

to write music for a short movie called “The Instruments of the Orchestra”. It was supposed to show kids how orchestras worked. The piece he wrote was the *Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra*.

The *Guide* works like this: At the beginning, Britten has the whole orchestra play a tune. Then the big sections of the orchestra — the woodwinds, brass, and strings — play it so you can hear how they sound in their own groups. Then he puts them back together again.

Britten then wrote a variation of that main tune for each instrument in the orchestra: flute, oboe, clarinet, and so on. Each variation is designed to show off the special sound and personality of its instrument.

For the big finish, Britten wrote a fugue. A fugue is like a round (like singing “Row, row, row your boat”) except that, as each instrument starts the fugue’s tune (we call that a *fugue subject*), the people who already are playing start playing something *else*

that goes along with the first tune. By the end of the *Guide*, everybody is playing different parts — all based on the piccolo tune which started it off. To top off the piece, the brass at last play the big theme from the very beginning while everybody else is still playing the fugue.

So what about Purcell? Henry Purcell was another English composer. He lived from 1659–1695, and he was the best and most famous composer of his time. He was one of Britten’s favorites, too. Since 1945 was the 250th anniversary of Purcell’s death, Britten wanted to write a piece as a tribute.

In the year he died, Purcell wrote some music to go with a play called *Abdelazar*. Britten took a dance tune he really liked from *Abdelazar* and used it as the *Young Person’s Guide’s* main theme. That’s why the *Guide* is also called *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell*.

— Thomas Consolo

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7:30 p.m. Saturday, October 22

Greaves Concert Hall, NKU



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Kentucky

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

James R. Cassidy, *Music Director*

10 A.M. Tuesday, September 20, 2022
10 A.M. Wednesday, September 21, 2022
7Hills Church
Florence, KY

James Cassidy, *conductor*
Ken Early, *narrator*

“GETTING TO KNOW YOU”

The Whole Orchestra:

“Imperial March” from *Star Wars*

John Williams

The Strings:

Eine kleine Nachtmusik

Wolfgang Mozart

I. Allegro

The Woodwinds:

“Largo al factotum”
from *The Barber of Seville*

Gioachino Rossini

The Brass and Percussion:

“Fanfare for the Common Man”

Aaron Copland

The Whole Orchestra:

The Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra

Benjamin Britten

Ken Early

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“Imperial March from *Star Wars*”

John Williams was born February 8, 1932 in Floral Park, NY. Music for the first *Star Wars* film was written in 1977.

American composer John Williams began his career writing music for 1960s television shows and movies. His big break came in 1975 when he teamed up with director Steven Spielberg on the film *Jaws*. From there John Williams has won 21 Grammy and five Academy Awards for numerous film scores including: *Superman*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *E.T.*, *Harry Potter*, and many more.

The “Imperial March” is the musical theme associated with Darth Vader in the *Star Wars* movies. It was composed by John Williams and first appeared in the film *The Empire Strikes Back*. The theme is loosely based on the well known funeral march from Chopin's Piano Sonata No. 2 in B minor and on “Mars, the Bringer of War” by Gustav Holst. One of the best known symphonic movie themes, it is a classic example of a leitmotiv, a recurring theme associated with characters or events in a drama. The “Imperial March” represents the dark authoritarian Galactic Empire.

Eine kleine Nachtmusik

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born on Jan. 27, 1756, in Salzburg, Austria. He died Dec. 5, 1791, in Vienna, Austria. *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* was written in 1787.

With all the channels we get from basic cable TV today, it's hard to believe that it hasn't been that

long since there wasn't any television or compact discs or even radio to entertain us.

About 200 years ago, if you were in Europe and rich, one easy source of entertainment was to have your own orchestra. They played in the background at banquets, parties and receptions, and for more formal ceremonies like weddings, baptisms and coronations.

Some aristocrats not only had private orchestras, they had their own staff composers. Haydn, for example, worked for a prince for years, and Mozart's father worked as a composer for the archbishop who ran the city of Salzburg.

Those were the jobs musicians tried to get. In fact, they were the only steady jobs around. Our idea of going someplace just to listen to music or to see a particular group was almost totally unknown. There were no independent orchestras.

Wolfgang Mozart never got one of those jobs. He had to sell pieces to publishers one at a time to make a living. He was lucky because he was a famous pianist, and people heard his music because they wanted to hear him play. He never earned much, though, and he died when he was only 35.

Mozart wrote *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* (which means *A Little Night Music*) in 1787. It's the last of 25 pieces he wrote to be used as entertainment for those big, private parties. It uses only strings, so even small private groups could use it.

‘Largo al factotum’

Gioachino Rossini was born on Feb. 29, 1792, in Pesaro, Italy. He died Nov. 13, 1868. The Barber of

Seville was written in 1816.

In just 18 years, from 1811 through 1829, Rossini wrote 38 operas. At his peak, from 1812 to 1817, he wrote 17 of them! His most famous music, including music you probably know from Bugs Bunny cartoons, comes from that short creative burst.

The most famous of all is *The Barber of Seville*. It's a full-length comic opera in Italian — almost three hours long — but Rossini wrote it in only about 18 days.

Here's the story: Figaro, the barber in the title, has to help Count Almaviva (who is a friend of his) win over the girl the count likes. They make big plans, and the whole thing almost falls apart, but in the end the count marries the girl and everyone is happy.

The first time Figaro comes on stage, he sings a song called “Largo al factotum”. He's complaining (but bragging, too) that so many people need his help — and not just for haircuts, either — that he's afraid he'll get so busy it will kill him.

Today, you'll hear a version of that song just for woodwind instruments. Listen how Rossini makes the music sound like a lot of busy people bickering, trying to get Figaro's attention.

“Fanfare for the Common Man”

Aaron Copland was born Nov. 14, 1900, in New York. He died Dec. 2, 1990, in Westchester, N.Y. “*Fanfare for the Common Man*” was written in 1942.

In World War II, everyone got involved in the war effort. From 1942 through 1945, people couldn't

buy new cars or refrigerators, or buy gas or new tires, or even get all the food they needed. Factories made only things needed for the war.

Even musicians joined the effort. In 1942, the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra asked 18 composers to write patriotic fanfares about the war. (Fanfares are usually pretty short, upbeat pieces, and they often use a lot of brass instruments.)

Most of the fanfares were dedicated to very specific things, like the “*Fanfare for the Fighting French*”, and they never became popular. But in his fanfare, Copland honored the “common man”, the kind of person you can count on to do a good job without needing a big reward.

Copland said he tried to make this music “noble”. Listen and see if you think he did.

The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra

Benjamin Britten was born Nov. 22, 1913, in Lowestoft, England. He died Dec. 4, 1976, in Aldeburgh, England. *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra (Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell)* was written in 1946.

Like many composers, Benjamin Britten liked mixing children with music. First, he liked the way kids see the world, and, second, he wanted them to see what a good time they could have listening to an orchestra.

Many of his pieces were written for children — either to play or to listen to. Most of them were written before World War II forced him to focus on more serious issues.

In 1945, after the war, Britten got a commission (that is, he was hired)