

AMPLIFY

VOLUME 2: LESSONS 5 - 8
2015 - 2016

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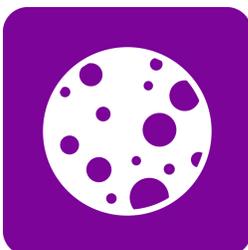


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Who is this for?

The Amplify curriculum is intended for use with upper elementary students (grades 3-5) but could be adapted for younger or older students. The curriculum can be taught in a general music education classroom, a specialized music class (e.g. band, orchestra), or an extracurricular setting. No prior experience in music is required on behalf of the participants.

Who makes Amplify?

Amplify is a program of the [Shreveport Symphony Orchestra](#), which is offered free of charge thanks to generous underwriting by the [Community Foundation of North Louisiana](#), the [Caddo Parish School Board](#), and [Chase Bank](#).

What's included in this guide?

At the heart of the Amplify curriculum are eight featured musical works that represent a wide range of centuries, countries, and styles. This guide includes the second set of four lessons, which guide students through active listening exercises as they familiarize themselves with each piece. You can access the [first set of lessons here](#). In the spring, a competition guide will help students make connections among the various pieces and help them prepare for the district-wide competition, in which they will listen to excerpts of the selected pieces and identify the title and composer.

What's included in each lesson?

- **Behind the Music:** The lesson introduction contains helpful information about the piece within its historical context.
- **Active Listening (10 - 15 minutes):** Students are introduced to the piece and participate in exercises that help them sharpen their listening skills.
- **Go Deeper:** Each lesson contains 2 - 4 suggestions of activities that will help students apply their new knowledge through performing, composing, or further listening. You can choose which activity or activities are right for your classroom!

Be on the lookout for boxes like these, which will provide links between the curriculum content and the current SSO season!

The appendices contain posters, sheet music, and video links that may be helpful in your lesson. They are included as separate downloads on the [Amplify website](#).

What's up with all the pictures?

One of the unique features of the Amplify curriculum is that it connects each work of music with a picture. This visual link will serve as a mnemonic to help students remember the title and composer. The icons are color-coded by musical period:

- Orange: Early or Renaissance (*not included in the 2015 - 16 selections*)
- Blue: Baroque
- Green: Classical
- Red: Romantic
- Purple: 20th Century or Modern

We encourage you to download, print, and [display the posters](#) prominently in your classroom all year long. When discussing or playing a particular piece, be sure to bring the corresponding poster to the front of the room so that students can see it.

What can I find online?

Please check out the Shreveport Symphony website (www.shreveportsymphony.com) and click on [Education/Amplify](#). There you will find resources for teachers and students alike, including the following:

- Digital Downloads (this guide and supplemental materials such as [posters](#), sheet music, and [the pretest/posttest](#))
- [Embedded videos](#) that you will need for each lesson

What other materials will I need to teach this curriculum?

- You will need a computer with Internet access and speakers so that you can play the video/audio files for each lesson. It is helpful but not necessary to have a projection screen available so that students can watch videos.
- Various percussion instruments (both melodic and rhythm) will be helpful for some of the “Go Deeper” activities. However, if you do not have any instruments available, we encourage you to be creative! Adapt the lessons in a way that will be most appropriate for your context.
- To administer the pre- and posttest, you will need to print out copies of the quiz for each student. Email Callie Dean at cdean@shreveportsymphony.com to receive the listening excerpts and answer key. We would love to hear about your results!

How can I help students prepare for the competition? Each school in Caddo and Bossier Parish (including both public and private schools) is eligible to send up to 12 students (three team members and one alternate from grades 3 - 5) to the district-wide Amplify competition that will be held during the Artbreak festival in April 2016. More information about how to register for the competition will be available in December 2015. In the meantime, we hope that you will talk about the competition to help your students to get excited! In your classroom (and around the school), we encourage you to play these eight songs as often as possible, even as background music. Reinforce the lesson content by showing the corresponding poster, telling the students the title and composer of the work they’re hearing, and quizzing students to see what they remember. We encourage you to make connections between your regular curriculum and the Amplify songs. You can also direct students to the Shreveport Symphony website, where they can listen to the songs on their own.

What if I have questions? Email Callie Dean, Education and Community Engagement Manager, at cdean@shreveportsymphony.com or 318-222-7496, with any questions or suggestions. If you are using this curriculum for the 2015-16 year, we would love to get your feedback about how it is working for you!



NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN

By Modest Mussorgsky (Russia)
Romantic (1867)

LESSON INTRODUCTION

Important Terms and Concepts

- * **Tone Poem (aka symphonic poem):** a large-scale orchestral work, usually in one movement, that illustrates the content of a poem, story, or other non-musical work
- * **Timbre (aka tone color):** the sound quality of a musical tone that is different from pitch or dynamics. Timbre is what makes

BEHIND THE MUSIC



Modest Mussorgsky (1839 - 1881) was a Russian Romantic composer who is known for nationalistic works that depicted the culture and soul of his home country. He began taking piano lessons at age six, and continued to develop his musical talent even while he trained for military service at the Cadet School and later served with the Russian Imperial Guard. He belonged to a group of Russian composers known as "The Five," a group which also included Alexander Borodin and Nicolas Rimsky-Korsakov. Like the others in the Five, Mussorgsky was often inspired by Russian culture and history; his most famous

You can hear the SSO play *Night on Bare Mountain* at the Discovery Concert on January 21 – 22, 2016. [Register your class for this free concert today!!](#)

works – *Night on Bald Mountain*, *Boris Godunov*, and *Pictures at an Exhibition* – were inspired by Russian art, folklore, and literature.

Night on Bald Mountain (sometimes translated as *Night on Bare Mountain*) is an orchestral tone poem, based on a short story by Gogol, which depicts a witches' Sabbath at Mt. Triglaf, near Kiev, on St. John's Eve (June 23). Mussorgsky first completed the work in 1860 at the age of 21, but he continued to rework and arrange the piece in various formats throughout his life. After his death, his friend Rimsky-Korsakov revised the work and premiered it in 1886. Mussorgsky himself described the piece as follows:

"Subterranean sounds of supernatural voices. Appearances of the spirits of darkness, followed by that of Satan himself. Glorification of Satan and celebration of the Black Mass. The Sabbath Revels. At the height of the orgies, the bell of the village church sounding in the distance disperses the spirits of darkness. Daybreak." (qtd. in Phil Goulding's *Classical Music*, 1992, p. 460).

ACTIVE LISTENING

1. Using the Youtube recording embedded on the Shreveport Symphony website, play the first minute of music for students (0:00 – 1:00).
[http://shreveportsymphony.com/education/amplify-videos/#Night on Bald Mountain](http://shreveportsymphony.com/education/amplify-videos/#Night%20on%20Bald%20Mountain)
2. Ask students:
 1. **What did you notice about this song?**
 2. **How would you describe this song? How did it make you feel?**
3. Display the "Night on Bald Mountain" poster and say: **"This song was written by a Russian composer named Modest Mussorgsky. It is a tone poem, which means that the music was written to tell a specific story. The title of this piece is *Night on Bald Mountain*. Can anyone guess what might be happening on the bald mountain in the story that Mussorgsky was trying to tell?"**
4. Listen for students' answers. If desired, share the following information: **The Night on Bald Mountain illustrates a witches' Sabbath. According to a Russian legend, every June 23, witches and other evil spirits would visit the mountain and stay out all night long.**

On Halloween (October 31), the SSO will collaborate with Cirque de la Symphonie for an unforgettable concert, featuring a variety of spooky songs, including *Night on Bare Mountain*, music from *Harry Potter* (John Williams), *Danse Macabre* (Camille Saint-Saens), and more!

***Please note: If you think the content of the story is too scary for your students, or if your school does not celebrate Halloween, etc., you can choose

to omit this information. Instead, you can run with students' imaginations and create a story together based on the stories they suggested in Step 3. For Step 5, play the selected excerpts, but allow students to assign meaning and motions based upon their own story rather than using Mussorgsky's program notes.

5. Say, "When composers write music for a tone poem, they can use different instruments to represent different parts of their story. All of the orchestral instruments sound a little bit different. We call this sound quality their tone color, or timbre. That means that even if two instruments are playing the same note at the same volume, they still will sound different because they have different timbres. If you have instruments available, demonstrate by playing the same note on two different instruments. Ask the students to guess what
6. Play the following excerpts for students, and share with them what the selected excerpt was intended to illustrate. Have the students come up with a motion to illustrate each excerpt (e.g. students might mime screaming for Excerpt 1).
 1. Excerpt 1 (0:05 – 0:22): supernatural shrieks
 2. Excerpt 2 (0:22 – 0:39): the arrival of the spirits of darkness (bassoons, trombones, tubas)
 3. Excerpt 3 (1:33 – 1:43) and Excerpt 4 (3:00 – 3:26): the witches and evil spirits dance (introduced by woodwinds and picked up by strings)
 4. Excerpt 5 (8:24 – 9:02): The village church bells sound, sending the evil spirits away (bells, strings and harp)
 5. Excerpt 6 (10:34 – 11:04): The sun rises, a new day begins. (clarinet)
7. Have students practice doing all of the motions they have described, in sequence, essentially illustrating the entire story in movements. An alternative may be to assign each movement to a different group of students.
8. Listen to the entire piece with the class, leading them in their selected movements when each of the motifs is heard.

