

London Philharmonic Orchestra



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Key Stage 2 BrightSparks Concert

May 2024
Teachers' Pack
lpo.org.uk/brightsparks

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This pack and all learning resources are available on the
Watch, Listen, Learn section of the London Philharmonic Orchestra's
website along with many other resources for schools.

<https://lpo.org.uk/watch-listen-learn/>



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Introduction

This pack is designed to help you and your class prepare for the London Philharmonic Orchestra's Key Stage 2 BrightSparks concert featuring *Appalachian Spring* by Aaron Copland, as well as other American and America-inspired music. Copland was the first really successful American classical composer and his music is known for sounding instantly 'American.' This wonderful piece was originally written for a ballet and tells the story of one exciting day in a small American town in the late 1800s.

We will also explore *Mighty River* by British-Belize composer Errollyn Wallen, which uses a familiar hymn to chart the journey of a ship of enslaved people sailing to freedom, and our concert will begin and end with an epic fanfare.

It will really help your children's understanding and enjoyment if you explore the music a little before you visit us. This pack is designed to help you do this and features two composing projects that we strongly urge you to undertake in the run up to the concert. The main focus of these activities is Copland's *Appalachian Spring*, but we've also included some background information on the other composers and their music, and our new participation song "One Hundred Years Ago..." for you to teach to your class.

Meet the presenter



Our concert will be presented by composer and amateur Rachel Leach. Rachel was born in Sheffield and studied composition with Simon Bainbridge, Robert Saxton and Louis Andriessen. She has won several awards including, with ETO, the RPS award for best education project 2009 for *One Day, Two Dawns*.

Rachel has worked within the education departments of most of the UK's orchestras and opera companies. The majority of her work is for the London Philharmonic

Orchestra and the London Symphony Orchestra. Rachel has written well over twenty pieces for these orchestras and fifteen community operas, including seven for English Touring Opera.

Alongside this she is increasingly in demand as a concert presenter. She regularly presents family and schools' concerts as well as pre-concert events for LPO, LSO, BBC Proms, RCM & Wigmore Hall.

The London Philharmonic Orchestra

One of the finest orchestras on the international stage, the London Philharmonic Orchestra balances a long and distinguished history with its reputation as one of the UK's most forward-looking ensembles. It was founded in 1932 by Sir Thomas Beecham, and since then has been headed by many great names in the conducting world.



The Orchestra regularly record for film. Amongst the many soundtracks they have recorded are:

- ★ The Lord of the Rings Trilogy
- ★ The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey
- ★ Thor: The Dark World

The London Philharmonic Orchestra has been performing at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall since it opened in 1951, becoming Resident Orchestra in 1992. It also has residencies in Brighton, Eastbourne, Saffron Hall and Glyndebourne, and performs around the UK and the world.

The LPO Education and Community department maintains an energetic programme for young people and families. Our **BrightSparks** schools' concert series provides orchestral experiences for students from primary to secondary level, providing analysis of set works at Key Stage 4. **FUNharmonics** family days provide interactive concerts and music-making experiences for the whole family at the Royal Festival Hall. Other projects work with young people with special educational needs and disabilities through our **Open Sound Ensemble**. We also run the **LPO Junior Artists** programme, a free orchestral experience scheme for talented young musicians from backgrounds currently under-represented in professional UK orchestras, and **LPO Junior Artists: Overture**, free immersive events for young people which take a hands-on, behind-the-scenes look at the world of a professional orchestra. The **Watch, Listen, Learn** section on our website hosts resources for teachers to build confidence in leading music in school and provides music lesson plans featuring a variety of different topics. The department also caters for early-career professionals – the **LPO Young Composers, Foyle Future Firsts** and our new **Conducting Fellowship** schemes look to support players, composers and conductors at the start of their careers.

The LPO is proud to be a member of the South Riverside Music Partnership (SRMP) which comprises the LPO, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, and the Music Education Hub leads of Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark and Royal Greenwich. The LPO is also proud to partner with Create Music, the music education hub for Brighton and East Sussex, and with West Sussex Music.

