SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Learning & Engagement Teaching Kit

Stage 5 & 6

Acknowledgements

Contact

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"Your life can be changed and enriched through all sorts of music; music from now, music from the past, music from the very distant past and music from as recently as yesterday.

Through intensive listening students become involved in one of the highest orders of thinking.

As a teacher, by bringing students to a concert and studying music in the classroom, you are providing your students with a special pathway to musical knowledge through direct experience of and contact with live music."

Richard Gill AO
(1941 – 2018)

Conductor, notable educator and advocate. Richard was the founding Artistic Director of Education at Sydney Symphony. He has inspired generations of musicians through his work and continues to inspire new generations through his legacy.

Background: Syllabus Topic
Music of the 19th Century

Historic Context

In the 19th Century the industrial revolution, social upheaval and rejection of the authority of the church, created a new middle class. It was a time of the rise of the individual: man the hero, the virtuoso. Continuing land ownership wars across the world fuelled the fires of nationalism.

A snapshot of events include:

1804	Napoleon Bonaparte pronounces himself Emperor of France.
1809	Uprising in Germany and Austria – war against Napoleon renewed.
1813	Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson cross the Blue Mountains and start opening up Australia
1814	Stevenson builds the first steam locomotive
1825	The first railway opens and 1826 first steam ship crosses the Atlantic.
1827	Beethoven dies
1837	Death of John Constable (artist) and Alexander Pushkin (poet)
1846	Great Potato famine in Ireland
1848	Karl Marx publishes The Communist.
1851	Gold discovered in Australia
1859	Darwin publishes his Origin of Species
1865	Abolition of slaves in America and Klu Klux Klan is formed
1867	End of transportation of criminals to Australia
1874	First Impressionist Exhibition (named after Monet painting)
1878	Edison develops electric light
1883	Krakatoa Volcano erupts killing 35,000
1889	Eifel Tower built
1890	Lumiere brother develop motion pictures
1893	New Zealand is the first country to give women the vote
1897	First zeppelin airship launched.

Features of 19th Century Music

Musical Romanticism was marked by emphasis on originality and individuality, personal emotional expression, and freedom and experimentation of form. Music of this time had an increasing level of technical challenge as the individual virtuoso rose to fame. As countries asserted independence and fought over boarders, nationalism became a key ingredient, and the rise of literature, art and poetry was often reflected in the symphonic poems and programme music depicting heroes, places, objects and events.

Pitch (Melody and Harmony)

- Emphasis upon lyrical, songlike melodies
- Some composers still organised melody into balanced phrases, others like Wagener, created long, unbalanced phrases or continuous melody.
- Harmonies were more adventurous and colourful with many added note chords (7ths, 9ths, 11ths, etc.) and use of chromaticism
- More adventurous use of augmented and diminished chord vocabulary
- Musical momentum propelled by harmonic tension and release created by the use of dissonance.
- Harmony was a key tool in creating expressive and passionate works, which drew composers to dissonance and tension and release created by dissonance created dramatic tensions.

Duration (Rhythm and Metre)

- Rhythmic tension created by cross rhythm, poly rhythms and use of rubato.
- Virtuosic material used complex rhythmic beat subdivisions requiring great dexterity and coordination.
- Frequent changes of metre and tempo within movements

Tone Colour

- The orchestra expanded with many additional brass and percussion instruments becoming standard in symphonic music
- Exploration of tone colour used for storytelling and nationalistic depictions.

Tonality

- Whilst music was tonal and still created through major and minor scales, modulations were adventurous, often unexpected and facilitated often through the use of a diminished seventh chord, from which there are many resolutions.
- Works roamed a long way from the home key, and the dominant – tonic cadence, which punctuated the structure of Classical music was less important as the years passed.

Texture

- The 19th Century completed the swing from a horizontal (contrapuntal) to a vertical conception of music.

- Emphasis upon harmony meant that composers were preoccupied with the power of the chord. They often focussed on luscious harmonies and tone colour, striving for an even richer sound.

- Texture grew thick and opaque, through the use of dense chords and a mammoth orchestra.

- By the time of Mahler and Rachmaninov, the elaborate texture of late romanticism had reached a point that no further progress was possible.

Dynamics and Expressive Devices

- Composers began including detailed score markings to ensure the music was played exactly as they envisioned.

Structure

- The ordered balance of Classicism was abandoned in favour of freer forms, or a freer attitude to classical forms.

- Use of through composed and arc structures, as well as a loose sonata form.

- The solo concerto, symphony, symphonic poem and other types of programme music were important symphonic genres, and large orchestras were used to accompany large scale oratorio, operas and requiems.

The 19th Century Orchestra Instrumentation

As concert halls grew, so too did the size of the orchestra.

