"Charlotte and the Music-maker"

A Concert for actor and orchestra

Study Guide

Introduction

Welcome to the Platypus Theatre study guide for "Charlotte and the Music-maker". This guide has been created to help you prepare your students for the concert you will be attending and also to stimulate creativity in your music classes at school. If you are not a music teacher, don't get overwhelmed by the material! Choose only the exercises that you feel confident in exploring with your students: a few simple exercises done in conjunction with reading the material in the study guide will greatly enhance your students' enjoyment of the concert.

I hope this material is helpful to you. If you have any comments about the guide or the concert, please let me know. I can be reached at the address below:

Peter Duschenes
Platypus Theatre
36 Julian Avenue
Ottawa, ON K1Y 0S5
Tel: (613) 792-1250
Fax: (613) 792-4671
Email: peter@platypustheatre.com
Website: www.platypustheatre.com

Why Music?

1. **MUSIC IS A SCIENCE.** It is specific and demands exact acoustics. A conductor's full score is a chart, a graph which indicates frequencies, intensities, volume change, melody and harmony all at once and with the most exact control of time.

2. **MUSIC IS MATHEMATICAL.** It is rhythmically based on the subdivisions of time into fractions which must be done instantaneously, not worked out on paper.

3. **MUSIC IS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE.** Most of the terms are Italian, German or French, and the notation is certainly not English – but a highly developed kind of shorthand that uses symbols to represent ideas. The semantics of music is the most complete and universal language.

4. **MUSIC IS HISTORY.** Music usually reflects the environment and times of its creation, often even the country and/or racial feeling.

5. **MUSIC IS PHYSICAL EDUCATION.** It requires fantastic co-ordination of fingers, hands, arms, lip, cheek and facial muscles in addition to extraordinary control of the diaphragmatic, back, stomach and chest muscles, which respond instantly to the sound the ears hear and the mind interprets.

6. **MUSIC DEVELOPS INSIGHT AND DEMANDS RESEARCH.** Music is all these things, but most of all, **music is art**. It allows a human being to take all of these dry, technically techniques and use them to create emotion. That is one thing science cannot duplicate: humanism, feeling and emotion.

About the Program

Synopsis:

Charlotte is no ordinary little girl; she plays the trumpet on a cardboard tube, the violin with a ruler and pencil and the drums on anything that bangs. But her musical talents are not appreciated at home where everyone is far too busy to listen to her brilliance so she sets off into the wide world only to find herself lost in a raging blizzard. The Music-maker to the rescue! An odd little man who shares Charlotte's passion for music, the Music-maker takes Charlotte on a magical-musical journey through the orchestra, exploring the sounds and colors of the instruments and the exciting possibilities that music has to offer.

Using a simple story this concert focuses on the different families and individual instruments of the orchestra and features each instrument heard on its own and in symphonic works.

The Repertoire

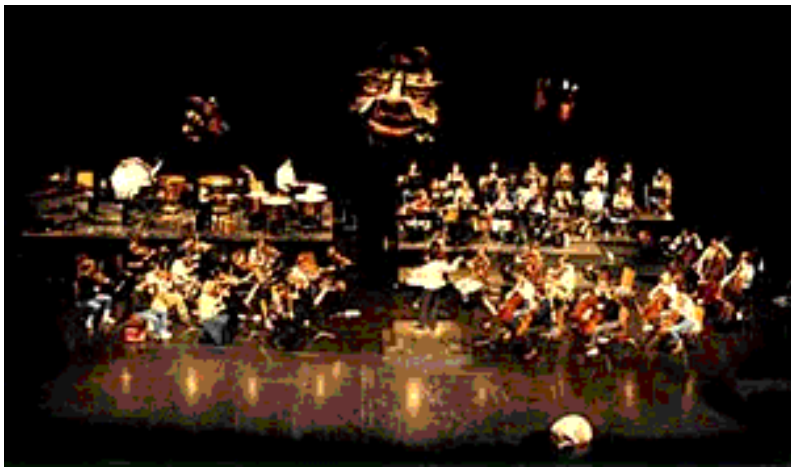
Includes excerpts from:

Trudel, Alain	Original composition
Handel, George Frideric	Water Music (Hornpipe)
Traditional (arr. Trudel)	When the Saints Go Marching In
Handel, George Frideric	Arrival of the Queen of Sheeba
Abreu, Zequina (arr. Trudel)	Tico-tico
Grieg, Edvard	Holberg Suite – Slow Movement #4 "Air"
Mozart, W.A. (arr. Trudel)	Variations on "Twinkle, Twinkle Little star"

Biographies

Platypus Theatre

On January 28 1990 a 40 foot monster interrupted a concert of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony in Kitchener, Ontario. In a battle that involved puppets, masks, actor, 45 musicians and some of the world's most beautiful symphonic music, the Monster and the audience "duked" it out to see who would triumph - noise or music. Of course music won and the evil monster Cacopholous was destroyed. That was the beginning of Platypus Theatre, a company that has dedicated itself to presenting classical music to young audiences with theatrical performances in an intelligent, entertaining and participatory way. Since that first performance Platypus Theatre has been receiving rave reviews from orchestra managers, critics, educators, musicians, parents and children from around the world. Platypus' seven original programs have been seen by over half a million spectators in Canada, the United States and on six tours to Southeast Asia. After nearly 400 concerts with more than 50 orchestras worldwide Platypus Theatre has gained an unparalleled reputation for excellence in music education. In 2006, in collaboration with TV Ontario and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Platypus Theatre created a television adaptation of their ever-popular, "How the Gimquat Found Her Song", which was broadcast three times on TVO and is now available on DVD from



Emily saves the orchestra (1990)

www.platypustheatre.com. Platypus Theatre was also the subject of a nationally broadcast documentary made by CTV (CKCO Kitchener) in 1991 and of a PBS television full-performance broadcast on UNC-TV in North Carolina in 2000.

The name Platypus came about because like the animal that lives partly on land and partly in the water, Platypus Theatre lives partly in the world of music and partly in the world of theatre. In Addition to "Gimquat" and "Charlotte and the Music-maker" the company's programs include: "Emily Saves the Orchestra", "Rhythm in Your Rubbish", "Bach to the Future", "Song of the Forest" and "A Flicker of Light on a Christmas Night".

Peter Duschenes – Writer and actor

When Peter Duschenes was 13 his brothers were putting on a marionette production of Igor Stravinsky's "The Soldier's Tale". They didn't really want their little brother involved but at the last minute they needed someone to do the voice of the Soldier: Peter to the rescue! That was his first taste of doing theatre and also of combining theatre with music. 16 years later, after earning a Masters degree in Theatre from the California Institute of the Arts, Peter and his brother, Michael, founded Platypus theatre to once again combine theatre with classical music. As the Artistic Director of Platypus, Peter has been widely praised for his innovation in presenting symphonic music to young audiences. His ability to bring the concert stage to life by combining theatre and music has led to numerous commissions with orchestras from coast to coast. An award winning playwright, Peter's writing credits include all seven of Platypus' symphony plays as well as the one-act play, "Lost River", which was the 1991 winner of the Theatre BC's Canadian National Playwriting competition. As an actor Peter has performed with companies across Canada and the United States appearing most recently as Richard in "Richard II" at Quantum Theatre in Pittsburgh, PA and as Louis Ironson in "Angels In America" at the Centaur in Montreal. Peter lives in Ottawa with his wife Sarah and their daughter, Magda.

Alain Trudel – Composer

Montreal native Alain Trudel has distinguished himself as a conductor and soloist, but has also used his creative genius as a composer and arranger. Many of his works have been performed by orchestras and chamber ensembles throughout the Americas and in Europe and Japan, In 1997, the CBC commissioned the work "Passage", a small ensemble piece written for trombone, trumpet, accordion and piano. This piece has been played more than fifty times, including at the Winnipeg New Music Festival and in the United States, and rebroadcast nationally on Radio Canada and the CBC. In 1992 he composed "Vision" which was broadcast on the radio and performed more than fifteen times across Canada. Alain has also written many times for his instrument, the trombone, including "Grand Louis", which was premiered at the International Trombone Congress of 1991 and two pieces for trombone and tape: "Yo" and "Vital" which premiered at the Festival de Strasbourg in 1993 and 1995 respectively. "Charlotte and the Music-Maker" is not Alain's first collaboration with a theatre company. He recently composed the music for a musical puppet play created by Productions Felix Mirbt. As an arranger, Alain Trudel has adapted an almost incalculable number of works for both choir and orchestra. Of special interest is his fifteen year engagement with the CBC radio and television sing-in for which he arranged Christmas pieces from all genres and eras. Alain Trudel is recipient of the Virginia Parker Prize, The Prix du Président de la République of the Académie du disque Charles Cros (France), an Opus Prize and a Juno Award.