For more information about the LPO, you can visit our website or social media.

Website: lpo.org.uk

Twitter: [LPOrchestra](https://twitter.com/LPOrchestra)

Facebook: [londonphilharmonicorchestra](https://www.facebook.com/londonphilharmonicorchestra)

Instagram: [londonphilharmonicorchestra](https://www.instagram.com/londonphilharmonicorchestra)

TikTok: [LPOrchestra](https://www.tiktok.com/@LPOrchestra)

The orchestra

An orchestra is a large group of musicians and their instruments. It is divided into different sections:

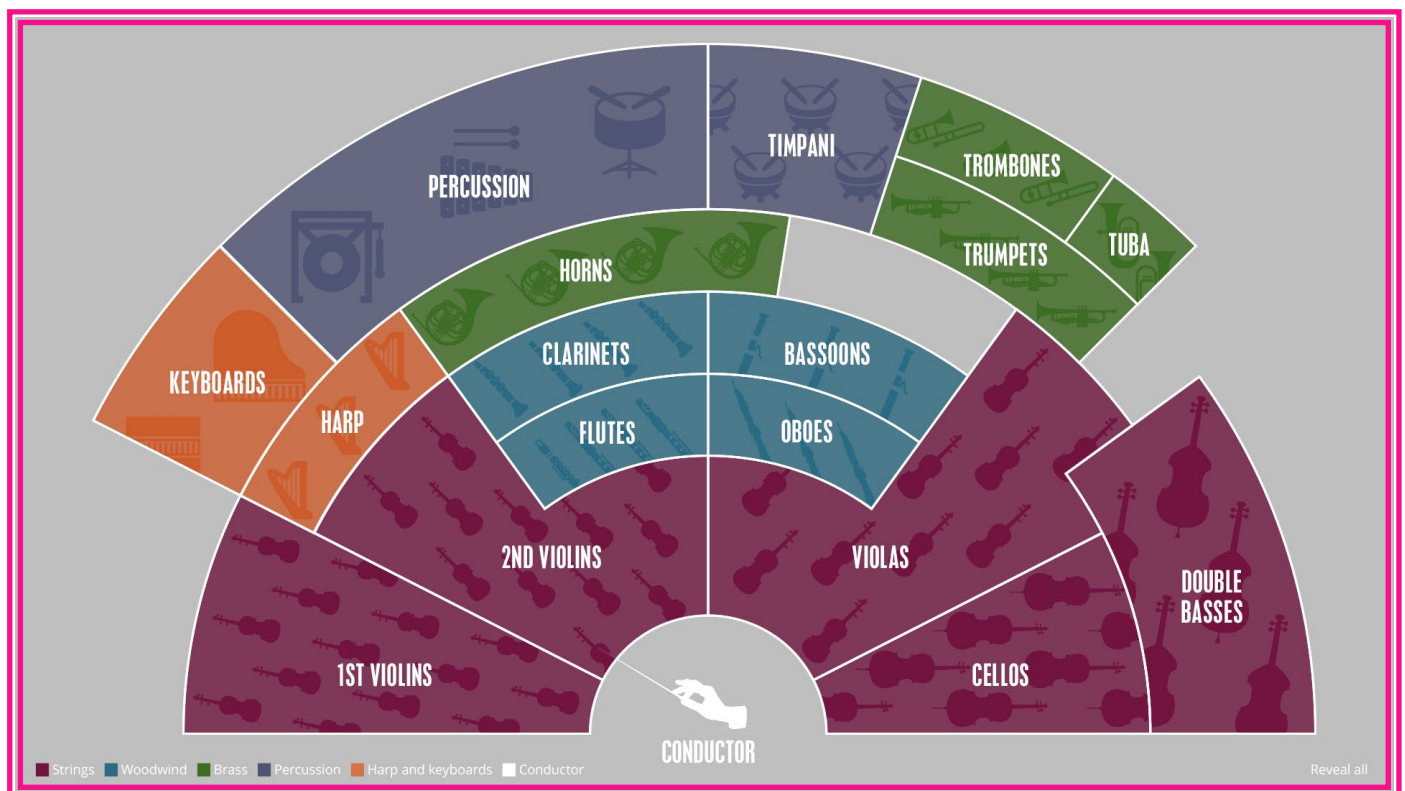
Strings: violins, violas, cellos, double basses

