

SYDNEY  
SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA

2026  
SEASON

Teachers  
Resource Kit



# BARTÓK

## Concerto for Orchestra

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MEET THE MUSIC

Stages 5 & 6

**Concerto for Orchestra, Sz. 116, BB  
123  
by Béla Bartók**

Stage 5 & 6 Teaching Resource  
Sydney Symphony Orchestra

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*“Your life can be changed and enriched through all sorts of music; music from now, music from the past, music from the very distant past and music from as recently as yesterday.*

*Through intensive listening students become involved in one of the highest orders of thinking.*

*As a teacher, by bringing students to a concert and studying music in the classroom, you are providing your students with a special pathway to musical knowledge through direct experience of and contact with live music.”*

Richard Gill AO

(1941-2018)

Conductor, notable educator and advocate. Richard was the founding Artistic Director of Education at the Sydney Symphony. He has inspired generation of musicians through his work and continues to inspire new generations through his legacy.

# Syllabus links

## NSW Curriculum

*Concerto for Orchestra* by Béla Bartók covers a range of topics from the NSW syllabuses:

### Years 7-10 Elective

Art Music of the 20th and 21st centuries

Music for Large Ensembles

### Music 1 Preliminary and HSC

Music of the 20th and 21st centuries

Music for Large Ensembles

### Music 2 Preliminary

Additional Topic: Music 1900 - 1945

### Music 2 HSC

Additional Topic: Music 1900 - 1945

# Syllabus Outcomes

The activities included in this kit cover a range of outcomes across the NSW Music Syllabus stages, as mapped below:

## Stage 4 and Stage 5 Elective Music

Activities	Syllabus Outcomes	Ideas for assessment
Activity 1: Listening and Performance	4 LIS1, 4PER1 5LIS1	Performance Discussion
Activity 2: Musicology	4 LIS1, 4PER1 5 LIS 1, 5 LIS 2	Notation and graphic responses Short written responses
Activity 3: Listening and Composition	4 COM 1, 5COM 1, 5 COM 2	Short written responses Composition portfolio
Activity 4: Aural and Musicology	4 LIS 1, 5 LIS1, 5 LIS2	Dictation exercises Graphic score creation
Activity 5: Performance and Musicology	4 LIS1, 4 PER 1 5 PER1, 5 PER2, 5 LIS2	Performance Short written responses

## Stage 6 Music 1

Activities	Syllabus Outcomes	Ideas for assessment
Activity 1: Listening and Performance	P1, P4, P6 H1, H4, H6	Short written responses Performance of key themes
Activity 2: Musicology	P2, P4 H2, H4	Short notations and written responses
Activity 3: Listening and Composition	P2, P3, P4, P6 H2, H3, H4, H6	Discussion Composition portfolio
Activity 4: Aural and Musicology	P2, P4, P6 H2, H4, H6	Graphic Score Oral or written extended response
Activity 5: Performance and Musicology	P1, P3, P7, P9 H1, H3, H7, H9	Performance Short exercises

## Stage 6 Music 2

Activities	Syllabus Outcomes	Ideas for assessment
Activity 1: Listening and Performance	P1, P2, P7, P8 H1, H2, H7, H8	Short written response Performance of themes
Activity 2: Musicology	P2, P5 H2, H5	Short notated and written responses
Activity 3: Listening and Composition	P3, P5, P6 H3, H5, H6	Short written response
Activity 4: Musicology	P1, P3, P4, P6, P8 H1, H3, H4, H6, H8	Discussion Extended written response
Activity 5: Performance and Musicology	P1, P2, P7, P9 H1, H2, H7, H9	Performance Written responses

# Work: *Concerto for Orchestra* by Béla Bartók

## Composer background

**Bartók** (1881 – 1945) was a Hungarian composer, pianist and a pioneer ethnomusicologist. He is considered one of the most important Hungarian composers of the 20th century. Among his notable works include the opera *Bluebeard's Castle*, the ballet *The Miraculous Mandarin*, his six string quartets, the *Concerto for Orchestra* and the *Microcosmos* piano methodology, all of which contained Hungarian musical flavours. As a child he learned piano, began writing small compositions from the age of 9 and gave his first public piano recital at the age of 11.

After studying music in Hungary – not Vienna where many of the eminent composers were taught, he met Kodály and together they set about collecting the folk music of Hungary with the objective of revitalising Hungarian music. Together they travelled to the far corners of Hungary collecting tunes, scales, rhythms, textures and harmonies endemic to the truly traditional music of Hungary. It was not surprising that both composers incorporated into their original music the melodic, rhythmic, and textural elements of peasant music. At a time when Nationalism was trending across Europe their own work became suffused with the folk spirit of Hungary.

As a critic of Nazism, once his country made a treaty with Hitler, Bartók decided it was time to leave his homeland and fled to the USA. Towards the end of his life Bartók was diagnosed with leukemia, which prevented him from teaching and performing. He did complete *Concerto for Orchestra* and it was premiered the year before he died.

As a composer of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, he assimilated many unrelated influences: Strauss' orchestration techniques and Debussy's impressionism, the Hungarian composers of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the new musical sounds of Stravinsky and Schoenberg and the folk material from his heritage he'd studied and gathered over his lifetime. Bartók arrived at a vital and varied style, rhythmically animated, where diatonicism and chromaticism sat side-by-side.

## Work Background

### *Concerto for Orchestra* (1943)

This symphony is in 5 movements:

1. Introduction - *Andante non troppo*
2. Game of Pairs - *Allegro Scherzando*
3. Elegia - *Andante, non troppo*
4. Intermezzo interrotto - *Allegretto*
5. Finale - *Pesante-Presto*

Koussevitzky, conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, commissioned Bartók to write an orchestral piece. At the time, new to America, Bartók needed both the money and the vote of confidence. This seemed to reinvigorate Bartók and retreating in August 1943 to the country, he wrote a substantial, five-movement work in under two months. Rather than a symphony, he called it a *Concerto for Orchestra* because he treated the orchestra in a 'single orchestral soloistic manner, and every section of the orchestra has an opportunity to shine.'

