



Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra

Presents

**Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov**  
**Scheherazade**

Teacher Resource Booklet

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# BACKGROUND

**Scheherazade** by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov is one of the world's most loved orchestral works, composed in 1888. Rimsky-Korsakov travelled with the Russian Navy and was clearly influenced by these travels and love of the sea. **Scheherazade** is a musical work inspired by the stories of the 'Arabian Nights', also known as 'One Thousand and One Nights', named after its heroine. These are ancient stories from the exotic and then, little-known Middle-East. These 'Arabian Nights' are very much a part of our culture now, just as they enchanted people when Rimsky-Korsakov was composing. Sinbad, Ali Baba and his Forty Thieves and Disney's incarnations of Aladdin are part of these 'One Thousand and One Nights' tales.

**Scheherazade** is comprised of stories within a story. The outline story goes that the Sultan, the Supreme and Absolute ruler, found out that his wife had betrayed him. He executes her and to stop himself from being betrayed again, he takes another wife, only for the night, and then executes her in the morning. So the Sultan continues with wife after wife, night after night – anything to stop him from experiencing the grief of betrayal again.

Enter Scheherazade, the daughter of one of the Sultan's officials. Scheherazade is a beautiful and highly educated young woman, well versed in the literature, histories and stories of the time. She becomes the Sultan's wife and, to save herself from a certain death, she entrances the Sultan with her stories night after night, always ending with a complication as dawn breaks, leaving the Sultan in so much suspense that he must wait until the next night to hear what happens next in the story. In doing so she preserves her life. Scheherazade weaves her tales night after night, until one thousand nights have passed. By this time the Sultan has fallen in love with Scheherazade, spares her life and crowns her as his Queen. A wider peace also falls on the land as the realm is safe from losing any more of its young women - to the relief of all.

Rimsky-Korsakov is able to 'tell' us these stories through his evocative music, creating distinct melodies for the characters that recur through the work and brilliant orchestrations. The full version has four movements. This resource concentrates on the characters of the Sultan and Scheherazade, and the first two movements: *The Sea and Sinbad's Ship* and *The Legend of the Kalendar Prince*. Rimsky-Korsakov begins by introducing us to the Sultan and Scheherazade.

NB To correspond with the time markings used throughout as reference points, choose a recording that is 10:15 for Movement I and 13:04 for Movement II.

# TELL ME A STORY!

This activity looks at these characters in the selected movements and analyses how Rimsky-Korsakov has musically portrayed them. Students then create their own musical portrayal of a character they know well, either in a melody, or a soundscape.

## LEARNING INTENTIONS

- Students will become familiar with **Scheherazade** Movements I & II, recognising the musical characters by their melody and timbre. (ACAMUM 084, 088)
- Students will explain how the elements of music enable communication of a character. (ACAMUMR087, 091, 097)
- Students will compose their own melodies or soundscapes, using their understanding of the musical elements, to convey their chosen character. (ACAMUM 086, 090)

\*\* indicates Assessment Opportunity

## CHARACTERS IN THIS MUSIC

We learn a lot about each character by the way Rimsky-Korsakov has musically treated them. Invite the students to listen to the opening section of the work until 1:28. What do we learn about them? Let's musically analyse them using the musical elements of dynamics, texture, duration, pitch, tempo and timbre. (You may need to do a refresher course with your students before you begin, or indeed commence your study with an introduction into them.)

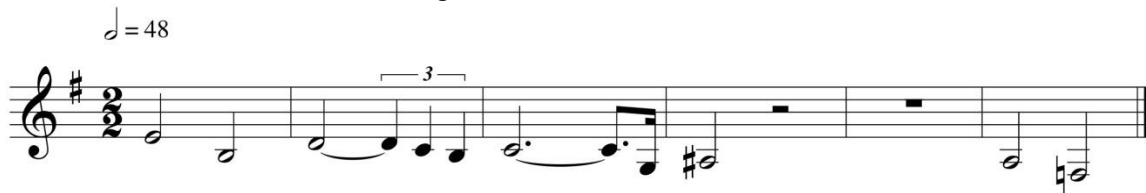
Let's pose the question of what is musically happening. You may also invite the students to draw the character that they hear and discuss how each of the elements are used, after you have analysed Rimsky-Korsakov's choices.