Woodwind: flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons (the piccolo will also feature – this instrument is the little sibling of the flute, but is smaller and plays higher notes)

Brass: French horns, trumpets, trombones, tuba

Percussion: timpani (large kettle drums) and other types of drums, xylophone, shakers, triangles and lots more

Other: there will also be a piano and a harp, a big instrument with 47 strings and a magical sound!



The music

Aaron Copland (1900 – 1990)

Copland was one of the first American composers to carve out his own path amongst the much more famous songwriters and jazz musicians of the 1920s. He was born in New York in 1900 to Russian immigrant parents who owned a successful grocery store. He studied in Paris and found fame early on, remaining a central figure in American music until his death in 1990. His music is said to 'sound like America' and often features a large, open sound (like the vast American prairies) and complex rhythms.



©Cleland Rimmer/Getty Images

Appalachian Spring (1944)

Appalachian Spring began life as a ballet score for Copland's good friend, choreographer Martha Graham. It tells the story of a farming village preparing for a wedding, from the opening chords as the sun rises in the morning through to the traditional hymns at the wedding ceremony.

We will perform three sections from the piece:

- ★ **Dawn:** this is a beautiful depiction of dawn in a tiny Pennsylvanian farming village with a loud wake-up call at the end!
- ★ **The Revivalist and his Flock:** in this section it's easy to imagine the busy and important preacher striding along with his students.
- ★ **Variations on a Shaker Hymn** (the wedding): Copland didn't write this hymn – he borrowed it from a hymnbook. It's a very famous tune that you and your pupils may know already.

Fanfare for the Common Man (1942)

This fanfare by Aaron Copland is now one of the most famous fanfares of all time. A fanfare is a ceremonial piece that is usually short and played by brass instruments, typically to announce something or someone important. This famous fanfare is written for brass and percussion only and was commissioned as part of an initiative by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra to begin each concert during the Second World War with a fanfare. Of the 18 fanfares created through this scheme, this is the only one still regularly performed. It has been covered by several rock bands and is often played as the opening to sports events in the United States.

Errollyn Wallen (b. 1958)

Mighty River (2007)



©Robert McFadzean/Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Errollyn Wallen was born in Belize, in Central America, and was brought up in Tottenham, London. She is now one of the most performed composers in the world. She was the first Black woman to have a piece performed at The Proms and the first woman to win an Ivor Novello award. She is a true pioneer. This work explores the history of the slave trade in Britain. Wallen uses a familiar hymn, 'Amazing Grace,' and hides it within a shimmering texture that describes the flowing water around a ship of enslaved people. There is a moment of danger before a feeling of calm follows the storm.

Speaking about *Mighty River*, Wallen says:

“Composing for the orchestra is my favourite challenge [and this] work is an especially important one for me. It is an innate human instinct to be free, just as it is a law of nature that the river should rush headlong to the sea. That is the concept behind *Mighty River*.”

Slavery claimed the lives of countless people, but somehow my ancestors found the grit and determination to persist in spite of the conditions in which they found themselves. I dedicate *Mighty*

River to my great-great-great-great-great grandmother. Though I never knew her, I am driven on by her courage in the face of dreadful odds and am inspired by her example not merely to survive, but to thrive.”

