

SCHOOL PACK

SHEHERAZADE



SAMPLE

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SCHÉHÉRAZADE

COMPOSER: Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov 1844-1908

NATIONALITY: Russian

- ♪ Nicolai learnt the piano from an early age
- ♪ From the age of twelve he attended a navy school as a cadet
- ♪ At eighteen he went to sea as an officer
- ♪ By 1865 he had left the navy to concentrate on composing
- ♪ In 1871 became a music professor at St. Petersburg Conservatoire
- ♪ Most of his students became famous composers
- ♪ One of the Russia's most important composers of the 19th century

THE MUSIC:

- ♪ The symphonic suite, Schéhérazade, was completed in 1888
- ♪ Written for large orchestra with numerous percussion instruments
- ♪ The first performance was in St. Petersburg during 1888
- ♪ The music was inspired by the "Tales of the Arabian Nights"
- ♪ There are four movements
- ♪ In 1910 the music was used for a ballet

THE ARABIAN NIGHTS:

A collection of folk stories by collated by several writers since the 9th century. The 1001 stories, originally from across Asia, are based on a relationship between a young bride and the King of Persia. The most popular stories are *Sinbad the Sailor*, *Aladdin* and *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*. The first English translation did not appear until the 18th century.

THE STORY:

The rich Sultan Shahrayar married several wives. As he did not trust any of them they were all executed the morning after the wedding night. His last young bride, Schéhérazade, was determined to survive and devised a plan to keep her husband occupied every night by telling him stories. Her scheme was successful as the Sultan always fell asleep before he could announce the death penalty. The Sultan was so excited and impressed by his wife's stories that he removed the death sentence and Schéhérazade lived to produce three children.

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YOUNG NICOLAI



NICOLAI'S GRAVE

Nicolai was born in the town of Tikhvin and his grave is nearby in the Alexander Nevsky Monastery, St. Petersburg



SYMPHONIC SUITE

A collection of movements based on the structure and elements of a symphony

OTHER WORKS BY THIS COMPOSER

Opera
Snow Maiden (1881)
Golden Cockerel (1907)
Concerto
Piano Concerto (1883)
Orchestral
Symphony No 1 (1865)
Sadko (1867)

SCHÉHÉRAZADE

LISTENING PLAN:

1st Movement - The Sea and Sinbad the Sailor

(A) Stern trombones (Sultan) supported by brass and lower strings.

(B) Shy woodwind lead to a solo violin playing an oriental tune (Schéhérazade), which is punctuated by a rippling harp (glissando).

(C) Strings sway as Sinbad's ship heads for the open sea. The timpani rumbles as orchestral waves leap and crash before the woodwind, cello and horns steer the ship to calmer waters.

(D) Lively violin solo, punctuated by clarinet, is kept afloat by a solo cello before a dramatic orchestra takes over and strings add (C).

(E) Strings pulsate against a rippling dialogue between woodwind and cello. The solo violin returns before a tense passage dominated by brass and timpani. (B) and (A) are recalled before the sound fades to a solo flute, oboe and clarinet. The cello provides movement for violins and woodwind to bring the ship safely to rest.

2nd Movement - Prince Kalender's Story

(B) Solo violin returns as Schéhérazade's tells another story.

(F) Strings drone as the bassoon plays a new oriental tune for the Prince who, dressed as a peasant, begins his journey in search of adventure and love. The oboe, violins, flutes, cello and horn follow. Strings tiptoe (pizzicato) as the oboe lingers. Suddenly the brass interrupt, strings shiver as trumpets fanfare.

(G) Strings strum as the clarinet plays a swirling dance. The piccolo and brass are chased before a brisk march takes over.

(F) The bassoon returns and the woodwind reply. The orchestra takes over until sustained horns lead to misty violins, sweeping harp, solo flute and shivering strings until the horn, violin and cello lead to a magnificent ending.

3rd Movement - The Prince and the Chinese Princess

A young couple fall in love but ignore their parent's advice.

(H) Romantic violins represent the Prince.

(I) The clarinet sweeps in as the Princess enters.

(H) The violins return before the flute adds (I).

(J) Strings shudder while the clarinet and flute duet.

(H) The violins lead the orchestra through several moods

(B) Schéhérazade's tune returns until a passionate orchestra subsides as the young couple tiptoe away to get married.

4th Movement - Baghdad Festival

(A) Quick dramatic entry of the Sultan by the strings.

(B) Schéhérazade follows (violin uses double stopping) before the orchestra responds with a flourish of percussion.

(K) Tambourine and cymbals catapult the orchestra into a tapestry of main tunes from previous movements as the carnival begins. The orchestra is whipped up into an oriental as Sinbad's ship is sighted. Bold trombones, splashing cymbals and pounding drums stir up a mega storm until the ship crashes onto the rocks and sinks.

(A) The excited orchestra gives way to the Sultan's tune on trumpets.

(B) Schéhérazade's tune brings the suite to a sad conclusion.

MOOD-O-METER

Discover the different moods in this music by sliding your finger on the mood-o-meter as the music changes.



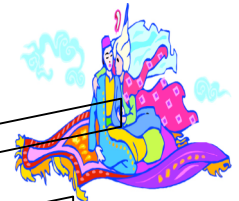
Sad



Happy



Nervous



Romantic



Bold



Dramatic

SCHÉHÉRAZADE

TEACHERS NOTES - FOLLOW UP

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Story telling and how news, folk stories and legends were communicated before books, newspapers, television and computers. The Arabian Nights is a good example of storytelling.

2. Russian history between 1800-1900 and the influence of nationalism on music and culture.

<http://www.channel4.com/history/microsites/H/history/n-s/russia.html>
<http://www.dorak.info/music/national.html>

3. Investigate the composers early life in Russia and his experience in the Russian Navy

<http://www.russianlaw.net/RK/NARK.htm>

4. This suite features colourful orchestration. The composer used: -

2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, triangle, tambourine, snare drums, bass drum, cymbals, tam-tam, harp, and strings.

<http://www.dsokids.com/2001/instrumentchart.htm>

5. How the two main musical motifs played by the trombone (Sultan) and violin (Schéhérazade) represent the two main characters.

6. How does the composer use the orchestra to depict the Baghdad Festival, the chase and the storm etc.

7. Introduce other music that tells a story or describes an event: -

e.g. 1812 overture (Tchaikovsky), The Nutcracker Suite (Tchaikovsky), Peter and the Wolf (Prokofiev), The Armed Man (Karl Jenkins)