

London Philharmonic Orchestra



© Jason Chapman

Key Stage 1 BrightSparks Concert

Spring 2026
Teachers' Pack
lpo.org.uk/brightsparks

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This pack is available on the
Learning Resources section of the
London Philharmonic Orchestra's
website along with many other free
resources for schools.





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Introduction

This pack is designed to help you and your class prepare for the London Philharmonic Orchestra's Key Stage 1 BrightSparks concerts at the Royal Festival Hall on 11 March 2026. It also provides preparation and development classroom activities based on the concert and the musical story.

The concert is conducted by Nefeli Chadouli, and opens with Mozart's 'Overture' from his opera, *The Marriage of Figaro* – a perfect introduction to the sights and sounds of the orchestra. The Orchestra will then play Benjamin Britten's atmospheric 'Dawn' from *Four Sea Interludes* and Dmitry Kabalevsky's lively 'Galop' from *The Comedians Suite*. Presenter Polly Ives will introduce all the music and link it in with the themes and characters in the story later. We would love to display artwork by your children on the big screen during 'Dawn'. See page 24 for details.

Polly will also teach and rehearse the audience with the songs and sound effects for the story. We will then perform *Stan and Mabel and the Race for Space*, with words and illustrations by Jason Chapman, music composed by Paul Rissmann and narrated by Polly.

Finally, the Orchestra will perform the *Doctor Who* theme by Ron Grainer/Delia Derbyshire, arr. Robin McEwan to send us out of the concert hall with smiles on our faces!

Meet the presenter



Polly Ives enjoys a varied career as a concert presenter and narrator, workshop leader, trainer, consultant and charity founder and CEO. Polly has worked with London Philharmonic Orchestra since 2015 including family and Key Stage 1 schools' concerts and training emerging musicians in working with young audiences.

As well as the LPO, Polly has also presented concerts with the London Mozart Players, Britten Sinfonia, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Royal Opera House, Wigmore Hall and CBeebies. She has been a passionate advocate of composer Paul Rissmann's music since meeting at a 'New Music and New Musicians' conference in 2004. She has now commissioned and premiered over 20 new pieces with him, winning multiple awards.

Polly won the 'Fearless Freelancer' award in the Northern Cultural Education Awards 2024. She is also Founder and Director of Concerteenies, a South Yorkshire based charity producing, delivering and pioneering live music opportunities for 0-7 year olds and their grown-ups supporting wellbeing, wonder, all round early childhood development and musical learning. Concerteenies won the Royal Philharmonic Society's 'Inspiration Award' in 2020.

The London Philharmonic Orchestra

Uniquely ground-breaking and exhilarating to watch and hear, the London Philharmonic Orchestra has been celebrated as one of the world's greatest orchestras since Sir Thomas Beecham founded it in 1932.



Our mission is to celebrate artistry and humanity through the power of orchestral music, through live performances, online, and our extensive Education and Community programme. Our home is at the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, where we're at the beating heart of London's cultural life. You'll also find us at our resident venues in Brighton, Eastbourne and Saffron Walden, and on tour worldwide. In 2024 we celebrated 60 years as Resident Symphony Orchestra at Glyndebourne Festival Opera.

We're one of the world's most streamed orchestras, with over 15 million plays of our content each month, and in 2023 were the most successful orchestra worldwide on YouTube, TikTok and Instagram. You can hear us on countless film soundtracks, and we've released over 130 albums on our own LPO label.

We're committed to inspiring the next generation of musicians and music-lovers. Our dynamic and wide-ranging Education and Community programme:

- ★ offers high-quality learning projects and performances for schools, with resources and CPD opportunities for teachers
- ★ uses music to inspire and engage with families, young people with SEND, community groups, disabled adults and those who have experienced homelessness
- ★ develops the next generation of professional instrumentalists, composer and conductors.

The LPO is proud to be an official partner of the South East London Music Hub and the Sussex Music Hub.

