

SUPERHEROES



Symphor!a

THE ORCHESTRA OF CENTRAL NEW YORK

CONCERT & ACTIVITY GUIDE

WELCOME!

We are excited to perform our Superheroes concert for you! In this guide, you can find information about the concert, including descriptions of the musical selections that we will be performing, sound samples, some important highlights about the music and orchestra, and some activities for students. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions, or if we can be of any assistance in your preparation for the concert.

Paul McShee, conductor



Described by the Baltimore Sun as both a "lyrical and rhythmically incisive" conductor, Paul McShee, Artistic Director of Instrumental Studies and Assistant Professor at Binghamton University, is known for the "energy and sincere expression" of his performances. Equally at home on the podium and in the opera pit, Dr. McShee is sought after as a conductor for opera productions in the US and Europe. He was a staff conductor for the Baltimore Opera Project, guest conductor for *La traviata* and *Madama Butterfly* at Paul Hamlyn Hall in London, and music director of the PopUp Opera Program in Edinburgh, Scotland. He also serves as music director of the Connecticut Valley Symphony Orchestra based in West Hartford, CT.

Paul has conducted the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra, the Boulder Chamber Orchestra, the London Paradisal Players, L'Orchestre QuiPasseParLà, L'Orchestre Band-Son, the Philharmonie Mihail Jora, and the Bohuslav Martinu Philharmonic.

A champion of new music, and works of underrepresented composers, Paul is currently preparing a collected edition of the instrumental works of Margaret Bonds. Additionally, he has worked with composers including Kenneth Fuchs, Avner Dorman, Anna Clyne, and Nathan Fletcher.

A passionate believer in the importance of music in our communities, Paul is also the director of the Symphoria Youth Orchestra program. There, he conducts the Symphoria Youth Repertory and Young Artists' Orchestra, which perform multiple concerts each year throughout the Syracuse area and collaborate closely with local school programs to bring high-quality music making to their community.

He holds the DMA in conducting from the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University and a MM from the University of Connecticut. He has served on the faculties of the University of Minnesota, the University of Connecticut, and Binghamton University. His current research concerns the intersections between philosophy and the music of Brahms, Wagner, and Mahler. His dissertation, "Gentle into that Good Night: Rejection of Linear Structural Narratives in Finales by Brahms, Wagner, and Mahler," was recognized by Peabody Conservatory faculty with a commendation.

Holly Adams, host



Holly Adams is a SAG-AFTRA performer with classic and conservatory training and a graduate of the International Dell 'Arte School. Her professional career covers two decades and four continents! Known for her skills as a physical actor, her stage and film roles include Zombies, Aliens, and Shakespearean nymphs, witches, and warriors. Favorites include film features Gotham Blue, Anomie, and Here Alone; shorts Your Loving, Virginia as Virginia Woolf, Ovid, and Taps. Some stage favorites: Love, Loss and What I Wore; My Father's Dragon; A Midsummer Night's Dream;

Macbeth; A Christmas Carol; Hotspur in Richard II; Richard III in Kynge's Games; as well as numerous physical theatre pieces.

PROGRAM

Mikhail Glinka: Overture to Ruslan and Lyudmila

Listen here: <https://archive.org/details/RuslanAndLudmilaOverturebernstein>

Alan Silvestri: Captain America March

Listen here: <https://youtu.be/wltsGaeKIEI>

John Williams: Superman March

Listen here: <https://youtu.be/XmsEJY08jEg>

Danny Elfman: Batman Theme

Listen here: <https://youtu.be/YoaU3kRFvLg>

Danny Elfman: Music from Spiderman

Listen here: https://youtu.be/qUi_xJU4WJc

Rupert Gregson-Williams: Wonder Woman

Listen here: <https://youtu.be/zJcdgh2Zka8>

John Williams: Imperial March from Star Wars

Listen here: <https://youtu.be/vsMWVW4xtwl>

COMPOSERS



Mikhail Glinka was born on May 21, 1804 in Novospasskoye, Russia. He was the first Russian composer to receive international recognition, and is the founder of the Russian nationalist school of composition. He became interested in music around age 10, and began to study piano. He eventually travelled to Germany to continue studying music and composition. He eventually returned to Russia. His opera *Ruslan and Lyudmila* is a classic story of good triumphing over evil. Glinka used folk songs, dissonance, and unusual scales throughout the work. Though the opera was initially not very popular, Glinka's music went on to influence generations of Russian composers.