You may wish to have a go and play tunes with your students!

## Sultan Movement I 00:00 – 00:23

The marking in the score is *pesante*, to be played heavily. *Pesante* means heavy in Italian.

- Dynamics: very loud, it is marked *ff* (fortissimo) in the score – look at me! I am the only one who is important!
- Texture: unison – indicating a strong and forceful nature of a person who gets his way, silence follows his introduction, he commands all
- Duration: long notes
- Pitch: low – indicating a male, whose voice is lower than a woman's.
- Tempo: stately, in no rush, majestic
- Timbre: full orchestra - strong and dominant, ruler of all



## Scheherazade Movement I 0:47 – 1:28

A beautifully mesmerising melody created using melodic steps and built on an Am7 arpeggio. This tune is playable on Orff instruments, substituting the F for an F#.

- Dynamics: gentle, not soft, but not loud. Expressively played, melody swells.
- Texture: solo with chordal accompaniment, as it would be as Scheherazade accompanies herself
- Duration: short, legato phrases, that move quickly in steps and skips, indicating ease of movement
- Pitch: high, indicating the feminine
- Timbre: a solo, beautiful and virtuosic violin playing accompanied by the sensuous harp
- Tempo: *rubato* – moves with feeling, freely expressing, without the need of staying strictly in time, the emotion of the moment.

Scheherazade's theme is performed an octave higher than written.



# Sinbad sailing in his ship      Movement I 1:32 and following

The tune repeats many times and develops with increasing intensity.

- Dynamics: starts soft (*p*) initially, then grows to loud (*f*)
- Texture: full orchestra, tune and accompaniment
- Duration: long notes, sailor gazing out on the sea
- Pitch: middle
- Timbre: evocative strings
- Tempo: a good strong tempo, not slow

$\text{♩} = 56$

5

9

13

## The Sea Movement I 1:32 and following

Arpeggiated, rocking bass, up and down continually mimicking the rise and fall of the waves with Sinbad's journey symbolised in the melody above.

Dynamics: strong  
Texture: arpeggio in unison  
Duration: short, indicating quick movement  
Pitch: low, the deep roll of the sea  
Timbre: low strings – viola and 'cellos  
Tempo: steady and fast

$\text{♩} = 56$

5

9

13

## The Kalendar Prince Movement II 0:42 and following

The Kalendar were a type of fakir, roving monks who turned up at Eastern courts and bazaars. The Prince in this story is tired of living his routine life and goes looking for adventure. He disguises himself as a mysterious old Kalendar who can do magic tricks and tell fortunes. He is introduced by the bassoon and the tune is repeated many times with differing instruments as his story unfolds. Have your students listen out for his tune as the movement progresses.

- Dynamics: not loud, neither soft  
Texture: solo with gentle accompaniment  
Pitch: high register of bassoon, an instrument capable of enormous range and versatility.  
Timbre: bassoon, in its upper registers; the opposite to the bombast of the Sultan, it's a lithe and agile sound, suggesting a thoughtful person  
Tempo: medium tempo, again with some use of rubato as the soloist introduces us to the Kalendar Prince.

$\text{♩} = 112$

7

15

Throughout these movements there are moments when the woodwinds insert themselves into the narrative. Who or what do they represent?!



# CREATE YOUR OWN CHARACTER

Use your discretion here according to the age of your students. There are many wonderful characters that the students will be already very familiar with. The success of this activity will rely upon them truly knowing their character. Characters from *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings*, both by JR Tolkien; *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis; Roald Dahl's many vivid characters; *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins are but a few from the wonderful world of literature available for use here. Students may prefer to choose characters they remember fondly from their earlier years.

Choose your character. This can be done individually or in pairs. Write a physical description of them. Write about their nature, their personality, how they move, how do they look at the world, draw them.