Woodwind	Brass	Percussion	Strings
Piccolo	8 Horns in F (7th and 8th doubling Tenor Tuba)	Timpani (1 player)	Violin I
3 Flutes (3rd doubling Piccolo 2)	4 Trumpets in F, C & Bb	Bass Drum	Violin II
Alto Flute	3 Trombones	Tam-tam	Viola
4 Oboes (4th doubling Cor Anglais 2)	2 Tuba	Triangle	Cello
Cor Anglais		Tambourine	Double Bass
Piccolo Clarinet in D & Eb		Glockenspiel	
3 Clarinets in Bb & A		Xylophone	
(2nd doubling Bass Clarinet 2)		Tubular Bells	
Bass Clarinet			
4 Bassoons (4th doubling Contrabassoon 2)			
Contrabassoon			

Techniques of Orchestration

The most exciting and developed instrument of this time was the orchestra. After the "rules of orchestration" observed by the classical composers, composers of this period followed Beethoven's lead, to break the dominance of the violins and high wind in taking melodic roles. Celli and bass lines were divided and given individual parts. The woodwind section was expanded by the inclusion of piccolo, cor anglais, bass clarinet and sometimes contrabassoon. Additional percussion colours of cymbals, bass drum, and hand percussion like sleigh bells, finger cymbals and triangle were used for programmatic effects.

Work: TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No. 6 in B Minor "Pathétique" (1893)

Composer Background

Pytor Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893)

Tchaikovsky was one of the most famous Russian composers of the 19th Century and the most Westernised of the major 19th Century Russian composers, but still used folk music in his compositions. He admired the music of Mozart and was influenced by Saint-Saëns and Bizet. He fused the National and Western traditions to produce intensely subjective and passionate music. His music is characterised by beautiful melodies; colourful orchestral treatment; sharp contrasts of tempo, dynamics, thematic material; and contrast produced by alternating the use of strings, woodwinds and brass.

Work Background

Symphony No. 6 in B Minor "Pathétique" (1893)

Tchaikovsky's last symphony was originally titled '*Programme Symphony*' but was altered at the suggestion of Tchaikovsky's brother Modeste, to '*Pathétique*' (French for 'melancholy'). It only took Tchaikovsky around 12 days to complete the draft and less than a month to finalise the orchestration. The symphony was premiered on 28 October 1893 under the direction of Tchaikovsky just nine days before his death.

Instrumentation

Woodwind	Brass	Percussion	Strings	Solo
3 Flutes (3rd doubling piccolo)	4 Horns	3 Timpani	Violin I	Piano
2 Oboes	2 Trumpets	Bass Drum	Violin II	
2 Clarinets	3 Trombones	Cymbals	Viola	
2 Bassoons	Tuba		Cello	
			Double Bass	

Listening Guide
Overview:

This symphony is a good example of the genre at the height of Romanticism, in its loose adherence to structure, frequent fluctuations of tonality and numerous changes of speed and mood. Tchaikovsky treats his instruments equally with key melodic material distributed across the ensemble. The program of the work is biographical. Its whole essence is 'life', although some view it as a premonition of his death.

Movement I: conflict for life, love and the presence of death

Movement II: love

Movement III: triumph and disappointment

Movement IV: death

Movement I: *Adagio – Allegro non troppo*

The first movement is in sonata form. After a quiet adagio opening with a fragment of the first subject introduced by the bassoons accompanied by divisi double basses, the violas introduce the first subject:

The second subject is in the relative major:

An unusual feature of this theme is that the accompanying instruments are in 12/8 (the time signature changes in their parts, against the common time of the violins and violas.

Movement II: *Allegro con grazia*

This movement is unusual in that it is a dance in 5/4 time. The movement is in ternary form.

Theme A:

The opening contrasts with a darker B section *con dolcessa a flobile* where the timpani sounds on every beat.

Movement III: *Allegro molto vivace*

The third movement is in a compound meter 12/8 and 4/4 and a scherzo in Ternary form. The A section is in G major and the B section a major third away. It begins with a 'moto perpetuo' (continual movement). Much of the thematic material is based on sequences of the interval of a fourth. Fourths, like fifths, sound assertive, (like fanfares), but a sequence of more than two of them makes the tonality vague. The fourths eventually settle into a March theme, played first by the clarinets against scale figures in the strings

The theme and the scales become more prominent, culminating in a long crescendo based on the March theme. The March theme then returns triumphantly against scales in the brass. The movement comes to a powerful conclusion with a rush of scales in the Coda.

Movement IV Finale: *Adagio Lamentoso*

The Finale is in ternary form. It is unusual for the last movement of a symphony to be an adagio, but this movement of the symphony is about death. The violins violas and celli play the theme in close harmony from the opening bar. An unusual feature of this is that the theme is shared between the first and second violins:

This contrasts with a calmer descending theme in D major, introduced by the violin 1 and violas in octaves. This gradually builds until the full tutti are playing this theme. Another interesting feature of this movement is the return of the first subject theme from Movement I immediately after in its original key of B minor.