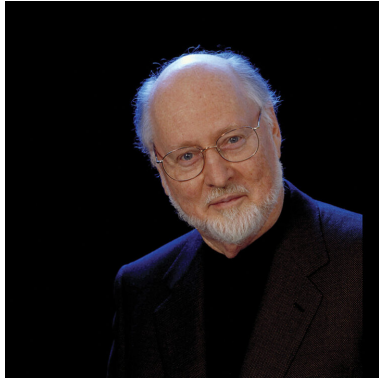
Alan Silvestri first dreamed of becoming a jazz guitar player. After spending two years at the Berklee School of Music in Boston, he hit the road as a performer and arranger. Landing in Hollywood at the age of 22, he found himself successfully composing the music for 1972's "The Doberman Gang" which established his place in the world of film composing. The 1970s witnessed the rise of energetic synth-pop scores, establishing Silvestri as the action rhythmologist for TV's highway patrol hit "CHiPs." This action driven score caught the ear of a young filmmaker named Robert Zemeckis, whose hit film, 1984's "Romancing the Stone," was the perfect first date for the composer and director. It's success became the basis of a decades long collaboration that continues to this day. Silvestri has written film scores for *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*, *What Lies Beneath*, *Back to the Future*, *Ready Player One*, *Avengers*, *Polar Express*, and dozens of others.



Daniel Robert Elfman, also known by his stage name "Danny" Elfman, is an American Composer, Producer, and Actor. He is famous for composing some of the most familiar tunes in American cinema, including main titles themes for highly popular shows such as "The Simpsons" and "Desperate Housewives", and also the score of the 1989 Tim Burton *Batman* Movie. Elfman, born in Los Angeles in 1953, spent much of his time at his local music theatre, there, unlike most people; he paid a ridiculous amount of attention to film scores. In high school he started a

Ska band, and soon he followed his brother Richard to France, where he performed with an Avant-Garde musical theatre group called the "Le Grand Magic Circus". Elfman went on to study numerous musical styles in Ghana and Mali, particularly the highlife genre of Ghana. Elfman then returned to the United States where he unofficially studied music at the California Institute of the Arts. In 1985, he was invited by legendary director Tim Burton to write the score for "Pee-wee's Adventure", and Burton was so happy with it that he asked Elfman to write music for almost all of his movies, including "Sleepy Hollow", "Edward Scissorhands", "Planet of The Apes", "Alice in Wonderland", and "Batman" for which he won an Academy Award for Best Soundtrack.

Rupert Gregson-Williams is a composer of film, video games, and television scores. He is well known for his work on the film “Hotel Rwanda”, “Hacksaw Ridge”, “Wonder Woman”, “Aquaman”, “Over the Hedge”, “Bee Movie”, “Abominable”, “Back to the Outback”, “Made of Honor”, and the “Legend of Tarzan”. He has also composed the music for many films that Adam Sandler has starred in, as well as the score for the video game “Battlefield 2: Modern Combat”. His television productions include “Veep”, “Catch 22”, and “The Crown”.



In a career that spans five decades, **John Williams** has become one of America’s most accomplished and successful composers for film and for the concert stage. He has served as music director and laureate conductor of one of the country’s treasured musical institutions, the Boston Pops Orchestra, and he maintains thriving artistic relationships with many of the world’s great orchestras, including the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Mr. Williams has received a variety of prestigious awards, including the National Medal of Arts, the Kennedy Center Honor, the Olympic Order, and numerous Academy Awards,

Grammy Awards, Emmy Awards and Golden Globe Awards. He remains one of our nation’s most distinguished and contributive musical voices.