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

Website: lpo.org.uk

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

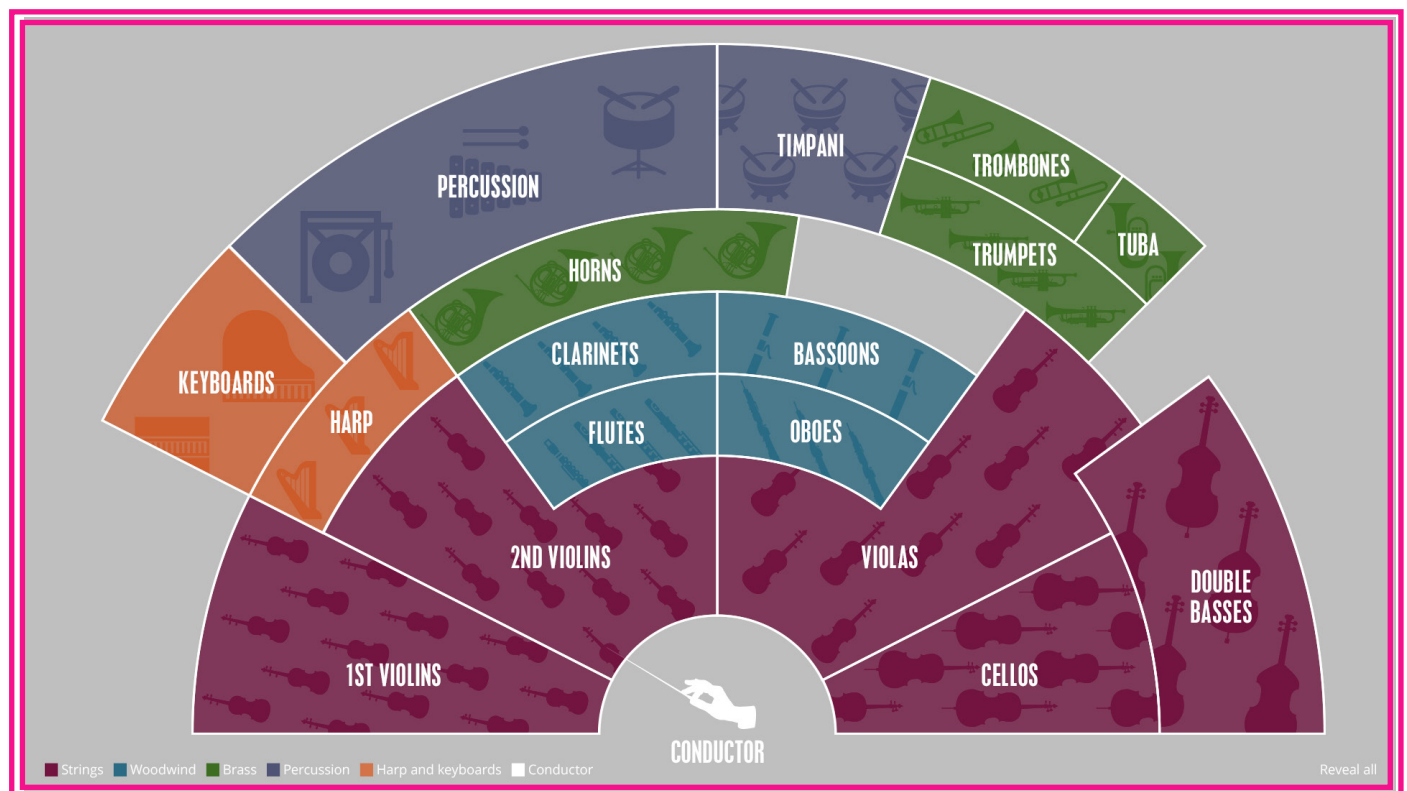
Brass: French horns, trumpets, trombones, tuba

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

Other: harp, piano

There are some extra instruments in our concert too:

