

THE DESERT SYMPHONY
**PAINTING
PICTURES
WITH MUSIC**

FRIDAY
OCTOBER 20 2017
10 AM & 11:30 AM



LEARNING LINKS



2017 > 2018
FIELD TRIP SERIES

BROADEN THE HORIZONS
OF YOUR CLASSROOM.
EXPERIENCE THE VIBRANT
WORLD OF THE ARTS
AT THE McCALLUM!

McCALLUM THEATRE EDUCATION
PRESENTS

THE DESERT SYMPHONY PAINTING PICTURES WITH MUSIC

FRIDAY
OCTOBER 20 2017
10 AM & 11:30 AM

“When I was 4,
my parents told me to
sit down and play piano.”

> GARY BERKSON,
MUSIC DIRECTOR

Connecting to Curriculum and Students' Lives!

HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY > Europe (especially France and the Czech Republic), Mexico
ARTS > Music, symphonic tone poems

EXPANDING THE CONCEPT OF LITERACY

What is a “text”? We invite you to consider the performances on McCallum’s Field Trip Series as non-print texts available for study and investigation by your students. Anyone who has shown a filmed version of a play in their classroom, used a website as companion to a textbook, or asked students to do online research already knows that “texts” don’t begin and end with textbooks, novels, and reading packets. They extend to videos, websites, games, plays, concerts, dances, radio programs, and a number of other non-print texts that students and teachers engage with on a regular basis.

We know that when we expand our definition of texts to the variety of media that we use in our everyday lives, we broaden the materials and concepts we have at our disposal in the classroom, increase student engagement, and enrich learning experiences.

Please consider how utilizing your McCallum performance as a text might align to standards established for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language.

How do we help students to use these texts as a way of shaping ideas and understanding the world?

Please use this material to help you on this journey.

NON-PRINT TEXT > any medium/text that creates meaning through sound or images or both, such as symbols, words, songs, speeches, pictures, and illustrations not in traditional print form including those seen on computers, films, and in the environment.

THE WORK OF ART

A NON-PRINT TEXT FOR STUDY

WHAT'S IT MADE OF? HOW CAN THIS WORK SERVE AS A COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS-MANDATED "TEXT" FOR STUDENT STUDY IN THE CLASSROOM?



When our valley's resident orchestra, The Desert Symphony, takes the stage in its special Field Trip Series program, the focus will be on great classical works which also appeal to a broad audience. One selection – the prelude (or overture) to *Carmen* – comes from the world of opera. Another – *Die Moldau* – is a staple of the symphonic concert hall. And the third – *Danzon No. 2* – is a relative newcomer whose overwhelming success proves that classical music is by no means washed-up.



GEORGES BIZET

The prelude to Act 1 of *Carmen* by French composer Georges Bizet introduces three important musical themes. First, the entrance music of the bullfighters (which we will hear again in Act 4 at the arena), followed by the melody of the *Toreador Song* (which the dashing torero Escamillo will sing in Act 2). And finally the motif that represents both Carmen herself and the idea of fate, which assumes a major role in her life and death. This third motif, played on clarinet, bassoon, cornet and cellos over tremolo strings, rises to a huge crescendo and then abruptly stops. At this point in staged productions, the lights suddenly come up full force on stage and we see that we are on the streets of the city on a sweltering day at high noon.

Act 2 also begins with a short prelude, based on a melody that Carmen's boyfriend, José, will sing offstage just before he comes on.

The prelude to Act 3 was originally intended for another of Bizet's operas. It has been described by musical expert Ernest Newman as "an exquisite miniature, with much dialoguing and intertwining between the woodwind instruments." Oftentimes, this justly famous and much-loved piece – gentle and flowing in quality – is positioned more as an interlude between scenes than a prelude per se.

All of these preludes are worth a short trip to YouTube!



BEDŘICH SMETANA

Betsy Schwarm has described the beloved symphonic poem, *Die Moldau*, by Czech composer Bedřich Smetana in the following way for *Encyclopedia Britannica*. “The movement starts with light, rippling figures that represent the emergence of the Moldau River as two mountain springs, one warm and one cold. Water from the springs then combines to become a mighty river, symbolized by a thickly orchestrated, stately theme that recurs periodically throughout the remainder of the work. Farther downstream, the river passes jubilant hunters, portrayed by a horn melody, and then passes a village wedding, signaled by a passage in polka rhythm. The river then enters a gorge where, according to legend, water nymphs – suggested by serene and mysterious melodies – come out to bathe in the moonlight. With the morning light, the main river theme returns, though it soon breaks into tumultuous dissonance as the river enters the St. John’s Rapids. Beyond the white water, the river reaches Prague, where to grand arpeggios of a regal hymn; it flows past the castle Vyšehrad, once the seat of power for Bohemian kings. After fading to a trickle, the piece – and the journey – come to an unambiguous close with a loud two-chord cadence.”