GO DEEPER

OPTION 1. MUSICAL CONNECTIONS

*During this activity, students will listen to other symphonic tone poems. Choose one or more of the following pieces to listen to with the students. Teach students about the composers and historical periods that inspired these works. Invite students to identify the stories and images that they hear within the music, and compare these works with *Night on Bald Mountain*.*

1. Richard Strauss' (1864 – 1949) *Don Juan* is based on the Spanish legend of Don Juan and was specifically written to illustrate the content

of a play *Don Juans Ende*. Listen to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CcBGsjPky0c>

2. Alexander Borodin's (1833 – 1887) *In the Steppes of Central Asia* is a peaceful tone poem that illustrates a meeting of Russians and Asians in the Caucasus, interweaving melodies that represent each of the two groups. Listen to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=juisZsDQZBo>

3. Antonin Dvorak's (1841 – 1904) *The Noon Witch* is based on the Slavic mythological demon "Lady Middy" and was specifically written to illustrate the content of the poem *Polednice* by Czech poet Karel Jaromir Erben. Similar to *Night on Bald Mountain*, different instruments are used to represent different characters, and 12 bell chimes signify the coming of noon. Listen to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Db72nldUdZY>

OPTION 2. CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

*During this ELA activity, students will write their own poems based on Mussorgsky's musical tone poem. Remind students of the tone poem genre, and have them listen to the piece again with the instructions to write their own poem about *The Night on Bald Mountain*. You may also want to have them draw pictures of the *Night on Bald Mountain*.*

If you choose this option, we would love to read the poems that your students create! Please send your students' completed artwork or poems, based on any of the Amplify songs, to cdean@shreveportsymphony.com! We would love to display their works!!

OPTION 3. EXPERIMENT WITH TIMBRE

During this activity, students will describe the sounds that different musical instruments make and create their own tone poem based on the different instrumental sounds. You will want to have many different melodic instruments available, preferably from different families (woodwinds, brass, strings, percussion). An alternative would be to play video or audio recordings of solo instrumentalists.

1. Have students close their eyes while you play a brief melody on one of the instruments. Ask them to open their eyes and guess which instrument you were playing. Ask:
 1. How did you know which instrument was being played?
 2. What words would you use to describe the sound of the instrument? (some suggestions might include *bright, dark, harsh, mellow, flat, resonant, warm, eerie, choppy, rounded, gentle, lush, brassy, reedy, clear, flat, breathy, strident, piercing, having much/little/no vibrato*)
2. Ask students to compare and contrast the timbres of the different instrumental families. How do woodwind instruments sound different from brass instruments? How do stringed instruments sound different from percussion instruments, etc.?

3. Choose two instruments that students are able to play (e.g. a xylophone and a recorder). Divide the class in half, so that each half is playing one of the two instruments. Invite the class to create a character to go along with each instrument, based on that instrument's unique sound. Then, lead them in imagining a conversation or interaction that those two characters might have. Invite individual students to represent the characters and create a musical interpretation of that interaction. Repeat as desired.
4. Once you have finished, praise students' compositional abilities as you affirm them for having completed their first class tone poem!



ASE'S DEATH

(from the Peer Gynt Suite No. 1, Op. 46)

By Edvard Grieg (Norway)

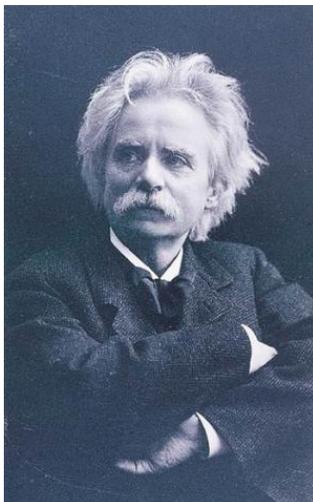
Romantic (1888)

LESSON INTRODUCTION:

Important Terms and Concepts

- **Key:** the tonal mode of music
 - **Major:** one of two tonal modes of music that typically sounds bright and happy
 - **Minor:** one of two tonal modes of music that typically sounds dark and sad
- **Dynamics:** describes how loud or soft a piece of music is
 - **Pianissimo (pp):** very soft
 - **Piano (p):** soft
 - **Forte (f):** loud
 - **Fortissimo (ff):** very loud
- **Tempo:** the speed of music
 - **Andante:** at a walking pace

BEHIND THE MUSIC



Edvard Grieg (1843 - 1907) is a Romantic composer regarded as a national hero in his home country of Norway. He began playing the piano at age six and eventually was sent to continue his studies at the Leipzig Conservatory in Germany (which had been founded by Amplify composer Felix Mendelssohn over a decade earlier). His compositions, which include orchestral works, chamber music, instrumental pieces, and vocal songs, incorporate folk music techniques and tunes to create a distinctly Norwegian sound.