1. \*\* Make a list of musical elements. Write how these traits can be expressed musically. If the character is a big one, a simple way would be to create a large, loud sound. It could be a complicated chord, experiment and find a way to communicate this 'bigness'. Complete the remaining elements.

This experimentation can be and usually is noisy! You may wish to have only one or two groups working on his, rather than the whole class, as if there is too much sound, the students can't hear their experimentation. Organise some stations with activities that don't require your input to enable you to help students with their experiments. These may be consolidating known rhythmic work, further listening with headphones, musical games, etc. It would be great to do some work here in triple times: 3 / 4; 3 / 8; 3 / 2; 6 / 4, as moving in 3's is a recurring feature of **Scheherazade**.

2. Put a limit on the length of the music, say 30 seconds, or on the number of notes used say 10-16 individual notes, to give the students a defined end boundary. You as the teacher will know which is best for your students. You may be working with older aged students for whom 16 is not enough, or with a grade 3 student who would feel most comfortable with only 10.
3. \*\* Once students have created their music, practise it in their small groups, separating them as much as your site allows you to. Then gather together and listen to each other's work. Record it using video, DAT, or voice memo. The students will love to hear their work and enjoy seeing a video of themselves. This is also an excellent aid for assessment for you, the teacher, as well. Students also could notate it.
4. \*\* Have the students articulate why they chose their instruments to represent their character. For example, why did you select the triangle, bass xylophone? How does this relate to their character?

## Other characters in music

If these tunes reoccur this technique is called *Lietmotif*, a German term meaning a reoccurring musical theme which found its genesis in the Romantic era of Western Musical tradition. Composers created tunes that reoccur in their music to convey the character melodically in the 'story' of their music or opera. Notable examples to listen to could be:

- Peter's tune from **Peter and the Wolf** by Sergei Prokofiev
- Tristan from **Tristan and Isolde** by Richard Wagner

There are many examples from John William's film music:

- *Jaws* – who can ever forget that reoccurring theme! So simple and scary.
- *Darth Vader's Imperial March* - as soon as we hear this we are transported knowing that he will arrive.
- *Luke's* theme, so similar in thoughtful style to Rimsky-Korsakov's horn at 11:38 of Movement II! Is the source of Williams' inspiration?

If your allocated lesson time allows, you could begin each composing lesson with listening to how another composer created their characters in sound.

## Songs that tell a story

Scheherazade is a character from a set of stories from a particular place in time - a story in sound. Our culture is alive with many songs that tell a story.

There are many of these available - *Eleanor Rigby* and *A Day in the Life* by the Beatles; *Viva la Vida*, about the French Revolution by Cold Play; *American Pie* by Don Maclean, to name a few. There are lists and lists of them available on your internet browser: choose those that will suit your context and needs. We also have our Australian traditional folk songs and ballads which tell a story, such as *Botany Bay*, *Waltzing Matilda*, *Click Go the Shears* and the *Loaded Dog* by Banjo Patterson.

\*\* Students could compose their own song over a simple chord progression. If you have access to some guitars, teach students some simple chords (D major, A major, E minor and G major) and then release them to experiment. Students could learn to play and sing some of the more simpler song tales.

# CRESCENDO!

## LEARNING INTENTIONS

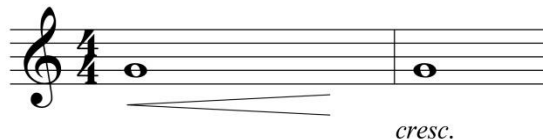
- Students will learn about, improvise, practice and rehearse the skills of playing crescendos and diminuendos on a number of instruments and recognise them when heard. (ACAMUM084, 085, 088, 089, 092, 094, 096)
- Students will practise reading traditional notation, maintaining a steady beat and *colla voce* (with the voice) (ACAMUM084, 088, 092)
- Students will compose a soundscape in a small group, practising the skill of communicating a crescendo (ACAMUM086, 090, 093, 095)

\*\* indicates an Assessment Opportunity

In this series of activities students will learn about and play crescendos. These activities are guaranteed to cause excitement and a high level of sound! Students with sensory issues may wish to wear a pair of ear plugs or headphones.

