



sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

Bite-Sized Music Lessons

**A series of F-10 music lessons for
implementation in the classroom**

Conditions of use

These Materials are freely available for download and educational use.

These resources were developed by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra with funding and support from the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and Education.



Education
Services
Australia

In the Hall of the Mountain King (1875)

Edvard Grieg

Duration: approximately 2 minutes and 30 seconds

Year levels: Foundation–2 (Stage 1)

Written in the language of the Australian Curriculum in the Arts these resources include activities in each of the music learning areas: performing, composing and listening and identify the key competencies reinforced in each activity.

Lesson	Page	Focus Activity
1	4	Listening and responding
2	5	Moving and listening
3	6	Performing
4	8	Listening
5	10	Composing and performing

Lesson Index

- Lesson 1:** Students start by listening to the piece and imagining what the music might be conveying. They learn a song based upon the main theme of the piece and games to understand changes in tempo (speed) and volume.
- Lesson 2:** This lesson includes another game about volume and the concept of getting faster. The rest of the lesson is about recognising and performing the main Troll theme.
- Lesson 3:** This lesson focuses on crotchets and quavers and recognising these patterns visually and aurally. Students therefore will start to differentiate between beat and rhythm.
- Lesson 4:** In this lesson the students listen to the piece with an understanding of the story the composer is trying to tell in sound. They consider how aspects of the music (pitch, rhythm, tempo, dynamics and instrument) are used to build tension and drama.
- Lesson 5:** Finally the students compose their own piece of music telling a story, creating a simple score and performing it for the class.

Composer biography: Edvard Grieg (1843–1907)

Edvard Grieg was born in Bergen, Norway. His early music education was primarily shaped by his mother, Gesine Hagerup, who was a gifted pianist. At the age of 15, Grieg entered the Leipzig Conservatory, Germany. After four years of extensive study he returned to Norway having developed great skills as a pianist, conductor and composer. A chance meeting with the man who wrote Norway's National Anthem awakened Grieg's pursuit to compose music based on Norwegian folk melodies and the natural environment of Norway.

In the Hall of the Mountain King

This music is from a longer collection of pieces telling a tale of the life of a young man called Peer Gynt. *In the Hall of the Mountain King* was composed to accompany a scene where Peer is out in the forest and encounters a woman in green. They ride together on the back of a huge pig into a dark cave, which is the home of the troll king. Once inside, Peter is tormented and taunted by trolls who are trying to kill him. Peer manages to escape – you can hear him running away at the end!

Instrumentation

Woodwind

Piccolo
2 Flutes
2 Oboes
2 Clarinets in A
2 Bassoons

Brass

4 French Horns in E
2 Trumpets in E
2 Tenor Trombones
Bass Trombone
Tuba

Percussion

Timpani
Bass Drum
Cymbals
Triangle

Strings

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Double Bass

Key musical concepts contained in this work

- Program music (music that depicts a story, object or person).
- Tone colour: recognition of specific instrumental timbres and playing techniques.
- Tempo: *accelerando*, triple metre and duple metre.
- Structure: use of repeated bass as a structural tool for compositions; binary form.

At the conclusion of the activities students should be able to:

- discuss the role of incidental music in enhancing the story in a play.
- identify the main themes.
- recognise and describe changes in dynamics, tempo, pitch, texture and instrumentation.
- identify the sound qualities of orchestral instruments that feature in the work.
- recognise the difference in sound between plucked (*pizzicato*) and bowed (*arco*) strings.
- compose and perform an original composition and record it using graphic notation.
- perform a classroom arrangement based on the theme of *In the Hall of the Mountain King*.

Related Listening and Resources

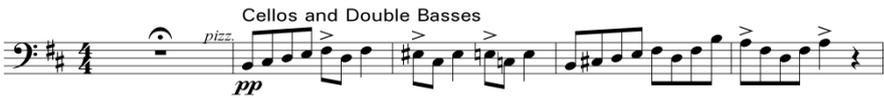
Peer Gynt full story text: <http://www.archive.org/details/peergyntdramatic00ibseuoft>

Performance by the Berliner Philharmoniker:

<https://safeshare.tv/submit?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DpPLXNmKvLBQ>

Listening Guide

Audio example - *In the Hall of the Mountain King* has a single melody which is repeated eighteen times. The entire excerpt can be heard at the link given in [the resources](#). Notice that the camera usually focuses on the instruments that are playing the main melodic line.