Bartók wrote the following brief program note for the occasion:

*“The general mood of the work represents, apart from the jesting second movement, a gradual transition from the sternness of the first movement and the lugubrious death-song of the third, to the life-assertion of the last one... The title of this symphony-like orchestral work is explained by its tendency to treat the single orchestral instruments in a concertante or soloistic manner. The ‘virtuoso’ treatment appears, for instance, in the fugato sections of the development of the first movement (brass instruments), or in the perpetuum mobile-like passage of the principal theme in the last movement (strings), and especially in the second movement, in which pairs of instruments consecutively appear with brilliant passages.”*

The most immediate features of the Concerto that promote unity are the germinal motifs heard in movement 1 whose contour is found in almost all of the important themes, in one form or another; and the perfect fourths shaped contours which open the work. This work is extraordinary in its ability to breach the gap that had developed between modern composer and their audiences. Bartók manages to combine many dissimilar influences: his mastery of grand forms from the Western Classical tradition, a deep personal engagement with Eastern European folk music and a wonderful, imaginative sense of sound. The *Concerto for Orchestra* was Bartók’s first work to readily establish itself with the general public, and remains a popular favourite with audiences, despite the complexities of its structure.

## Instrumentation of work

Woodwind	Brass	Percussion	Strings
3 Flutes (3 <sup>rd</sup> doubling Piccolo)	4 Horns in F	Triangle	Violin I
3 Oboes (3 <sup>rd</sup> doubling Cor Anglais)	3 Trumpets in C	Cymbals	Violin II
3 Clarinets in A and B flat (3 <sup>rd</sup> doubling Bass Clarinet)	2 Trombones	Side Drum	Viola
3 Bassoons (3 <sup>rd</sup> doubling Contrabassoon)	Bass trombone	Bass Drum	Cello
	Tuba	Tam Tam	Double Bass
		Timpani	2 Harps

# Listening Guide

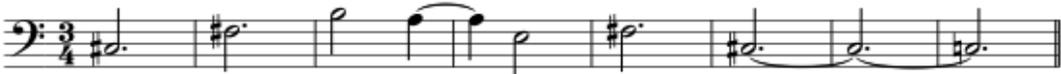
## Overview

This work is in 5 movements and in palindromic form. This means the middle slow movement has a scherzo either side, and either side of these is a larger movement, which has some motif and rhythmic similarities.

## Movement 1 - Introduction

The opening is dark, starting with a lengthy introduction based upon statements in perfect 4ths in cellos and double basses, which are interspersed by *tremolo* strings and flighty flute figures. After this idea is developed through 2 repetitions, a longer flute melody emerges. The music begins to build momentum as the cellos and basses, now joined by the violas, develop the fourth idea into a quaver walking bass, driving the music forward. Quiet trumpets play a development of the flute melody heard at bar 30 in harmony. Violins doubled by flutes and oboes enter strongly developing the flute idea from bar 30 into a longer, ascending pattern which builds the tension and texture and a huge fortissimo climax.

First statement



etc

Second Statement



etc

Third statement



etc

After this long introduction, the Sonata Form properly begins, and the first subject enters at bar 76 (*Allegro Vivace*) with a melody in 2 parts.

The first part is frantic (bar 76 – 81):

Violins



Where as the second part is more flowing and relaxed (bar 95-101). Throughout this passage, the fragment starting bar 76 can be heard. The trombone motif is also significant, first introduced at bar 134, and becomes increasingly important as the movement progresses.

The second subject group enters at bar 154 (*Tranquillo*) in the oboe. This tune is simple, more singable and almost folk-like in structure. This is accompanied by a rhythmic pedal

from the violas and celli, the celli sound harmonics on the same pitch as those played *arco* by the violas. Note that the rhythm from the second and third bars of the first subject is used frequently in the rhythmic structure of this theme.

The development starts with an explosion based upon the first subject theme. The first bar of the first subject is used in imitation, ascending and descending contours, placed in different parts of the bar and in contrary motion. It is heard as a stretto between the strings from bar 248 and extends into an energetic, restless pattern that works its way across the registers of the instruments.

The trombone motif heard earlier re-enters at bar 316 and is heard fugally across the brass section. This melody is also inverted. A climax *fortissimo* is reached at bar 386 where the first subject returns overlapping the ending of the brass fugato. Suddenly the folk-like second subject returns, now in the clarinets accompanied again by drones. The first subject returns in the strings like a coda, and in the final bars of the movement the brass play in unison the trombone theme with three notes added to create a strong, thrilling ending.

## Movement 2 – Game of Pairs

This movement marked *Scherzando* introduces the wind instruments in pairs. In ternary form, it begins with an 8-bar side drum (no snare) solo. Immediately after, two bassoons enter playing in parallel 6ths, accompanied sparsely by *pizzicato* strings. After the bassoons 16-bar solo, a pair of oboes take up the melody, this time in parallel 3rds as the *pizzicato* accompaniment continues. The melody sounds idiomatic to Eastern European folk music, full of rubato and quirky repetitive figures. Next to enter are a pair of clarinets playing in minor 7ths. The accompanying strings are now *arco* with violin II and violas playing a *ricochet* rhythmic ostinato against a slowly descending muted trills and *glissandi* harmonics on the first violins.

A pair of flutes playing in parallel 5ths enter at bar 60, and the strings accompaniment becomes a little more active but remains in a register below the two solo instruments. After a short passage played by the strings, the final pair enter, trumpets in parallel major 2nds. Muted trills on the strings create an eerie backdrop, they then play again an interlude which bridges into the B section and are joined by the side drum which continues into the next section, creating unity.

The middle of the work (B section of a ternary form) is a brass chorale and the side drum. The chorale is mostly comprised of 4-bar phrases with the last note held to allow for a small statement from the snare drum. Finally, at bar 147, the four horns enter for the first time in the movement, and their sustained note allows an imitative 3-note ascending pattern from the flutes and oboes to lead into the return of the A section.