A sombre funeral like chorale is also heard in this movement from the trombones and tuba accompanied by a sustained cymbal, which slowly slows and softens and leads into the coda, a restatement of the calmer descending theme in D major against an agitated B pedal triplet in the basses which continues to the final beats, ending in B minor.

This is the only symphony by Tchaikovsky that ends in a minor key.

It was bold to end the symphony with a slow movement, and this finale is what gave the symphony the name Pathétique.

Audio Excerpts

Access the Spotify playlist by visiting the following link:

Symphony No.6 in B minor "Pathétique"

Excerpt No.	Movement	Time	Activity	Page
1	Movement 1: *Adagio - Allegro non troppo*	0:00 – 3:20	Activity 1	12
2	Movement 2: *Allegro con grazia*	0:00 – 1:09	Activity 2	14
3	Movement 3: *Andante molto vivace*	1:08 – 1:17	Activity 2	14
4	Movement 3: *Andante molto vivace*	1:46 – 2:50	Activity 5	16

Score Excerpts (Click below to access)

Symphony No.6 in B minor "Pathétique"

Excerpt No.	Movement	Bars	Activity	Page
1	Movement 1: *Adagio - Allegro non troppo*	1 – 62	Activity 2	14
2	Movement 3: *Andante molto vivace*	71 – 110	Activity 3	19

Learning Activities
Activity 1: Performance

Perform these key themes from the symphony on your instrument for familiarisation. Note the original clefs and transpose appropriately.

Movement 1 First Subject:

Movement 1 Second Subject:

Movement 2

Movement 3 - March Theme

Movement 4 - Composite theme (shared between 2 instruments).

Note that if you follow the contour of the highest sounding notes in bars 1 and 2 it creates a descending scale.

Activity 2: Listening and score reading

Read **Score Excerpt 1** Movement 1(1 – 62) and listen to **Audio Excerpt 1** Movement 1 (0:00 – 3:20)

1. What instruments open the movement?

2. What is the key of the opening?

3. Identify 2 features of pitch in the double bass part.

4. The opening theme is repeated from bar 7. How is it varied the second time? (Consider accompaniment as well in your answer)

5. Comment on the instrumentation of the orchestra. Is it typical of a late C19th ensemble?

6. What chord is played *sf* in bar 5?

7. The movement is programmatic, and based upon the theme of *Conflict about love, life and the presence of death.* How has Tchaikovsky captured this in the tone colour of the opening of the symphony in bars 1-18?

8. How does the music change at bar 19?

9. From bar 19 onwards, how is the motif below used and developed in the excerpt?

   Identify examples of how Tchaikovsky has explored and extended this motif citing bar numbers in your answer.

10. What is unusual about the grouping of the lower strings from bar 19-43?

11. How are scale patterns used in this excerpt?

12. Describe the texture from bar 40 – 62.

13. Explain what the players are to do to obey these score directions:
    a. div. bar 40
    b. arco bar 59
    c. mit damfer bar 56
    d. Solo bar 56
    e. Allegro non troppo bar 19
    f. Riten. Bar 17
    g. saltando bar 42
    h. restez bar39
    i. unis. Bar 44

14. The first subject theme is used and developed fragments throughout the excerpt. Cirlce the parts of the theme that are used and explored by Tchaikovsky in this excerpt.

Activity 3: Aural

Movement 2

Listen to **Audio Excerpt 2** Movement 2 (0:00 -1:09) and answer the following questions.

1. Identify the instrument playing the tune
2. How many beats are in a bar?
3. The key has 2 sharps. What key does the movement start in?
4. What technique is used by the strings to accompany the melody?
5. Which family of instruments repeat the theme immediately after the first statement of it?

Now notate the melody played by the violins in bar 17-20 as you listen to excerpt 3.
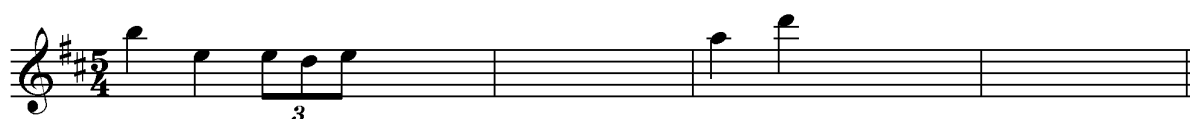
Activity 4: Composition

Leonard Bernstein believed that one of the fascinating things about this symphony was that most of the melodies were just scales. Play the excerpt below, which is the opening of the whole symphony:

It is based on a scale stepwise movement that repeats ascending in sequence stepwise up the scale.