Explain that crescendo is an Italian word that means ‘growing’. Musicians use this term when wanting their music to become increasingly louder. Crescendos are marked in a musical passage as:

or



Crescendos are sometimes referred to as ‘hairpins’ for obvious reasons!

Rimsky-Korsakov uses many of these to great effect, to heighten suspense and to make the music convey excitement.

Notable crescendos in Movement II are found at:

- 2:26 and following. See the percussion arrangement created to play long with the soundtrack.
- 10:17 – 10:33
- 12:22 – 13:03 The crescendo is intensified by the rising up the octave of the violins

## THE CONDUCTOR GAME

- a. Introduce students to the crescendo.
- b. Play a game called, “Conductor Game”. Every person has an untuned instrument. The teacher begins by the conductor, their hands being the instigators of the sounds played by the class.
  - Closed fists, together is silence
  - Tight wiggly fingers are soft sounds
  - Hands growing up and out are crescendos and diminuendos (becoming softer)
  - Hands held high, fingers wiggling demonstrates a loud and sustained sound is required.
  - Bursts of sound can be encouraged by throwing out the fingers and quickly restoring the fist
- c. \*\* Once students have learnt the parameters of the game, it can be student led. You could add a level of complexity by asking older students, half the class, to notate what they hear graphically. Swap over and let the remaining half play the game.

The students have experienced a crescendo with its counterpart diminuendo. A diminuendo is notated the opposite of a crescendo, a lengthy ‘greater than’ sign. The abbreviation is *dim*.

## DYNAMIC SOUNDSCAPE

Break the students into functional groups of four to six people. Anything less than four may have an unsatisfactory result as there isn’t enough physical sound.

\*\* Set a task which requires students to use crescendos and diminuendos in a group composition. Use the instruments that you have access to. If you have confident students, you could add a vocal element to this too.

This should not be an involved activity. View it as an experiential one, building on their understanding of crescendos and diminuendo, a skill in their compositional bag ready to be used in the future.

# PERCUSSION ARRANGEMENT

Play the untuned percussion arrangement with a recording of the music. This is adapted from Movement II of Scheherazade. Rimsky-Korsakov's score is in 3 / 8. Students may not be familiar with this notation, so the arrangement is in 3 / 4. However, if your students are ready to talk about quaver beats, transcribe it into quaver beats and would be an excellent jumping off point for talking about the division of steady beats into the different meters.

NB Check that the version you are using has a duration of 13.04 for Movement II. This arrangement will fit with the orchestral recording starting from 9.30.

\*\* Play this score with gentle and controllable shaking instruments such as maracas and egg shakers, triangles and clave, tapping, drum sticks, or small drums. Your sound needs to not overwhelm the score. There is a great sense of achievement to be found with playing along with a professional orchestra from the recording. Students get a real buzz if they then are able to attend a concert with the music in it – they really do make a strong connection to the concert experience.

Practise before playing with the recording – it goes very fast. Use rhythmic syllables and practise with hand clapping and 'drum rolls' on a surface before unleashing the instruments.

Rhythmic syllables for rhythmic elements are as follows and are from the Hungarian school.



Toom      too      taa      ti ti

# Scheherezade Movement II by Rimsky-Korsakov

## Percussion Arrangement

### for gentle shaking instruments, triangles, claves & skin instruments

Rimsky-Korsakov's score is in  $\frac{3}{8}$ . This percussion score is written in  $\frac{3}{4}$  for ease of reading. Play along with Movement II from approximately 9:30 - it's a quick beat. Enjoy the syncopation and crescendos!

Start time: 9:30 ♩ = 152

1 5

9 13

17 20 *cresc.* *sf* 20 9:58 rest for 8 bars violins playing with bouncing bow

29 33 *cresc.*

37 *cresc.* 41 *cresc.* 43 44 10:37 Shakers only 5 bars 10:54 tree chime shaker 1 bar 2 bars

11:06 triangles only - *rubato* (play with feeling, pulling the time)

52 56

60 65 11:38 gentle shaking only Horn solo 11:52 Violin solo

11:59 Horn solo 12:17 'cello solo 12:22 Accelerando Tutti 77 *p* *cresc. to end* 82

83 87

90 95 101! keep the beat, crescendo to the end!

