

SYDNEY
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

2026
SEASON

Teachers
Resource Kit



PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS

SCHOOLS CONCERT

Stages 3 & 4

Pull Out All the Stops

Stage 3 Teaching Resource
Sydney Symphony Orchestra

Acknowledgements

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Simone Young, Chief Conductor, Sydney Symphony Orchestra

Craig Whitehead Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Symphony Orchestra

Resource Development

Writer: Sonia de Freitas

Editor: Daniella Garnerio

Production: Alice Jarman-Powis

Design: Amy Zhou

Contact

For information concerning the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's Learning & Engagement program, contact:

Email: schools@sydneysymphony.com

Online: www.sydneysymphony.com/learning

“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.

Background

The purpose of this resource

This Teaching and Learning Kit has been designed by Sydney Symphony Orchestra, in collaboration with registered educators, to assist you in building meaningful learning experiences around your concert attendance.

You may choose to use the existing lesson plans as they appear, or - using our handy differentiation hints - adapt them to align with the needs and interests of a particular group of students. Alternatively, go above and beyond and use the Resource Library to extend the students who really love to deep-dive into the world of orchestral music.

How will you use these flexible and adaptable resources? The choice is yours!

As always, we welcome all feedback and suggestions regarding the nature of our Teaching and Learning Kits. Please feel free to be in touch with our friendly Learning & Engagement team at schools@sydneyorchestra.com.

How curriculum is referenced in this resource

This resource is mapped to the NSW Curriculum. The beginning of each Lesson includes a matrix aligning the learning activities to the outcomes of the Creative Arts K – 6: Music Syllabus addressing performing, listening and composing.

Introduction to the concert theme

The Grand Organ is a powerful instrument like no other. With over 10,000 pipes built into the walls of the Sydney Opera House, it can whisper, roar, and shake the room with sound. Pull Out All the Stops invites students to discover how this extraordinary instrument works with a full orchestra to create music that is bold, dramatic, and unforgettable.

Featuring spectacular music such as Richard Strauss' Sunrise from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and the thrilling finale of Saint-Saëns' *Organ Symphony*, this concert explores how composers use sound, texture, and form to create moments of immense power. With new music by First Nations composer Adam Manning and exciting surprises along the way, this resource encourages students to listen deeply, move creatively, and explore how music can fill a space with energy and emotion.

Introduction to the repertoire

An overview of the repertoire that will be played by the orchestra in the concert is provided below. To listen to the repertoire, visit our Resource Library page in this resource kit where you can enjoy both a Spotify playlist and YouTube links to each work. Please note that the selection of repertoire may change for the live concert.

Resource Library

Below is a curated selection of additional third-party resources you might choose to use in supporting your students to engage in concert preparation. The lesson plans in this resource will suggest you select from these in order to plan/undertake your lessons - alternatively, these resources may also be used for differentiation and extension.

Things to listen to

This Teaching and Learning Kit has been designed by Sydney Symphony Orchestra, in collaboration with registered educators, to assist you in building meaningful learning experiences around your concert attendance.

Discover this Spotify playlist featuring concert repertoire audio recordings where available.

- [Pull Out All The Stops](#) Spotify Playlist
- [Bach - Toccata And Fugue \(Techno Mix\)](#) (For a fun dance party break!)

Things to watch

- **Strauss – *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (Orchestral Performance)**
[Strauss: Also sprach Zarathustra – hr-Sinfonieorchester \(YouTube\)](#)
- **Saint-Saëns *Organ Symphony* – Finale**
[Saint-Saëns: Symphony No. 3 “Organ” – Finale \(Auckland Symphony, YouTube\)](#)
- **Strauss – *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (Live Orchestra)**
[Richard Strauss Also sprach Zarathustra – Academy Symphony Orchestra \(YouTube\)](#)
- **Saint-Saëns – *Organ Symphony* (Performance with Organ)**
[Saint-Saëns: Symphony No. 3 “Organ” – Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra & Iveta Apkalna \(YouTube\)](#)
- **Saint-Saëns – *Organ Finale* (Organ-only Performance)**
[Saint-Saëns ‘Organ Symphony’ Finale played by Anna Lapwood \(YouTube\)](#)
- [Inside the Music with organ sensation Anna Lapwood.](#)
- [Behind the Music: Strauss's "Also Sprach Zarathustra"](#)
- [Leonard Bernstein breaks down the opening of Also sprach Zarathustra](#)
- [Saint-Saëns - Symphony no. 3 "Organ", finale with score \(music notation\)](#)
- [J.S. Bach : Toccata and Fugue in D minor BWV 565 / Liene Andreta Kalnciema live at Riga Cathedral](#)

Things to explore

- **Sydney Opera House – *George Meets the Orchestra*** – A fun introduction to the instruments of the orchestra.
[George Meets the Orchestra – Sydney Opera House Stream](#)
- **360 Degree Orchestra Concert Video**
[Beethoven's 5th Full VR](#)
- [BBC Bitesize Johann Sebastian Bach - Toccata and Fugue in D minor](#)
- [THE STORY BEHIND: Saint-Saëns' Symphony No.3 \(Organ\)](#)
- [Program Notes: Also Sprach Zarathustra Richard Strauss](#)

Lesson 1: Meet the Orchestra & The Organ

Intended Learning Outcome

Students identify orchestral families and understand how the organ functions as an instrument. Focus: Instruments, tone colour, ensemble awareness

NSW Curriculum Links

The activities in this resource are mapped to the outcomes of the K - 6 Creative Arts: Music Syllabus.

Stage	Outcomes
Stage 3 Years 5 and 6	MUS3.4 Identifies the use of musical concepts and symbols in a range of musical styles.

Materials

Audio/Video player

Audio Excerpts

Worksheet: Instruments of the Orchestra

Repertoire:

R. Strauss – *Also Sprach Zarathustra*

J.S. Bach – *Tocatta and Fugue* (arr. Twist for Organ & Orchestra)

C. Saint-Saëns – *Symphony No. 3 “Organ”, 4th movement*

Lesson Plan

1. Explore the instruments of the orchestra together. You can use this handy resource: [BBC Bitesize Musical Journeys: Discovering the Orchestra](#). Ensure you listen to the sound of each orchestral instrument family: Strings, Woodwind, Brass and Percussion.
Explore the sound of the organ too! Have a listen to the way that Anna Lapwood plays the organ and explains how it works in this [helpful resource](#).
[How does a pipe organ actually work? | Anna Lapwood | Classic FM](#)
2. *Listening Challenge!* Students raise hands when they hear:
 - Brass fanfares (Strauss)
 - Organ entry (Saint-Saëns)
 - Rapid organ figures (Bach)

Worksheet: Instruments of the Orchestra

Name: _____ Date: _____

An orchestra is a big group of musicians who play together. The instruments are grouped into sections based on how they sound and how they are played.

1. There are 4 main instrument sections in an orchestra: Strings, Woodwind, Brass and Percussion. Name each orchestra section:



Section: _____

Section: _____



Section: _____

Section: _____

2. Write the name of each section and an instrument from the section next to its clue.

a. Instruments you bow or pluck:

b. Instruments you blow air into (often made of wood):

c. Instruments you blow air into (usually made of metal):

d. Instruments you hit, shake or scrape:

3. The pipe organ is one of the largest and loudest instruments in the orchestra — it's really special when the organ gets to play with an orchestra! Answer the questions below.

a. The organ makes sound by pushing _____ through _____.

b. Circle the correct answer. The organ is played using:

- Hands only
- Feet only
- Hands and feet

4. On the next page, take a look at the part of the pipe organ. Can you identify the pipe, the keyboard and the pedal board?



