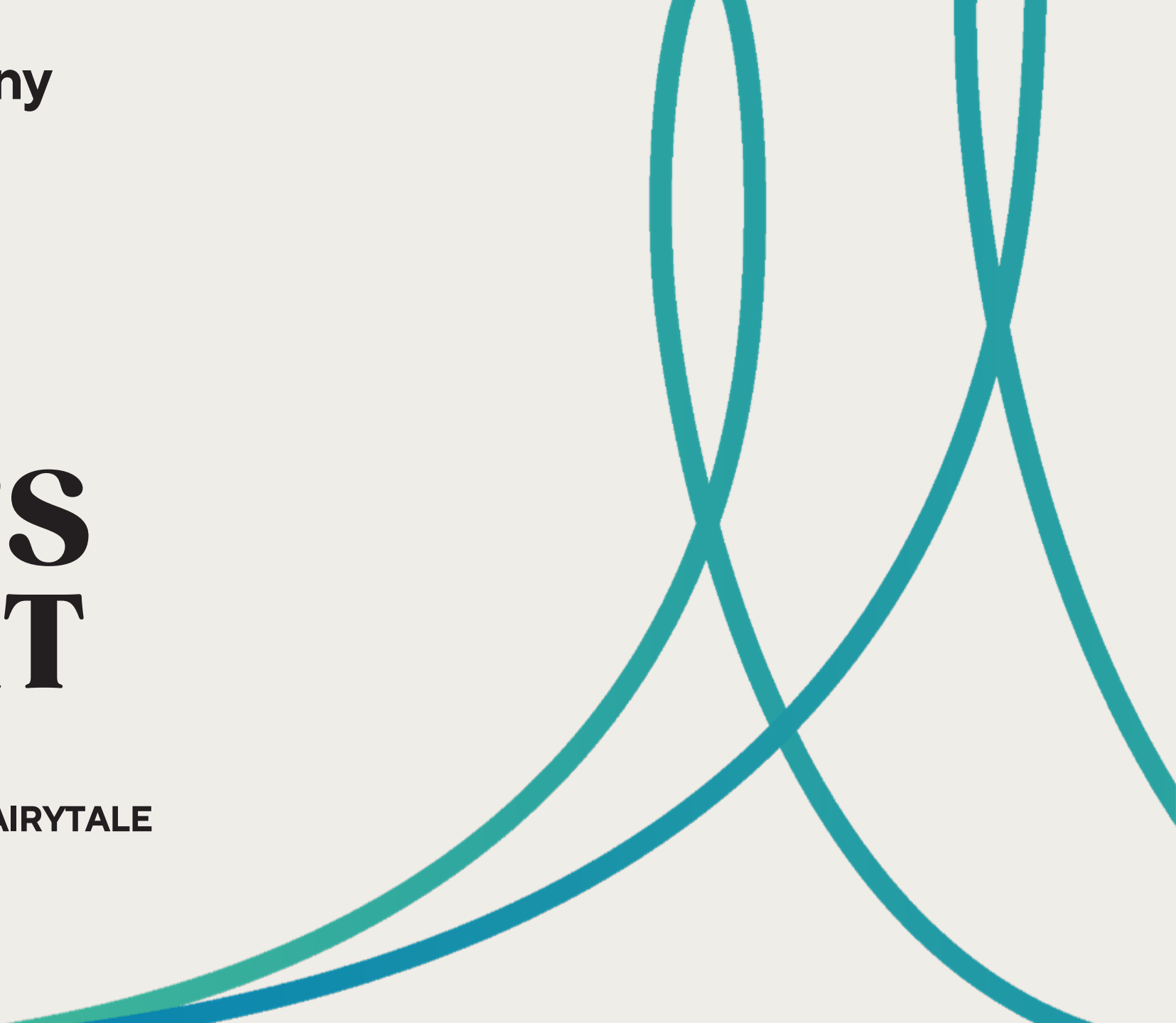


Kansas City Symphony

YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONCERT

CREATING AN ORCHESTRAL FAIRYTALE

2025/26 LEARNING GUIDE



Program

- CARLOS SIMON "The Block"
- GRIEG *Peer Gynt* Suite No. 1
I. Morning Mood
- RAVEL *Mother Goose* Suite
III. Conversations of
Beauty and the Beast

- WAGNER *Ride of the Valkyries*
- MENDELSSOHN Wedding March
from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
- RIMSKY-KORSAKOV *Scheherazade*
IV. The Festival at Bagdad

CARLOS SIMON

The Block





CARLOS SIMON

Carlos Simon is a modern American composer who mixes gospel, jazz, hip-hop, and classical sounds. His music tells powerful stories about history and culture. He is the Composer-in-Residence at the Kennedy Center and uses music to inspire and connect people.

THE BLOCK



The six-minute work for orchestra is based on the art of Romare Bearden, inspired by six paintings that represent African-American culture in one block in Harlem. The music blends classical orchestration with gospel, jazz, and hip-hop rhythms.

“The Block” Romare Bearden



“The Block” is made up of six paintings that highlight different buildings (church, barbershop, nightclub, etc.) in Harlem on one block. Learn more about this work at

<https://www.metmuseum.org>



KEY LISTENING POINTS

- Layers of **rhythm** and **syncopation**.
- Shifts between lively street energy and reflective moments.
- Blend of African American musical traditions with symphonic style.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

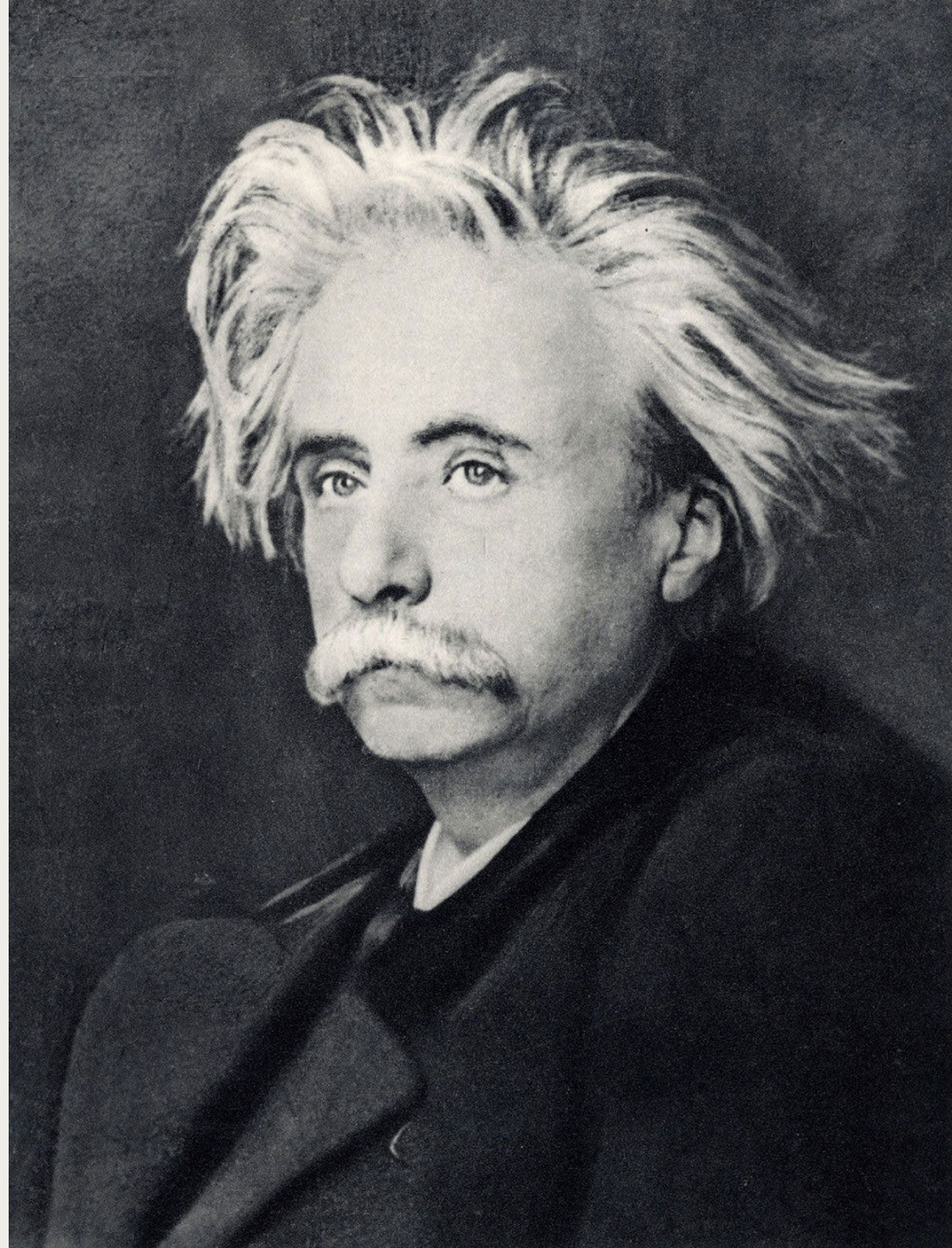
- How does the music make you imagine a neighborhood scene?
- What styles of music can you hear mixed in?
- Why do you think Simon wanted to connect painting and music?