All About Instruments

String Instruments

Violin

It is the smallest of the stringed instruments and usually plays the melody of the piece. The Violin has a bright tone and many feel it is the instrument that is closest to the human voice. The violinist plays the instrument by placing it on the shoulder and under the chin. When the strings are touched by the bow, a sound is produced. The shorter the string, the higher the pitch.

Viola

The Viola is very similar to the violin, except that it is a slightly larger instrument and therefore has a deeper, richer tone.

Cello

The Cello is so much larger than a violin or viola that it has to be put in front of the musician, resting on the floor. In the orchestra, the cello often carries a melody, supplies rhythm or harmony.

Double Bass

This is the largest member of the string family. Bass players must stand or sit on a tall wooden stool. The strings are very long and thick and the same is true of the bass bow.

Harp

This heavenly instrument stands on it's own; the player who sits behind it plucks the strings, and uses the seven pedals to adjust the pitch or key to the piece. The harpist can play single notes, melodic intervals and chords, or can strum the strings in what is called a glissando, the sound most people associate with the instrument.

Wind Instruments

The sound of a wind instrument is produced by the vibration of air inside the instrument. There are two main groups of wind instruments: woodwinds and brasses. The names of the groups originated as their names would suggest.

Flute

Flutes are made of metal and sometimes of platinum. Basically, it is a long pipe with holes in it. Air is blown over the top of the mouthpiece; much like you would do to with a soda bottle, to produce the sound. The finger holes, which are closed or left open by the fingers either raise or lower the pitch.

Piccolo

A smaller version of the flute and the same concepts of sound production apply. Usually there is only one piccolo ever used in an orchestra because the sound is so distinctive and piercing.

Oboe

Its mouthpiece is made of two very small and very thin pieces of reed (extremely thin wood) which are tied together with silk thread and inserted into the instrument. The oboe looks very much like a clarinet, however, it is marginally shorter in length and much narrower. The tone of the oboe is so pure, it is the instrument which gives the pitch for the orchestra prior to the beginning of a concert, when the members of the orchestra are tuning their instruments. Two oboes are usually included in the full symphony orchestra.

Clarinet

The clarinet looks like a long, black tube with finger holes and valves, much like the flute, that when covered or left open, adjust the pitch. The mouthpiece is made of wood and is attached to the top of the clarinet. It often plays melodies or fast running passages, trills and rapid scales.

Bass Clarinet
The bass clarinet plays one octave lower than the clarinet and is so large that it rests on the floor.

Bassoon & Contrabassoon
The Bassoon is a large, wooden instrument. The reedy sound of the bassoon creates a humorous sound that is very distinctive. The Contrabassoon plays the lowest notes in the orchestra. Its tube is over sixteen feet long and is folded over on itself four times. The notes it plays sound one octave lower than the printed music.

Brass Instruments

The traditions of brass instruments extend back into military history and even early church music during the Renaissance.
The sound of brass instruments is created by "buzzing". This is the way in which the lips press together and create a buzzing sound. Brass players can use the valves or slide positions to determine the notes or pitches, but most of the notes are determined by the pressure of the embouchure (the manner in which the mouth is held).

Trumpet
The highest in pitch of the brass instruments is the trumpet. Its brilliant sound is often associated with military music. There are usually two to four trumpets in the full symphony orchestra.

French Horn
The French horn has a funnel-shaped mouthpiece attached to a narrow metal tube that is over 6.5 m long. The tube is coiled so that the instrument sits on the player's lap and the players' right hand rests in the flared bell. It has three valves which alter the pitch, however, like all brass instruments, the variety of pitches rely on the embouchure of the player.