Note that in the return of the A section, Bartók has made some alterations to the accompaniment to provide interest and showcase his own skills of orchestration. The bassoon theme has a countermelody added by an additional bassoon and the two oboes are joined by the clarinets playing in a mirrored contrary motion to their original theme. Then, the roles are reversed once the clarinet theme begins and flutes take on the countermelodic ideas, before taking on their own theme again in 5ths accompanied by the woodwind section. Below these statements, the string accompaniments are more active.

By the entrance of the trumpets, the two harps are enhancing the texture of the accompaniment with alternating *glissandi*. The music builds in volume and texture until a short coda starts at bar 248 and the last six bars are reserved for a *decrescendo* pattern on the side drum to end.

### Movement 3 – Elegia

This movement is an excellent example of a style utilised by Bartók known as Night Music and is in the form A, B, C, B1 A1 – which is itself a palindrome.

It starts darkly like the opening and draws upon musical material from the first movement – particular the intervals of the 4ths and 5ths which are heard in the double basses descending – unlike the first movement which focused on ascending shapes. The upper strings play a slow-moving crotchet canonic pattern coming to rest on a long-sustained note, while harp and woodwind solos intersperse short, fast moving scalic “waves”. These little woodwind interjections are believed to represent the sounds of the night – birds and insects. At bar 22, the woodwinds play a canonic passage in quavers, similar to that played earlier by the strings.

An eruption of intensity happens at section B (bar 34) with the return of an idea from the first movement played loudly by violins and clarinets.



Section C starts at bar 62 in the violas. The melodic material is similar to that of section B featuring step-wise movement, short phrases and repetition of patterns within the phrase. The music has become very soft, and texture is light due to the finger *tremolos* used across the strings. At bar 73, the woodwinds extend this tune loudly in unison and harp is added to the *glissando* textures. This continues to build in density, volume and texture until the A section returns quietly at bar 101 with violas and celli joining the basses. The movement ends with the piccolo creating a bird-like sound heard in the final bars as a brief coda.

### Movement 4 - Intermezzo

The structure of this movement is: Introduction, A, B, A1, C, B1 Coda. It starts with a flourishing fanfare trill from the lower strings, and the oboe enters with the A section melody.

The A melody is played on the oboe. Like the other melodies we have heard in this movement, it regularly changes metre and uses a lot of stepwise motion, reminiscent of a folk tune.



This melody continues, shared amongst the woodwind instruments before concluding in the oboe. Following this is a melody of a very different character introduced by the violas.



## Movement 5 – Finale

The Finale is in Sonata Form and brings more virtuosity to the orchestra. The horns open this motif in unison, loudly and joyfully. A frenzied rush of semiquavers is heard in contrapuntal lines from the violins accompanied by lower strings playing guitar style 4-note chords.



The climax is eventually reached with a *fortissimo* motif, but the energy does not stop, moving into a transition which is based upon the horn opening melody, now in the bassoons. The energy builds again in a *stretto* amongst the woodwinds based up the opening horn theme, before a *tranquillo*, chromatic *tremolo* string passage begins, leading to the second subject at bar 188. The second subject has a folk-like melody played by oboes. Like the motifs before it, this motive is repetitive and based upon short phrases with some unexpected rhythmic figures.

After this, a new tune is heard in the second trumpet which becomes very significant in the development at bar 201.



The development section is based solely upon this new tune. It is accompanied by ghostly harmonics on the strings. The second violins play a portamento version of the new melody at bar 265. Here, Bartók again demonstrates his affinity with string instruments and the many colours he can evoke from them. The tune is developed through counterpoint, inversion and *stretto*. There are some references to rhythmic patterns from the snare drum solo in movement 2.

The recapitulation starts at 384 with the frantic string energy followed by the transition from bar 449, this time concentrating on beautiful *legato* string chords from divisi violins. Bartók omits the second subject theme which was extensively developed earlier in the work entirely in the recapitulation and charges straight into the coda.

## Additional Media Resources

Below is a curated selection of additional third-party media resources teachers might choose to use in supporting their students to engage in concert preparation:

Full score with audio: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0DKuzKnklro>

Bartók's life in America. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Krp3Uee5-s>

Bartók at the Crossroads <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=isU-rq6p8ws>

Cght Music explained by Andras Schiff. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lbbkz2Fxl74>

Bartók's folk music transcriptions <https://bartok-nepzene.zti.hu/en/introduction>

## Audio Excerpts

Access the Spotify playlist by visiting the following link:

<https://open.spotify.com/album/317b74rpNBO2uhaJFyMaxJ?si=SWX4mjBQRNGN76GBxD4ujQ>

Excerpt No.	Bar No.	Time	Activity	Page
1	Mvt 1: 1-30	0.00-1.26	Activity 1 Task 1	15
2	Mvt 1: 76-94	3.36-3.51	Activity 1 Task 1	15
3	Mvt 3:1-9	0.00-0.40	Activity 1 Task 2	16
4	Mvt 4: 1-69	0.00-1.50	Activity 1 Task 3	17
5	Mvt 5:1-4	0.00-0.05	Activity 1 Task 4	18
6	Mvt 5: 201-211	2.52-3.02	Activity 1 Task 4	18
7	Mvt 2: 1-122	0.00-3.04	Activity 2 Task 1	19 & 21
8	Mvt 2:123-158	3.04-4.05	Activity 2 Task 3	21
9	Mvt 3: 1-22	0.00-1.29	Activity 3 Task 1	23
10	Mvt 3: 19-35	1:10-1:38	Activity 3 Task 2	23
11	Mvt 4: 4-12	0.04-0.16	Activity 4 Task 1	25
12	Mvt 4: 43-59	1.00-1.15	Activity 4 Task 2	25
13	Mvt 5: 1-15	0.00-0.14	Activity 5 Task 1	26
14	Mvt 5: 148-161	1:59-2:11	Activity 5 Task 2	27

## Score Excerpts

Score excerpts are from Public Domain, IMSLP:

[https://imslp.org/wiki/Concerto\\_for\\_Orchestra%2C\\_Sz.116\\_\(Bart%C3%B3k%2C\\_B%C3%A9la\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Concerto_for_Orchestra%2C_Sz.116_(Bart%C3%B3k%2C_B%C3%A9la))

# Learning Activities

## Activity 1: Listening and Performance

At the end of this activity, you will be familiar with key motifs from the *Concerto for Orchestra* and their construction. You will also have had practice performing from three different clefs.

