

RTE NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA 

Music
IN THE
CLASSROOM



**MUSICAL
ADVENTURES**

MONDAY 14 & TUESDAY 15 JANUARY 2019
NATIONAL CONCERT HALL

NCH RESIDENT AT
NATIONAL CONCERT HALL
AN CEOLÁRAS NAISIÚNTA

RTE NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA 

Who's who?

Tom Redmond

Tom is a horn player and teacher and has performed with some of the best UK orchestras in venues all around the world. He is a radio presenter too, as well as presenting concerts from the stage. In his hugely popular concerts for schools, he has introduced classical music to over a hundred thousand young people and their families so far!



RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra

A symphony orchestra is a group of around 80-100 musicians and made up of four families of instruments; Strings, Woodwind, Brass and Percussion.

The RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra performs around 70 concerts per year. They perform all sorts of orchestral music, from classical and operatic favourites to modern and movie music, ballets and operas. The musicians love introducing young people of all ages to the music they play. They also love working with young student musicians who might want to play in an orchestra. The orchestra also makes recordings and tours to other parts of the country. They are often joined by guest soloists and conductors from all around the world, and today's conductor is Gavin Maloney.

Gavin Maloney

Gavin Maloney began learning how to play the violin when he was 3 years old. When he was a little older he heard the sound of an orchestra for the first time, and he thought it was the greatest thing in the world. He liked making music with other people, in small chamber groups, and in youth orchestras. When he was 18, Gavin entered a conducting competition as a result of which he conducted the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra for the first time. He studied at the Royal Irish Academy of Music, and at music colleges in England and Austria. The oldest music Gavin conducts was written nearly 400 years ago. The most recent piece of music he conducted was written 6 months ago. With new music like that, the composer is usually still alive, which means Gavin gets to talk to them about what they've written. Gavin has made several recordings, and his concerts have been broadcast all over the world.



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**MUSICAL
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Tom Redmond presenter • Gavin Maloney conductor

PROGRAMME

MOZART *The Magic Flute Overture*

MUSSORGSKY *A Night on a Bare Mountain*

JOHN WILLIAMS *Fawkes Theme from Harry Potter*

MENDELSSOHN *Scherzo from A Midsummer Night's Dream*

MASON BATES *The A Bao A Qu from Anthology of Fantastic Zoology*

PICKETT / BENNISON *Charleston Champions*

JOHN WILLIAMS *Jurassic Park*

STRAVINSKY *Berceuse and Finale from The Firebird*

MONDAY 14 JANUARY 2019 10.30am

TUESDAY 15 JANUARY 2019 10.30am and 12.15pm

NATIONAL CONCERT HALL

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About the music and composers

By Tom Redmond

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart 1756-1791

Overture to *The Magic Flute*

The Magic Flute is a fairytale opera with themes of love, and good versus evil. One of the characters, Pamina, is given a magic flute to help her rescue a captured princess. He uses the flute to charm wild animals, then rescues the princess, defeats her evil mother and everyone lives happily ever after. The overture sets the scene in the theatre before any of the drama unfolds.

MOZART Did you know...?

Mozart is perhaps one of the most famous composers to have ever lived! He began playing and writing music from a very young age; one of his first compositions was completed when he was just 5. By the time he was 11, he'd composed his first opera! He's widely regarded as a genius and he had an absolutely filthy sense of humour- toilets (and their contents) were a great source of amusement for him.



Modest Mussorgsky 1839-1881

A Night on a Bare Mountain

A Night on a Bare Mountain is a tone poem, music that tells a story in sound, in which St John sees a witches' Sabbath on the Bald Mountain near Kiev. It's a terrifying party with witches and warlocks dancing wildly, but when the church bell chimes 6am, the sun comes up and they all disappear.

Mussorgsky had many goes at writing this piece, but in the end his friend Rimsky Korsakov completed the version that we'll hear today.

MUSSORGSKY Did you know...?

Mussorgsky came from a rich, powerful family that had connections with royalty. He was considered a child wonder, going to a special music school from a young age. Sadly his adult life was less successful, he never quite achieved in his lifetime what he thought he might and his music didn't really become popular until after his death.



John Williams born 1932

Fawkes Theme from Harry Potter

John Williams is considered by many to be the greatest film composer of all time. He has written the music for some of the greatest movies ever made, including *Star Wars*, *ET*, *Jurassic Park*, *Home Alone*, *Jaws*, *Superman*, *Indiana Jones* and *Harry Potter*.

