

MSO Classroom

LIVE ONLINE

CREATIVE TASKS 1: FROM PAGE TO STAGE

SUGGESTED FOR:

Students with 2 or more years' musical training

RESOURCES:

Manuscript and a pencil or notation program ([Sibelius](#), [Noteflight](#), [Finale](#), [Dorico](#), etc.)

TIME: +60 minutes

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Attend the MSO Classroom Live Online session exploring Schumann and Literary Influences.

THE TASK:

Compose a short work for your instrument that captures the characteristics of one of Schumann's alter egos: *Florestan* or *Eusebius*.

RESEARCH:

Learn about the personality traits of Schumann's alter egos, *Florestan* (passionate and volatile) or *Eusebius* (the dreamer) by completing independent research. Imagine how the elements of music could be used to reflect the two contrasting characters of *Florestan* and *Eusebius*. Create a comparison table to record your thoughts about each of these elements:

- Rhythm and tempo
- Dynamics and articulation
- Pitch and register
- Texture and harmony
- Instrumentation and tone colour
- Other factors (e.g. repetition)

NARRATIVE (OPTIONAL BUT FUN):

Write a short fictional story from the perspective of (or about) *Florestan* or *Eusebius*.

- Try to capture the emotion or mood of your story as vividly as possible.
- Consider the momentum — does it start slow and build? Perhaps it starts in a flurry and resolves slowly before a wicked plot twist at the end?
- Include at least one other character in the story.

PLAN YOUR COMPOSITION:

Before you start composing it is helpful to create a rough plan:

- If you completed the narrative step above, your goal is to replicate the same **emotions and moods** as your story.
- Consider including leitmotifs for some of the characters.
- If you did not complete the narrative step, look back to your research step and plan to use the elements to reflect EITHER *Florestan* or *Eusebius*.

CURRICULUM LINKS

- Victorian F–10:
 - Music — *Explore and Express*
 - Music — *Music Practices*
 - English — *Writing*
 - Critical and Creative Thinking — *Meta-cognition*
- VCE Music Performance:
 - Unit 2 Outcome 4 — *Organisation of Sound*
 - Outcome 3 — *Music Language*
- VCE Music Style and Composition:
 - Outcome 3 — *Creative Response*

GENERATING IDEAS:

Use your instrument to experiment with melodic ideas that capture the moods you are trying to replicate. You may like to record your ideas on your phone so that you can come back to them later. This can be a slow process, but you only need two or three ideas to get you started.

CONSTRUCTION:

Take your first melodic idea and play it as the **antecedent phrase** (the call or A phrase) and experiment to find a **consequent phrase** (the response or B phrase).

- Experiment with some different structures such as: A-B, A-B-A, A-A1-B-A1 etc.
- Repeat the construction phase for each of your melodic ideas.
- Now you have 3 melodic structures.
- Arrange them in an order that best reflects your narrative.
- You may like to use small fragments as leitmotifs representing different character interacting.
- Add bridging material to connect the ideas as required.
- There really are no rules here, so just experiment to find sounds that help you express the mood.

EXPRESSIVE ELEMENTS:

- Write out a neat copy of your melody.
- To help capture your intended mood, add dynamics, articulation, ornamentation, tempo marking etc.

RECORD IT:

Refine your new composition record yourself playing it. Be sure to share your short story AND your recorded composition with friends, family and your teachers!

REFLECTION

- What was easy for you? Why?
- What was challenging? Why?
- What adjustments did you have to make during the process?
- What could you do in the future to get better at composing?
- What did you learn about the way that you work that you could apply to other areas of your study?
- Try playing your piece for someone else and ask them to describe the mood. Does it match your intention? If not, what could you change?
- Please send your reflections through to us at schools@mso.com.au

EXTENSION #1: GET THE MSO TO PLAY IT

Now you have composed your work, see if a professional musician interprets it how you meant it to sound. Send a PDF of your composition in to the Sylvia Hosking, Schools Program Manager at the MSO (schools@mso.com.au) to have it played by an MSO musician!

EXTENSION #2: MUSIC IN CODE

Similar to Bach, Schumann liked to spell words using note names throughout his compositions. Schumann pays homage to Bach by spelling his name. ([Click here to listen](#)).

- Using the musical alphabet, A through G, plus H and S, spell as many different words as you can (remember that in Germany B = B flat, H = B natural, S = E flat).
- Choose your favourite three words as the basis to compose three new melodies.
- Try changing the mood of the melody by manipulating the musical elements (e.g. tempo, articulation).
- Be sure to try all of this on your instrument!

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.



CRAIG HILL

Craig Hill has been a member of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's Clarinet section since 1991. Craig grew up in Wagga Wagga and completed his formative studies with Phillip Miechel at the Victorian College of the Arts where he was a recipient of a German Academic Exchange scholarship that saw him complete further studies with Dieter Kloecker at the Freiburg Musikhochschule in 1991. As a specialist on period clarinets Craig has appeared at festivals throughout Australia, the United States and Denmark in repertoire spanning from Vivaldi to Brahms.

He has regularly performed as guest principal clarinet with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the Orchestra of the Antipodes and the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra with whom he has frequently appeared as soloist.

In April 2009 he directed a mini-festival of period instrument chamber music, Concertino Copenhagen, which brought together musicians from Australia and Europe for concerts at the newly opened Melbourne Recital Centre.



LEIGH HARROLD

Leigh Harrold enjoys a reputation as a "musician of rare talent and intelligence", and is one of Australia's busiest and most sought-after pianists.

Leigh has performed extensively throughout Europe, North America, Africa and Australia as both soloist and chamber musician, including concerts at Australia House in London, the Royal Academy of Music, the Mozarteum in Salzburg, the Harare International Festival of Arts, and concerto engagements with many Australian orchestras. His international reputation as an associate artist has led to collaborations with some of the world's greatest musicians, including Michael Cox, Denis Bouriakov, and Daniel Gaede. Leigh is a founding member of the Helpmann Award-nominated Syzygy Ensemble which has gone on to become one of Australia's most critically lauded and active contemporary music ensembles. Additionally, Leigh has recorded and released CDs for Sony, ABC Classics, and Move Records.

An enthusiastic and committed teacher, speaker, and writer, Leigh is regularly invited to tutor and lecture at many institutions, adjudicate competitions, and has given several masterclasses around Australia, Africa, the USA and the UK. He currently holds positions on the Faculties of ANAM and the University of Melbourne, and is pianist with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

RESOURCES & CONTENT



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.

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.



ERNEST PRICE

Ernest Price is the Education Officer at Victorian Association for the Teaching of English, after ten years teaching and leading English departments. Ernest has written study guides for a range of texts and has travelled the state presenting for both students and staff.

Thank you to our content and resource consultants:

James Le Fevre, Head of Music, Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School
Ernest Price, Education Officer, Victorian Association for the Teaching of English