



sydney symphony orchestra

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Bite-Sized Music Lessons

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

Conditions of use

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English Folk Song Suite - March (1923)

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Duration: approximately 2 minutes 50 seconds

Year levels: 3-4

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 moving
2	6	Performing
3	7	Listening
4	8	Performing
5	9	Composing

Lesson Index

- Lesson 1:** Students complete a series of movement activities which reinforce their understanding of beat and show changes in the structure and dynamics of the music. They will consider the characteristics of a march and through movement develop an understanding of musical metre and phrasing.
- Lesson 2:** Students will learn rhythmic patterns based on text and apply this understanding to a simple percussion score. They will read the score to perform along with the music and they will compose their own percussion parts a specific section of the piece.
- Lesson 3:** This lesson will develop listening skills and enable recognition of the sounds and images of the instruments of the orchestra. They will describe the music they hear.
- Lesson 4:** Students will sing and play two English folk songs. They will then hear how a composer has used these songs in his own arrangement for a full symphony orchestra.
- Lesson 5:** Students will compose a short work using a favourite poem as the basis for the composition. In this lesson they will experiment with volume, tone colour and accompaniment patterns and work the piece into their own class composition which the teacher can record.

Composer biography: Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

Ralph Vaughan Williams was an English composer who wrote symphonies, chamber music, operas, choral works, incidental music, ballets and concerti. He arranged Christian hymns, for the organ, film, radio, TV scores and for bands. Vaughan Williams was also a collector of English folk music and songs. His hobby of collecting folk music was to influence many of his compositions, including the English Folk Song Suite. Vaughan Williams is a central figure in British music because of his long career as teacher, lecturer and friend to so many younger composers and conductors.

English Folk Song Suite

The English Folk Song Suite is one of Vaughan Williams' most famous works. A suite is a collection of works, usually music to move to, but in this case it is an arrangement of well known British folk songs. The suite consists of three movements: March, Intermezzo and another March. The first march is called Seventeen Come Sunday, the Intermezzo is subtitled My Bonny Boy and the final movement is based on four Folk Songs from Somerset.

Instrumentation

Woodwind

2 Flutes
1 Oboes
2 Clarinets
1 Bassoons

Brass

2 Horns
2 Trumpets
2 Trombone

Percussion

Timpani
Snare
Triangle

Strings

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Double Bass

Key musical concepts contained in this work

- Performing: singing folk songs, learning a percussion score.
- Composing: improvising and arranging tasks.
- Aural skills: recognising familiar tunes, identifying beat and tempo, recognising instrument sounds.
- Listening: identifying aspects of pitch, rhythm, tempo, dynamics and structure in this work.

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

- sing the folk songs *Seventeen Come Sunday* and *My Pretty Caroline*.
- perform a percussion accompaniment to a recording of this work.
- improvise melodies to create their own folk song.
- complete a group composition based on a section of this work.
- identify specific features of the concepts of music in this work.

Listening Guide

The entire excerpt can be heard here:

<https://safeshare.tv/submit?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DcPoQGM5uQ5M>

Vaughan Williams - English Folk Song Suite PART 1 of 3 - LSO & SIR ADRIAN BOULT

Audio Cue	Section	Features
0:00–0:05	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full orchestra • 3 repetitions of quaver and crotchet pattern. Starts loud and thick and descends in register, dynamics and texture with each repetition.
0:05–0:32	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flute plays variation on Seventeen Come Sunday (cue 0:05-0:19) • Repeated by thicker and louder orchestration between 0:19-0:32.
0:32–1:05	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet section. Melody is played by clarinets and this theme is based on <i>My Pretty Caroline</i>. It is heard twice.
1:08–1:40	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A third tune, <i>Dives and Lazarus</i>, is heard in the woodwinds and lower parts. This is in 6/8 while there is counterpoint in 2/4 in the brass.
1:40-2:16	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet section. Melody is played by clarinets and this theme is based on <i>My Pretty Caroline</i>. It is heard twice.
2:17–2:48	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme A repeats as it was performed earlier played by the full orchestra. • 3 repetitions of quaver and crotchet pattern. Starts loud and thick and descends in register, dynamics and texture with each repetition.
2:48–2:50	Ending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A change in key as this piece which started in a minor key ends with a major chord. • This movement is in Arch form being A-B-C-B-A.

Sequential Classroom Activities

Lesson 1: Listening and moving

1. Play the piece and allow the students to freely improvise movements which show the mood of the music.
 - a) Ask them why they chose their particular action? What features of the music made them respond that way?
 - b) Now ask them to move in a way which does NOT reflect the mood or style of the music. Why is this not appropriate?

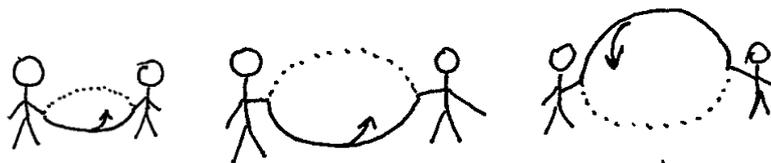
2. This piece is called *March*. Ask your students:
 - a) What is a march? (*To walk in a regular, measured and deliberate manner*).
 - b) Where do you see marching? (*Official military and state occasions, Christmas parades, before a sports game*).
 - c) What are the musical features of a march? (*Steady walking pace, usually in duple (2) time*).
 - d) What instruments might you hear performing a march? (*Woodwinds, brass and percussion, such as a bass drum, snare drum, triangle, cymbals, flutes, clarinets, trumpets and trombones*).
 - e) A march has a regular beat to keep soldiers walking in time. Clap the beat while listening to the start of the piece.

3. One very important feature of a march is that it has a feeling of 2. This makes it good for marching left-right, left-right.
 - a) Listen again and have the students step the 1 and the 2.
 - b) Then try stepping just on 1, or just on 2.
 - c) To show just how strong the 1-2 feel in this piece is, try counting 1-2-3 to the beat, then 5, then 8. Needless to say, any number which can be divided by 2 will fit more comfortably than one that cannot.

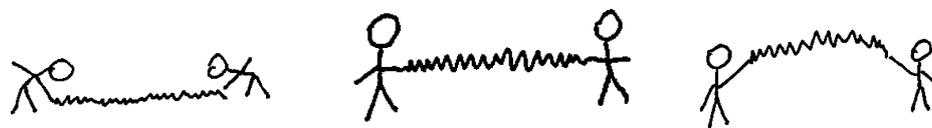
4. Another important feature of a piece of music is that the tunes are organised into phrases or musical sentences. This piece has a series of regular “sentences” or phrases which are 8 beats long.
 - a) Form a line on one side of the room. While someone claps the beat or keeps the beat on a handy instrument, ask the students to slowly march forward for 8 beats.
 - b) On the count of 8 change direction. Teacher might count aloud: 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-turn.
 - c) In groups of 3-4 make up an 8 bar military movement pattern which can be performed with the music.
 - d) Once each group has rehearsed their pattern, take turns performing it to the 8 bar phrases of this piece.

5. Rough seas versus calm waters: you will need enough skipping ropes for the class to be in pairs.

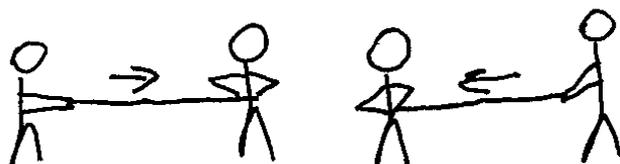
- a) In pairs, turn the skipping rope to reflect dynamic or volume level (small versus large) using audio cues 0:00-0:31 and 2:46-3:01.



- b) Wave (shake) the skipping rope on the floor for the legato section – raise higher to reflect register or dynamics, using audio cues 0:31-1:05 and 2:13-2:46.



- c) Stand and enact a 'heave-ho' by imitating pulling the rigging forward and backward (audio cue 1:05-2:05).



- d) Remind the students that the music is grouped in phrases of 8 beats and use this information to shape your movements.