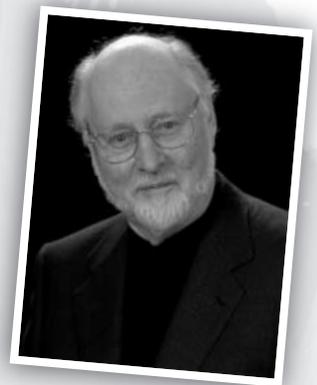
Fawkes was Dumbledore's phoenix, a creature of great magical power - able to carry heavy loads, heal wounds with his tears and rejuvenate in a burst of flames. Fawkes' tail feathers were at the core of two twin wands, held by Lord Voldemort and Harry Potter.

Like all characters and creatures in *Harry Potter*, Fawkes has a theme tune, or a leitmotif; a short musical signature that always accompanies his appearance in the story.

This music describes Fawkes effortlessly soaring over the grounds of Hogwarts in music as warm as the Phoenix's red feathers.

WILLIAMS Did you know...?

John Williams has been nominated for 49 Oscars, only Walt Disney has been nominated more times than him. He's won 5, plus 22 Grammys, 3 Golden Globes, and 5 Baftas. That's quite a trophy cabinet he must have.



Felix Mendelssohn 1809-1847

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Op. 61, Incidental Music: Scherzo

A Midsummer Night's Dream is a play by the great William Shakespeare. One of the main groups of characters is a band of fairies and when Mendelssohn wrote his incidental music to accompany a production of Shakespeare's play in 1843, he managed to capture the lightness and playful character of the spirits. Scherzo means joke, and this music sets the stage for the forest at night and you can imagine the air around you flickering with mischievous magical creatures.

MENDELSSOHN Did you know...?

Felix Mendelssohn was a musical genius as a child but his father, who was a banker, didn't push his son into performing. It wasn't until young Felix showed how committed he was to music that his dad gave him his blessing. From his teenage years Mendelssohn travelled Europe as a composer, conductor and pianist. He loved Scotland and wrote a very famous piece about *Fingal's Cave* near the Hebrides, though he got very sea sick on the way. Queen Victoria was one of his biggest fans.



Mason Bates

born 1977

The A Bao A Qu

Mason Bates is an American composer, DJ and musician who fuses together many different styles of music.

A Bao a Qu is from a much bigger piece of music called *Anthology of Fantastic Zoology*. According to myth the A Bao a Qu is a creature that lies sleeping, and invisible, at the bottom of some steps that lead to paradise. When someone starts to climb the stairs the A Bao a Qu unwinds to guide them on. As it unwinds it becomes clearer and clearer and more colourful. The higher it goes, the bluer it becomes but normally the climber of the stairs cannot reach the top, so they go back down and the A Bao a Qu returns to its resting place.

You can hear the same journey in the music too. It's a palindrome; it says the same thing forwards as it does backwards, like the name Hannah, or A nut for a jar of tuna. There's a point in the music when you hear the A Bao a Qu reach its highest point, then the music just goes backwards!

John Williams

Jurassic Park

The master of film music does it again. This time, it's all about dinosaurs.



Charleston Champions

Lights up, show time! Dancers take your partners
Strictly's dream teams will get the contest started.
Waltzes, tangos, rhumbas, jives and sambas
Whirl round the great glitter ball.

Lyrics by
Neil Bennison

Music by
Steve Pickett

Best in the show is this dance tornado
Its style, big smile, was made in Carolina
In the jazz age, there was nothing finer
Here's how this humdinger goes...

CHORUS:

Charleston, Charleston,
Crazy as a cartoon
Fast feet, hot fun
Let's dance!

Step out, step in, keep those jazz hands waving
Clown hops, knee drops, and just keep up that big grin.
High kicks, back flicks, Charleston has the best tricks
To top the grand leader board.

Spun heels, cart wheels, get the audience cheering
Dance hard, leap large, and don't forget to breathe in,
Stay sharp, work hard, and you'll get Craig beaming
"Fabulous Darling that's ten!"

CHORUS

Sparkling, Charleston, Strictly's brightest highlight
Judges all rush to get their highest score out.
They have no doubt, if you get the style right
You'll lift the trophy and smile.

