

MSO

CLASSROOM

THE MOVEMENT AND SOUNDS OF AROUND US

SUGGESTED FOR:

Students of all levels.
Can be completed in collaboration or individually.

RESOURCES:

Household items, your instrument or voice.

TIME: 15–60+ minutes.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Attend the MSO Classroom session exploring Aaron Copland's iconic *Appalachian Spring*.

In 1942, Copland was commissioned to compose a ballet with “an American theme”. The narrative tells the tale of a young pioneering couple who settle on “new land” in 19th Century North America.

Whilst the title *Appalachian Spring* was assigned just weeks before its successful premiere in 1944, retrofitted assumptions of the depiction of the vast Pennsylvanian plateaus and the Appalachian Mountains are rife amongst audience goers. From the grandeur of ancient mountain forests in springtime (broad melodic statements featuring wide intervals of 4ths and 5ths), to fast rushing river waters (fast flowing melodic statements and cascading contrapuntal interjections), through to the more abstract connotations of the trials and tribulations of early settler life (increasingly dissonant harmonies and colder tone colours), *Appalachian Spring* has taken on a life of its own, well beyond the imaginings of Copland's original title — *Ballet for Martha*.

THE TASK:

Develop a vocabulary of sounds inspired by the movement and sounds around us.

Reflecting the landscape and culture of a geographical location is not something new to classical music. Nationalist composers such as Dvořák (Czech), Tchaikovsky (Russia), Sibelius (Finland) and a plethora of others, invested significantly in celebrating and at times defining the sound of their Nation. Aaron Copland, “The Dean of American Composers”, strived to create a recognisable American musical vocabulary. More recently and closer to home, the likes of Peter Sculthorpe, Graeme Koehne, Deborah Chetham and other Australians have composed works with a distinct flavour drawing influence from our Nation's landscapes and culture.

DEVELOPMENT:

1. Listen to the environment around you. What sounds do you hear?
 - a. Bird calls, the hum of the city, leaves in the breeze, a train horn...
2. Now consider the topography of the land, the local flora and fauna, architecture, the people...
3. Take a moment to notice how they move and consider how a dancer might represent this movement?
4. How might a composer depict this movement and the sounds of your environment?

CURRICULUM LINKS

- Victorian F–10:
 - Music — *Explore and Express*
 - Music — *Music Practices*
- VCE Music Performance:
 - Unit 2 Outcome 4 — *Organisation of Sound*
- VCE Music Style and Composition:
 - Outcome 3 — *Creative Response*

REFINEMENT:

5. Create a list of things you have noticed in your environment and brainstorm ideas on how you could represent their sound and movements through music.
6. This is an entirely subjective pursuit however these examples might spark some ideas:
 - i. Gently rising major arpeggio with lush warm tone colours = slow [awakening morning](#)
 - ii. Peter Sulthorpes famous cello harmonics = [seagull calls](#)
 - iii. Short, fast and detached weaving melodic contours = [rushing river water](#)
 - iv. Light dissonance introduced into the harmonic pallet = body language of [uncertainty](#)
 - v. Passing of melodic motifs between instruments = [interaction](#) between animals or people
 - vi. Recognisable musical ideas with widely accepted [cultural connotations](#)
7. Experiment using your voice or instrument, household items or music notation software OR collaborate with your friends and see how they might interpret your ideas into sound.



EXTENSION #1: MAKE IT A MOVEMENT

Having developed a musical vocabulary inspired by movement and sounds around you, arrange your ideas to create a short movement of a composition reflecting your local area. Make a recording and share it with the people around you, and of course send it in to us here at the MSO (schools@mso.com.au).

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BIOS



NICHOLAS BOCHNER

After training in Adelaide and London, Nicholas spent 3 years as Artist-in-Residence at the University of Queensland as part of the ensemble *Perihelion*, forging a strong reputation as an exponent of contemporary music. He joined the MSO as Assistant Principal Cello in 1998. Since then he has appeared as a soloist, chamber musician and recitalist. He has also taught cello and improvisation at the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM).

Nicholas has always had a strong commitment to music education and community engagement. In 2010 he was awarded the Dame Roma Mitchell Churchill Fellowship to study the LSO's iconic Discovery program and the use of improvisation in training classical musicians at the Guildhall School of Music.

In 2016, Nicholas' considerable experience as an orchestral musician and his passion for communication led him to undertake a fellowship at ANAM where he developed, conducted and presented educational concerts for primary school children. During the fellowship he was mentored by Paul Rissmann, Graham Abbott and the legendary Richard Gill AO. Since then he has presented educational concerts for children and adults for MSO, ANAM and the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra.

In 2020 he was named the MSO's Cybec Assistant Conductor for Learning and Engagement. He is also the conductor of the Melbourne University Biomedical Students' Orchestra. In support of his work as an education presenter, Nicholas has been studying conducting with Benjamin Northey and won a coveted place at the TSO's 2019 Australian Conducting Academy.



JAMES LE FEVRE

For the past 15 years, James Le Fevre has been sharing his passion and enthusiasm for music education with students and colleagues from around the country across the Independent, Catholic and State School systems. He was recently appointed as Head of Music at the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School having served as The Arts Learning Area Leader and also Director of Bands at Our Lady of Sion College for 7 years prior. As an active member of the music community, James performs regularly across a wide range of genres and is forging a reputation as an engaging presenter and conductor. He proudly serves as the Immediate Past National President and as a Vice President of the Australian Band and Orchestra Directors Association – Victoria.

James holds a Bachelor of Music with Honours from the Australian National University majoring in Jazz Saxophone, and education qualifications from Monash University. In 2016, James completed studies in Education Leadership on scholarship to the Expert and Leading Teachers Colloquium through the National Excellence in School Leadership Initiative.

Thank you to our content and resource consultants:

James Le Fevre, Head of Music, Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School



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