Joan Tower (b. 1938)

Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman 1 (1987)



©Bernard Mindich

Joan Tower has been described as ‘one of the most successful woman composers of all time.’ She was born in New York but brought up in Bolivia, in South America, where she learned piano and composition. Returning to the US, she studied at Columbia University and began a career as a chamber pianist. In 1985 she was made composer-in-residence at the St Louis Symphony Orchestra and started to win major composing awards around the world. This is the first of six ‘Fanfares for the Uncommon Woman’ written in response to Copland’s very famous piece. Each is dedicated to an ‘adventurous, risk-taking’ woman. This one, written in 1987, is for pioneering female conductor Marin Alsop and features exactly the same instruments as Copland’s fanfare.

We will also perform ‘One Hundred Years Ago’ by Rachel Leach. Please teach this song to your class.

The lyrics and music are on pages 16 & 17 and you can listen to a recording on Soundcloud:

<https://on.soundcloud.com/VmqbY>

Ideas for creative work in the classroom

Project 1: Waking up on the Prairie

Appalachian Spring begins with a slow awakening during which Copland uses three-note chords (triads) to create his distinctive sound. He also chooses instruments carefully to help portray the gentle early morning. When his soundworld is established, he breaks it with a loud and violent wake-up call on high strings and piano.

Task 1: Dawn

1. Explain to your class that you are going to make some music to represent dawn. To do this you are going to use just three notes – C, E and G – and very gentle percussive sounds such as shakers, triangles and quiet drum rumbles. Start by demonstrating on a xylophone where the notes C, E and G are – you can remove the other notes if you wish. Play a short, **slow** fragment consisting of just three notes, and explain to the class that this is made up from just C, E and G in any order. The important thing is that you only make three sounds and they are **slow, steady and quiet**. Here are some examples:



2. Invite members of your class to come forward and see if they can create their own 3-note fragment following the same rules.
3. Gradually give out instruments and ask every member of the class to play their own 3-note fragment. If you run out of pitched instruments, add in some unpitched instruments such as shakers, finger cymbals and triangles. Ask the children playing these instruments to play a continuous shimmer as softly as possible. If members of your class are learning instruments, they can be used in the task too (young violinists might find the notes G, B and D easier to play).
4. Appoint yourself as conductor and make a class piece. Simply point at children and encourage them to play their fragment once whilst the shimmery sounds play softly throughout. Remind the class of the following simple rules:
 - ★ Each player must play their three-note fragment once when pointed to
 - ★ Notes must be played slowly
 - ★ Notes must be played quietly
5. Choose one child to take over your role as conductor. Can they create their own version of 'dawn' using the same rules?

Task 2: Wake up!

1. To move on, explain that we are going to borrow a motif from Copland (a motif is a musical idea). This is his 'wake up' motif:
2. Teach this to your class. Practise clapping the rhythm until you can perform it neatly without the words.



3. Moving onto instruments, start by performing the motif on unpitched instruments or using just one pitch. Copland's real motif begins by jumping between three notes and then becomes a falling scale – with all the notes in order – before jumping around again at the end.
4. Challenge your children to use a similar shape to perform it. Don't worry if their choice of notes sounds a bit messy – the rhythm (especially at the beginning) is the most important thing.



5. Split your class into smaller groups and ask them to explore this motif and create a piece that uses it. It works particularly well if split between several groups of instruments or with the beginning repeated over and over as an ostinato (repeating pattern). This piece should be **loud and fast** in contrast to the dawn piece.
6. When this is achieved, hear each group and ask your class to join their pieces together into one piece. Remind them that this needs to be a big contrast to the 'dawn' piece they made earlier. It should be loud and energetic. Can they achieve this without the music becoming confused? Maybe they need another class conductor playing a loud, steady and confident pulse (e.g. a steady beat on a drum).

Task 3: Composing a finished piece

Finally, encourage your children to join their 'Dawn' and 'Wake up!' pieces together. Remind them that you are aiming for a gentle dawn scene followed by a hectic wake-up call!

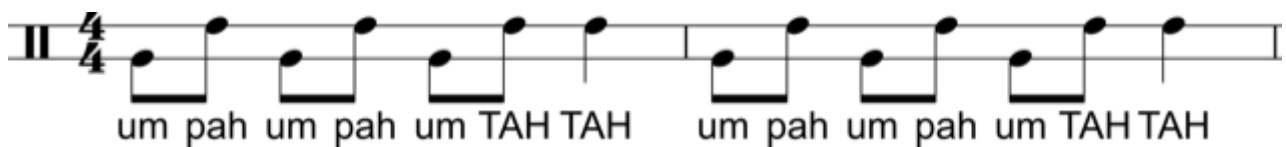
Project 2: The Preacher

Another of Copland's compositional traits was to use uneven rhythms and unusual time signatures to give his music a quirky, uneven feel. When describing the Preacher in this ballet, he splits up his 4/4 bar in an uneven way to give the feeling of someone hurrying along. He also limits the number of notes he uses in his melody. This makes the character sound worried and stuck.

Task 1: Rhythm

1. Teach your class the following rhythm:

Explain that the 'um' beats are strong and **on** the beat. The 'pah's are weaker and on the **off-beat**.



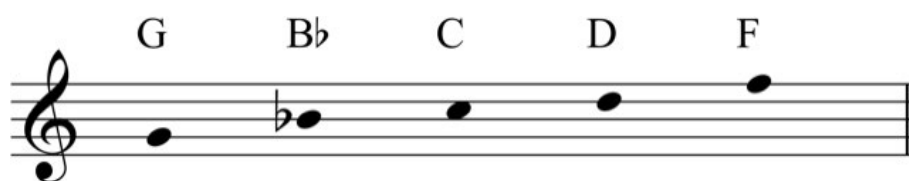
The 'tah' beats are the strongest and fall on the weakest part of the bar!

2. Ask your pupils to play this pattern on unpitched instruments. Remind them that the 'um' beats need to sound strong and should perhaps be played on the loudest instruments (e.g. drums, woodblocks).

Task 2: Melody

1. Encourage your class to add a melody. Here are the rules of Copland's melodies:

★ Only the following notes are allowed:



If you don't have Bbs, just miss them out!

- ★ Try to use a spiky rhythm. Here is a typical Copland rhythm:
- ★ Think carefully about the instruments you choose. They should be heard above the um-pah accompaniment.



2. Can you put add this to your um-pah accompaniment?

When working on this task you may want to split your class into small working groups and then bring everyone back together at the end to make one big piece, or you could divide the two teams into an 'um-pah' group and a 'melody' group. Each group works on just one element of the piece and then the challenge is fitting one idea on top of the other. If you stick to the 5 pitches and the pulse is the same, your piece should fit together very easily.

We love hearing what you get up to in the classroom!

If you would like to share your musical creations with us, get in touch with education@lpo.org.uk

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The Preacher, *Appalachian Spring*, choreographed by Martha Graham

Audience Participation Song – ‘One Hundred Years Ago’

At the climax of *Appalachian Spring* there is a very well-known tune. During our concert we are going to play a new version of this tune and encourage the audience to sing along with the orchestra. The music for this is on page 17. Please take some time to teach this simple song to your class before the concert so that they can sing along confidently.

Please note that alongside our new words, there is a body percussion section to learn too! (Figure C, bar 19).

We will project the words onto our big screen during the concert so you don't have to worry about lyric sheets or perfect memories! We suggest you make up some simple actions or gestures to go with the words; this will help with memory and make their performance much more energised. We're not looking for perfect singing but for volume and enthusiasm! You can listen to a recording of the song [on Soundcloud](#) by scanning our QR code.



Warming up

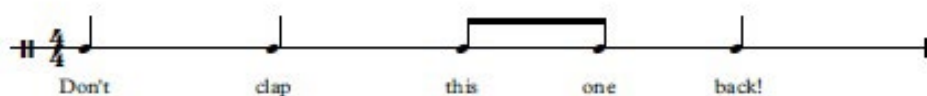
It's really important that you warm up your class before you start learning the song. Doing so will gather focus, get everyone relaxed and energised, protect their voices and help them to sound their best. Below we've suggested some warm ups written by singing specialist Lucy Hollins that you might want to try.