ARTURO MARQUEZ

Mexican composer Arturo Marquez opens *Danzón No. 2* with a slow, graceful introduction and then switches gears abruptly, layering on the fiery brio. There’s lots of syncopation at this point. The rhythms are highly percussive, conveying a sense of passion. Sometimes the music slows down and turns lyrical for brief solos and duets. In more spirited sections, however, you can hear the clack-clack of the clavés. Could that be the beating of the Latin heart? Amusingly, the oboe steps in and takes up the melody of the clarinet. Are the two instruments caught up in a dance of their own? The piano takes over in a brief interlude. A different feeling settles in. We hear the brass and strings produce strokes, sharp and repetitive. The next passages are marked *con fuoco* – Italian for “with fire.” And fiery those brass and woodwinds surely are! Suddenly all instruments except the piccolo go silent, listening to that tiniest of instruments wax lyrical. Then, the opening theme returns on piano and violin. The dance revs up. Faster and faster, wilder and wilder. The instruments throw out constant short bits of the musical themes in the general fracas. And as the excitement mounts, every instrument joins in the same note and rhythm, in constant repetition, gaining in volume and intensity.

“I think it’s
a piece for hope,
para esperanza.”

> COMPOSER ARTURO MARQUEZ
ABOUT HIS COMPOSITION,
DANZON NO. 2



THE ARTISTS

WHO HAS *PRODUCED*
THIS TEXT FOR STUDY?

A native of Michigan, Edwin Benachowski won many awards for his clarinet playing. He also performed under the baton of noted conductor Percy Grainger. He was a bandmaster during WWII, touring the Midwest with singing cowboy Gene Autry and the South Pacific with Danny Kaye. He studied at Juilliard School of Music, and in 1989 took the helm of The Desert Symphony. When he passed away, the current Music Director, Gary Berkson, took over the reins. Previously, Maestro Berkson was the Resident Conductor of the Royal Swedish Ballet and Royal Swedish Opera. A Juilliard graduate, he is best known for his work as a conductor in the theater, appearing with companies such as the Dutch National Ballet, the Nederlands Dans Theater, Hamburg Ballet, Norwegian National Ballet, Finnish National Ballet, Greater Miami Opera, and Chattanooga Opera. He has conducted for Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip of Great Britain, King Carl XVI Gustav and Queen Silvia of Sweden, and Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands.

THE ORCHESTRA OFFERS THE FOLLOWING MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide a professional orchestra committed to enhancing and enriching the cultural life of the people in the Desert Cities. We offer a series of concerts, recitals and special events with programs of musical, artistic excellence that entertain, educate and engage the audience. We are also dedicated to providing free concerts to schoolchildren where they can experience a live symphony orchestra.



GARY BERKSON

Made up of approximately 65 musicians, ranging in age from 30 to 80-something, and hailing from all over Southern California; the actual number playing in a given concert varies according to the orchestration needs of the particular program. On the educational front, The Desert Symphony recently began a project in partnership with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Coachella Valley. Orchestra musicians go into classrooms during after-school hours to perform and talk with the students about music in general and classical music in particular.

When asked what musical genres the orchestra focuses on, Maestro Berkson offered the following, “Mostly classical music when it began. About 10 years ago, when it moved into the McCallum Theatre and needed to find a broader audience, the shift was made toward popular music – from jazz to big band to country-western to Broadway. That seems to be the niche that the audience wants, and of course the orchestra is there ... for the audience.”

When questioned about his own musical upbringing, he shared, “I never saw myself as a musician. My goal was to become a theoretical mathematician. But then when I was at university – this was a couple of years after we landed on the moon and there was a lot of talk about dismantling the space program – I figured, I really can’t stand on a street corner with a slide rule doing calculations for a quarter ... but ... at least I can play [music]!”

CONTEXTS

WHAT INFORMATION SURROUNDS THIS TEXT FOR STUDY & COULD HELP MAKE STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT WITH IT MORE POWERFUL?

The opera *Carmen* premiered at the Opéra-Comique in Paris on March 3, 1875. It broke with convention, shocking – scandalizing – those first audiences. Composer Georges Bizet died suddenly after the 33rd performance. He could have had no idea that this work would become one of the most revered – and often-performed – operas of all time! Its biggest “hit numbers” are the *Habanera* (which Carmen sings when she makes her first appearance) and the *Toreador Song* (the dashing toreador sings this one, of course).