Trombone
The trombone is really just a long tube that has three main parts: the mouthpiece, slide and bell. Like other brass instruments, the player buzzes into the mouthpiece sending out vibrations. The slide acts much like the valves do on the other brass instruments. It either lengthens or

shortens the instrument, thus making the pitch higher or lower. Usually, there are three trombones in the full orchestra of which the third is often a bass trombone.

Tuba

The lowest in pitch of the brass instrument is the tuba, and along with the double bass and the contrabassoon, it provides the foundation for the orchestra's harmony. A smaller tuba is called the euphonium, but this instrument is usually found in bands, as opposed to orchestras.

Percussion

The percussion section of the orchestra includes a wide variety of instruments that produce sound when they are hit or struck. Percussion instruments can be divided into two groups: instruments of definite and indefinite pitch. Keyboard instruments, much like xylophones, timpani and the piano can play pitches that are notated on a staff. Snare drums, triangles, tambourines and castanets do not have a definable pitch therefore the player just reads the rhythmic notation.

Timpani

They are kettle-like in shape and are always found in the orchestra in groups of two or more. Timpani are tuned, unlike other drums, by tightening or loosening the drum. They can be played with single strokes in a definite rhythm or in a roll that sounds like thunder.

Bass Drum

The Bass Drum has two drumheads, one across its top and one across the bottom. Normally the bass drum is tilted on its side and mounted on a stand within the orchestra.

Snare Drum

This is a small drum, mounted on a stand when played in the orchestra. It can be played as a straight drum, with either rhythmic patterns, single strokes or drum roll.

Tambourine

The Tambourine is a small, hand-held drum, with only one drum head. It's beaten with the heel of the hand or is shaken to produce a steady jingling sound.

Cymbal

The cymbal is a metal disc whose centre rises into a bell-shape. It can either be suspended on a stand and struck with sticks, or two cymbals can be held in the percussionist's hands and crashed together when required.

Chimes

These produce the sound of bells. They are metal tubes suspended from a frame and struck at the top end with a wooden mallet.

Gong

The is simply a single piece of circular metal. The instrument vibrates when struck. The gong is suspended and is struck in single strokes with a 'beater' or stick. The enormous sound takes quite a while to fade away.

Triangle

This is a metal rod bent into a triangular shape with one angle left open. It is suspended and is struck with a metal beater. Its tinkling sound can penetrate through the entire orchestral sound.

Castanets

These are a pair of wooden shells which are struck together to close sharply like clam-shells. They may be held and played in one hand, or mounted on a wooden stick that is shaken, or mounted on a wooden platform and tapped rhythmically.

Wood block & Cow bell

The Wood block is a round or rectangular hollow block or wood which is open at both ends and is struck with a stick. The metal orchestral cow bell is mounted on a wooden stand and is struck with a stick.

Glockenspiel

This is a set of tuned metal bars mounted on a metal frame. The bars are stuck with mallets.

Xylophone

This is a set of tuned wooden bars placed on a frame in an arrangement like the keys on a piano. One player strikes with the bars as many as four mallets.

Marimba

This is a set of tuned wooden bars similar to a xylophone. Each bar has a hollow tube beneath it for greater resonance.

Vibraphone

This is a set of tuned metal bars each over a hollow tube as in the xylophone. Inside each hollow tube is a metal disc which spins when an electric motor is turned on, giving a vibrating sound.

Exercises For The Classroom

The Music Machine

One student stands at the front of the class and begins a machine-like gesture accompanied by a sound. (e.g. bending and straightening the knees accompanied by the vocal sounds "Ha!….Peep!…Ha!….Peep!…"etc.) The student repeats the gesture and sound over and over. Another student joins the first and adds to the machine, creating a gesture of their own with an accompanying sound. (It adds to the fun and to the understanding of how different components of music work together if the gestures are related – like a conveyor belt. For example, if the first student creates a gesture that looks like a machine passing objects from one side of their body to the other, the second student could create a gesture with which they received the passed object and threw it up in the air, the third student could catch it and flatten it and so on…)

Stories in Music

1) Listen to the Slow Movement #4 "Air" from Edvard Grieg's "Holberg Suite. Ask the students to write a story or draw a picture based on the music. What story is the music telling? What might have been going on in Grieg's life when he wrote this piece?
2) Open a discussion about the mood of a piece of music. What is it that makes a piece of music sound sad or happy, frightening or triumphant? Do certain instruments create certain moods? Is it the tempo? The dynamics? The use of major or minor chords? Ask the students to think about music that they know, any kind of music. What is it, besides the words, that make us feel a certain way when listening? How does the music tell its story?