Assessment Schedule – Lesson 1: Meet the Orchestra & The Organ (Stage 3)

Outcome	Music Practice	Assessment Activity	Evidence of Learning
MUS3.4 Identifies the use of musical concepts and symbols in a range of musical styles.	Listening	Listening Challenge identifying brass fanfares (Strauss), organ entry (Saint-Saëns) and rapid organ figures (Bach)	Correct identification of instrumental sounds and tone colour through hand/card responses
	Listening	Guided listening and class discussion of orchestral families and organ	Students accurately name instrument families and describe the sound and role of the organ
	Listening	Active participation through clapping, gestural responses and attentive listening during repertoire excerpts	Demonstrates ensemble awareness, focus and musical engagement
	Listening	Worksheet task: classifying instruments by sound production and identifying organ components	Accurate classification of instruments and explanation of how the organ produces sound

Assessment mapped to the outcomes of the K - 6 Creative Arts: Music Syllabus

Lesson 2: The Power of Sound – Listening & First Impressions

Intended Learning Outcome

Students explore how composers use instrumentation, dynamics and register to create drama and atmosphere. **Focus:** Listening, describing sound, emotional response.

NSW Curriculum Links

The activities in this resource are mapped to the outcomes of the K - 6 Creative Arts: Music Syllabus.

Stage	Outcomes
Stage 3 Years 5 and 6	MUS3.4 Identifies the use of musical concepts and symbols in a range of musical styles.

Materials

Audio excerpts
Audio/Video player
Blank paper
Colourful pens/pencils

Repertoire:

Also sprach Zarathustra – R. Strauss

Lesson Plan

In *Also sprach Zarathustra* by R. Strauss, the orchestra and organ work together to create bold, dramatic soundscapes. By first exploring the instruments involved, students will be better equipped to identify and describe the sounds they hear in this music.

1. Now that everyone has had a listen to the instruments of the orchestra and the organ, let's listen to *Also sprach Zarathustra* by Richard Strass.
 - Students close eyes and imagine a scene or story as they listen to the music.
No peeking 😊

2. Sound Descriptors: What happens in the music that makes you imagine the scene or story? Create a “word bank” to capture some of the descriptors shared by the students.
 - Students list words to describe what they hear (e.g. bold, mysterious, rising, powerful...)
 - Students list words to describe how the music makes them feel (e.g. scared, curious, surprised, on the edge of their seat...)
 - Encourage students to use as many describing words as possible and identify instruments or instrument groups as they go.

3. Musical Building Blocks: Did you notice anything interesting about the music?
 - What instruments stand out?
 - How does the music build tension? (e.g. rising notes, long sustained notes, pacing)
 - How does the organ/orchestra create impact? (e.g. loud full sound, changing the instruments playing at a time)
 - Were there any repeated parts?

4. Visualising the sound: Using the **Graphic Notation: *Also sprach Zarathustra* by R. Strauss** listen and follow along.
 - Do you think the picture shows what happens in the music?
 - Is anything missing?

5. Extra creative step: Create a collaborative graphic notation/visual representation of the music.

In pairs or small groups, students decide on 2 - 4 of the most important aspects of the music they would like to capture in the graphic notation. (e.g. melody shape, different instrument sounds, dynamics loud/soft, rhythm...)

Optional: You could use a mix of colourful shape cut outs, pipe cleaners etc to construct the visual representation for this activity.

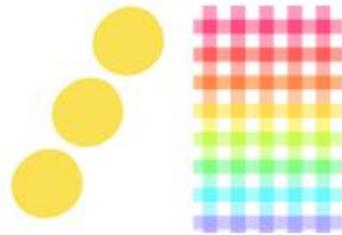
- Decide on the symbols you want to use for each element. (e.g. if you choose to represent the different instrument parts you might use a red circle for the timpani and a blue blob for the strings)
- Listen to the *Also sprach Zarathustra*. As the music plays, draw the music (it may take a few plays).