- ★ Piccolo: the little sibling of the flute, which is smaller and plays higher notes
- ★ Cor Anglais: a larger oboe with a rounded bottom, which plays deeper notes
- ★ Bass Clarinet: a larger clarinet which is long and rests on the ground, playing deeper notes
- ★ Contrabassoon: a larger, curlier bassoon that rests on the ground and plays deeper notes



Stan and Mabel and the Race for Space



© Jason Chapman

Summary and participation

This musical tale is the main focus of our concert. The words and illustrations are by Jason Chapman and the music is by Paul Rissmann. It's a sequel to the original *Stan and Mabel* book by Jason (published by Templar and a great read!). Some of you may have attended our *Stan and Mabel* concert in 2024, which followed Stan the dog and Mabel the cat's journey to join the Greatest Animal Orchestra in the world! If you don't know the original *Stan and Mabel* story, it doesn't matter – you and your pupils will still enjoy this concert as a standalone experience.

Stan and Mabel and the Race for Space was written especially to be performed by an orchestra and told from the stage, so it doesn't have a printed book for you to read with your children. We have therefore written a synopsis of the story and how the participation elements below. We encourage you to explain the story to your children to give them some context before the concert.

The story

Stan the dog and Mabel the cat are having their breakfast. Mabel sees the headlines in the papers about wild animals running riot in the city. They are looking for food, as their natural habitats have shrunk as the city has grown. The mayor wants to capture the animals and put them to work.

Stan and Mabel head to the city to investigate. "It's all gone silly bonkers!" they say. A police dog

tells them that the mayor has commanded that all the animals must be captured and sent to the School for Wild and Dangerous Animals. At the school, animals are trained to do jobs. The city calms down. Stan and Mabel find it eerily quiet...

They meet a sad polar bear who serves them a milkshake and tells them that his iceberg home is no longer habitable and he has had to flee to the city. He'd like to be back in the wild but it's nearly all gone. They meet a tigress waitress who tells them her home has become a multi-storey carpark so she now has to work in the milkshake bar.

Stan is sad, but Mabel has an idea... She sees a newspaper story about a rocket launching to a new planet full of forests and all the food you can eat! They decide that they must be on that rocket. They take with them the polar bear, tigress and a rhino they meet sweeping the street. They are joined by many other animal friends too!

They run to the launchpad but it's so far away and they become exhausted. They run into the Transport museum, where they take various forms of transport out of it to get to the launchpad. Finally, they reach the launchpad and scramble aboard the rocket squished in with the astronauts. After a countdown they finally blast off!

What happens next? We will stop the story there to avoid spoilers, but read on to find out as you learn the songs, and share with the children if you like!

Join in!

There are 9 songs/sounds that we would love you and your children to join in with. This piece works best if you prepare your children in advance of the concert. That way, your class will be able to burst into song at key moments throughout the piece. If you are not a music specialist, please don't worry as it is all very easy to learn and Polly will guide everyone throughout the concert. In the concert, Polly brings everyone in saying 'Off we go'. To help you and your children prepare, we have provided a video and musical notation (so you can all develop further activities if you wish):

Watch this video to learn the songs and actions for the story

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

Note: The video section at 06:35 is incorrect and unfortunately combines the lyrics and music for song no. 7 and song no. 9. The notation below is correct so please use that to learn the song. You are welcome to explain this to the children if it is helpful to them. Or you can just watch the video or learn the lyrics below and in the concert, where we will clarify the separate verses.

Learn the songs

1: Silly Bonkers

The story begins when the main two characters, Stan (the dog) and Mabel (the cat), are eating their breakfast. They read the newspaper headlines. 'Crazy animals cause another night of looting and mayhem in search for food.'



© Jason Chapman

We all sing the words 'It's all gone silly bonkers' twice. We then hear some more music and sing it again. You will know when to sing as Polly says "Off We Go!"

Actions: Wave your hands by the side of your head in time with the words 'Silly Bonkers'.



2. At the School

As the city got bigger and bigger, and the wild got smaller and smaller, animals that once lived far away now lived right in the bustling metropolis. And what's more, they weren't very welcome. The town mayor decides to send the animals to a school for wild and dangerous animals. Every single animal was trained to do a job.



© Jason Chapman

Actions: (as seen in the film)

- ★ Slide your arm across your body for 'school'
- ★ Paw hands for 'wild', 'dangerous' and 'animals'
- ★ Wave your your finger for 'every single animal was trained'
- ★ Cross your arms on the word 'job'

Polly's cue
"Off we go"

At the school for wild and dan-ger-ous a - ni - mals,

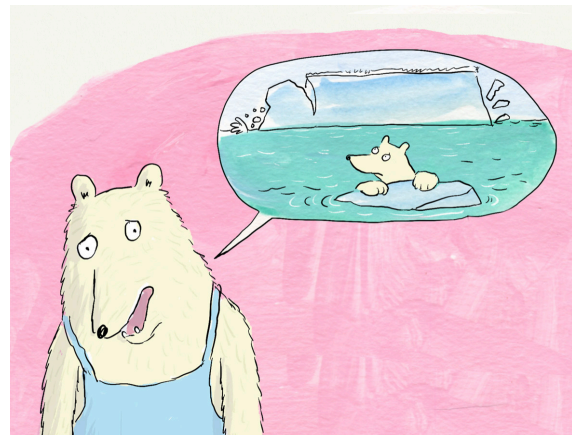
At the school for wild and dan-ger-ous a - ni - mals,

E - very sin - gle a - ni - mal was trained to do a job

3. I'd really like to be (polar bear)

We meet a polar bear who once lived on a great iceberg that got smaller and smaller. He had to swim many miles to scrounge food from bins, parked cars and supermarkets. The people at the School for Wild and Dangerous Animals trained him to work at a milkshake bar.

He sings a sad and wishful song about how he'd like to be back home in the Arctic. He is a gentle and thoughtful character so use your calm singing voice!



© Jason Chapman

Actions:

- ★ Point at yourself ('I'd really like')
- ★ Move right hand out ('wild'), then left hand ('free')
- ★ Point downwards ('space')
- ★ Move hands ('roam')
- ★ Point downwards ('place')
- ★ Hands crossed on chest ('our own')

The musical score is written on five staves in 4/4 time. The lyrics are: 'I'd rea-lly like to be wild and free, To find a space where we can roam, A place that we can call our own, I'd rea-lly like to be wild and free.'

4. I'd really like to be (tigress)

We then sing the same song, but this time as a tigress, who is working as a waitress in the milkshake bar. Her home in the wild had become a multi-storey car park. She is quite a sassy and wily character, so experiment with how you can change your singing voice.

Actions: the same as for the polar bear, but with more sass!



© Jason Chapman


I'd rea-lly like to be wild and free,


I'd rea-lly like to be wild and free,


To find a space where we can roam, A place


— that we can call our own,


I'd rea-lly like to be wild and free.



© Jason Chapman

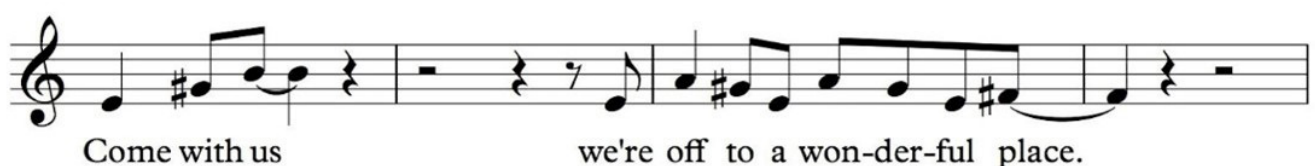
5. Come with us

Mabel comes up with a plan. "Today a rocket blasts off to a newly discovered planet where there's nothing but wild: wild forests, wild jungles, wild seas and all the wild food you can eat - and we're all going to be on that rocket!" They meet lots of animals and encourage them all to join Stan and Mabel on their way to the rocket.

We sing the song twice.

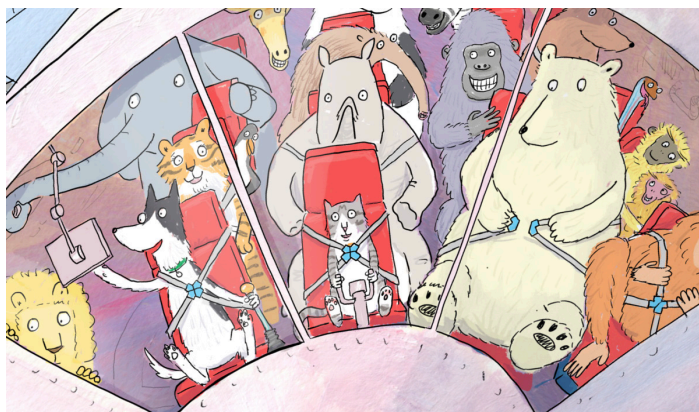
Actions:

- ★ Beckoning arm ('Come with us')
- ★ Running arms ('we're off to a wonderful place')



6. The Countdown

When they reach the launchpad, they all climb aboard the rocket and the countdown begins. Polly will encourage everyone to say the numbers whilst holding up the number of fingers and then shout the 'Blast Off!' and lift their arms up like a rocket.



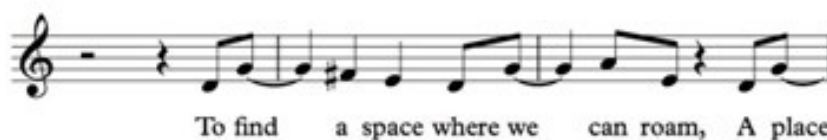
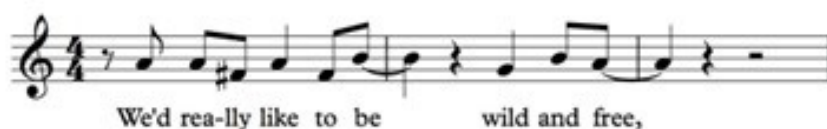
© Jason Chapman



7. We'd really like to be (on the rocket)

As the rocket roars into the blue sky, the animals cheered at the thought of life on a new planet. We all sing this song with our big, brave and excited voices.

Actions: the same as for polar bear and tigress (p11) and important note on page 8 about the song!



8. Crash!

But unfortunately the rocket crashes because, of course, animals can't fly rockets! Join in with the rocket's descent (move your arms up high, down, down, down) and a big crash (clap and say the word 'Crash!')

Try out different ways to get a collective 'Crash' and clap. Can a child be the conductor at the front of the class and show everyone when to clap?



© Jason Chapman

9. We're really glad to be (finale)

Near the end of the story, the mayor accepts that she hasn't treated the animals very well and she gives them the land where the old factory stood. It wasn't long before nature turned it back into a wild and beautiful paradise.

The animals are really happy so we sing the same song again but with slightly different words. This time it is really happy and bouncy in character. Encourage the children to use their smiley singing voices and feel the groove! Make the 'Call our own' extra long and exaggerated.

Note: for both activities 7 and 9, please see an important note on page 8 about the song

The image displays a musical score for the song "We're Re-ally Glad to Be Wild and Free" in 12/8 time. The score is written on five staves, each with a treble clef. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff contains the lyrics "We're re-ally glad to be wild and free,". The second staff contains "We're rea-lly glad to be wild and free,". The third staff contains "We've found a space where we.". The fourth staff contains "— can roam, A place— that we can CALL OUR OWN". The fifth staff contains "We're rea - lly glad to be wild and free.". The melody is simple and catchy, with a mix of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are written in a playful, slightly informal font.

12/8

We're re-ally glad to be wild and free,

We're rea-lly glad to be wild and free,

We've found a space where we.

— can roam, A place— that we can CALL OUR OWN

We're rea - lly glad to be wild and free.