Mr. Williams has composed the music and served as music director for more than one hundred films. His 40-year artistic partnership with director Steven Spielberg has resulted in many of Hollywood’s most acclaimed and successful films, including “Schindler’s List”, “E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial”, “Jaws”, “Jurassic Park”, “Close Encounters of the Third Kind”, four Indiana Jones films, “Saving Private Ryan”, “Amistad”, “Munich”, “Hook”, “Catch Me If You Can”, “Minority Report”, “A.I.: Artificial Intelligence”, “Empire of the Sun”, “The Adventures of TinTin” and “War Horse”. Their latest collaboration, “The BFG”, was released on July 1, 2016. Mr. Williams has composed the scores for all seven Star Wars films, the first three Harry Potter films, “Superman: The Movie”, “JFK”, “Born on the Fourth of July”, “Memoirs of a Geisha”, “Far and Away”, “The Accidental Tourist”, “Home Alone”, “Nixon”, “The Patriot”, “Angela’s Ashes”, “Seven Years in Tibet”, “The Witches of Eastwick”, “Rosewood”, “Sleepers”, “Sabrina”, “Presumed Innocent”, “The Cowboys” and “The Reivers”, among many others.

ABOUT THIS CONCERT

Have you ever thought about what makes a Superhero or a Supervillain? Stan Lee, who created iconic characters such as Doctor Strange, Spider Man, X-Men, Iron Man, Thor, Hulk and many others, has said that a superhero is a person who does heroic deeds in a way that a normal person couldn't. So, to be a superhero, you need to have some kind of special power. That power could be anything, but it is an essential part of what makes a superhero different than other people.

But that special power isn't all that makes up a superhero. Superheroes also have additional traits that make them super. Think about the **attitude** of the superheroes you know. Do they have anything in common? Superheroes are also known for **integrity** and moral character. Can you ever remember a time when a superhero you know wasn't honest?

Superheroes are also known for **empathy**, and understand how their actions affect others. Just think of all of the times when it seemed like something bad would happen, and a superhero came to the rescue to save just one person at the last moment. Superheroes also work together and are **supportive** of other efforts to solve a problem. Can you think of any superheroes that worked together to solve a problem?

It seems like Superheroes never give up. They are always **driven** to not let an obstacle stand in their way. And sometimes those obstacles seem pretty big, so they need a lot of **courage** to do that. Can you think of other superhero traits?

The Music

The music at today's concert helps to describe each superhero. Composers do that by trying to think about the traits and characteristics of each one, and then describing that with the music they write. But how does courage, empathy, or integrity sound? Each composer has a different way of using music to describe the characters. Sometimes they use rhythm, specific instruments or instrument families, dynamics, and different combinations of each to try and capture the sound they are looking for. This guide includes some activities that will enhance the experience before or after the performance. There are many possibilities for the lesson can be utilized, and the activities are intended to act as examples that can be expanded upon, if time allows.

LESSON: The Superhero Musician in Me

Students will create and perform their own music or story inspired by the composers and performers featured in the concert.

FEATURED REPERTOIRE

John Williams: Superman March

Listen here: <https://youtu.be/XmsEJY08jEg>

Danny Elfman: Batman Theme

Listen here: <https://youtu.be/YoaU3kRFvLg>

Rupert Gregson-Williams: Wonder Woman

Listen here: <https://youtu.be/zJcdgh2Zka8>

Danny Elfman: Music from Spiderman

Listen here: https://youtu.be/qUi_xJU4WJc

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How do musical elements convey courage?
- How do musicians and composers exemplify courage?
- What does courage mean to you? How are you courageous?

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Explore the process of composing and editing original music or stories.
- Perform original music or story in a small group.
- Reflect on the process of composing or writing.

EVALUATION

Successful achievement of all activities would include students performing and describing their compositions or writing.

KEY VOCABULARY

- Articulation: The style in which musical notes are played
- Composer: a person who writes music
- Composition: an original piece of music created by a composer
- Dynamics: how loudly or softly music is played
- Ensemble: a group of musicians playing together
- Tempo: the speed of the music's beat

MATERIALS

- The Superhero Inside Me worksheet
- Composer's Guide worksheet
- My Superhero Story writing response worksheet
- Melodic instruments* for composition activity (e.g., xylophones, recorders, keyboards, guitars)
- Sound System for musical excerpts of concert repertoire (e.g., laptop and speakers, iPhone® dock, Spotify®, etc.)

COMPOSITION ACTIVITY: Create an original piece of music inspired by the music of John Williams.