The opera is set in southern Spain and tells the story of the downfall of Don José, a naïve soldier who falls in love with the fiery gypsy Carmen. José turns his back on his childhood sweetheart and goes AWOL from the military all for the sake of this new girlfriend. Even so, Carmen gets bored after a while and runs off with the glamorous toreador Escamillo. After that, things go from bad to worse. Showing ordinary, even poor, people, on stage in an opera unsettled audiences used to seeing kings and queens and figures from mythology represented in works on the operatic stage. They weren't accustomed to seeing lawlessness and street violence depicted in opera either. After the premiere, reviews were scathing, and it was only after the piece acquired popularity in other countries that the French public gave *Carmen* a second look. The music is now widely admired for its indelible melodies and atmosphere, as well as for the way in which Bizet represents the emotions and suffering of his characters through the medium of music.

The Moldau (or *Vltava* in Czech) is one of six pieces that go to make a larger work by Czech composer Bedřich Smetana, *Má vlast*, or *My Homeland*. These symphonic poems were written between 1874 and 1879. It was the Hungarian composer Franz Liszt who first came up with the symphonic poem form, and Smetana added to this form a sense of nationalism. Each piece tells about some aspect of the Czech countryside or culture. *The Moldau* – its German name – lasts about 13 minutes, and is in the key of E minor. Smetana uses tone painting to help the audience imagine one of Bohemia's great rivers purely through musical sounds. Here's how he put it: “The composition describes the course of the Vltava, starting from the two small springs, the Cold and Warm Vltava, to the unification of both streams into a single current, the course of the Vltava through woods and meadows, through landscapes where a farmer's wedding is celebrated, the round dance of the mermaids in the night's moonshine: on the nearby rocks loom proud castles, palaces and ruins aloft. The Vltava swirls into the St John's Rapids; then it widens and flows toward Prague, past the Vyšehrad, and then majestically vanishes into the distance, ending at the Labe.”

The piece features Smetana's most famous tune, which he adapted from the melody *La Mantovana*. This Renaissance piece also provided the basis for the Israeli national anthem, *Hatikvah*. And it shows up yet again in a famous Czech song, *The Cat Crawls Through the Hole*.

Danzón No. 2 is one of the most popular and most frequently performed orchestral compositions in Mexican contemporary classical music. It became super famous worldwide when the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela under Gustavo Dudamel played it on their concerts during their 2007 tour. Arturo Marquez' best-known composition features solos for clarinet, oboe, piano, violin, trumpet and piccolo. It also shows up in concert band performances quite a bit, owing to Oliver Nickel's lively arrangement.

Danzón is the official musical genre and dance of Cuba. It shows up elsewhere as well – Mexico, for example, and Puerto Rico. Written in 2/4 time, the danzón has a slow tempo, meant to coordinate with a formal dance done by two partners. There's special footwork that goes with the musical form's syncopated beats. Elegant pauses suspend the action periodically when the couples are meant to stand still, listening to the instruments play virtuoso passages.

TO GET READY FOR THE PERFORMANCE, STUDENTS COULD RESEARCH THESE:

- > THE RIVER MOLDAU
 - > 19TH CENTURY SEVILLE, SPAIN
 - > DANZÓN
-

HERE'S A 60-MINUTE LESSON IN COLLABORATION & PROBLEM-SOLVING YOU COULD TEACH TO HELP PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THIS WORK:

LINE OF INQUIRY – LOI is an essential question that generates a lesson:

How do the three pieces that make up *Painting Pictures With Music* convey, through musical sounds, images of places and events?

ASK STUDENTS

How can music tell us things? What kinds of things?

SHOW A CLIP

www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiiPb0h3CRs

(This shows a live orchestra playing *The Moldau*.)

Have students describe what they see and hear. Share with them that the piece was written as a way of painting a picture with sound. Show it a second time, asking students to use their imagination to decide what pictures they think the composer is painting.

Students share their responses aloud.

Reveal that the Moldau is a famous river in the Czech Republic and then show the following clip:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zz9okzlhDSk

(This shows images of the river as the musical tone poem plays in the background.)

Have students individually create on paper their own pictures based on what they hear in the music as it plays.

You may want to share some context from Smetana's programmatic description to help spark ideas. Here are some key points:

- > Two small springs grow progressively larger and then unify into a single current.
- > It winds through woods and meadow.
- > It flows past a farmer's wedding.
- > The mermaids dance in the night's moonshine.
- > It widens and flows toward the great old city of Prague. Students might very well enjoy seeing images of this most fairytale-like of all world cities – www.prague.net/photo-gallery

These pictures are shared and students notice interesting details.

AFTER COMING TO THE THEATER, STUDENTS COULD RESEARCH THESE:

- > CLASSICAL MUSIC
- > TONE POEMS (FOR EXAMPLE RICHARD STRAUSS' *TILL EULENSPIEGEL*)

HERE'S A 45/60-MINUTE LESSON YOU COULD TEACH AFTER STUDENTS HAVE EXPERIENCED THE WORK:

DISCUSSION

Have students take a look back at the performance. What stood out, and why? Describe the concert. What were the different pieces – and how were they sequenced? What skills were the players using? What were the different groupings of instrumentalists? How did the players and the conductor appear to communicate with each other? What evidence did you find of collaboration? What emotions were conveyed – and how? What pictures came to mind? What surprised you? What do you want to know more about?