Ideas for classroom activities

Creative composition tasks based on the music featured in the concert will help your children understand the music from a hands-on point of view. Here are some suggestions for creative work that can be undertaken in groups in preparation for, or in response to, the concert. You may like to explore these further activity suggestions to get the children more familiar with the story's themes and characters.

1. Discuss how the animals feel at different times in the story

- ★ How do you think Stan and Mabel feel reading the newspaper headlines at the beginning?
- ★ How does the polar bear feel about his iceberg home melting away?
- ★ If you were the mayor, what rules would you enforce?
- ★ How do the animals feel as they race towards the rocket?

Then discuss what kind of music would suit each of the emotions above. Can you have a musical conversation as different characters?

Musical building blocks

Exploring the inter-related dimensions of music, use these words to imagine and discuss what kind of music would suit each of the emotions above:

Pitch: high to low sounds

Dynamics: loud to quiet sounds

Tempo: fast to slow sounds

Duration: long or short sounds

Timbre: the sound qualities of different instruments

Texture: how many layers of sounds - just one instrument or lots at the same time

Structure: how the music is organised; sequences and patterns

2. NEWSFLASH!

Look at Mabel's newspaper on page 9. Can your children write and draw a newspaper article or a newsflash design inspired by any of the elements in the story? Or perhaps you could create a NEWSFLASH film about your trip to the Southbank Centre to hear the London Philharmonic Orchestra!

3. Come with us!

Look at the black and white picture below - Stan and Mabel invite Rhino to join them. Rhino asks if Orangutan can come.

Ask the children what other animals they can see. Encourage them to say 'Come with us!' to each of the animals. You could gather up cuddly toys or picture cards.



© Jason Chapman

4. Musical ‘Countdowns’

- ★ Everyone count down from 10 to 1, blast-off!
- ★ Try changing the dynamics (start saying it quietly and get louder)
- ★ Try at different speeds (you set the pulse before: say ‘Off we go’ to start together)

Silent countdown

To create a silent countdown, say ‘Off we go’ and have the children count from 10 in their heads and all shout ‘Blast Off!’ when they get to the end. Was everyone together? How can you make it more together?

Percussion countdown

To create a percussion countdown, seat 10 children in a circle. Going round the circle, each child plays one sound on each number, and then everyone shouts ‘Blast Off!’.

Or, perhaps you could layer the sounds, starting with one player and then adding one more each time - building up both the texture and the dynamic. What new sound or action could be on ‘Blast Off!’? You might even choose some sounds to represent the rocket flying after the blast-off.

5. Experiment with the word ‘Pandemonium’!

Discuss what pandemonium means. Imagine what ‘pandemonium’ looks like in different contexts:

- ★ What would it look like in a vet’s surgery?
- ★ How about in the school dining room?
- ★ What if it was happening in your bedroom at home?

More classroom pandemonium...

- ★ Ask the children to draw their own pictures using the title ‘Pandemonium’
- ★ Enact a freeze frame of pandemonium and take photos (one child pretends to drop their tray of food, one child lays on the floor pretending they have fallen over, another child acts like a cross teacher etc.)
- ★ Can you create some musical pandemonium? Choose some percussion instruments, or some found sound-makers to represent your pandemonium scene!

6. Explore the orchestra

Research the musical instruments that will be in the concert (see a map of the orchestra on page 6). Discuss the key characteristics of the groups or 'families' of instruments; woodwind, brass, strings and percussion. What do they sound like? How do you play them? Which instruments play the highest and lowest sounds?

- ★ Can you make your own versions of these instruments using materials in your class - perhaps shoeboxes and elastic bands, bottles with different amounts of water, cutlery... Can you invent your own instrument?

You can meet some of the LPO players too:

- ★ Meet Dave and his trombone: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yOGVGFnBuZI&t=126s>
- ★ Meet Alice and her oboe: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tqJ-gR3DV0>

Here is a picture of The Greatest Animal Orchestra as featured in the story, including Mabel the cat as the conductor and Stan the dog on the violin. What other animals and instruments can you see?