CHORUS X 2

© Steve Pickett -
Neil Bennison - 2018

Igor Stravinsky 1882-1971

Berceuse and Finale from *The Firebird*

The Russian composer, Igor Stravinsky, was asked to write music for a Ballet based on an old Russian fairytale called *The Firebird*. The story follows a prince, called Ivan, who falls in love with a beautiful princess in an enchanted kingdom. The kingdom is ruled by an evil ogre called *Kostchei* (kosh-ay) *the Immortal*, and he tries to get rid of this handsome Prince by releasing all his evil minions to chase Ivan away.

Prince Ivan learns that *Kostchei* the Immortal keeps his soul in an egg that is hidden in a tree stump. Ivan waits for everyone to fall asleep (Berceuse means *lullaby*, so this is music to send the baddies to sleep!) before tiptoeing into the forest to find the egg. When he does, he destroys it and *Kostchei*'s evil spell is lifted. Life returns to the enchanted kingdom, Ivan marries the beautiful princess with whom he had fallen in love, and the Firebird is free. The bird soars into the sky and the orchestra erupts into glorious technicolour as everyone lives happily ever after.

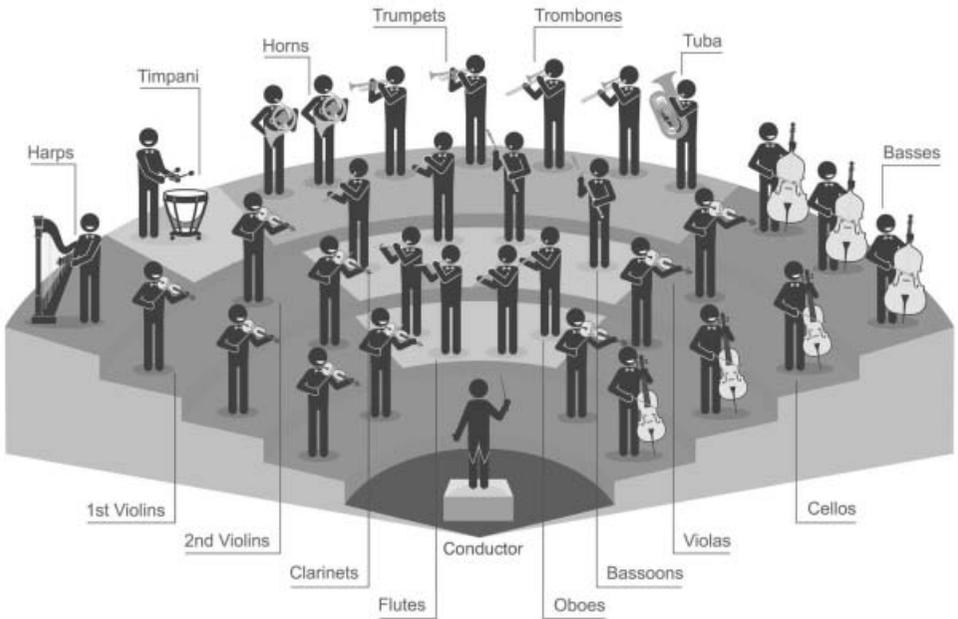
STRAVINSKY

Did you know...?

Stravinsky composed some of his most famous works in a chicken coop. He hated the idea that people might hear him composing at the piano so he had one hidden away in a shed full of wood and hens. He was also a huge fan of scrabble.



Sections of the Orchestra



An orchestra is made up of four 'families': Strings, Woodwind, Brass and Percussion.

The orchestra sits as it does so that the audience get the best balance of sound. The loudest instruments are at the back so they don't drown out the sound of the strings at the front.

Strings: The string section is the largest family of instruments in the orchestra. It works harder and plays more notes than any other group in the orchestra, and because of this the string section gives an orchestra its sound, or its soul.

There are two lots of Violins (firsts and seconds), Violas, Cellos and Double Basses. Violins are the highest, Double Basses are the lowest.

They all make their sound by pulling a bow across the strings to make a vibration that is amplified inside the body of the instrument.

The hair on the bow is made from a horse's tail. The strings used to be made from sheeps' intestines, but nowadays they're made from metal.

String players can also make a sound by plucking the strings with their fingers.

Harp: The harp is the fifth member of the string family, but unlike the other string players, a harpist doesn't use a bow to play. They have to pluck their 47 strings, and change the pitch by operating 7 pedals with their feet.