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### Task 1

This task has four parts:

- Listen to the opening of the concerto **Audio Excerpt 1** (0.00-1.26, bars 1-30) for orchestra while following the excerpts below.
- The interval of a 4th is an important feature of these motifs. Mark as many as you can find on the music. Are they all perfect 4ths or are there other types?
- Discuss the similarities and differences between the first three statements and then compare these with the violin theme.
- Learn to play each of these tunes.

First statement



Second Statement



Third statement



Now listen to **Excerpt 2** (3.36-3.51, bar 76-94).



## Task 2

This task also has four parts:

1. Listen to **Audio Excerpt 3** (0.00-0.40, bars 1-9), the opening of the third movement while following the transcription below.
2. Identify places where dissonance occurs in the harmony as each line enters.
3. Discuss the similarities and differences between the first and third movement openings.
4. In four parts, play the opening from Movement III.

Slowly and mysteriously

The musical score is presented in two systems, each with four staves. The first system covers bars 1 through 5, and the second system covers bars 6 through 9. The time signature is 3/4. The first system shows the initial entries of the four parts, with the bass part providing a harmonic foundation and the treble parts entering in a staggered fashion. The second system continues the development of the harmonic texture, with various parts playing sustained notes and moving lines, creating a complex and dissonant sound.

### Task 3

In Movement IV, the A section has two important themes, which are written below.

Listen to **Audio Excerpt 4** (0.00-1.50 bars 1-69) then answer the following questions:

1. What is the pitch range of each of these?
2. How does the composer construct the melodic material?
3. What features of these two melodies give them a folk like quality?
4. Learn to play each of the melodies after you have rewritten the viola part into treble clef.

#### Movement IV Theme 1

Oboe



The musical notation for Oboe Theme 1 consists of two staves of music in treble clef. The first staff contains 8 measures, and the second staff contains 8 measures. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature changes from 2/4 to 5/8, then back to 2/4, then to 5/8, and finally back to 2/4. The melody is characterized by eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and features a folk-like quality with simple intervals and a clear melodic line.

#### Movement IV Theme 2

Violas



The musical notation for Violas Theme 2 consists of two staves of music in bass clef. The first staff contains 8 measures, and the second staff contains 8 measures. The key signature is one flat (Bb). The time signature changes from 6/8 to 3/4, then to 5/8, then to 3/4, then to 5/8, and finally to 7/8. The melody is characterized by eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and features a folk-like quality with simple intervals and a clear melodic line.

### Task 4

The last two themes are from Movement V.

Both of these tunes are used in counterpoint at different times throughout the movement.

1. Listen to these two themes and identify which aspects of the tunes do you think make them work well for contrapuntal writing?
2. Learn to play both themes.

Movement V Theme 1 **Audio Excerpt 5** (0.00-0.05, bar 1-4).



Movement V Fugue Theme (transposed up a tone to make it easier to play) **Audio Excerpt 6** (2.52-3.02, bar 201-211).



## Activity 2: Musicology

At the end of this activity, you will be able to describe the composer's use of pitch. You will also be able to describe some of the techniques used by the composer create the impression of a "concerto for orchestra".

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### Task 1

Below is a graphic score of the opening of the second movement.

Study the score using the key in the bottom right-hand corner to predict what will be happening in the piece.

Once you have figured it out listen to the opening of Movement II, **Audio Excerpt 7** (0.00-3.04, bar 1-122) whilst following the graphic score.

Explain how the person who created the score demonstrates each of the following:

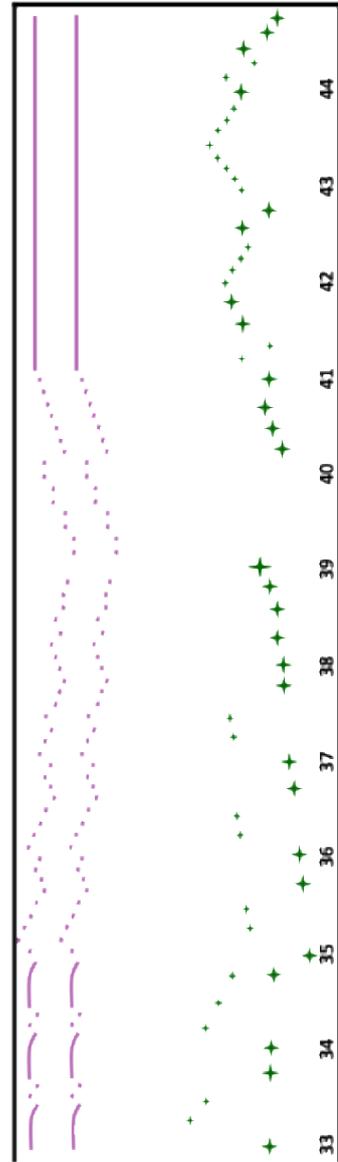
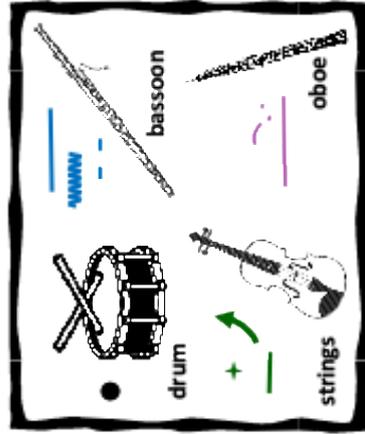
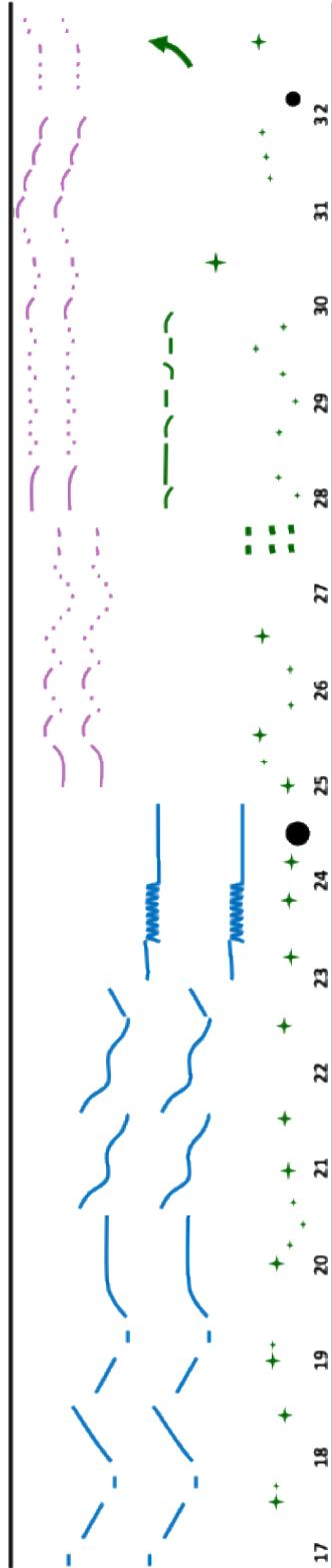
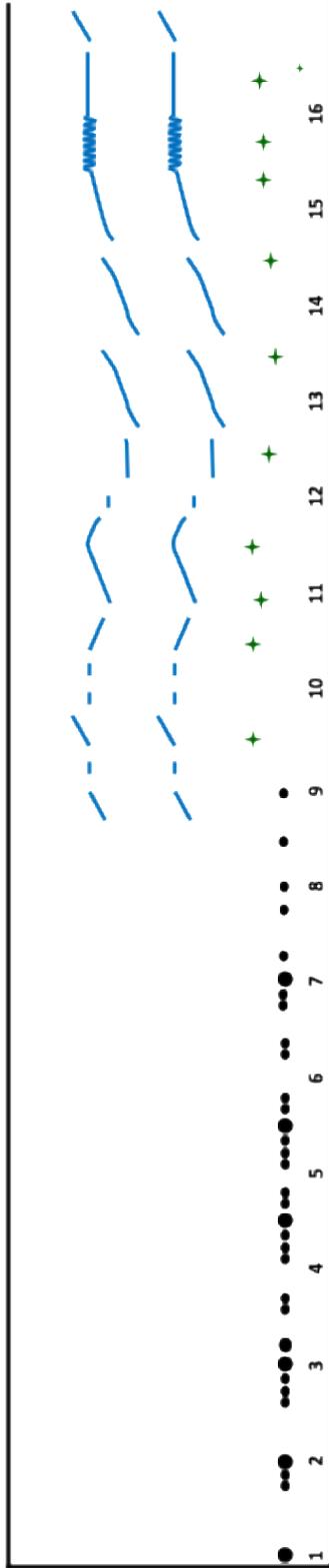
- Pitch
- Rhythm
- Tone colour
- Texture

Which concept of music has the creator of the score not shown? How might they have shown it?

NB the score is colour coded: see original here:

<https://lpo.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Bartok-Game-of-Pairs-Opening-Graphic-Score.pdf>

# Béla Bartók—opening of *The Game of Pairs* from *Concerto for Orchestra*



## Task 2

Listen to the opening of the second movement **Audio Excerpt 7** (0.00-3.04, bar 1-122).

1. What solo instrument opens the movement?
2. What is the first melodic instrument to enter?
3. Describe the accompaniment to this melody.
4. How many instruments are playing the opening melody?  
Bonus question: what parallel intervals are they playing in?
5. After this group finish playing other pairs of wind instruments enter, taking it in turn to be the main melodic instrument. List them in the order in which they enter. Clue: there are four pairs.
6. Extension question: Each pair of instruments are playing in a parallel interval which changes as each new pair enters. What are the intervals. (Clue: consider first if it is a consonant or dissonant interval to narrow your choices!)

## Task 3

Below is the B or middle section of this movement. Listen to **Audio Excerpt 8** (3.04-4.05, bar 123-158) and answer the questions:

1. Which family of instruments play the pitch material here?
2. Which standard orchestral instrument from this family is missing from the excerpt below?
3. How do the phrases and texture in this section contract with that of the first section.
4. Analyse the chords played on the first 7 crotchet beats of this excerpt.
5. How does the composer maintain some unity between this section and the A section?

The musical score for the B section (bars 123-141) is presented in four staves. The top staff is for Trpns I, II in C, the second for Trbns I, II, the third for Tuba, and the fourth for S Dr. The tempo is marked '(lo stesso tempo)' and the dynamics are 'mf' for the brass and 'p' for the snare drum. The snare drum part is marked 'always without snares'. The score shows a complex texture with overlapping melodic lines and chords.

## Task 4 (Extension)

One of the features of this piece that supports the concept of “collective virtuosity” which earned the work the title, *Concerto for Orchestra*, is the virtuosity of the string writing. This ranges from the ridiculously fast passages of semiquavers in Movement V, extremes of range, and even the accompanying role the strings have in the second movement. Here Bartók changes the audience’s relationship to the orchestra, as he wants the audience to look beyond the front row string section who usually present much of the melodic material in orchestral music. The strings in Movement II function only as an accompaniment and percussive section. It is the woodwinds and brass that have the interesting melodies and shine as soloists.

But the string writing is nonetheless quite inventive, exploring a range of tone colours from the string section.

Refer to the score, Movement II bars 166 to the end and discuss the virtuosity of the string parts in terms of the range of tone colours and playing techniques required.

## Activity 3: Listening and Composition

At the end of this activity, you will be able to describe how Bartók creates his Night Music, the musical features of this style, and will demonstrate this understanding by creating your own short Night Music work.

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### Task 1

Listen to the opening of the third movement **Audio Excerpt 9** (0.00-1.29, bar 1-22) while following the score.