# ORCHESTRATION

Rimsky-Korsakov is widely regarded as a master of orchestration. His book, **The Principles of Orchestration** is still in print and can be found on Amazon in even a Kindle format, so in demand is this text. The product details:

*"To orchestrate is to create, and this cannot be taught," wrote Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov, the great Russian composer whose genius for brilliant, highly colored orchestration is unsurpassed. But invention, in all art, is closely allied to technique, and technique can be taught. This book, therefore, which differs from most other texts on the subject because of its tremendous wealth of musical examples and its systematic arrangement of material according to each constituent of the orchestra, will undoubtedly be of value to any music student. It is a music classic, perhaps the only book on classical orchestration written by a major composer.*

*In it, the composer aims to provide the reader with the fundamental principles of modern orchestration from the standpoint of brilliance and imagination, and he devotes considerable space to the study of tonal resonance and orchestral combination. In his course, he demonstrates such things as how to produce a good-sounding chord of certain tone-quality, uniformly distributed."*

Orchestration, then, is the art of scoring music for an orchestra or band, in other words, orchestration is the art of choosing the right instrument or instruments in combination, to play a theme, provoke a mood or effect. **Scheherazade** shows off Rimsky-Korsakov's mastery.

## LEARNING INTENTIONS

- Students will become familiar with the term 'orchestration' and how essential instrument choice/selection is to the success or failure of a piece of music. (ACAMUMR087, 091, 097,098)
- Students will rehearse and perform a known tune with varying orchestrations, organising the sound to engage their audience. (ACAMUM 086, 090, 093)
- Students will notate their chosen song, noting instrument choice and why it was chosen. (ACAMUM086, 090, 095)

\*\* indicates an Assessment Opportunity

## INSTRUMENT FAMILIES

Discuss instrument families, revising them if necessary.

What mood does each of these families provoke?

There are wonderful resources available online to help with this. The Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra's website has a number of outstanding resources for you to use as you explore the effect each instrument has.

Click on the Education tab, then Online Classroom resources and choose The Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra in Your Classroom. The Videos of Richard Gill with the TSO button will list:

- *Meet the Orchestra with Richard Gill* – a whizz around all the orchestral instruments in 10 minutes.
- *The Horn is Orchestral Glue* – a one-minute long piece of gold!
- *Writing for the Harp* – the harp is featured in Scheherazade beautifully and has a wonderful glissando towards the end of Movement II. Listen out for it in the Percussion arrangement.

Go back one step and choose *What is a Symphony Orchestra?* to find videos and a booklet you can download which contains true to size scaled photographs of the instruments. This is very helpful when discussing instrument families with your students.

## COMPOSERS' INSTRUMENTAL CHOICES

Choose a small number of instruments to concentrate on and listen to other composers' use of these instruments. If you have students that play these instruments, have them bring them to school and play them for your classes. You may wish to widen the class's understanding of orchestration by looking at the different genres of music – jazz, pop bands etc. as they all have their own distinctive sound because of the choices of the composers/writers.

Some examples:

### Bassoon

Developed in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, in its modern form.

Rimsky-Korsakov uses it brilliantly in Movement II, for the Kalendar Prince.

Prokofiev in ***Peter and the Wolf*** uses it differently.

***Sorcerer's Apprentice*** by Paul Dukas and ***The Rite of Spring by Stravinsky*** also contain passages with outstanding bassoon writing. These last two pieces have been used as inspirations for Disney's *Fantasia* and *Fantasia 2000*.

### Violin

Developed in 15<sup>th</sup> Century Italy, a versatile instrument across many musical genres.

Rimsky-Korsakov again showcases the splendour of this instrument in ***Scheherazade***, from the delights of a 'voice' for Scheherazade herself; to the tremolo, tension creating shaking of their bows and to adding higher octaves to great suspense. The violin is an amazing instrument.

The violins provide the optimistic tune for Peter, from ***Peter and the Wolf*** by Prokofiev.

***The Lark Ascending*** by Vaughan-Williams highlights its beauty and flexibility. There are so many to choose from; decide which pieces bring you joy, as your enthusiasm is such a vital component in successful music teaching.

### Flute

Flutes have been around for thousands of years, in many cultures. Looking at these is a fascinating study in itself. The modern flute evolved in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.



Some pieces of music from the Western Classical tradition that highlight the flute are **Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune** by Debussy, The Bird in **Peter and the Wolf** by Prokofiev and **L'Arlésienne Suite No. 2 (Minuet)** by Georges Bizet.

Again, there are many to choose from; you decide what to listen to.

## EXPLORING TIMBRE

Use any well-known tune. This is one possibility, from the TSO website:

Score

### The Birch Tree

Russian Folk Song

TSO education resources 2017

See the love-ly Birch in the mea-dow. Cur-ly leaves all dance when the wind blows. Lu - li -

8  
lu when the wind blows, lu - li - lu in the mea - dow.

Choose a melody that your students can play easily as they will need to concentrate on the effect of the sound rather than on the tune itself.

\*\* Play it on any and all instruments you have at your disposal. You could even play with it in GarageBand and create orchestral, punk, ethnic instrument versions.

\*\* This could be a whole class, group or individual task. The focus for discussion is the character that is created by the use of different sound sources.

\*\* Discuss how the orchestration matters to achieve the effect the composer wants.

\*\* Set a task in which the effect is specified at the outset, and the instruments chosen to achieve this. If achievable by your students, they could notate their work, using staff notation, also noting the instruments chosen and the effect they were seeking to obtain.

# ASSESSMENT

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL CURRICULUM FOR MUSIC			
	3-4	5-6	7-8
<b>AURAL SKILLS</b>	<p><b>ACAMUM084</b></p> <p>Develop aural skills by exploring, imitating and recognising elements of music including dynamics, pitch and rhythm patterns</p>	<p><b>ACAMUM088</b></p> <p>Explore dynamics and expression, using aural skills to identify and perform rhythm and pitch patterns</p>	<p><b>ACAMUM092</b></p> <p>Experiment with texture and timbre in sound sources using aural skills</p>
<b>PERFORMING</b>	<p><b>ACAMUM085</b></p> <p>Practise singing, playing instruments and improvising music, using elements of music, including rhythm, pitch, dynamics and form in a range of pieces, including music from the local community</p>	<p><b>ACAMUM089</b></p> <p>Develop technical and expressive skills in singing, playing instruments with understanding of rhythms, pitch and form in a range of pieces, including music from the local community</p>	<p><b>ACAMUM094</b></p> <p>Practice and rehearse a variety of music, including Australian music, to develop technical and expressive skills</p> <p><b>ACAMUM096</b></p> <p>Perform and present a range of music, using techniques and expression appropriate to style</p>
<b>COMPOSING</b>	<p><b>ACAMUM086</b></p> <p>Create, perform and record compositions by selecting and organising sounds, silences, tempo and volume</p>	<p><b>ACAMUM090</b></p> <p>Rehearse and perform music including music they have composed by improvising, sourcing and arranging ideas and making decisions to engage an audience</p>	<p><b>ACAMUM093</b></p> <p>Develop musical ideas, such as mood, by improvising, combining and manipulating the elements of music</p> <p><b>ACAMUM095</b></p> <p>Structure compositions by combining and manipulating the elements of music, using notation</p>
<b>LISTENING (context and purpose)</b>	<p><b>ACAMUR087</b></p> <p>Identify intended purposes and meanings as they listen to music, using the elements of music to make comparisons, starting with Australian music, including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p>	<p><b>ACAMUR091</b></p> <p>Explain how elements of music communicate meaning by comparing music from different social, cultural and historical contexts, including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p>	<p><b>ACAMUR097</b></p> <p>Analyse composers' use of the elements of music and stylistic features when listening to and interpreting music</p> <p><b>ACAMUR098</b></p> <p>Identify and connect specific features and purposes of music from different eras to explore viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</p>