EDVARD GRIEG

“MORNING MOOD” FROM
PEER GYNT





EDVARD GRIEG

Edvard Grieg was a Norwegian composer who loved the beauty of nature. He was born in Bergen, Norway, in 1843. As a boy, he enjoyed the outdoors—the mountains, forests, and fjords (steep inlets of the sea). These landscapes inspired him to create music that sounds fresh, bright, and full of life.

“MORNING MOOD”



“Morning Mood” was written by Edvard Grieg to accompany the action in Henrik Ibsen’s play *Peer Gynt*. The music is heard during Act 4, Scene 4, when the main character, Peer, finds himself in a grove of Acacia and Palm trees in the Sahara desert. As day breaks, Peer discovers his friends have abandoned him. A group of crazy of monkeys chase him up a tree and Peer uses a broken branch to defend himself. The music has been heard in cartoons, commercials and movies.



KEY LISTENING POINTS

- Flute melody rising like the sun.
- Gentle, flowing accompaniment.
- Dynamic swell from soft dawn to radiant morning.

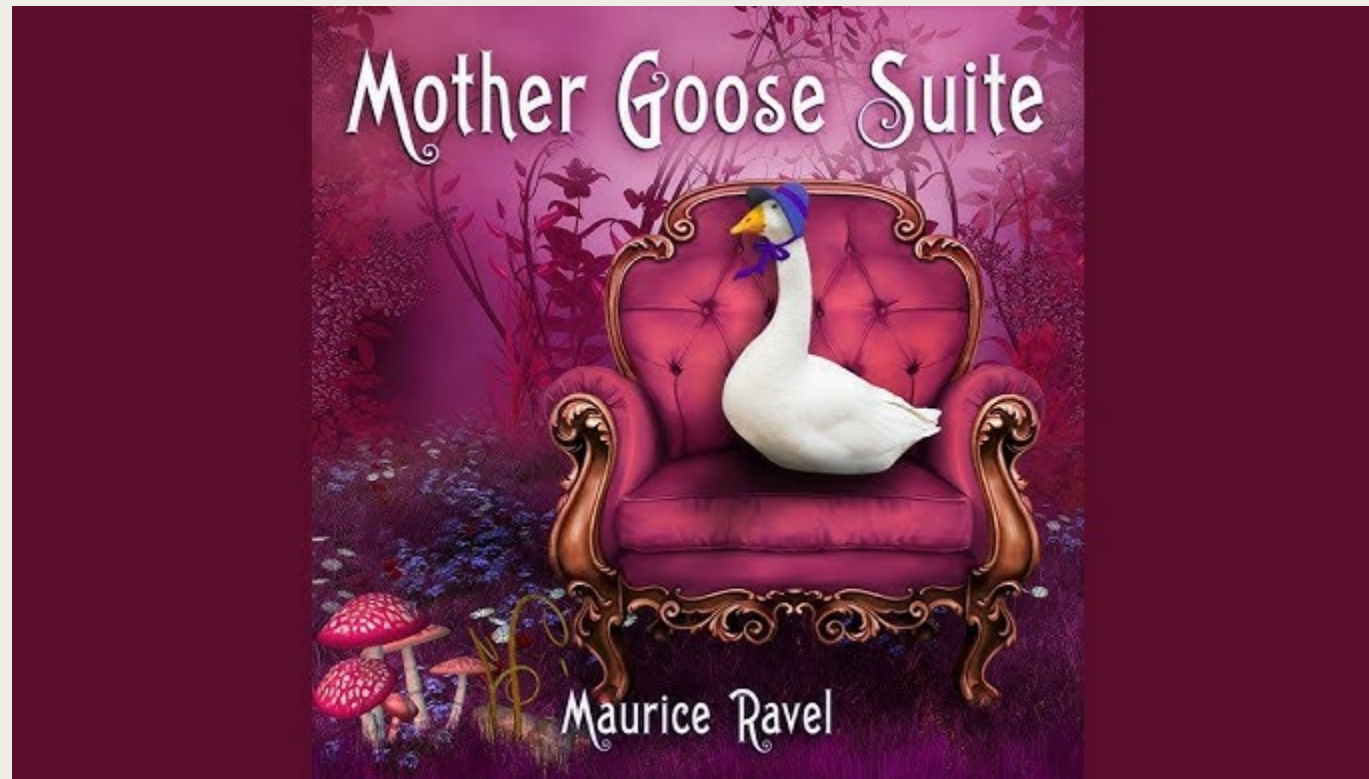
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- How does this piece paint the feeling of morning?
- Do you think the music sounds like Norway or the desert? Why?
- What instruments do you hear carrying the sunrise?