Lesson 2 Graphic Notation: *Also sprach Zarathustra* by R. Strauss

1. Opening (rumbling bass) 0:00-0:19



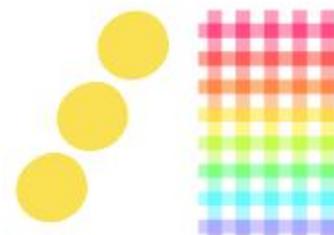
2. Brass starts (notes from low to high) then orchestra added 0:19-0:31



3. Timpani (kettle drum) start 0:31-0:38



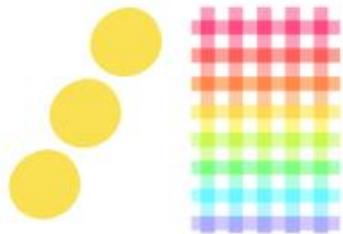
4. Brass repeats followed by orchestra 0:38-0:51



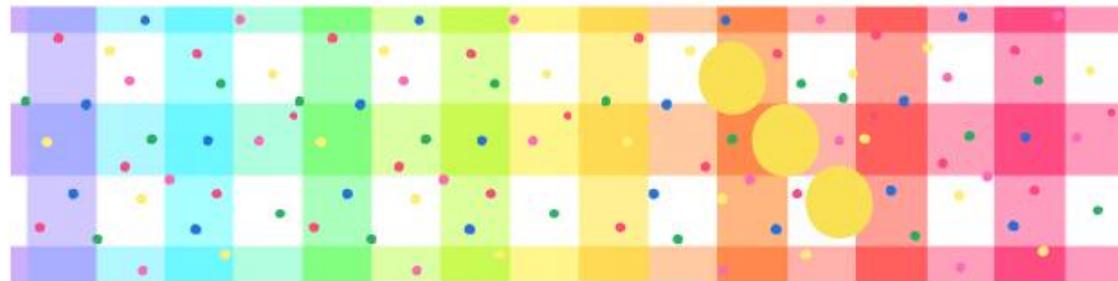
5. Timpani (kettle drum) again 0:51-0:56



6. Brass repeats followed by orchestra 0:56-1:11



7. Full orchestra starts and builds up 1:11-1:41



8. Brass enters (notes go from high to low) 1:18-1:24



9. Organ ends the piece 1:41-end



Assessment Schedule – Lesson 2: The Power of Sound – Listening & First Impressions (Stage 3)

Outcome	Music Practice	Assessment Activity	Evidence of Learning
MUS3.4 Identifies the use of musical concepts and symbols in a range of musical styles.	Listening	Guided listening to <i>Also sprach Zarathustra</i> with eyes closed and class discussion	Students describe musical features (instrumentation, dynamics, register) using appropriate musical language
	Listening	Sound descriptor word bank (what they hear and how it feels)	Use of descriptive and emotional vocabulary linked to specific sounds or instruments
	Performing	Active listening behaviours and following graphic notation during playback	Demonstrates focus, timing awareness and engagement with musical structure
	Composing	Creation of individual or collaborative graphic notation representing key musical elements	Visual symbols clearly represent selected musical concepts (e.g. dynamics, instrumentation, texture)
	Composing	Group discussion explaining symbol choices	Students justify how their symbols reflect what happens in the music

Assessment mapped to the outcomes of the K - 6 Creative Arts: Music Syllabus.

Lesson 3: Music & Movement – Feeling the Form

Intended Learning Outcome

Students respond physically to changes in form, dynamics and texture. **Focus:** Music and movement, structure, body percussion

NSW Curriculum Links

The activities in this resource are mapped to the outcomes of the K - 6 Creative Arts: Music Syllabus.

Stage	Outcomes
Stage 3 Years 5 and 6	MUS3.1 Sings, plays and moves to a range of music, demonstrating musical concepts. MUS3.4 Identifies the use of musical concepts and symbols in a range of musical styles.