Share with students some information about symphonic tone poems. Here's a great site:
www.classicallykids.org/composer-of-the-month/tone-poems/

Then, play either *Danzón No. 2*: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZXeWiiXwEz4
or the Prelude to Act 3 of *Carmen*: www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyWbs38ULRE

Students consider what pictures come to them hearing this music. Then, they write descriptions of these images.

These are read aloud.

QUESTION

What in the music corresponds to these descriptions?

“New wine
demands new bottles.”

> FRANZ LISZT EXPLAINING HIS
DEPARTURE FROM THE TRADITIONAL
CONCERTO FORM



WHAT'S YOUR READ OF THIS NON-PRINT TEXT?

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS - AND HOW COULD THEY BE ADAPTED AS GUIDING QUESTIONS TO SPARK STUDENT DISCUSSION?

- > About how many members did the orchestra have?
- > How were the different instruments arranged – in the space and in relationship to each other? To the conductor?
- > How did the instrumentalists collaborate?
- > What did the conductor do to help bring that about?
- > What else did you sense the conductor contributing to the performance?
- > How did the instrumental sounds interact with the acoustics of the room?
- > What did you observe about the soloist instrumentalists?
- > What kinds of stories did these pieces tell – and how?
- > What about mood? Sense of location? Events depicted?
- > What did you notice about pacing?
- > Which moments were climactic – and what made them so?
- > How was the idea of contrast employed in this performance?
- > How did the music make you respond? What contributed to that, do you think?
- > What did you observe about the structure of the concert?
What about the sequence of pieces?



INTERNET

CLASSICALLY KIDS – TONE POEMS

www.classicallykids.org/composer-of-the-month/tone-poems/

A history of symphonic tone poems.

KIDZSEARCH – SYMPHONIC POEM

https://wiki.kidzsearch.com/wiki/Symphonic_poem

PROFILES OF GREAT CLASSICAL COMPOSERS - BEDŘICH SMETANA

www.52composers.com/smetana.html

THEFAMOUSPEOPLE - GEORGES BIZET

www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/georges-bizet-397.php

ARTURO MARQUEZ

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arturo_M%C3%A1rquez

SFS KIDS FUN WITH MUSIC:

www.sfskids.org/classic/templates/instorchframe.asp?pageid=3

BOOKS

CARMEN: THE STORY OF BIZET'S OPERA

By: Robert Lawrence (Author), Alexandre Serebriakoff (Illustrator)

Publisher: Grosset & Dunlap, 1938

ASIN: B002CT4148

Hardbound, about 9.5 inches tall by 7.5 inches wide, 38 pages. The story of Bizet's famous opera is adapted for children, with black and white and color illustrations by Alexandre Serebriakoff.

STORY OF THE ORCHESTRA: LISTEN WHILE YOU LEARN ABOUT THE INSTRUMENTS, THE MUSIC AND THE COMPOSERS WHO WROTE THE MUSIC!

By: Robert Levine

Reading level: Ages 9 and up

Publisher: Black Dog & Leventhal, 2000

ISBN-10: 1579121489

Orchestra Bob guides readers through a delightful musical journey. The book is divided into two major parts: composers from Vivaldi to Bernstein and their associated musical periods, and the instruments of the orchestra. There are interesting and sometimes humorous bits of information about the composers, their music, and corresponding historical events. The last two pages introduce the conductor.

CDS

DVORAK: SYMPHONY NO. 9 FROM THE NEW WORLD/SMETANA: DIE MOLDAU

Performed by: Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra with Herbert von Karajan, Conductor

Label: Deutsche Grammophon, 1993

ASIN: B000001GJU

In addition to the *Moldau*, this CD offers fellow Czech composer Dvorak's exciting symphony with its many unforgettable melodies.

BIZET: CARMEN SUITE, L'ARLÉSIENNE SUITES

Performed by: Les Musiciens Du Louvre with Marc Minkowski, Conductor

Label: Naïve, 2008

ASIN: B01K8LSX7W

DANZÓN

Performed by: Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra with Keri-Lynn Wilson, Conductor

Label: Alliance, 1998

ASIN: B00000DMYX

"I want to do
nothing chic; I want
to have ideas before
beginning a piece."

> COMPOSER GEORGES BIZET

LEARNING LINKS HAVE BEEN
CREATED BY:

MARK ALMY
RESEARCH AND TEXT UNLESS
OTHERWISE NOTED

MARK DUEBNER DESIGN
DESIGN

MICHAEL FLANNIGAN
FIELD TRIP SERIES COORDINATOR

KAJSA THURESSON-FRARY
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION