:** Measures 1-5 each contain a whole note C (two ledger lines below the staff).
- Full Orchestra:** Measures 1-3 are rests. Measure 4 contains a C major triad (C, E, G) in the treble clef. Measure 5 contains a C minor triad (C, E-flat, G) in the treble clef.
- Timpani:** Measures 1-3 are rests. Measure 4 contains a half note C (two ledger lines below the staff). Measure 5 contains a half note G (one line below middle C), followed by a series of eighth notes: C, G, C, G, C, G, C, G.

Composing a sunrise

- A quiet beginning using a drone and rising melody
- A crescendo
- A repetition with a thickened texture
- A loud, strong ending

Section A – Before Dawn/The Dark Night	Mars	Venus
• Quiet dynamics • Drone on a low sound • Slow tempo – slow heartbeat as an ostinato • Sparse texture with a rising melody	• Crescendo • Add more instruments/sounds gradually over the using pitches which gradually get higher • Clearer sense of a beat with repeated rhythms • Increase in tempo • Make the melody rise higher – like the sun in the sky	• Loud dynamics • Lots of instruments playing at the same time to create a dense texture, rich and full • Confident ending using a rallentando and triumphant timpani stomps

Use the space below for your ideas:

Montgomery

Short 5-minute task: Opposites Game

Think of a musical word which has a clear opposite, for example high/low when it comes to pitch. Your task is to think of a word and to ask other members of your class to guess the opposite to your word.

Medium 20-minute task: Creative Task

This piece is all about rapidly changing musical colours, linked to the idea of a starburst – where lots of new stars are born very quickly, and often in an explosive manner!

Your task here is to listen to the piece and to respond creatively – this might be through a drawing, or a piece of creative writing, or a poem, or another creative way like a dance, or dramatic production. The poem below might help your thinking...

*High in the sky, a starburst grows,
Spreading its sparkle wherever it goes.
Twinkling and dancing, bright in the night,
Painting the darkness with magical light.
Shining like fireworks, bursting with cheer,
Sending its starlight far and near.
A glittering treasure, bold and bright,
A starburst sparkles all through the night.*

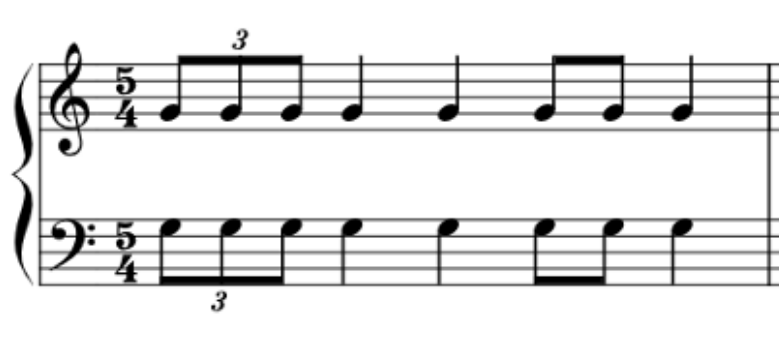
Longer 45-minute task: Composing and Performing

Imagine your group are asked to write 30 seconds of music, divided into three different sections, each lasting around 10 seconds. Each of the three sections should demonstrate different opposites, which the rest of the class need to guess. For example, your first ten seconds could look at the musical opposites of high and low pitches. Use the space below to plan your ideas. You can use instruments and/or voices.

Section and Timing	Musical Opposites	Musical Ideas
A 0:00-0:10		
B 0:10-0:20		
C 0:20-0:30		

Holst – Extracts from ‘The Planets’

Medium 20-minute task: Rhythm Challenge (Mars)



Medium 20-minute task: Peace and War Challenge (Venus)

	Jupiter
Instruments	
Rhythm	
Tonality	
Dynamics	
Tempo	

Longer 45-minute task: What about Pluto?

Step 1: Listen and Analyse

- How does Mars sound powerful?
- How does Venus sound peaceful?
- What makes Jupiter sound joyful?

Step 2: What is Pluto like?