Materials

Audio excerpts and player
Space to move
Prop e.g. ribbon, scarf, ball, plush toy...
Board and writing implements

Repertoire:

Symphony No. 3, 4th movement – Saint-Saëns

Lesson Plan

1. Movement Mapping
 - Students move around the space freely to the music using their bodies to show what the music is doing.
Tip: give each student a prop in their hand to exaggerate the movement. This could be a ribbon, scarf, ball, plush toy...
 - Assign movement ideas:
 - Rising melodies = upward movement
 - Loud sections = large movements
 - Soft sections = small, slow movements
2. Freeze & Reflect
 - Pause music and ask: What changed? Why did you move differently? These moments of pause could be when the instrumentation changes from organ to orchestra, or when the strings have the main part or when the brass comes in. Keep the pauses fun and somewhat random- just like it's musical chairs!

3. In this work, the composer Camille Saint-Saëns uses a lot of contrast in the music.

Contrast means a strong difference between two things (for example: loud and soft, fast and slow).

Now that we've listened to and moved to the music, let's think about all the ways contrast is created in this movement. As a class, draw a table on the board and add ideas from our discussion in the following categories shown in the table. Encourage students to describe what they heard and felt while moving to the music.

Tip: You may want to listen to the recording again as you brainstorm the musical ideas as a refresher. Some helpful questions have been included in this table.

Musical Element	Musical Ideas (<i>What did we notice?</i>)
Instrumentation	<i>What instruments did we hear? Were there moments with lots of instruments playing together and other moments with fewer instruments? Did the organ stand out?</i>
Dynamics	<i>Were there very loud sections? Were there softer or quieter moments? How did these changes make the music feel?</i>
Speed	<i>Did the music use quick, fast notes? Were there sections with longer, slower notes? How did the pacing change across the movement?</i>
Feel/Character	<i>Were there parts that were gentle and calming? Were there parts that were more dramatic?</i>

Optional Extra: Repeat this activity with another musical work. Happy listening and moving!

Assessment Schedule – Lesson 3: Music & Movement – Feeling the Form (Stage 3)

Outcome	Music Practice	Assessment Activity	Evidence of Learning
MUS3.4 Identifies the use of musical concepts and symbols in a range of musical styles.	Listening	Guided listening to <i>Symphony No. 3 (Mvt 4)</i> with pause-and-reflect questions	Students identify changes in dynamics, texture, instrumentation and form
MUS3.1 Sings, plays and moves to a range of music, demonstrating musical concepts.	Performing	Movement mapping using props to respond to rising melodies, loud/soft sections	Physical responses accurately reflect musical changes and contrasts
		Body-based responses during Freeze & Reflect moments	Demonstrates awareness of ensemble changes and musical structure through movement
MUS3.4 Identifies the use of musical concepts and symbols in a range of musical styles.	Composing	Class-generated contrast table (instrumentation, dynamics, speed, character)	Use of musical vocabulary to describe contrasting sections
	Composing	Verbal explanation of movement choices	Students justify how movement represents musical ideas

Assessment mapped to the outcomes of the K - 6 Creative Arts: Music Syllabus.

Lesson 4: What Is a Toccata? – Graphic Notation & Form

Intended Learning Outcome

Students understand **toccata form** and represent sound visually. **Focus:** Form, creating graphic notation, visualising sound

NSW Curriculum Links

The activities in this resource are mapped to the outcomes of the K - 6 Creative Arts: Music Syllabus.

Practice	Listening
Stage	Outcomes
Stage 3 Years 5 and 6	MUS3.1 Sings, plays and moves to a range of music, demonstrating musical concepts. MUS3.4 Identifies the use of musical concepts and symbols in a range of musical styles.

Materials

Audio player

Audio Excerpts

Video player for YouTube videos

Hand held prop e.g. Scarves/ribbon

Printed Sheet music: [Toccata and Fugue in D minor \(Simple Theme\)](#)

Repertoire:

Toccata and Fugue – J.S. Bach (arr. Twist)

Lesson Plan

Key Concept: Toccata = fast, virtuosic, showy music designed to demonstrate skill (often for keyboard or organ).