Woodwind: There are four instruments in the woodwind family: Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets and Bassoons. Flute players make their sound by blowing over a hole at the top of the instrument, just like blowing over the top of a bottle. The others use a piece of bamboo to make a reed that vibrates when they blow through it. The woodwind section has the highest and lowest voices in the orchestra. The piccolo (a tiny flute) is the highest, and the contra bassoon (a giant bassoon) is the lowest.

When they play, the instruments of the woodwind are like magical spirits. Their sound leaps and twists and flips through the air but they can also play incredibly delicately. They can sing the most beautiful melodies that make you want to cry.

Brass: The brass section is the powerhouse of the orchestra. Trumpets, Horns, Trombone and Tuba, they can make a sound that makes your hair stand on end and bring about the most uncontrollable smiles.

Brass players are the only musicians in an orchestra whose bodies actually generate the sound they make. Instead of pulling bows over strings or blowing through reeds, or hitting with sticks, they use their lips to make a vibration, like a raspberry.

Percussion: The percussion section is the special effects department of the orchestra. They sit right at the back so their sound doesn't overpower everything else and they play anything that they can hit. From instruments that you might have at school like glockenspiels and xylophones, triangles and tambourines to church bells, wind machines and even bits of old car.

Lesson Plans for Teachers

By Tom Redmond

Tone Poem

AIM

To compose a tone poem using musical ideas created by the whole class or smaller groups.

INTRODUCTION

Mussorgsky's *A Night on the Bare Mountain* is a tone poem, music composed to illustrate a story, a picture or a mood. Mussorgsky took as his inspiration the Witches' Sabbath that takes place on St John's Eve. It describes witches and warlocks dancing on a mountain all through the night until the sun comes up when they all suddenly vanish! Listen to the piece as a whole class using any of the recordings available on YouTube. Ask the class how they felt when they heard it. What did they imagine to be happening?

ACTIVITIES

Using the same story that Mussorgsky does, use the musical techniques below to create your own class tone poem.

CREATE A MOTIF

A motif is like a musical signature, a short melody that represents a character (like the two notes you hear for Jaws!). Using the notes C D E F G Ab, create a motif to describe a witch. The notes can be in any order or rhythm that the pupils choose, but they must be able to repeat the motif.

Now experiment with different pitches. If they play the motif higher and faster, does it sound like a witch flying? If they play it low and slow, what image does that conjure?

You can also experiment with different instruments. The motif played loudly on a trumpet will create a different atmosphere to it being heard on the mellower sounding clarinet. This is called orchestration, which we illustrated in the Musical Adventures concert.

Next you can experiment with different soundscapes. Can you have groups create sounds for wind, rain, rivers, sun, church bells..? Anything you might see in your imagined landscape/story.

Now play your motif over some of these background soundscapes.

Select a child who can conduct the piece, pointing to the different soundscapes that they want to hear, and the musicians who are playing the motif to decide how it will all fit

together. They can control the dynamics (volume) by giving big gestures for loud, or small gestures for quiet. They can control the tempo (speed) by slow or fast gestures.

Choose your ending. Will it finish loudly or will it fade away to nothing? Let the class decide.

CONCLUSION

Arrange to perform the piece in a school assembly or to another class. Ask the audience what they thought of when they heard your new composition.

CHALLENGE

Make up a brand new story and use the same techniques to create a new tone poem.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Understanding the use of motif to describe a character or event
- Understanding the use of dynamics
- Understanding the use of tempo
- Understanding orchestration
- Understanding tone poems as a dramatic form of musical storytelling

RESOURCES

- Instruments
- Performance space
- Laptop and speakers to listen to Mussorgsky's *A Night on the Bare Mountain*

Notes by Tom Redmond ©

Musical Celebrations

AIM

Pupils will create a piece of music for a celebration, inspired by the finale from Stravinsky's ballet, The Firebird.

INTRODUCTION

Ballet is a way of telling a story using dance and music. *The Firebird* by Igor Stravinsky is a fairytale story of good and evil that takes place in an enchanted kingdom.

Prince Ivan has fallen in love with Princess Tsarevna (*tsa-rey-vna*), but before they can marry they have to get rid of an evil ogre called Kostchei (*kosh-ay*) who rules the kingdom. A magical phoenix-like creature called The Firebird helps Ivan to rid the kingdom of Kostchei, and in the end, everyone lives happily ever after!

With your class, listen to the finale from *The Firebird* - there are many versions available on YouTube.