Step 3: Compose

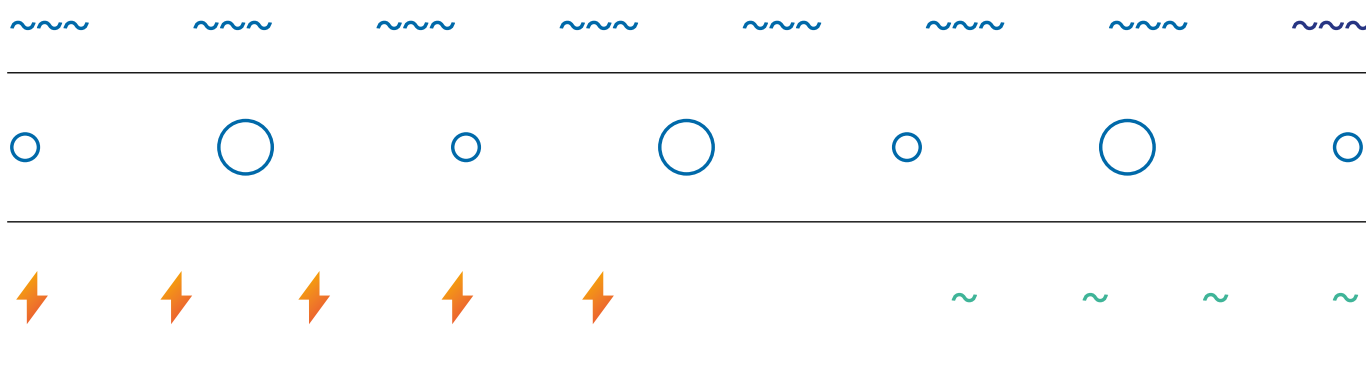
Using body percussion, classroom instruments and voices, perform music for Pluto.
Your composition should include:

- A beginning, middle and end
- At least two contrasting dynamics
- An ostinato that is repeated
- A clear mood

Alberga – ‘Sailing on Tethys’

Short 5-minute task: Ocean Task

Read left to right. Create sounds to match the score.



Waves = swishing sounds

Lightning = storm sounds

Bubbles = pops / clicks

Final waves = calm sea

Medium 20-minute task: Musical Fossils

“This musical fossil contains evidence of

“I think this because I heard

My musical reasons:

Longer 45-minute task: The Tethys Transmission – Decode the Message

“Scientists have received a strange transmission. It seems to come from the lost Tethys Ocean. It may be a warning, a map, a memory or a message.”

Part 1: Listen Like Scientists and make a graphic score

Part 2: Decode the Transmission

Musical Sound	Musical Name	Possible Meaning

“The message from Tethys says

Part 3: Perform the Transmission

Create a 20–30 second “transmission” using:

- voices
- whispering
- body percussion
- classroom percussion
- repeated words (ostinato)
- sliding vocal sounds (glissando)
- quiet and loud contrasts (crescendo and diminuendo)

You should include:

1. A mysterious opening
2. A coded repeated pattern (ostinato)
3. A sudden warning sound
4. A fading ending (diminuendo)

C418 – Minecraft Medley

Short 5-minute task: Listening Detectives!

- What instruments can you hear?
- How are the instruments are being played?
- Does the music sound busy or calm?
- What might be happening in the video game during this music?

Extract 1	Extract 2	Extract 3

Medium 20-minute task:

Step 1: Scene Choice

Words, colours, smells, sensations, pictures?

Step 2: Create Movement

What movement might accompany the scene?

Step 3: Music Planning

What music would go with the scene?

Longer 45-minute task: Minecraft Film Composer Challenge

1. **Ostinato** – a repeated pattern, for example *Ta Ta Ti-Ti Ta*
2. **Drone** – a long held note to help create atmosphere
3. **Dynamic Changes** – **crescendo** (gradually getting louder) and **diminuendo** (gradually getting quieter), or sudden changes between quiet (**piano**) and loud (**forte**)
4. **Changing instruments** – changing between the different orchestral families and how these instruments are played (e.g. **pizzicato**)

	Scene 1	Scene 2	Scene 3
What is happening?			
Musical features			

Composer check list: does your composition include:

- One ostinato rhythm?
- One use of a crescendo?
- One use of a diminuendo?
- One use of a drone?
- 2 changes in the instruments/sounds used to give contrast?

Music Critic Review

- Where did the mood change?
- Did they use an ostinato?
- Did they use a crescendo and diminuendo?
- Did they use a drone?
- Were there at least 2 changes to instruments/sounds used?

Beethoven – Overture to The Creatures of Prometheus

Short 5-minute task: Heroic Listening Challenge

- Is the character brave or frightened?
- Is the character a hero, villain or explorer?
- Which musical features helped you decide?

Medium 20-minute task: Out of This World Art Challenge

Complete this task on separate paper.

Longer 45-minute task: the Magical Quest

Step 1: Listen and Gather Ideas			
Step 2: Plan a Musical Journey			
Step 3: Compose Music			
Step 4: Perform			

Williams – Main Title/ Rebel Blockade Runner from Star Wars

Short 5-minute task: Space Explorer Challenge

Write down the describing and musical words in the box below

Medium 20-minute task: Galactic Rhythm Orchestra

The musical notation is written on two staves in 3/4 time. The top staff begins with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. It contains a whole note, followed by two eighth notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. Below the notes are the lyrics "STAR WARS" and "Ad-ven-ture".

The bottom staff also begins with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. It contains a whole note, followed by two eighth notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. Below the notes are the lyrics "STAR WARS" and "Ad-ven-ture".

The middle section of the notation features a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. It contains a whole note, followed by two eighth notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. Below the notes are the lyrics "Ta" and "DA!".

The bottom section of the notation features a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. It contains a whole note, followed by two eighth notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. Below the notes are the lyrics "STAR WARS" and "Ad-ven-ture".