© Jason Chapman

The Conductor

Discuss the role of the conductor. By moving their arms or a baton at different speeds, the musicians in the orchestra know how fast to play, as well as when they stop and start. Can the children in your class have a go at conducting? Play a simple game of 'Copy Me':

- ★ Invite one child (the conductor) to stand at the front of all the other children (the orchestra). Make sure everyone is watching and ready!
- ★ The conductor lifts one arm up and down at a steady speed to start with and the 'orchestra' (other children) do the same.
- ★ The conductor can get a bit faster and a bit slower, making sure that everyone is copying.
- ★ Choose an agreed action for 'stop' (perhaps two hands out in front) and everyone has to 'freeze' when they see this sign!
- ★ Without talking, the 'conductor' starts conducting again and the 'orchestra' copies.
- ★ You could even add in some percussion instruments and play sounds together.

More music

In the concert, the Orchestra will also perform four exciting and inspiring pieces of music that complement the *Stan and Mabel and the Race for Space* story. Here is some background information about the music for you and the children. We have also suggested some additional activities that you might like to explore before or after the concert.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 – 1791) 'Overture' from *The Marriage of Figaro* (1786)

An overture is the opening piece of music in a big musical performance, like an opera or a ballet. Its role is to catch everyone's attention, inspiring and intriguing the audience about what is to come - and this certainly will!

Mozart wrote 22 operas and this music comes from one of his most popular - the 'comic' opera *The Marriage of Figaro*. The opera has an excellent blend of comedy, social commentary, and musical brilliance. Apparently, Mozart only completed writing this overture two days before the opening performance of the opera in 1786!



The music starts with quick and bustling notes from the string instruments and the bassoon. Melodies are then passed around the woodwind instruments like a woodwind helter skelter. The chords on the percussion and brass instruments build up the energy and volume.

Explore it more...

- ★ You could perhaps draw similarities with the Stan and Mabel story as the main characters gather up more and more animal friends to join them as they race across the city
- ★ Watch a YouTube film of this piece and imitate the conductor at the front. Which instruments can you see? Encourage the children to talk in pairs about how the musicians make the sounds and play the music.

Benjamin Britten (1913 – 1976)

'Dawn' from *Four Sea Interludes* from *Peter Grimes* (1945)

Benjamin Britten was a very famous English composer. He wrote his first opera, *Peter Grimes*, in 1945 about a fishing village on the Suffolk coast where he lived.



The sea is really important the whole way through the opera, and we get to see how the villagers interact with the ocean for food and for income, as well as the general rhythm of their everyday lives. The *Four Sea Interludes* are orchestral pieces that are heard during the scene changes in the opera, each one giving a different vivid picture of the sea and introducing the drama of the upcoming scene.

The section of music 'Dawn' starts with the stillness of the morning sea with a gentle violin and flute melody. Then the swell of the waves (harp), the rippling water (cymbal), the seagulls and the gathering momentum of the ocean waves (brass and timpani).

Explore it more...

- ★ Listen to a recording of this piece. Maybe lay on the floor, close your eyes, take some deep breaths.
- ★ Ask the children to imagine this piece is about the Arctic Ocean, just like where the polar bear in the Stan and Mabel story has come from. The polar bear is clinging onto the melting iceberg. Using your geographical vocabulary, discuss the physical features and location of the Arctic Ocean.



© Jason Chapman

Listen again, this time encouraging the children to imagine pictures of this scene in their minds while they listen. Together can you identify some sections of music that sound like these:

- ★ A calm and tranquil sea - the sun sparkly on the flat surface
- ★ The wind blowing gentle ripples on the water
- ★ A great, icy, cold iceberg floating above and beneath the surface
- ★ A HUGE splash of big, frothy wave
- ★ Goosebumps and chattering teeth
- ★ The vast expanse and depth of the Arctic Ocean

Send us your artwork!