1. Describe the sound of these opening bars.
2. Discuss which elements of the music contribute to this sound.
3. What do you notice about the Timpani and Double Bass part in the first 5 bars?
4. How would you describe the texture of bars 1-5.
5. What is meant by the instruction *Andante, non troppo*.
6. What composition technique is used when the other strings enter bars 5-9?
7. How does the role of the lower strings change at bar 10?
8. Describe what the Harp is required to do in bar 10.
9. What do you notice about the Harp part in bars 11-14?
10. What do you notice about the Clarinet 1 and Flute 1 parts in bars 10 and 11?
11. The pitches played by the flute form a hexatonic scale. Look at the intervals and explain how a hexatonic scale is structured.
12. Describe the Violin I part from bar 10 – 18
13. What is the role of the Piccolo when it enters from bar 14 to 19?
14. How many different layers create the texture from bars 10-18?

### Task 2

Listen now to **Audio Excerpt 10** (1:10 - 1:38, bar 19-35) the rest of the excerpt bars 19 – 35.

1. Describe how the texture changes in this section.
2. Identify how Bartók has created sudden drama at bar 34.
3. How are the celli playing their part in bar 23?
4. Describe the chord that occurs on the second beat of bar 29.
5. What is the pitch of the Horn 1 note when it enters in bar 23?
6. The movement is titled *Elegia*. Look up the meaning of this term.
7. How has Bartók created a sense of an elegy in this excerpt through his use of the concepts of music?

### Task 3

This movement is in the style of Night Music – something that Bartók often used in slow movements of his orchestral or chamber music works. This music is more of a sound portrayal, than a piece with melody and harmony.

The main features of this style include:

- Imitating sounds of nature, especially nocturnal birds and animals
  - Evoking the mood of night and spaciousness
  - Use of *ostinato*, pedal notes or drones
  - Dissonance and cluster chords
  - Short curt fragments of pitch material
  - *Glissandi* over a large range of pitches
  - Overlapping layers of material that seems to be unrelated.
1. Looking over bars 1-34 of movement 3 in the score, what characteristics of Night Music can you find?
  2. Identify at least one example of each of the above features and include instrument names and bar numbers in your response.

### Task 4 Composition

Use your knowledge of the features of the Night Music style to create a short, atmospheric Night Music piece either for piano or a trio of three instruments from your class.

Bartók's Night Music has some of the nature sounds from Hungary, so consider what some of the night sounds from your part of Australia may be and how you could notate these for another musician to perform.

Once you have created your score perform the work and discuss the strengths of each composition as a class.

## Activity 4: Aural and Musicology

At the end of this activity, you will be able to identify the main themes of the fourth movement and reflect upon the folk influences that can be found in this work.

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### Task 1

Listen to the opening of the fourth movement **Audio Excerpt 11** (0.04-0.16, bar 4-12) and answer the questions below:

1. What ornament opens the movement?
2. Which family of instruments plays this ornament?
3. Which woodwind instrument plays the opening solo melody?
4. Describe the structure of this melody.
5. The melody uses the notes C, D, F, G, B. What scale do these notes make?
6. What genre of music is likely to use this type of scale?
7. Identify the interval between each of the notes in this scale.

### Task 2

1. Notate the melody first played by the Oboe from bar 4 on the staff below using **Audio excerpt 11** (0.04-0.16, bar 4-12).

6

2. Listen to **Excerpt 4** (0.00-1.50, bar 1-69) and discuss how the theme introduced by the Oboe is developed.

3. The Viola theme enters at bar 43. Complete the opening rhythm of this theme using **Excerpt 12** (1.00-1.15, bar 43-59).

6

4. After the violas play this theme – which instrument repeats it?
5. Listen to **Excerpt 4** (0.00-1.50, bar 1-69) and identify the structure of the music from bars 1-69.

### Task 3

Two of the features used in traditional Hungarian folk dance music are the use of pentatonic scales composed of major seconds and minor thirds, also known as gapped scales. Often, tunes are created by transposing a short phrase many times to create the essence of a song.

Both of these features are true of the folk-like melodies heard in this movement. Research the musical features of Hungarian folk music and see what other characteristics can be found in Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra*.

To find out more about folk music influences in Bartók's music and to see some of his transcriptions, go to:

<https://bartok-nepzene.zti.hu/en/introduction>

### Stage 5 and Music 1 Extension Task

Using the graphic score from Movement II as a model, create your own graphic score with symbols to indicate the key musical events in this movement from bars 1 – 58.

## Activity 5: Performance and Musicology

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### Task 1

Listen to the opening of the fifth movement **Audio Excerpt 13** (0.00-0.14, bars 1-15) while following the score.

1. How many instruments play the opening theme? What are they?
2. What is meant by *Pesante*?
3. How does the composer ensure that the opening theme draws the attention of the listener?
4. What is unusual about the way the violas and celli are played when they enter?
5. What do you notice about the chords played by the lower strings?

### Task 2

Learn the short arrangement of the *fugato* from Movement V. Note all parts are in C and some additional parts are included in the keys indicated for classroom ensemble.

#### First Fugue from Movement 5

Bartok

Part 1

Part 2

2 in B flat

Part 3

3 in B flat

Part 4

4 in E flat

Part 5

5

1

2

2 Bb

3.

3.Bb

4

4 Eb

5

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 5 through 9. The score is arranged in seven staves. Staves 1, 2, and 2 Bb are empty. Staves 3. and 3.Bb contain a melodic line starting in measure 9. Stave 4 is the bass line, starting with a half note G2 in measure 5 and moving through a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. Staves 4 Eb and 5 provide harmonic support with chords and moving lines.

10

1

2

2 Bb

3.

3.Bb

4

4 Eb

5

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 10 through 14. All seven staves are active. Staves 1 and 2 play a melodic line with slurs and accents. Staves 2 Bb and 3. play a similar melodic line. Staves 3.Bb and 4 play a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. Staves 4 Eb and 5 play a bass line with chords and moving lines. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a fermata in measure 14.



Musical score for Horns in F (I, III and II) and Trumpets in C (I and II). The score shows measures 266-279. The Horns in F part has a dynamic marking of *f*. The Trumpets in C part has a dynamic marking of *mf*. There are some markings like *acc* and *pizz* in the Trumpets part.

Example 3 bar 266-279

Musical score for Violins I and II, measures 270-279. Violin I has a dynamic marking of *p* and *pizz*. Violin II has a dynamic marking of *p*. There is a bracketed measure number [270] above the Violin I staff.