Audio Cues	Features
0:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opens with French Horns playing one note. • Four bar Theme played by Cellos and Double Basses <i>pizzicato</i>.  <p style="text-align: center;">Cellos and Double Basses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bassoons in octaves play a <i>staccato ostinato</i> of alternate notes - tonic (B) / dominant (F#). • Bass Drum punctuates the Theme. Tempo is <i>alla marcia</i> (in a march-like style). • Theme features accents and is played <i>molto marcato</i> (very marked).  <p style="text-align: center;">Bassoons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft (<i>piano</i>) and in the key of B minor.
0:16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bassoons in octaves take over the Theme while the Cellos and Double Basses play the <i>ostinato</i> accompaniment. French Horns and Bass Drum continue their patterns.
0:26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat of the Theme alternating between the Cellos/Double Basses and Bassoons. • Melodic pattern repeated at original pitch. • Descending scale run in Cellos and Double Basses introduce the next section.
1:01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme in Violins I and II in octaves, repeated by the Clarinets and Oboes. The Theme is played an octave higher than at the beginning. • Cellos/Double Basses play <i>ostinato</i> accompaniment using alternating octaves. • Introduction of Flutes, Clarinets, French Horns, Trombones and Violins. • Violas add a bowed syncopated accompaniment pattern
1:16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This repeats with violins followed by Clarinets/Oboes playing the Theme at a higher pitch. • Ornamental patterns are used between the Violins, Violas and Cellos in question/answer. • Downward scale-like movement in Cellos, Double Basses, Bass Trombone and Tuba. • Intense semiquaver pattern in Violins and Violas prepares for the next section. • Dynamics get louder (<i>crescendo</i>). Tempo accelerates little by little (<i>stretto poco a poco</i>).
1:38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Crescendo</i> as all strings play the Theme <i>fortissimo</i>. More lively (<i>piu vivo</i>). • Upper strings (Violins and Violas) play using <i>tremolo</i> in a higher register. • Texture is thickened by the inclusion of all instruments. • French Horns and Trombone emphasise the end of the Theme. • Timpani part alternates between rolls and rhythm pattern of the Theme. • Extensive use of <i>ostinatos</i> in all accompanying instruments.
1:48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased tension as tempo quickens until the end (<i>stringendo al fine</i>). • Alternating pitch patterns progressively become higher.
1:58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question/answer pattern between upper strings and upper woodwinds. • All instruments play with a dramatic increase in tempo and dynamics. A two-bar drum roll in the Timpani from <i>piano</i> (soft) to <i>forte-fortissimo</i> (very, very loud) builds to a climax.

Sequential Classroom Activities

Lesson 1: Listening and responding

1. Before listening to *In the Hall of the Mountain King*, briefly discuss how music helps to tell the story in films and in plays. (e.g. creates suspense, adds dramatic effect, enhances mood etc.)
2. Listen to the recording of *In the Hall of the Mountain King* (see [resources](#)).
 - a) What do you imagine is happening in the story? How does the music show this? (*The music starts slowly and softly and becomes faster and louder, the work begins in a low register, gradually higher pitches are added and eventually high pitched squeals and shrieks are added, the regular crotchet beat of the pizzicato could suggest footsteps.*)
 - b) Students compile a list of words/ideas that describe the feelings portrayed in the music. (e.g. fear, excitement, sinister, threatening, chase)
 - c) Discuss students' ideas in terms of the musical clues that triggered their thoughts.
 - d) Introduce the notion of tempo - fast, slow, accelerando (gradually getting faster), and decelerando (gradually slowing down) by using a 'follow my beat' activity (teacher conducts while class clap pulse).
3. Play the opening of *In the Hall of the Mountain King* several times.