Focus

Start by doing an activity that gets everyone focused. You may have your own ways of doing this, but here are a few ideas of how to do this in a musical way:

Don't clap this one back

This is a call and response clapping game. You clap a four beat rhythm and the children clap it back. The only twist is that if you clap the following rhythm, they don't clap it back:



Physical warm up

Now, a physical warm up. This can be anything that gets your young singers moving and feeling energised, making sure every part of the body is relaxed.

8-4-2-1-HEY

Put your right hand in the air and shake it 8 times, counting the numbers out loud as you do. Now do the same in the left hand, then the right foot and the left foot. Repeat this pattern but now with 4 shakes in each hand and foot, then 2 in each, then 1 in each. To finish, jump up in the air and all shout HEY!

Breathing

Next, do some work on breathing...

Bubble Gum

Ask the children to get an (imaginary) piece of bubblegum out of their pocket, unwrap it and pop it in their mouths. Now tell them it's really, really sticky and ask them to have a good chew. They might need to use their tongues to get it off their teeth!

Next tell them you're going to have a bubble blowing competition. On the count of three, everyone blows an imaginary bubble, using their arms to show how it is slowly expanding, until you shout 'POP!' and the bubbles all burst. You'll now need to roll it into a ball and start again.

Make some noise!

'Aha!'

Take a simple word or sound, for example 'aha' or 'hello,' and ask the children to copy the way you say it. You might imagine a scenario, for example, in which you get angry, then despondent, then happy, then excited – but the whole story is told with this single sound. Make sure you use different parts of the voice from high to low, and don't be afraid of swooping and sliding to get a really good warm up.

**Now you've warmed up your body through rhythmic and physical activities,
and your voice through breathing and sound exercises,
it's time to learn the song!**

<https://on.soundcloud.com/VmqbY>

One Hundred Years Ago...

by Rachel Leach

One hundred years ago in the USA
Lived a boy who worked in a shop all day
He knew when he grew up he wanted to be
A composer of tunes and of harmony

Copland was this composer's name
And after his studies he found world fame
His music spoke to those from afar
It is the sound of America

Stamp! (stamp) Clap! (clap)
Rumble on your knees
Hands in the air -
Now freeze

Stamp! (stamp) Clap! (clap)
Shout HEY!
This is the sound of the USA

(Repeat from beginning)

This is the sound of the USA
This is the sound of the USA

KEY
 (C) = clap
 (S) = stamp feet
 'Rumble on your knees' - tap knees to make a rumble sound

One hundred years ago...

RACHEL LEACH

A Andante ♩ = 90 *mf*

One hun-dred years a-go in the U S. A lived a boy who worked in a

6

shop all day He knew when he grew up he wan-ted to be a com -po ser of tunes and of har mo - ny

11 **B** *f*

Cop - land was this com-po-ser's name and af-ter his studies he found world fame His mu-sic spoke to

© Copyright Rachel Leach London 2013

16 C *Speak and do:*

those from a far It is the sound of A-mer-i - ca Stamp (S) Clap (C) Rum-ble on your knees

21

Hands in the air Now freeze Stamp (S) Clap (C) Shout HEY! This is the sound of the

26

U S A This is the sound of the U S A This is the sound of the U S A

Thank you

We hope this pack will give you some suggestions to support Key Stage 2 provision in your school. For further ideas, don't forget to look at Watch, Listen, Learn on the LPO website, or book tickets to future BrightSparks concerts. We offer a Key Stage 1 (London only) and Key Stage 2 (London and Eastbourne) BrightSparks concert per year, each with associated resources and INSET sessions.

You can find out more at www.lpo.org.uk/create-take-part/

We'd love to hear from you about your school's musical activities! Please feel free to get in touch with us via email education@lpo.org.uk to find out more about our work here at the LPO, or if you'd like any guidance for musical work in the classroom.

We love hearing what you get up to in the classroom!

**If you would like to share your musical creations with us,
get in touch with education@lpo.org.uk**