1. Listening Analysis
 - a. Identify fast passages, repeated patterns, dramatic gestures
 - b. Watch this video showing a graphic representation of the music using lines, squiggles and shapes. Students can use their hands (with/without props) to trace the shapes on the screen along with the music.
[Toccata and Fugue in D Minor](#)

2. Are there any repeated parts in the music?
3. Translating graphic notation to musical notation. Each student should have a copy of the opening musical idea: [Toccata and Fugue in D minor \(Simple Theme\)](#)

This musical notation shows the opening musical idea of the piece. Do you notice anything about the shape of the notation? Take a close look at how the notes move from up and down. It's similar to the squiggles we saw and moved along to before!

4. Optional: Students should write the names of the notes on the treble clef  and on the bass clef .

Assessment Schedule – Lesson 4: What Is a Toccata? – Graphic Notation & Form (Stage 3)

Outcome	Music Practice	Assessment Activity	Evidence of Learning
MUS3.4 Identifies the use of musical concepts and symbols in a range of musical styles.	Listening	Guided listening to <i>Toccata and Fugue in D minor</i> identifying fast passages and repeated ideas	Students describe characteristics of a toccata using appropriate musical language
		Viewing and tracing graphic representations of the music using hands or props	Accurate tracking of musical shape and changes over time
MUS3.1 Sings, plays and moves to a range of music, demonstrating musical concepts.	Performing	Movement responses using scarves/ribbons to follow melodic contour	Physical movement reflects pitch direction, speed and gesture
MUS3.4 Identifies the use of musical concepts and symbols in a range of musical styles.	Composing	Creation or interpretation of graphic notation representing musical ideas	Visual symbols clearly correspond to musical features (e.g. speed, contour, repetition)
		Identifying patterns and melodic shape in simplified staff notation (optional note naming)	Recognition of repeated ideas and pitch movement in standard notation

Assessment mapped to the outcomes of the K - 6 Creative Arts: Music Syllabus.

Lesson 5: Create & Perform – Pulling Out All the Stops

Intended Learning Outcome

Students learn and perform the opening theme of the *Toccatà and Fugue in D minor*. Focus: Music making, performance, note reading

NSW Curriculum Links

The activities in this resource are mapped to the outcomes of the K - 6 Creative Arts: Music Syllabus.

Practice	Performing
Stage	Outcomes
Stage 3 Years 5 and 6	MUS3.3 Performs music demonstrating confidence, expression and communication skills. MUS3.4 Identifies the use of musical concepts and symbols in a range of musical styles.

Materials

Audio/Video player

Audio Excerpts

Worksheet: D Minor Scale

Printed Sheet music: [Toccatà and Fugue in D minor \(Simple Theme\)](#)

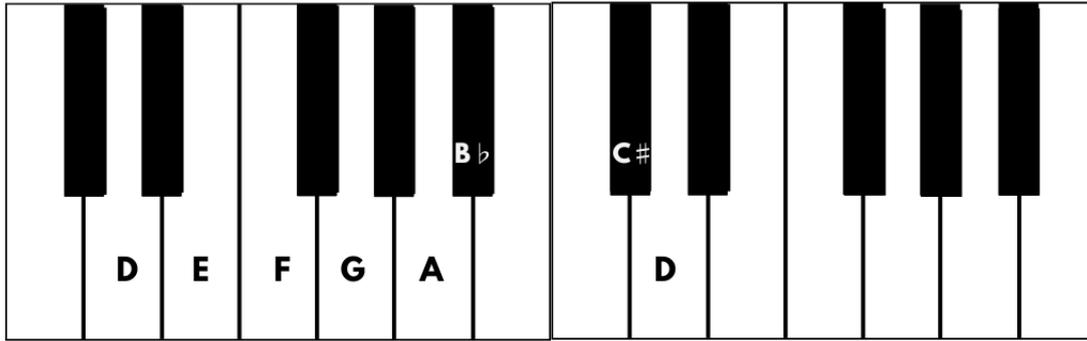
Piano/keyboards

Repertoire:

J.S. Bach – *Toccatà and Fugue* (arr. Twist for Organ & Orchestra)

Lesson Plan

1. What is D minor anyway?
Here are further helpful resources [Exploring D minor](#)
2. Play a D minor scale together on the piano/keyboard. Here is a [helpful video](#) showing one octave of the D minor (Harmonic) being played on the piano. These are all the notes that you will need to play the main musical idea of the *Toccatà and Fugue in D minor* by Bach.