Consider the opening of movement 4. If you look at the contour of the melody shared between the violins starting the movement it is a scale too:


If you revise the themes that you performed in Activity 1 you will find many examples of scale use but used creatively to make melodies that can be developed in a symphonic manner. What keeps the melodies interesting are the rich harmonies and instrumental writing that supports them.

a) create 2 contrasting melodies, one based upon ascending patterns and one based upon descending patterns
b) work them into a 12-bar ternary form piece
c) harmonise your melody with interesting chords
d) put it all together and record using available computer software or in small groups.

Activity 5: Listening & Score reading

Read **Score Excerpt 2** Movement 3 (Bars 71-110) and listen to **Audio Excerpt 3**
Movement 3 (1:08 – 1:17) and **Audio Excerpt 4** Movement 3 (1:46 – 2:50)

1. Which instruments have the melody?
2. Identify the key and time signature of this melody.
3. Describe the structure of this melody.
4. What is the role of the horn's bars 71 - 77?
5. Describe the part played by the strings in bars 71-77. When the violins enter in bar 77 and 78 how are their notes to be played?
6. Why are time signatures in brackets included in some parts between bars 71 and 77?
7. There are numerous uses of scale patterns as accompaniment figures, flourishes and the framework for melodic lines in this excerpt. Identify at least three different examples of this from the score, identifying instruments part and bar numbers in your answer.
8. Tchaikovsky followed the 19th Century practice of treating the instruments of the orchestra equally, sharing roles across the ensemble and not confining instruments to one role or purpose in the ensemble. Listen to Audio Excerpt 4
   What examples of this can you find in the excerpt?
9. Identify the last 4 chords of the excerpt (bars 109-110). Write the pitches onto the manuscript below to help you identify them.
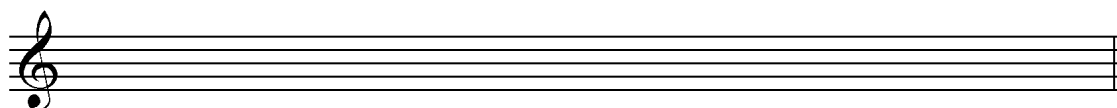
10. What is the mood of this excerpt and how does Tchaikovsky use the concepts of music to achieve it?

GLOSSARY

Musical term	Definition
a2	Two instruments play the given pitch.
Accompaniment	The part of the music that is not the main theme or tune, but the musical support.
Da capo	From the beginning.
Dissonant	The term describing the sound when notes played simultaneously do not blend together but clash.
Duration	Referring to the rhythmic aspects of music, length of sounds or silence.
Dynamics and expression	Volume and choice of how the sound is made.
Expressive techniques	Ways of playing or articulating a sound often related to the interpretation of a style.
Extended Techniques	When a player is required to play their instrument in an untraditional manner, such as blowing into a trumpet without the mouthpiece or tapping the belly of a stringed instrument.
Forte (*f*)	Loud
Fortepiano (*fp*)	To commence a note loudly and becoming very soft immediately after.
Graphic Notation	A method of indicating pitch, rhythm and dynamics using symbols instead of traditional musical notation.
Legato	Smoothly
Melody	Tune
Metre	The way that the beats are grouped in a piece of music, ie the number of beats in a bar
Orchestra	A group of mixed instruments comprising woodwind, brass, percussion and stringed instruments and usually directed by a conductor.
Ostinato	A repeating pattern – may be rhythm only or rhythm and pitch.
Pentatonic Scale	A scale consisting of five notes only – the most common being the 1st, 2nd 3rd, 5th, and 6th notes of the scale.
Piano (*p*)	A dynamic marking meaning soft.
Pitch	The relative highness of lowness of sounds. Discussion of pitch includes the melody and direction of pitch movement and the harmony (different parts).

Pizzicato	A technique used by string players where the sound is made by plucking the string rather than bowing it.
Program music	Music which is inspired by a story, character, place or atmosphere i.e. it is inspired by a non musical program.
Sequence	A pattern that repeats at a higher or lower pitch.
Sforzando piano (*sfp*)	To accent the start of the note loudly, then become suddenly soft.
Soundscape	Compositions of organised sounds which are describe a scene of a place.
Staccato	Playing a note so that it sounds short and detached.
Structure (form)	The plan underlying the construction or the design of a piece of music. Structure relates to the ways in which sections of music sound similar or different.
Texture	The layers of sound in a piece of music.
Timbre/Tone Colour	The particular features of a sound which distinguish one sound (instrument or singer) from another.
Tuned and Untuned percussion	Tuned percussion refers to percussion instruments which play specific pitches such as xylophones. Untuned percussion instruments include shakers, triangles and other instruments with no definable pitch.