MAURICE RAVEL

Conversations of Beauty and the Beast from *Mother Goose*





MAURICE RAVEL

Maurice Ravel was born in 1875 in a small town in France, near Spain. He loved to color—not just with paint, but with sound. He became known for writing music that was detailed, delicate, and full of imagination.

MOTHER GOOSE SUITE



Mother Goose is a **suite** by French composer Maurice Ravel. It was originally written as a piano **duet** and was later **orchestrated** for a full symphony. The movements include tunes for Sleeping Beauty, Tom Thumb, a Fairy Garden and Beauty and the Beast.

“Conversations of Beauty and the Beast”

“Beauty and the Beast” is a slow waltz depicting Beauty’s tenderness and Beast’s awkward lumbering. The Beauty’s theme is played by the clarinet. The Beast’s theme is played by the contrabassoon. Both are woodwind instruments but they make very different sounds.

CLARINET



CONTRABASSOON





KEY LISTENING POINTS

- Beauty's graceful theme played by clarinet.
- Beast's heavy, gruff theme on contrabassoon
- Transformation at the end—Beast turns into a Prince, music becomes radiant.



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- How does Ravel use instruments to act out the story?
- How does the ending sound different from the beginning?

RICHARD WAGER

RIDE OF THE VALKYRIES





RICHARD WAGNER

Richard Wagner was a German composer who changed the way people thought about opera. He was born in 1813 in Leipzig, Germany. As a boy, he loved plays and stories about heroes, gods, and legends. When he grew older, he learned to combine music and storytelling in a powerful way, especially with the invention of **leitmotifs**.

WHAT IS A LEITMOTIF?



A leitmotif (LAHYT-moh-teef) is a short musical theme that represents a character, place or idea. Leitmotifs are often heard in operas, **tone poems** and movie soundtracks.

“Ride of the Valkyries”



Wagner’s “Ride of the Valkyries” paints a musical picture of warrior maidens flying through the stormy skies on winged horses. They are brave and powerful which comes through in Wagner’s music.



KEY LISTENING POINTS

- Famous galloping rhythm.
- Bold brass fanfares.
- Energetic, stormy mood of flying warriors.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- How does this music make you feel—excited, nervous, powerful?
- Why do you think it's often used in movies and commercials?
- What instruments give it its bold, heroic sound?



FELIX MENDELSSOHN

WEDDING MARCH





FELIX MENDELSSOHN

Felix Mendelssohn was a German composer born in 1809. He and his sister Fanny were both very talented musicians. Some of his most recognizable music comes from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, including the famous "Wedding March."



“Wedding March”

One of the most famous wedding processionals in history, Mendelssohn’s “Wedding March” was first heard in the play *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* accompanying the wedding of Duke Theseus and Hippolyta.



KEY LISTENING POINTS

- Regal brass fanfares.
- Steady, celebratory march rhythm.
- Joyful energy with grandeur.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Why do you think this became the traditional wedding march?
- How does it make you picture a wedding scene?
- What instruments make it sound festive?



NIKOLAI RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

SCHEHERAZADE





NIKOLAI RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov was born in Russia in 1844. At first, he didn't plan to be a musician—he wanted to be a sailor! He joined the navy and spent years traveling the seas. But even during his voyages, he wrote music and dreamed of becoming a composer. He loved writing pieces that sounded like fairy tales, full of mystery, adventure and color.

Scheherazade



The story of Scheherazade follows a cruel and powerful Sultan and a brave woman named Scheherazade. The Sultan was known for marrying women and sending them away forever after only one day.

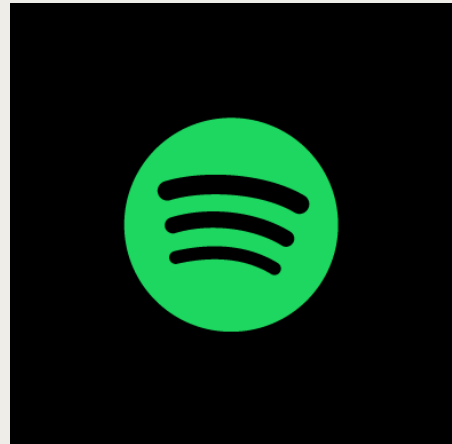
When the Sultan married Scheherazade, she had a clever plan. She began telling the king a wonderful story. But as the story began to get exciting, she stopped and said, "I'll finish tomorrow."