Have students perform the work and reflect on the courage it takes to be a composer and/or performer

INTRODUCTION

1. Hook the students by sharing the following: “Musicians and composers do brave things every day by creating music from inside their hearts and souls and sharing it with the world. Let’s listen to a piece of music composed by John Williams.
2. Ask: “What do you hear in this music that reminds you of the idea of courage?” (Students may comment about how fast or loud it is. Whatever they say is correct.)
3. Transfer the ideas generated by the students’ focused listening to a writing activity. “Let’s listen to that piece of music again and, as you listen, brainstorm the actions of a new superhero: YOU! What are you doing? What powers do you have? What actions are taking place in your imagination?”

ACTIVITY

1. Instruct students to complete the The Superhero Inside Me worksheet as they listen to music of John Williams
2. Drawing from their completed worksheets, students will create a short “Superhero Theme Song” that reflects the components on their organizer.
 - Have students use melodic instruments like a xylophone or recorder to create their compositions. If students have never composed before, don’t worry about the quality of the musical ideas, instrumental technique or notation. Give students freedom to create any musical ideas they think best represent their superpower. If you don’t have access to melodic instruments, feel free to skip the composition activity and use the alternate activity instead.
3. Tell students, “Superheroes have theme music that reflects their courage and the danger they face. What is your superpower and how would your theme song sound?”
4. Guide students through the Composer’s Guide worksheet. Students can brainstorm how they want their theme song to sound courageous. Provide students time to create their theme songs. (If your students are older, you may wish to skip the “Composer’s Guide” worksheet in step 4 and instead discuss more complex compositional ideas like melody, rhythm, meter, form, harmony, unity and variety, etc., before the students compose.)
5. Allow students to present their music to each other in partners or small groups. Listeners will provide feedback about the music.
 - Instruct students to ask themselves the following questions when giving feedback:
 1. Are superpowers expressed in the music?
 2. Does the music sound courageous?
 3. Does the music have a beginning, middle and end?”
6. Ask for volunteers to present their music to the class, emphasizing that performing an original piece of music is courageous because it comes from your imagination but is brought to life using your skills as a musician and performer.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY: Write a superhero story based on the music of Shostakovich. Write about how this music is providing a soundtrack to students' courageous superhero actions.

1. Instruct students to complete The Superhero Inside Me worksheet as they listen to a work by John Williams.
2. Ask students to write or draw a short story describing their superhero and their courageous acts inspired by John Williams' music.
3. Prompt student writing with the following discussion: "What is your superpower and what courageous actions are you imagining as this music plays? It can be as simple as defending someone from a bully, performing a piece of music alone or stating your true opinion that people may disagree with. Provide students time to write or draw their ideas.
4. Allow students to present their stories to each other in partners or small groups. Listeners will provide feedback about the stories.

Instruct students to ask themselves the following questions when giving feedback:

1. Are superpowers expressed in the story?
 2. How is courage shown in the story?
 3. Does my story have a beginning, middle and end?
5. Ask students to present their stories to the class, emphasizing that presenting an original story is like presenting a new work of music because it comes from your imagination but is brought to life using your skills as a writer, as well as an expressive reader

ASSESSMENT:

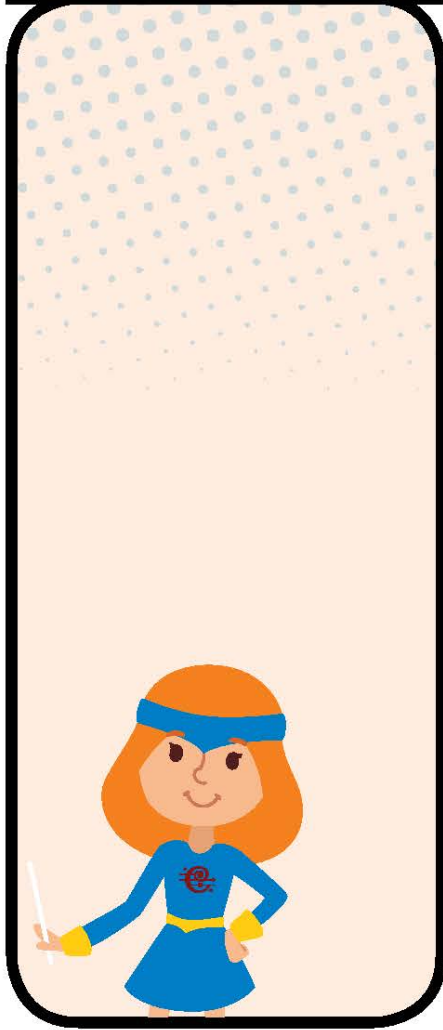
- Observe whether the students are connecting their stories to the musical excerpt.
- Observe whether students are creating original music that reflects the characteristics they wrote about.
- Observe whether students can describe their work and processes, as well as the courage it took to present it.