Musical score for Violins I and II, measures 280-289. Both Violin I and II have a dynamic marking of *p*. There is a bracketed measure number [281] above the Violin I staff.

Musical score for Violins I and II, measures 281-289. Violin I has a dynamic marking of *p* and *pizz*. Violin II has a dynamic marking of *pizz*. There is a bracketed measure number [281] above the Violin I staff.

### Task 4 Extended Response

You are now familiar with the key features of Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra*. Compare Bartók's approach to structure and orchestration with another work from either the early C20th or an Australian work you have studied.

# Suggested Answers and Teaching Notes

## Activity 1

### Task 1

- All the intervals are perfect fourths in the opening three statements.
- Each statement seems to become a little longer as the note values are reduced, e.g. the first statement has mostly dotted minims, second the equivalent of minims and the third mostly crotchets. The range of notes and register becomes larger but the perfect 4th is the dominant pitch feature of all three.

### Task 2

1. Dissonance occurs at bar 5 beats 1 and 2, Bar 6 beat 1 and 2, Bar 7 beats 1,2,3, bar 8 beats 1,2,3 and bar 9 beat 1,2,3 (created by the held dotted minim).
2. The first statement is an ascending pattern that makes an arc shape  while the opening of Movement III is an arc shape created by a descending line. The third movement becomes polyphonic with overlapping canonic entries of shorter phrases. Both openings are based on the interval of a perfect 4th, but there is more chromaticism in the third movement patterns.

### Task 3

1. The pitch range of the one theme is one octave (B-B) and the viola theme has the range of a 9th (F-G#)
2. The two melodic passages are based upon short phrases, regular changes of time signature, although the quaver pulse is maintained. Both feature sequences. The oboe pattern is more repetitive and *staccato*, emphasising an augmented 4th (E – A#), whilst the viola melody has more *legato*, lyrical and conjunct lines.
3. Both melodies are simple and quite dance-like. They are based upon simple rhythmic figures – crotchets and quavers, but the use of changing metre, especially 5/8 alternating with 2/4 or the mix of simple and compound metres suggest Eastern European dance groupings. The tonality is not clear but tonal centres can be found in both.

### Task 4

1. In order for counterpoint to work effectively, each line needs to be audible and contrast is the key. This is achieved through the use of different rhythmic groups in each bar, long, slow accented notes which contrast the repeated *staccato* notes, different divisions of the beat and using a range of pitches. In both cases it is an octave. The unexpected accidentals in the horn theme will create dissonance which further enhances the independence of each line to the listener's ear.

## Activity 2

### Teaching Notes

The graphic score highlights the main aural events in the second movement which may be easier for some junior students and Music 1 candidates to follow.

While most of the concepts of music are shown, dynamics are not in this version.

### Task 1

Pitch is shown by the height of the marking, and as this changes it shows the contours of melodic lines. The unpitched side drum is shown by a circle not a line, possibly to show that it is unpitched.

Rhythm is shown by the length of the stroke, a long note is shown by a longer line.

Tone colour is shown by different colours representing different instruments.

Texture is easy to see as each line of colour represents a different layer of sound.

Dynamics and expressive techniques are not shown but could be indicated either with the usual symbols or the size of the marking.

### Task 2

1. Side drum (or snare with the snare turned off)
2. Bassoons
3. Strings, *pizzicato* chords mostly in rhythmic unison, creating a chordal homophonic texture.
4. Two bassoons are playing in parallel 6ths.
5. Oboes, clarinets, flutes, muted trumpets.
6. Oboes in 3rds, clarinet in 7ths, flutes in 5ths and muted trumpets in 2nds.

### Task 3

1. This section is played by the brass family, trumpets, trombones and tuba.
2. The horns are missing, however they do enter with the main melody after the passage in which the score excerpt ends.
3. This passage has become more hymn-like, so the phrasing is easily identified with a longer tied note at the end of each phrase. As the instruments play in rhythmic unison, the passage is homophonic and full, contrasting to the parallel melodic writing and sparse string accompaniments from the previous section.
4. The first seven chords are B Major, C# min, B Maj, G# min, F# min7, A Maj7 1<sup>st</sup> inversion, B Maj.
5. This section contrasts in almost every way to the opening A section, but the inclusion of the side drum replaying fragments of its opening solo between each of the homophonic phrases serves as a unifying device.

## Task 4

The strings which return in the A section of *Game of Pairs* begin with simple *pizzicato* chords, but as the movement continues, more difficult and colourful techniques are required. Trills and double stopped open strings are replaced by finger *tremolos* (violas bar 184), *ricochet* stroke (cello bar 187-8) *divisi* passages which thin the timbre, *sul ponticello tremolo* at bar 219, directions to play at the point (bar 231) or at the frog of the bow, all down bows (cellos from bar 228), muted finger *tremolos* (upper strings bar 228). Each of these extend the player beyond your standard concerto bowed accompaniment styles.

## Activity 3

### Task 1

1. The opening bars are quiet and mysterious, played softly by the double basses and doubled on the timpani. A slow-moving canonic section with indeliberate crotchets start in the cellos, then violas and then violin II. Eventually the strings settle on a sustained pedal note. The flutes and clarinets play quick fluttering motifs. Then starts a *glissando* followed by a cluster chord. The effect is a series of unrelated sounds that all come through clearly. The lack of activity gives a feeling of stillness and stasis.
2. The thin texture creates a sparse empty sound and allows each of the layers to cut through clearly. The unease is created by the lack of a clear tonal centre, wider register between the sustained dissonant chord of the strings, and high melodic flurries from the clarinets and flutes. The unrelated *ostinato* from the oboe and harp *glissandi*, *tremolo* strings and pedal notes reduce the sense of pulse or metre. Every layer seems to have its own rhythmic vocabulary.
3. The timpani and double bass are playing the same pitch (not always at the same octave as the bass sounds an octave below what is written). This is giving the timpani a melodic role.
4. Monophonic as is it a single layer of melody even when the harp joins as it doubles the basses. Also sparse or thin.
5. *Andante non troppo* means at a walking pace but not too much – so don't rush.
6. Canon or *stretto* – overlapping entries which enter before the other line ends.
7. The lower strings begin to play a sustained chord which acts as a dissonant pedal (C, Eb and E natural) which lasts to bar 18 although they start to *tremolo* on the note rather than hold it at bar 14, but the pitch is sustained.
8. The harp does an almost two octave *glissando* up and back on the first beat of each bar then on the third beat plays a dense cluster chord in its lowest register.
9. The harp figure from bar 10 becomes an *ostinato* figure.
10. The clarinet and flute are playing identical patterns an octave apart (NB It is a Bb clarinet so it reads a tone higher than the sound). The gesture is like a rapid flutter between C to B natural and back.
11. The notes played C Eb E G Ab B make a hexatonic or six note scale, based upon alternating minor thirds and minor seconds.