3. Each student should receive a printout of the sheet music. Working as individuals, pairs or small groups (depending on their confidence level), students should write the note name under each note.



The treble clef shows notes to be played by the right hand.



The bass clef shows notes to be played by the left hand.

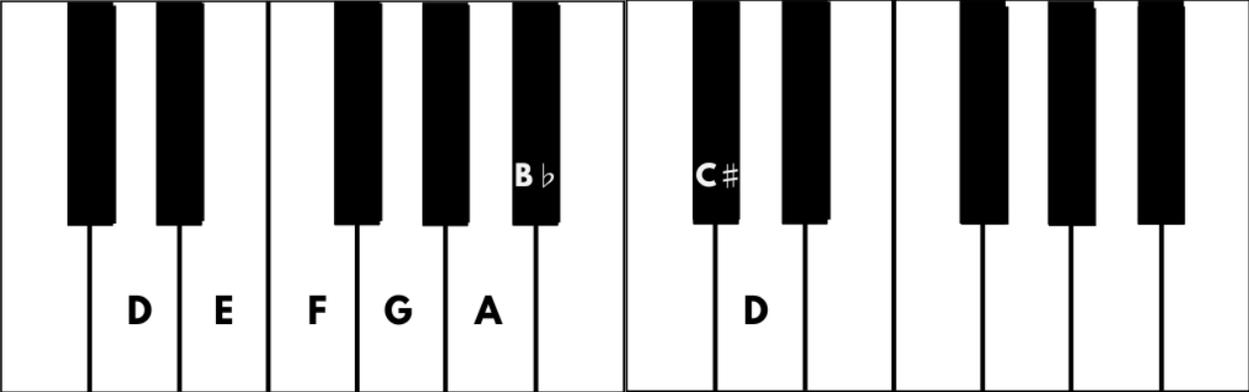
Remember the sharp # and the flat b show the notes on the black keys of the piano.

HELPFUL RESOURCE: If you need to run through the note names of the treble clef and bass clef staves, check out this [helpful link](#) for a way to remember the note names.

4. Learn the rhythm: Using the sheet music clap through the rhythm of the main musical idea of the famous *Toccata and Fugue in D minor*.
5. Time to practise. Give students space to work out the melody on the piano or keyboard. Some students may learn best by ear, however encourage note reading as much as you can.
6. Time to perform. Give each student the opportunity to perform what they have learnt.

Worksheet: D minor Scale

Can you play a D harmonic minor scale? Try these notes on the piano or keyboard- play them from left to right (low sound to high sound).



Assessment Schedule – Lesson 5: Create & Perform – Pulling Out All the Stops (Stage 3)

Outcome	Music Practice	Assessment Activity	Evidence of Learning
MUS3.4 Identifies the use of musical concepts and symbols in a range of musical styles.	Listening	Listening to recordings of <i>Toccata and Fugue in D minor</i> and identifying key musical features	Students recognise pitch, rhythm and tonal centre (D minor) in context
MUS3.3 Performs music demonstrating confidence, expression and communication skills.	Performing	Playing the D minor scale on piano/keyboard	Accurate pitch selection and confident execution of the scale
	Performing	Rehearsing and performing the opening theme individually or in small groups	Performs melody with correct notes and rhythm, showing confidence and musical expression
	Performing	Clapping and playing the rhythm of the theme from notation	Demonstrates rhythmic accuracy and coordination
MUS3.4 Identifies the use of musical concepts and symbols in a range of musical styles.	Composing	Annotating sheet music with note names and recognising clefs, sharps and flats	Correct identification and interpretation of musical symbols in notation

Assessment mapped to the outcomes of the K - 6 Creative Arts: Music Syllabus.