Try your own rhythms below

Longer 45-minute task: Create your own Space Adventure Soundtrack

Part 1: Listening and Discussion

	Extract 1	Extract 2	Extract 3
Story? Picture?			
Instruments?			
Story? Picture?			

Part 2 and 3: Story Creation and Soundtrack

	Beginning	Middle	End
Story			
Soundtrack			

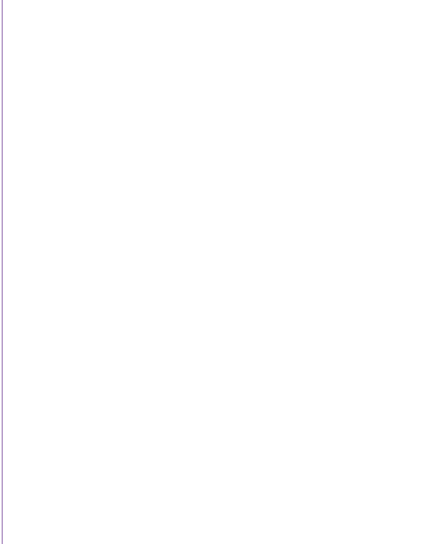
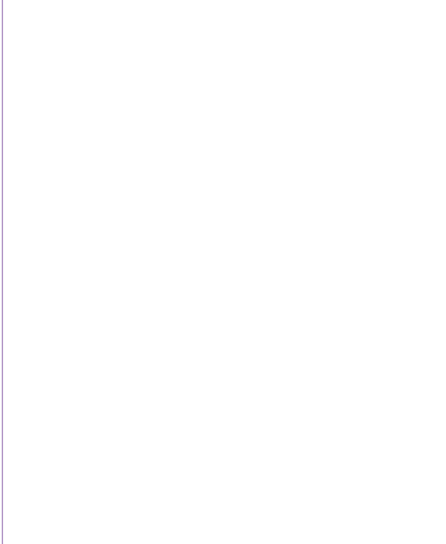
Women Composers

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

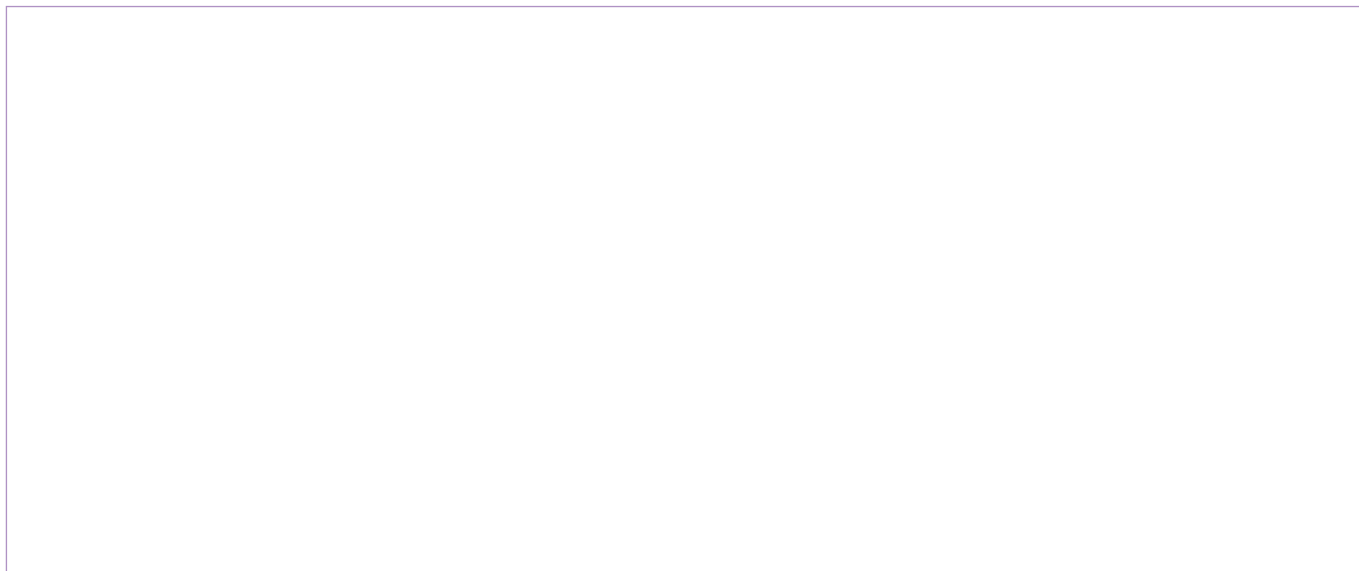
This is a quick drawing task! Look at the jobs listed below and then do a quick drawing of the person doing that job.

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



Southwark Council's Culture Together Grants

The Wixamtree Trust

Lucille Graham Trust

Leicestershire & Rutland Freemasons

The Weinstock Fund

E C Sosnow Charitable Trust

The Fernside Trust

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**