The music you just heard is all about celebration. Ask the class how they felt when they heard it. There are no wrong answers. Stravinsky cleverly uses repetition of the same musical theme to make the listener excited. It starts quietly and gets louder and louder until the whole orchestra is playing, this is called a *crescendo* (*cre-shen-doe*).

Listen again *really* carefully and get the class to count how many times the main tune is repeated.

ACTIVITIES

Ask the class to think of happy occasions that they could write a piece of music for. It could be a wedding, birthday, prize winning or end of term!

Using any instruments available, split the class into smaller groups and encourage them to compose a short melody that they can repeat back. It doesn't need to be complicated, Stravinsky only uses 5 notes in the melody you've just been listening to! They could just use the notes C D E F G, in any order they choose.

Once each group can repeat its melody, get them to experiment with speed and dynamics (volume). Does the melody sound as majestic when it's played fast? Can the crescendo (get louder) like Stravinsky does? How many times do they want to repeat it in their sequence? It doesn't have to be as long as Stravinsky's piece.¹

CONCLUSION

When each group has settled on these ideas, arrange a class performance – just to each other or in an assembly. Can the audience guess what the occasion is?

CHALLENGE

When each group is really secure with their own composition, can they teach it to the others in the class?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Understanding the use of repetition to create musical effect
- Understanding the use of dynamics
- Understanding ballet and music as dramatic art forms.

RESOURCES

- Computer and speakers to listen to the finale from Stravinsky's *The Firebird*
- Tuned Instruments. e.g. keyboards, xylophones, orchestral instruments.
- A large space for performance.

Notes by Tom Redmond ©

RTE National Symphony Orchestra

STRINGS

1st Violin

Elaine Clark, *Co-Leader*
Sebastian Liebig †
Orla Ní Bhraoin °
Catherine McCarthy
Ting Zhong Deng
Audrey McAllister
David Clark
Sylvia Roberts
Brona Fitzgerald
Dara Daly
Claudie Driesen
Karl Sweeney
Anita Vedres
Emily Thyne

2nd Violin

David MacKenzie ·
Elizabeth McLaren †
Paul O'Hanlon
Mary Wheatley
Rosalind Brown
Paul Fanning
Dara O'Connell
Melanie Cull
Evelyn McGrory
Elena Quinn
Jenny Burns Duffy
Magda Kowalska

Viola

Adele Johnson ·
Francis Harte °
Ruth Bebb
Neil Martin
Randal Devine
Áine O'Neill
Adele Greene
Cliona O'Riordan
Richard Hadwen

Cello

Martin Johnson ·
Polly Ballard †
Violetta-Valerie Muth °
Niall O'Loughlin
Úna Ní Chanainn
Katie Tertell
Delia Lynch

Double Bass

Dominic Dudley ·
Mark Jenkins †
Waldemar Kozak
Helen Morgan
Jenni Meade
Edward Tapceanu

WOODWIND

Flute

Catriona Ryan ·
Ann Macken

Piccolo

Sinéad Farrell †

Oboe

Matthew Manning ·
Sylvain Gnemmi †

Cor Anglais

Deborah Clifford †

Clarinet

John Finucane ·
Matthew Billing †

Bass Clarinet

Fintan Sutton †

Bassoon

Alex Callanan
John Hearne

Contra Bassoon

Hilary Sheil †

BRASS

Horn

Liam Duffy
Peter Ryan
Mark Bennett
David Atcheler
Jacqueline McCarthy

Trumpet

Graham Hastings ·
Killyan Bannister
Colm Byrne †
Viv Johnston

Trombone

Jason Sinclair ·
Gavin Roche †

Bass Trombone

Seán Fleming †

Tuba

Francis Magee ·

PERCUSSION

Timpani

Jonathan Herbert †

Percussion

Richard O'Donnell ·
Bernard Reilly
Lloyd Byrne
Malcolm Neale
Tadhg Kinsella

· Section Leader * Section Principal † Principal
‡ Associate Principal ° String Sub Principal

Harp

Andreja Malif ·

Keyboard

Fergal Caulfield

RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra

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Orchestral Assistant: Andy Dunne

For full contact information see rte.ie/nso

RTÉ Orchestras, Quartet and Choirs

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Head of RTÉ's Orchestras, lyric fm, Quartet & Choirs: Aodán Ó Dubhghaill

Love your Orchestras