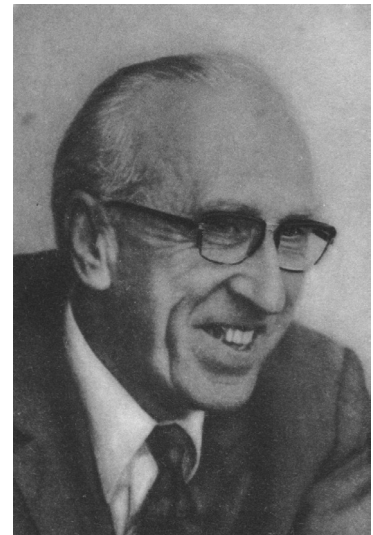
Create your own paintings and artwork inspired by the sections of this piece of music that could represent the different states of the Arctic Ocean listed on the previous page, or animals you may find in the Arctic. We would love to show some of your Arctic Ocean artwork during the concert on the big screen!

If you'd like your class artwork to be featured, email photos of your artwork to us, including the first name and age of each artist (if you'd like the names to appear on screen too). While we can't guarantee to feature absolutely every image we receive, we love seeing all your pictures, and will aim to display as many as we can.

Send your photos of your artwork to education@lpo.org.uk by Friday 13 February

Dimitry Kabalevsky (1904 – 1987) 'Comedian's Galop' from the *Comedians Suite* Op.26 (1940)

Dimitry Kabalevsky was a Russian composer and a passionate music educator. He wrote *The Comedians* in 1938 as incidental music for Mark Daniel's children's play entitled *The Inventor and the Comedians*. The play was performed at the Central Children's Theatre and was about a group of travelling entertainers. After Kabalevsky realised how popular this incidental music was, he chose ten short numbers from the play and arranged them into a concert suite.



For this concert, we have chosen this short and lively piece: 'Comedian's Galop'. It is marked presto, meaning very fast, and is a frantic march with three main sections. The first is a comic tune played by the full orchestra, punctuated by three loud, repeated chords, that almost sound like a car horn! Then, in the middle, there's a solo performance by the xylophone before we hear the first section again. The mood is comic, frantic and circus-like!

Explore it more...

- ★ Listen to the music and imagine what could be happening in this scene. Inspired by the Stan and Mabel 'pandemonium' scene, when I listen to this music, I can imagine: people running around in circles, bumping into each other and falling over; cars beeping their horns and people looking surprised! I could imagine galloping horses running through the city streets. Absolute chaos! What do your children imagine? Perhaps they could draw a picture, and link it with the activity on page 19.

-
- ★ Play a game of musical statues. Play the Kabalevsky music and encourage the children to move around the room to the music like a character or an action. When the music stops, get everyone to freeze!
 - ★ You could compare and contrast the Kabalevsky and Britten pieces with your children using descriptive language. Or, have both pieces loaded up ready to play, and ask your children to move one way for the Britten piece, and a different way for the Kabalevsky. Switch between short clips of each piece for a fun warm-up in a PE lesson!

Ron Grainer/Delia Derbyshire arr. Robin McEwan ***Doctor Who* theme (1963)**

This is possibly one of the most popular pieces of TV theme music. The *Doctor Who* theme transports us on a journey through time and relative dimensions in space, and sets the scene for every episode. First released in 1963, the original was a really innovative piece of electronic music; each note was created from recordings of plucked strings and white noise. These sounds were cut, spliced, sped up, or slowed down digitally to create brand new sounds that you hear.

The version of the music that we will hear is arranged just for orchestra and the music starts with the timpani playing. The strings hold long notes and then the main theme begins.

It is a perfect finale to our concert as it sounds powerful and is action-packed. Imagine striding out of the concert hall into another period in time!



Explore it more...

- ★ Discuss which time period you would visit. Draw a picture of what it would look like in another period. Don't forget to add yourself in!
- ★ Try recording some sounds and making a composition of your own.

Thank you

We hope this pack will give you some suggestions to support Key Stage 1 provision in your school. For further ideas, don't forget to look at Learning Resources 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/brightsparks/

We'd love to hear from you about your school's musical activities! 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.