The January 23, 2016, SSO concert will feature another work by Grieg: his Piano Concerto in A minor, featuring soloist Tomer Gewirtzman!

Grieg's best known work is a series of 22 pieces of incidental music that he composed to go along with Henrik Ibsen's 1876 play *Peer Gynt*. He later extracted eight of these songs into two orchestral suites, the first of which contains "Ase's Death" (sometimes transliterated as "Aase's Death") as well as "Morning Mood," "Anitra's Dance," and "In the Hall of the Mountain King." "Ase's Death," which accompanies the death of protagonist Peer Gynt's mother, Ase, takes the form of a slow, mournful funeral march for strings. As it progress, it rises and then falls, both in dynamics and register.

ACTIVE LISTENING

1. Using the Youtube recording embedded on the Shreveport Symphony website, play the first minute of music for students (0:00 – 1:00).
[http://shreveportsymphony.com/education/amplify-videos/#Ase's Death](http://shreveportsymphony.com/education/amplify-videos/#Ase's%20Death)
2. Ask students:
 1. **What instruments did you hear?** (strings: violins, violas, cellos, basses)
 2. **How would you describe the mood of this song?**
 3. **How did the composer, Edvard Grieg, create this mood?**
3. Display the "Ase's Death" poster, and say to students: **"This song is called Ase's Death. It comes from a larger work of music called the Peer Gynt Suite, and Ase was the mother of a character named Peer Gynt. This song illustrates a funeral march for his mother. Grieg used three different techniques to create a mournful mood in this piece: key, tempo, and dynamics."**
4. **"Our first clue comes from the key. In music, the key describes the way the tones are used. There are two types of keys: major keys and minor keys."** Play a minor chord and a major chord for students, and ask them to identify the mood that might be created by different keys. Point out that major keys typically sound bright and happy, while minor keys typically sound dark and sad. Ask students to guess which key "Ase's Death" is in (B minor).
5. **"Our second clue about the mood of the piece comes from its tempo. The tempo refers to how slow or fast a piece of music is. How would you describe the tempo of 'Ase's Death?'"**
6. **In the music, the composer, Edvard Grieg, described Ase's Death as *Andante doloroso*. *Andante* is a tempo marking that means "at a walking pace," and *doloroso* means sorrowfully. The tempo stays *Andante doloroso* throughout the whole song, but the dynamics -**

how loud or soft the piece is – do change. **Dynamics** are our final clue about the mood of the piece. Let's listen again, and while we march sadly along with the beat, pay attention to how the **dynamics** change.

7. Listen to the entire song again, leading students in marching slowly along with the beat. Use your body express the dynamic changes within the song, using big motions for loud parts and small motions for soft parts. The dynamic progression of the piece is as follows: piano, pianissimo, mezzo forte, piano, forte, fortissimo, piano.
8. After the song is over, ask students, "**What dynamics did you hear?**" Lead them in mapping out the dynamic progression of the piece on the board, explaining the terms piano, pianissimo, forte, and fortissimo as you go.
9. Ask, "**Did the piano sections of music feel different than the forte sections to you? Why or why not?**"
10. Ask students to sum up the three elements of music – key, tempo, and dynamics – that Grieg uses to create a particular mood in Ase's Death.

GO DEEPER

OPTION 1. THE STORY OF PEER GYNT

During this activity, students will hear the story of Peer Gynt and discover how music can be used to illustrate a story. We recommend reading the children's book "[In the Hall of the Mountain King](#)" by Allison Flannery to introduce children to the story. You may also choose to listen to the [Classics for Kids recording](#) that tells the story of Peer Gynt.