The Sultan wanted to hear the ending, so he let her live another day. Night after night, she told new stories for 1,001 nights. The Sultan grew kinder, fell in love with her, and they ruled happily together.



KEY LISTENING POINTS

- Solo violin represents Scheherazade (tender, lyrical).
- Low brass and strings represent the Sultan (powerful, stern).
- Exotic harmonies and flowing melodies evoke Eastern tales.



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- How does the violin sound like a storyteller?
- Which parts sound powerful or frightening? Which sound magical?
- How does the music take you on a journey?



The Kansas City Symphony

The Kansas City Symphony has rocketed to become one of the top 25 orchestras in the United States. We perform a huge breadth of music in both orchestral and chamber formats each season. In addition, we serve as the pit orchestra for both the Kansas City Ballet and Lyric Opera of Kansas City.

Learn more at kcsymphony.org

DANIEL WILEY

DAVID T. BEALS III ASSOCIATE CONDUCTOR

Daniel Wiley is a dynamic conductor quickly establishing himself across North America. He has appeared with leading ensembles including the Cincinnati Symphony, Cincinnati Ballet, Kansas City Symphony, Nashville Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Calgary Philharmonic, Toledo Symphony, Wichita Symphony, Orchestra Iowa, Quad City Ballet, Salisbury Symphony, Windsor Symphony Orchestra, Windsor Abridged Opera, London Symphonia, Boise Philharmonic, Abilene Philharmonic, Meridian Symphony (ID), Equilibrium Ensemble and University of North Florida Opera.

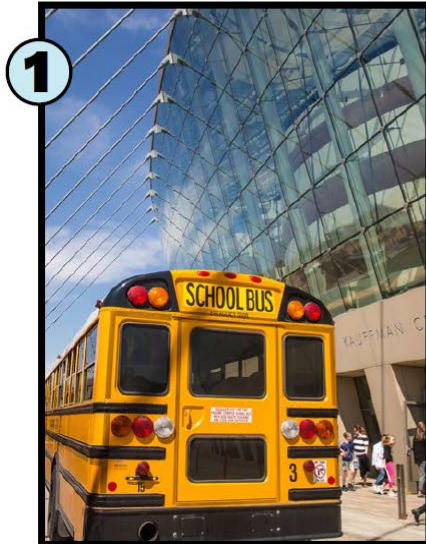
Daniel currently serves as the associate conductor of the Kansas City Symphony and music director of the Salisbury Symphony, Anderson Symphony and West Valley Symphony.



Where we perform...



GOING TO A CONCERT



1 My school is going to a Kansas City Symphony Concert. We will ride on a school bus.



2 When we arrive at the Kauffman Center, ushers will help take us to our seats.

(Our cool conductor!)



3 When the concert is about to start, the lights will dim and we will meet the concert host.



4 The orchestra will tune. The conductor will come out on stage. The concert will begin!



5 When I am in the theater, I am sitting in my seat being a good listener.



6 When the music stops, I can clap for the musicians.



7 When the concert is over, I will stay in my seat and wait for instructions.



8 Time to leave. Going to the Symphony is fun!

INSTRUMENT FAMILIES: STRINGS



The STRING family is made up of the violin, viola, cello and double bass. Instruments in this family produce sound by vibrating strings. The pitch on a string instrument is changed when the length of the string is adjusted. Shortening the string produces a higher sound. String instruments have rich, mellow sounds.

INSTRUMENT FAMILIES: STRINGS



INSTRUMENT FAMILIES: WOODWINDS



The WOODWIND family includes the flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, saxophone and many more. These instruments produce sound when players blow air inside the instrument. Some use a reed – a small flat piece of bamboo – blown against a fixed surface. Others, like the flute and piccolo, blow air across an open hole.

INSTRUMENT FAMILIES: WOODWINDS



INSTRUMENT FAMILIES: BRASS



The BRASS family includes the trumpet, French horn, trombone and tuba. These instruments are often all made of brass. Brass instruments were among the first instruments ever invented. Sound is produced when the musician “buzzes” their lips into a cup-shaped mouthpiece. This produces vibrating air that, when sent through the instrument, makes beautiful music.

INSTRUMENT FAMILIES: BRASS



INSTRUMENT FAMILIES: PERCUSSION



The PERCUSSION family is the most varied family in the orchestra. Percussion instruments include cymbals, drums, maracas, xylophones, marimbas and more. Sound in percussion instruments is created by striking, scraping or shaking either a solid material, like a metal triangle, or a membrane, like the top of a snare drum.

INSTRUMENT FAMILIES: PERCUSSION



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