12. While Violin II play a continuous drone G, Violin I are divided into 3 parts, with 2 groups playing *tremolo* notes and the third playing a D sharp trill. Together it creates a shimmering CminMaj7 chord.
13. The Piccolo is imitating a night insect or bird with its repetitive high Bs. It could be imitating the insect or bird sound played by the Oboe in bars 10-11. Note the Piccolo seems to be playing a 2-beat pattern across the three beat bars.
14. There are 4 layers of sound (NB students may break it down further which is fine as long as their argument is consistent) – the strings and Timpani are one sustaining layer, the alternating Flute and Clarinet gestures, the Harp *ostinato* of *glissando* and the Oboe and Piccolo nature sounds.

## Task 2

1. Bar 19 all activity ceases and a loud, high pitched, sustained Db slowly decays into a series of high pitched overlapping melodic quaver phrases from the woodwinds from bar 22. Initially monophonic, the texture quietly builds into polyphony with the addition of each new instrument. Slowly, the strings add to the density of the texture and take over the moving quaver motif from the woodwinds. This too decays and is replaced by a birdlike song from the piccolo. Suddenly at bar 34 the full ensemble joins playing loudly and the texture become dense homophony.
2. The sudden drama is created by an abrupt change from a single monophonic quiet line followed by *fortissimo* full orchestra and a lot of short note values, within the melodic shapes and tremolo accompaniment.
3. They are playing an artificial harmonic on the G string.
4. The pitches are Gb,C,E and Ab – an Ab aug min 7<sup>th</sup> chord or an Ab aug over a Gb bass. The chord is dissonant.
5. The horn will sound as middle C as a horn in F sounds a 5<sup>th</sup> lower than written.
6. *Elegia* is the same as the word Elegy, which is a song or poem about sorrow and loss. It can also be a short, reflective musical composition that is typically pensive or melancholy in mood.
7. The texture and tone colour suggests coldness, loneliness through the distances between pitches and lack of warmth in the tone and construction of the pitch material. The climax is an anguished cry – with short sobbing phrases, descending septuplets, the icy *tremolos* from the strings. The unusual pitch series without a dominant tonal centre is unsettling. Extreme registers also suggest space and aloneness. The trumpet rhythm at bar 34 is sob-like. The wandering melodic *strettos* from the strings and woodwinds suggest restlessness, as does the lack of any harmonic anchor.

## Activity 4

### Teaching Notes

- This is an opportunity for students to complete some dictation, as the themes can be clearly heard through the texture of the orchestra.
- For advanced students, have them do the viola rhythm then complete the pitch in alto clef. The full version is included in the answer.
- Interested students can look at some of Bartók's folk music transcriptions, but it would also be useful to read the Wikipedia excerpt on Hungarian folk music which mentions perfect 4ths and changing meter rhythm patterns.

### Task 1

1. A trill opens the movement.
2. The string family.
3. Oboe.
4. The melody has short irregular phrases, limited set of pitches and range of notes, includes repeated *staccato* pitches, starts with an anacrusis, and is mostly a series of quavers grouped into changing metre.
5. A five-note scale is a pentatonic scale.
6. Pentatonic scales are used in the folk music of many countries - in many different forms.
7. The series of intervals in this scale are: Maj2, min3, Maj2 Min3

### Task 2

1. Oboe theme dictation.



2. The theme is repeated by the clarinet and flute. More advanced students might hear the bassoon is also playing the same rhythm in an inversion of the melody. The first flute then plays a response to the opening theme, like a B which uses the same rhythm, but has a descending rather than ascending contour. This is answered by the clarinet followed by the horn. All melodies have characteristics from the opening oboe theme. Then the oboe's opening theme returns, this time with a countermelody from the flute.
3. Viola rhythm.



4. The violins take up the theme an octave higher, doubled by the cor anglaise after the violas finish. The texture is denser and now has a second violin (string) countermelody below the violins.
5. The whole structure of this A section is: ternary form oboe theme – oboe theme developed – viola theme repeated by strings and cor anglais – oboe theme.

## Activity 5

### Teaching Notes

This arrangement has parts of differing levels of difficulty and in a range of clefs and keys to accommodate the transposing instruments in the class ensemble.

### Task 1

1. There are four instruments that play the opening theme in unison. Horns 1, 2, 3 and 4.
2. *Pesante* means heavily.
3. The opening theme is announced as a fanfare – four horns playing loudly and in unison without accompaniment.
4. The violas and celli are required to strum their instruments back and forth like a guitar.
5. The lower string chords are based on perfect intervals – 4ths and 5ths. Note that a 5th is an inversion of a 4th.

### Task 3

Example 1 has the trumpets playing the theme in inversion, instead of the theme descending, it is ascending. The horns double the theme on the first three notes, then hold the A flat pedal note above the theme as the trumpets continue.

Example 2 has the theme in shorter note values, reducing the original opening three notes from minims to crotchets and thus diminishing the rhythm. There is also a shortening of the number of bars of repeated notes. One bar later, the trumpets state the theme as a canon but also an inversion. A triplet figure has been added to the ending of both statements.

Example 3 is played by the strings. It is played in canon in its original form with the addition of grace notes. The timbre has been manipulated from brass to strings and the string theme statements continue in a contrapuntal manner below the next entrance of the theme, in the style of a fugue.