1. Read or listen to the story of Peer Gynt, using one of the story options above.
2. Afterward, play students excerpts from "In the Hall of the Mountain King," (video is embedded on the SSO website: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAiEPUu0iO4>) and ask them what part of the story this movement illustrates.
3. Ask students:
 1. How is "In the Hall of the Mountain King" different from "Ase's Death"?
 2. Can you think of any other examples of music that is used to illustrate a story? (Students may recall that symphonic tone poems, such as *Night on Bald Mountain*, may illustrate the content of a story. However, you may also want to point out that movie scores serve a similar function today as the *Peer Gynt* incidental music did for the play during Grieg's lifetime. If desired, you may want to play excerpts from the Star Wars or Harry Potter soundtrack as a comparison)

OPTION 2. PERFORM

During this activity, students will learn to perform the melody of *Ase's Death*. You will need to print out the sheet music (available on the SSO website) for students to read. If melodic instruments are available (e.g. recorders, xylophones, etc.), students can play the melody using the instruments. If not, you can teach students to sing using repeated syllables (lalala), Sol-Fege, or even made-up lyrics.

OPTION 3. MUSICAL CONNECTIONS:

During this activity, students will listen to examples of funeral marches, which, like *Ase's Death*, typically are in a minor key and slow duple meter. Choose one or more of the following pieces to listen to with the students. Teach students about the composers and historical periods that inspired these works.

1. The third movement of Gustav Mahler's (1860 – 1911) 1st "Titan" Symphony is subtitled "Funeral March in the Manner of Callot" and features a variation of the children's song "Frere Jacques" in a minor key. Listen to it here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5A5tFyXQio>
2. Charles Gonoud's (1818 – 1893) "Funeral March of a Marionette" was made famous as the theme music for the TV show *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*. The opens with a brief introduction before moving into the familiar funeral march. Listen to it here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zH7nXgzKpM0>
3. Frederic Chopin's (1810 – 1849) "Piano Sonata No. 2 in Bb minor, Op. 35," is often nicknamed "The Funeral March" because of its third movement of the same name. Listen to it here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZY5DBmgC_A&list=RDhZY5DBmgC_A#t=9

You can hear the SSO play the 3rd movement of Mahler's Symphony No. 1 at the Discovery Concert on January 21 – 22, 2016. [Register your class for this free concert today!!](#)



THE ENTERTAINER

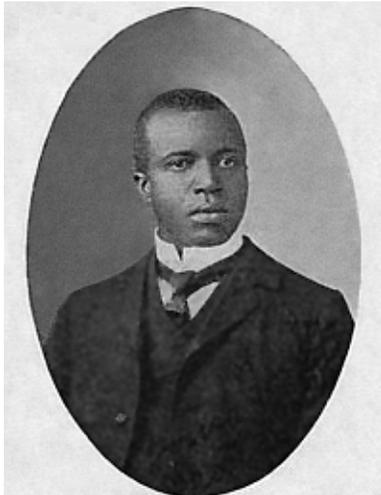
By Scott Joplin (USA)
20th Century (1902)

LESSON INTRODUCTION:

Important Terms and Concepts

- * **Syncopation:** when an accent occurs on a beat or part of a beat that is normally unaccented
- * **Rag:** a type of music with a syncopated melodic line, often played on the piano, that was popular in the 1890s

BEHIND THE MUSIC



Scott Joplin (1868 – 1917) was an African American composer, originally from the Ark-La-Tex, who gained national renown as the “King of Ragtime.” Joplin was born near Linden, Texas, and spent much of his childhood in Texarkana, where he took free music lessons from Julius Weiss. He played cornet, mandolin, guitar, violin, and piano; and made his living as a teacher and traveling musician. His performance at the 1893 World’s Fair, as well as his publication of hits like the “Maple Leaf Rag,” were influential in bringing ragtime music into the national spotlight. He moved to St. Louis, Missouri, and eventually settled in New York City, where he composed not only songs but also a

ragtime ballet and two operas.

“The Entertainer: A Rag Time Two Step” typifies the “classic rag” format in its meter (2/4), structure and key (introduction, AAA BB A CC DD). The bass clef (left hand part) contains a walking bass line, whereas the treble clef (right hand part) carries the syncopated (or “ragged”) melody. The genre of ragtime was supplanted by jazz in

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the 1920s, and many of the ragtime hits seemed destined to be forgotten. However, revivals in the middle of the 20th century re-popularized the old tunes, and Marvin Hamlisch's Academy-Award-winning adaptation of "The Entertainer" for the movie *The Sting* helped to ensure the tune's place as an American classic.

ACTIVE LISTENING

1. Hold up the "Entertainer" poster and say to students: "Today we are going to listen to a song called 'The Entertainer' that was written by Scott Joplin. Scott Joplin was an African American composer who grew up about 70 miles from here!"
2. Play "The Entertainer" for students:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPmruHc4S9Q>.
3. Ask students, "What did you notice about this song?"
What instrument did you hear?" (*piano*)
4. The composer, Scott Joplin, was a piano player who played a style of music called ragtime. His songs, like the Entertainer, are called rags. Rags are characterized by syncopated melodies. Does anybody know what syncopation means?
Syncopation happens when an accent occurs on a beat or part of a beat that is not normally accented.
5. Have students clap a 4/4 beat, with accents on beats 1 and 3. Demonstrate syncopation by clapping or playing the opening rhythm of "The Entertainer" on top of their beat.
6. Play a syncopation game! Invite students to keep clapping the 4/4 beat, but have them stand whenever they hear a syncopated melody. Alternate playing straight quarter notes and the syncopated "Entertainer" rhythm. Repeat until students seem to understand the concept.
7. Now say, "A piano player uses both his/her left and right hands to play. One of the characteristics of a rag is that the left hand (which plays the lower bass notes), is playing a totally different rhythm than the right hand (which plays the higher, treble notes). As we listen to "The Entertainer" again, let's see if we can figure out the different rhythms of the bass and the treble clef."
8. Play the first two minutes of "The Entertainer" for students, then ask, "What rhythms did you hear?"
9. If students do not point it out themselves, note that the left hand (bass) contains straight 8th notes. Listen to the first minute again, and have students clap along with the bass 8th-note rhythm.
10. Then, ask about the right hand (treble/melody) line. If students do not notice, point out that the melody is syncopated. Listen to the first minute again, and depending on students' abilities, invite them to clap the rhythm along with the melody.

11. One of the important characteristics of rags like the Entertainer is the contrast between the steady bass line and the syncopated, or 'ragged,' melody. Ragtime music was often played in social places, where people liked to dance, and the Entertainer is a fun, fast tune that people have always enjoyed dancing to!

GO DEEPER

OPTION 1. COMPARE AND CONTRAST

During this activity, students will listen to both a rag and a jazz tune and learn about the similarities and differences between the two genres.

1. Say "Ragtime was a genre of music that originated in the late 19th/early 20th century. It is often considered a precursor to jazz music, which originated in the early 20th century. Let's listen to a rag and an early jazz song together. Pay attention to how these two styles of music are both similar and different."
- Through SSO On the Go, you can invite symphony musicians to perform for your students in an interactive concert. If you'd like to invite a jazz ensemble (or brass, string, or woodwind ensemble) into your school, be sure and [complete a registration form!](#)
2. Play the following songs for students ([both available on the SSO website](#)):
 1. The Maple Leaf Rag by Scott Joplin
 2. "West End Blues" by Louis Armstrong
 3. Ask students to compare and contrast the two songs. Chart their answers on a Venn Diagram. Some suggested answers are below
 - Similarities: originated in African American tradition, use of syncopated rhythms, some of the same melodies were used
 - Ragtime: solo piano, structured repetition with written-out sheet music, less formal and complex
 - Jazz: ensemble, improvisation on a tune or chord progression, more formal and complex

OPTION 2. PERFORM

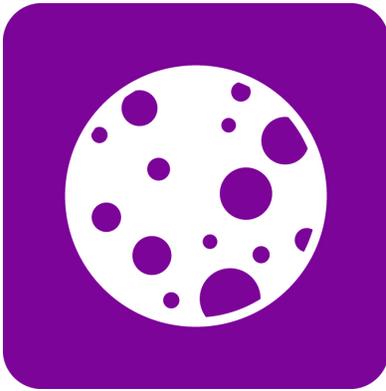
During this activity, students will learn to play the melody of "The Entertainer." You will need to print out the sheet music (available on the SSO website) for students to read. If melodic instruments are available (e.g. recorders, xylophones, etc.), students can play the melody using the instruments. If not, you can teach students to sing using repeated syllables (lalala), Sol-Fege, or even made-up lyrics.

OPTION 3. RESEARCH QUEST

During this activity, students will trace Joplin's life journey on a map and learn about other famous musicians from the Ark-La-Tex region.

Local composers are still creating music today! In fact, you can hear the world premiere of the "Shreveport Symphony" by Kermit Poling at the January 23 SSO Concert. Members of the SSO will also premiere the "Emerson Essays" by Todd Gabriel at a free chamber music concert on February 21.

1. Invite students to put a push pin on a map of the United States, representing some of the stops in Joplin's journey:
 1. Linden, Texas: Scott Joplin's birthplace (1867/1868)
 2. Texarkana, Texas: Scott Joplin's childhood home (c. 1870 - c. 1880)
 3. Chicago, Illinois: site of the World's Fair in 1883, where Joplin introduced the country to ragtime music
 4. Sedalia, Missouri: Scott Joplin's first adult home, from which he published the "Maple Leaf Rag" (1894 - 1901)
 5. St. Louis, Missouri: Scott Joplin's adult home, from which he published "The Entertainer" (1901 - 1907)
 6. New York City, New York: Scott Joplin's final home (1907 - 1917)
2. Ask students some of the following questions:
 1. Have you ever been to any of the same places as Scott Joplin?
 2. Were you surprised to find out that Scott Joplin grew up an hour away from here? Can you think of any other musicians from this area?
3. Assign students (as individuals or as groups) the following local musicians to research. Invite them to make a poster about the musician's life and find a song to share with the class. You may also want to encourage students to research the history of, or even visit, the Municipal Auditorium, a National Historic Landmark which has hosted musicians such as Aretha Franklin, Elvis Presley, B. B. King, Johnny Cash, and James Brown.
 1. Kix Brooks, country musician
 2. James Burton, rock and roll guitarist
 3. Van Cliburn, classical pianist
 4. Jimmie Davis, country and gospel singer (and Louisiana governor)
 5. Huddie William "Leadbelly" Ledbetter, blues guitarist
 6. Kenny Wayne Sheppard, blues-rock guitarist
 7. Dorsey Summerfield, jazz saxophonist
 8. Hank Williams, Junior, singer/songwriter
 9. Jesse Winchester, songwriter
 10. Oscar "Buddy" Woods, blues guitarist



MARS, BRINGER OF WAR

(from *The Planets*, Op. 32)

By Gustav Holst (England)

20th Century (1916)

LESSON INTRODUCTION:

Important Terms and Concepts

- * **Meter:** The number and type of beats in each measure, which is indicated by a fraction-like time signature at the beginning of a piece of music
- * **Suite:** an ordered set of instrumental pieces, or movements, that contain separate ideas but are linked together by a common theme

BEHIND THE MUSIC



Gustav Holst (1874 – 1934) was born in Cheltenham, England, and began taking violin, piano, and trombone lessons as a child, though he didn't like to practice very much! He struggled with health issues – asthma, poor eyesight, and neuritis in his right arm – throughout his life, and many critics believe these afflictions influenced both his career prospects and his compositional style. He gained professional experience as a choral conductor, church organist, a theatre musician, and a teacher. His compositions are similarly diverse, comprising classic hymns like “In the Bleak Midwinter,” orchestral suites, operas, ballets, military band music, chamber music, and even a film score.

The Planets is undoubtedly Holst's most popular composition, a seven-movement suite based on astrology rather than astronomy (which explains why the movements seem out of order, as well as why Earth is omitted). Each movement is a unique personification of a planet (hence “Mars, the Bringer of War,” which evokes the idea of war through a rhythm and an irregular meter),

which Holst intended to describe the effect of the planet on the human consciousness. Holst later extracted the main melodic theme of "Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity" for use as a hymn tune, although he said his personal favorite movement of the suite was "Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age."

ACTIVE LISTENING

1. Hold up the "Mars" poster and explain to students, "Today we're going to listen to a song that was written about the planet Mars. What do you know already about the planet Mars?" List any facts that the students share, and/or add your own.
2. Say, "The planet Mars was originally named after the Roman god of war. So when the composer, Gustav Holst, began composing this song, he named it "Mars, the Bringer of War." As you listen to this song, pay attention to the way in which the instruments help to personify the planet.
3. Using the Youtube recording embedded on the Shreveport Symphony website, play "Mars, the Bringer of War:" (If you do not have time to play the entire video, you may choose to stop the recording after a few minutes)
<http://shreveportsymphony.com/education/amplify-videos/#Mars>
4. Ask, "What did you notice about this piece? How would you describe the mood of this piece? How did Gustav Holst create a warlike sound?"
5. "This piece is actually just one movement in a seven-movement suite. Each movement portrays a different planet with a different personality. Some of the most familiar-sounding songs – and most of the planet movements -- are written in $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{4}{4}$ meter. The word meter refers to how many beats there are in a measure. In $\frac{3}{4}$ meter, there are three quarter-note beats per measure; in $\frac{4}{4}$ time, there are four quarter-note beats per measure. (Show students where the time signature on a piece of music can be located. Demonstrate these two meters by clapping and counting: one two three, one two three; ... one, two, three, four, one, two, three, four!) "For the song "Mars," Gustav Holst created a chaotic effect by writing it in an unexpected meter, $\frac{5}{4}$: 5 quarter-note beats per measure."
6. Lead the students in clapping and counting the beat: one, two, three, four, five, one, two, three, four, five!"
7. Play the first minute of the song again, this time leading the students in clapping along with the beat.
8. Ask, "What instruments did you hear?"
9. Say, "At the beginning of the song, the strings play a percussive rhythm in the $\frac{5}{4}$ time by hitting the strings with the stick (or

wooden part) of their bows.” Introduce students to the following rhythm – 3 triplets, two quarter notes, two eighth notes, and a final quarter note – and lead them in clapping the string part (A [Delaware Symphony Orchestra listening guide](#) by Katie Martinenza recommends pairing the rhythm with words – such as “Bringer of war is planet Mars” – to help students remember the rhythm)

Bring - er of war is plan - et Mars!

10. Once the strings have established this rhythm, the brass instruments come in ominously with a 3-2 pattern (a dotted half-note followed by a half note). Have students practice clapping this rhythm as well (as shown in the treble clef below):

Gustav Holst
from *The Planets (Mars)*

Allegro

Beat: 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2

11. Once students are comfortable with both rhythms, try dividing the class in half and having them clap the two rhythms simultaneously.

GO DEEPER

OPTION 1. VENUS, EARTH, AND MARS

During this activity, students will compare and contrast Venus and Mars before imagining what an “Earth” movement might sound like.

1. Say “Gustav Holst described Mars as “the bringer of war. However, he described Venus as “the bringer of peace.” How do you think these two movements might sound different?

2. Play "Venus" for your class (available on [SSO website](#), under "Mars"). Ask students to compare and contrast Venus and Mars. Chart their on a table. Some suggested answers are below:
 - Venus: hopeful, calm, emphasis on strings (specifically a violin and cello solo), horn, celeste, and glockenspiel; and beautiful melodies
 - Mars: march-like rhythm, loud, 5/4 meter, scary sounding, emphasis on brass and percussion
3. Say, "Gustav Holst's suite *The Planets* includes movements about Mars, Venus, Mercury, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune...but not Earth. If you were a composer and you wanted to write a movement about the planet Earth, how would you describe Earth? What would your song sound like? What instruments would you use?"
4. If there is time, or as an extra activity, invite students to compose a melody that would represent Earth.

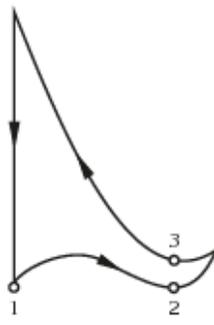
OPTION 2. CONDUCT!

During this activity, students will learn some basic conducting patterns for 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, and 5/4 time.

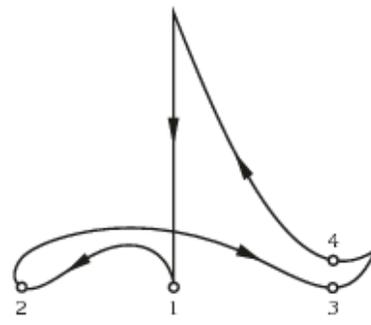
1. Demonstrate and teach students basic conducting patterns for 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4 time. (Diagrams are below)



**2
4**

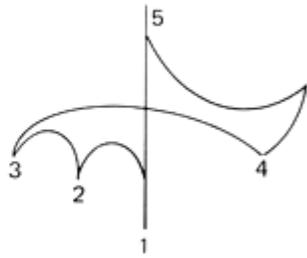


**3
4**



**4
4**

2. Point out that 5/4, the meter of "Mars," is an irregular time that is a bit more complicated, but uses elements of the other meters. If students are able, teach them the conducting pattern for 5/4.



Would you like for your students to learn more about the role of a conductor? Through Meet the Maestro, SSO conductor Michael Butterman will meet your students and give them the chance to try conducting each other! [Register here!](#)

3. If students are able, practice conducting the 5/4 pattern along with the “Mars” recording. If this is too complex, have them practice conducting the down beat only along with the beginning of each measure.

OPTION 3. RESEARCH QUEST

During this activity, students will learn about the connections between the solar system and ancient mythology.

Assign students (as individuals or as groups) one of the following planets to research. Invite them to make a travel guide advertising their planet as a vacation destination. Some topics to research might include: the origin of the planet’s name and any associated mythology; the history of the planet’s discovery; any salient features of the planet (moons, craters, atmosphere, etc.); distance from Earth; size; etc. As part of their research, invite students to listen to the corresponding musical movement by Gustav Holst and try to imagine the character of the planet as represented by the various instruments.

1. Mercury, the Winged Messenger
2. Venus, the Bringer of Peace
3. Mars, the Bringer of War
4. Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age
5. Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity
6. Neptune, the Mystic
7. Uranus, the Magician