Lesson 2: Performing

1. Learn the following word rhythms to help learn percussion rhythm patterns (the Z indicates rest/silence).

Loud section

Part 1	March	Z	Z	Z
Part 2	Right	left	right	left
Part 3	Z	left	Z right	left
Part 4	Stand	tall	face to the	front

Soft section

Triangle	Z	left	right	left
Tambourine	Z	left	Z	left
Finger cymbals	Ten	hut	stand ing	still

- Perform these patterns as individual lines first then put them together.
- Clap the rhythm patterns saying the text in your head.
- Transfer your pattern onto instruments and rehearse it twice.
- Perform with the recording.

2. Now perform the percussion score with the music.

Instrument	Section A (loud section)				Section B (quiet section)			
Triangle								
Tambourine								
Woodblock								
Snare Drum								
Whirly								
Finger Cymbals								

3. There is no score for the C section of the music. Create your own pattern for three body percussion parts.

Instrument

Section C

4. Perform the whole piece with the recording as a class ensemble using the score to assist you. Remember that it is based upon the structure or plan A-B-C-B-A.

Lesson 3: Listening

1. This work is written for a full orchestra. The instruments are identified in the four orchestra families:

Woodwind

2 Flutes
1 Oboes
2 Clarinets
1 Bassoons

Brass

2 Horns
2 Trumpets
2 Trombone

Percussion

Timpani
Snare
Triangle

Strings

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Double Bass

Use the link below to help students recognise the sound of each of these orchestra instruments:

<https://www.mydso.com/dso-kids/learn-and-listen/instruments>

- a) Teacher talks through each of the instruments while students identify which family they belong to and how their sound is made.
- b) Teacher plays the work while students answer the first part of the worksheet ([page 10](#)).
- c) Listen to the excerpt again to answer part two of the answer worksheet ([page 11](#)). (*You may need to refer to the listening outline on [page 3](#) for answers*).
- d) What image or scene do you think the composer is trying to create? (*Suggested answer to lead into activities in section 2: pirate or sea shanty or sailing, other answers are also correct as this is subjective*).

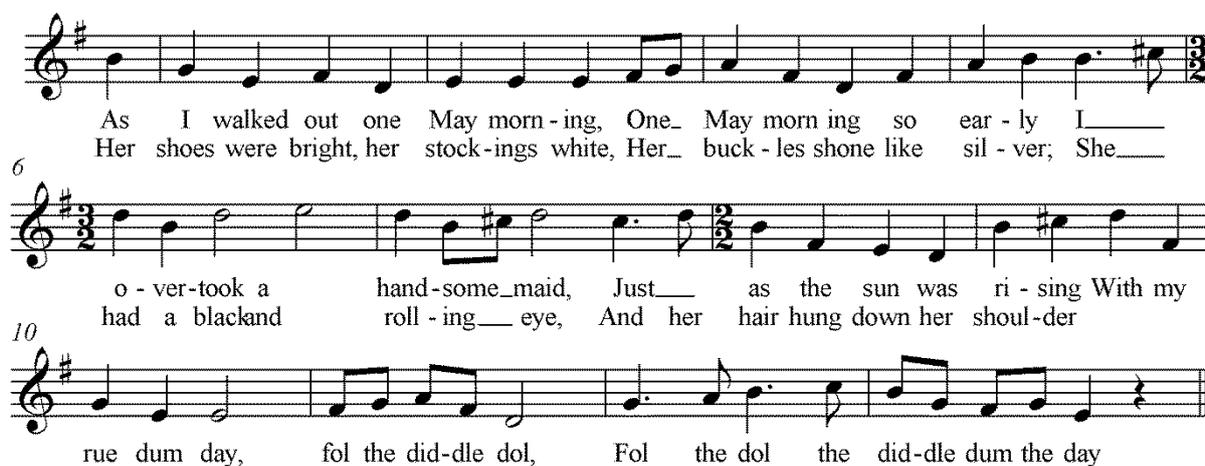
Lesson 4: Performing

This music is based upon a number of English Folk songs. At the time Vaughan Williams wrote the music an Australian called Percy Grainger was spending much of his life roaming the English country side to have people sing folk songs to him. He did this because the radio and films meant that people were not making their own entertainment as much and many of the rich heritage of folks songs from England were disappearing as people stopped singing them. Percy Grainger wrote them down so that the songs would be remembered.

What Australian Folk songs do you know?

1. The first song used is called *Seventeen Come Sunday*.
Use the following link (sound only) to listen to the first verse of this folk song:
https://safeshare.tv/submit?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DxLF7t_WcXnY

Seventeen Come Sunday



As I walked out one May morn-ing, One_ May morn ing so ear - ly I ____
Her shoes were bright, her stock-ings white, Her_ buck - les shone like sil - ver; She ____

6
o - ver-took a hand-some_maid, Just_ as the sun was ri - sing With my
had a blackand roll - ing_ eye, And her hair hung down her shoul-der

10
rue dum day, fol the did-dle dol, Fol the dol the did-dle dum the day

2. Now learn to sing this song.

My Pretty Caroline

3. The tune below is played by the clarinet in the suite. Listen to this tune played by the clarinet following the notes with a pencil while it is played.

Clarinet theme for Section B – My Pretty Caroline melody



4. Clap the rhythm of this piece as you listen to it again.
5. Once you are familiar with the tune sing it to "lah".
6. Create some words that can be sung to this tune about My Pretty Caroline and perform them for the class.

Lesson 5: Composing

On the board write the following poem:

Chomp, said the monkey.
Bananas to eat!
I'll wear banana skins,
on my little monkey feet.¹

As a class read through the poem.

1. Keeping a beat using body percussion.
2. Mark the beats by placing a line before the word that falls on the beat (these words are in bold):

Chomp, said the **monkey**.
Bananas to **eat**!
I'll wear banana skins,
on my little **monkey** feet.

3. Say the words in a more rhythmic way to fit in with the beat (perhaps try to notate the rhythm). Here is an example:

The image shows two lines of musical notation on a five-line staff. The first line is for the first two lines of the poem: 'Chomp, said the monkey. Bananas to eat!'. The notes are: quarter note (Chomp), eighth note (said), quarter note (the), quarter note (mon), eighth note (key), quarter note (Ba), eighth note (na), quarter note (nas), eighth note (to), quarter note (eat). The second line is for the last two lines: 'I'll wear banana skins, on my little monkey feet.' The notes are: quarter note (I'll), eighth note (wear), quarter note (ba), eighth note (na), quarter note (na), eighth note (skins), quarter note (on), eighth note (my), quarter note (lit), eighth note (tle), quarter note (mon), eighth note (key), quarter note (feet). There are bar lines after 'key.' and 'skins,'.

4. Say the words using a variety of voices (like different characters).
5. Say the poem using your favourite voice sound and experiment with dynamic (volume) changes.
6. Sing your poem using a variety of ways and select the melody you like the best.
7. Add percussive accompaniments, such as drones or rhythmic patterns to highlight the text.
8. Make a sound recording of this song.

Extension suggestion – use a poem or piece of text that is important to your class and try having them follow the same set of activities to create a special song based on that text.

¹ The above poem was taken from *Of Frogs and Snails* – Finger plays and action rhymes for children by Yvonne Winer and Lyndal Stewart. Belair Publications, Adamstown Heights, N.S.W 1979.

March by Ralph Vaughan Williams

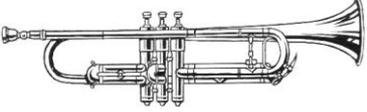
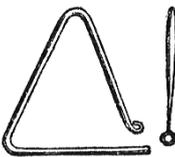
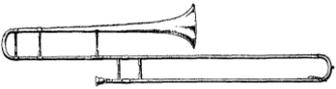
Student name: _____ Class: _____

Listen to the instruments and write some words to describe the quality of their sound, e.g. high/low, harsh/smooth.

In the box below write some words that describe the character and mood of the march.

Now on the lines below, try to describe what it is about the music that made you think of the words in the box above.

Listen to the whole march and place a tick ✓ next to the instruments that can be clearly heard in the piece.

Piano 	Piccolo 
Cello 	Snare Drum 
Double Bass 	Bassoon 
Timpani 	Electric Guitar 
Trumpet 	Flute 
Violin 	French Horn 
Triangle 	Trombone 
Clarinet 	Oboe 

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