Cellos and Double Basses

pizz. pp

Bassoons

4. Learn the following text that goes with the tune above:
We are nasty little trolls, little trolls, little trolls
We are nasty little trolls and now we're after you
5. Perform the tune starting softly and slowly, then gradually become faster and louder. Explain to the students that they are changing their dynamics (volume of the music) and the tempo (speed)
6. Play the Hot and Cold Game:
 - a) Hide an object somewhere in the classroom while a child is out of the room.
 - b) Ask the child try to locate the object by having them respond to aural cues played on a drum.
 - c) The closer the child is to the object the faster and louder the pulse on the drum should be played. As they move away the beat should slow down and become softer.
 - d) Once the class understand the principles of the game, divide them into groups and have them play the game by themselves. This works well in the playground if you set physical borders.

Lesson 2: Moving and listening

1. *In the Hall of the Mountain King* is based upon a gradual crescendo (increase in volume). This means that the composer is manipulating the dynamics or volume of the music.

- a) Learn the following rhyme and match the movement with the words:

Quietly tiptoe all around Trying not to make a sound	Tiptoe
Soft footsteps walk a steady beat Listen to those moving feet	Walk
Marching makes a bit more noise Left, right, left, right, girls and boys	March
Now we're stamping on the floor It's very loud 'well shut the door'	Stamp
BANG	Jump and clap

- b) Encourage students to vary the volume of their speaking voices while the teacher maintains a steady beat throughout the rhyme and directs the tempo. As a variation to this activity children can add non-tuned or body percussion to keep the beat.
2. This work is also based upon the principle of a gradual accelerando (increase in speed).
 - a) Say a well known speech rhyme (or the example below) several times while gradually getting faster.
"Trillions of trolls trying terrifying, troublesome tricks."
 3. Revise the story of the *In the Hall of the Mountain King* and explain that this is what the composer is trying to show in the music.
 4. Listen to the entire recording of *In the Hall of the Mountain King*.
 - a) How many times is the main Theme played? Students raise their hand each time they hear the Theme or record in tally form on a sheet of paper. (18 times)
 - b) How does Grieg vary the Theme to maintain interest and create excitement? (e.g. varies the timbre, dynamics, pitch, tempo and texture.)
 - c) What instrument plays the 'rumbling' notes at the end of the piece? (*Timpani*)

5. Learn the accompaniment pattern which is played by the cellos and bassoons
You will need the notes B and F# then D and A if you are playing with the YouTube clip.



Audio example

If playing without the audio link, the notes can be C, G then E and B while the children sing the troll song.

Lesson 3: Performing

1. Working in pairs:

- a) Create a joint movement for each beat of the bar.
- b) Add a contrasting movement for the second and third beats e.g.

1	2	3	4
Clap	Click	Click	Clap

2. Following a leader:

- a) Distribute non melodic percussion instruments to the group. Ask students to explore ways of playing softly/loudly and fast/slow.
- b) Ask students how a conductor might show loud and soft (big or small beats).
- c) Ask students how a conductor shows the speed of the music? (*By the speed of the beat.*)
- d) Students play their instruments fast, slow, loud or soft as “conducted” by the teacher.

3. Clap or play the four bar rhythm of the Theme on a non-melodic instrument. Students echo the rhythm.



In pairs facing each other, one person claps the beat into the other’s hand while the second person claps the rhythm of the Theme into the first person’s hand.

4. On the next page is a set of rhythm cards. Cut these out so there is one set for each pair of students and use them to answer the following questions:

- a) Use the cards as flash cards with the children reading the rhythm patterns on each one.
- b) The teacher arranges the cards in order of the four bar rhythm of the Theme (there will be two cards per bar). Check answers using the pattern for question 1 above.
- c) Students then repeat the activity and arrange the cards themselves.
- d) Tap the rhythm again and work out where the bar lines and accents go. Mark them on the cards.

Rhythm Cards

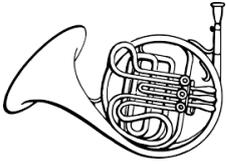
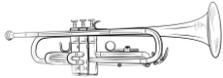
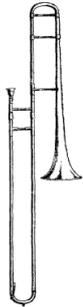
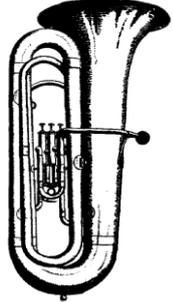
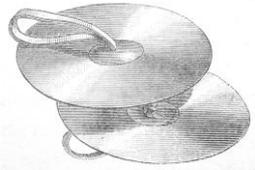
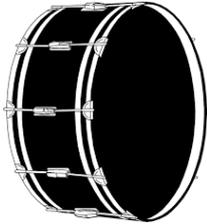
	