Name: _____

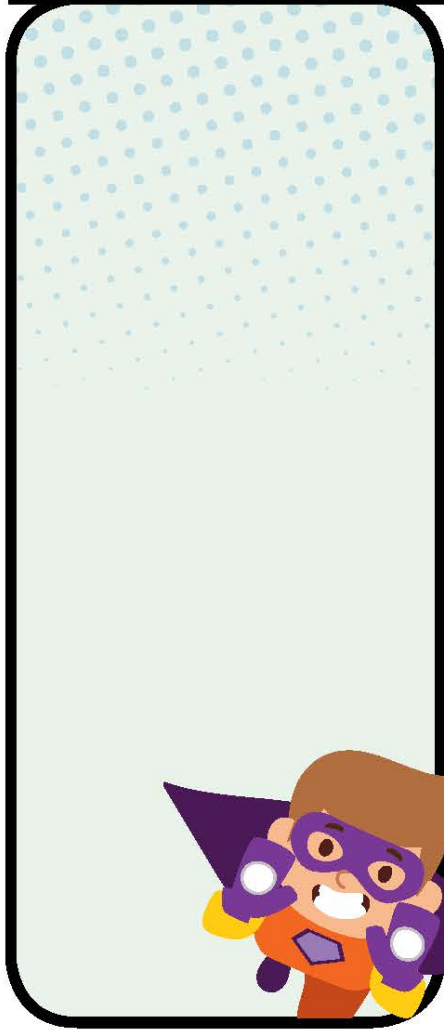
THE SUPERHERO INSIDE ME

As you listen to the music, think about your own life. What do you do that is courageous? What can you do that might be heroic? As the music plays, imagine yourself as a superhero and answer these questions.

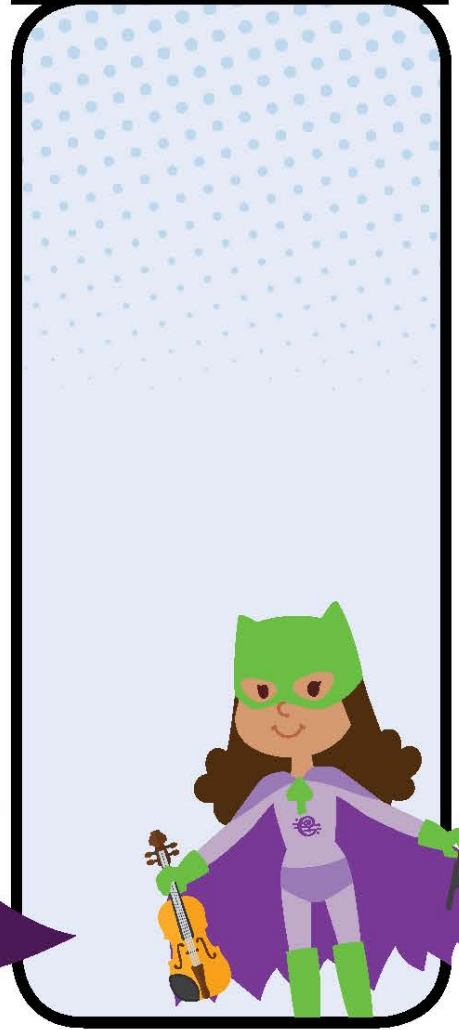
WHAT ARE MY SUPERPOWERS?



WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE? WHAT AM I WEARING?



WHAT AM I DOING WHILE THIS MUSIC IS PLAYING?



Composer's Name: _____

COMPOSER'S GUIDE

How will you use the musical elements to make your superhero theme song? What choices will you make in the music to make it sound courageous?

Put an X on the line to show the tempo, dynamics and articulation of your music.

Tempo – How fast or slow the music is.

Slow-----Fast

Dynamics – How loud or soft the music is.

Soft-----Loud

Articulation – The style in which notes are played.

Smooth ----- Dull ----- Accented ----- Choppy

What else did you do in the music to make it sound courageous?

How did you feel when you presented your music?



Name: _____

MY **SUPERHERO** STORY