	
	
	

Lesson 4: Listening

1. Listen to the opening of the piece. Students answer the following questions:
 - a) Which instruments play the Theme first? (*Cellos and Double Basses.*)
 - b) Describe how these instruments are played. (*Pizzicato, i.e. plucking the strings, not bowed.*)
 - c) What instrument plays an *ostinato* or repeating accompaniment initially in the opening? (*Bassoon*)
 - d) What happens during the second playing of the Theme? (*Bassoon plays the theme and Cellos and Double Basses play the ostinato accompaniment so they keep swapping parts..*)
2. Using the slide of the instruments cards, revise the names and families of the instruments of the orchestra.

Group 1	Strings: Violins, Violas, Cellos, Double Basses
Group 2	Brass: French Horns, Trumpets, Trombones, Tuba
Group 3	Woodwind: Piccolo, Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets, Bassoons
Group 4	Percussion: Cymbals, Bass Drum, Timpani

3. Identify the high and low sounding instruments (remember the smaller the instrument the higher their sound); instruments that are blown, instruments that are bowed, instruments that only play rhythm but have no pitch (such as cymbals and bass drum) etc.
4. Divide the class into four groups, representing the four orchestral families. Each group is allocated enlarged picture flashcards of instruments belonging to one section of the orchestra: strings, brass, woodwind and percussion
 - a) Watch the clip (see [resources](#)) and identify the instruments as they play, encouraging students to recognise “their family”.
 - b) Discuss these instruments with regard to their orchestral families as well as features like pitch, shape, timbre (tone colour) etc.
 - c) Groups write two words that describe the sound of each instrument and share these with the class.
 - d) Listen to audio cue 0:00-1:38.
 - a. Groups stand when their instrumental family is performing.
 - b. Using the picture flashcards, students place the cards in the order that the instruments play as they listen.

<p>VIOLIN</p> 	<p>VIOLA</p> 	<p>CELLO</p> 	<p>DOUBLE BASS</p> 
<p>FRENCH HORN</p> 	<p>TRUMPET</p> 	<p>TROMBONE</p> 	<p>TUBA</p> 
<p>PICCOLO</p> 	<p>FLUTE</p> 	<p>OBOE</p> 	<p>CLARINET</p> 
<p>BASSOON</p> 	<p>CYMBALS</p> 	<p>BASS DRUM</p> 	<p>TIMPANI</p> 

Lesson 5: Composing and performing

In the Hall of the Mountain King is an example of program music. This is music that depicts a story, a place an object or a person in music. In order to do this Grieg has manipulated the elements of music to create suspense and drama in his music.

1. Consider the story that is depicted in *The Hall of the Mountain King* from Ibsen's dramatic poem:

Deep in the caves beneath the mountains evil and ugly trolls stealthily emerge from the shadows to surround Peer. The troll king is seated on his throne, with his crown and sceptre. His children and relations sit either side of him. There is great uproar in the hall amongst the assembly of Troll Courtiers, Brownies and Gnomes. Faster and faster they dance around him, pinching and scratching him until he is terrified.

- a) Discuss how Grieg used various musical contrasts (*dynamics, pitch, instrumentation, rhythm, tempo*) to create the mood and movement of the story.
- b) In groups of three, students decide on a story of their own. (e.g. *bushfire, shark attack, hurricane, train journey, robbery, the tale of the Three Billygoats Gruff.*)
- c) Suggest the students draw a think tank of ideas for reference
- d) Using similar devices of musical contrast, create a soundscape by selecting suitable melodic and non-melodic instruments to help tell the story.
NB: A soundscape is a type of graphic score which uses pictures to represent the sounds of the instrument. The idea is to replicate the sounds of a place so instead of viewing a landscape they are hearing a soundscape. For example, a seaside soundscape would have sounds of waves, birds, children playing, sand and shells moving in the shallow waves etc.
- e) The group graphically notates their composition on a large sheet of paper
- f) Each group performs their soundscape for the rest of the class using their graphic score.
- g) Discuss the performance and the effectiveness of the score.