Musical Chairs

Ensure students are familiar with the various families within the orchestra such as: the string, wind, brass and percussion families. Have students divide into groups named for the musical families and arrange themselves in the classroom as an orchestra would be from the stage. Make this situation into a game similar to *musical chairs,* now renamed appropriately to *musical families.* During the music, the students are free to move to and from the delegated instrumental sections…once the music has been stopped, the student you choose must be able to tell you which instrumental family he/she is currently in.

Scrambled Instruments

Unscramble these words, which are the names of musical instruments played by a symphony orchestra:

1. cloel
2. lavio
3. sabs
4. ilivon
5. eboo
6. tulef
7. sabonoas
8. pocolic
9. raclinet
10. rombonet
11. pumtret
12. batu
13. phar
14. nopia
15. grantile
16. tanpimi
17. mrud
18. lonexypho
19. sambycl
20. blels

answers (just in case!):

1.cello	11.trumpet
2.viola	12.tuba
3.bass	13.harp
4.violin	14.piano
5.oboe	15.triangle
6.flute	16.timpani
7.bassoon	17.drum
8.piccolo	18.xylophone
9.clarinet	19.cymbals
10.trombone	20.bells

The Amazing World of Sound

1. You can create different musical pitches by placing your lower lip on the rim of a glass bottle and blowing across the top of the bottle. Try filling several bottles with different amounts of water. Can you play a scale on the bottles? Can you write a piece that someone else could play? Try knocking on the bottles with a pencil or a stick.

2. Create a list of sounds you think would go well together. Consider dynamics (loudness or softness), timbre, colour, and sound quality – as a composer would when choosing instruments.

   Ex. bees buzzing
   cat meowing
   wind chimes
   pots clanking together
   someone knocking
   children jumping into water
   steam
   birds singing
   airplanes flying
   doorbell
   vacuum cleaner

3. Have a group of students sit quietly in a circle with their backs toward the centre. Choose a "conductor" to stand in the centre and touch one person at a time; the person touched must speak, in any voice from whisper to loud talking voice. Any one of the students with their backs turned to the centre must try to identify the speaker. Can they identify their friends by the timbre and quality of their voices? Is this the same skill that helps identify different instrument voices? Do we hear the same thing when our eyes are open as when they are shut?

A Visit To The Symphony

A visit to see a live symphonic concert is a very special occasion. Your participation contributes to the enjoyment of the musical experience. The following are some questions you may have…

When I get to the concert hall, how will I know where I'm going to sit?

The ushers will direct you to the section where your seats are located. Each teacher will have a map of the theatre with his or her location. Take some time to go over seat locations. The ushers will be of help if there are any questions.

What do the ushers do?

Ushers ensure that people find their seats and that the visit to the hall is a pleasant one. It is important to give the ushers your full co-operation.

When is applause appropriate?

Applause is customarily given to both the concertmaster (first chair, Violin I), and the conductor as they walk on stage. Applause is also appropriate at the end of a work, which is marked by the conductor dropping both hands to his sides.

Why is it important to remain quiet while the orchestra is playing?

There are many different sounds to listen to and only when everyone is quiet will you have a chance to hear them all. More importantly, the musicians need your co-operation so they can hear each other and concentrate on giving the audience a good performance.

Are cameras, taping devices, or cellular phones allowed?

Sorry, but no. They aren't permitted in the theatre.

May I eat during the performance?

Food and drinks are not allowed in the theatre.

Everything You Wanted To Know About Concerts With The Symphony

(and ideas to help illustrate in class!)

What is a concert?

A concert is a performance of musical pieces. With the symphony, musical pieces require many musicians to make it work. They play the piece together for the audience. If you were taking all of the songs you knew and sing them for your friends and family, you'd be giving them a concert. *Exercise:* have students pick a song they like, either a solo, duet or trio, and have them perform it for the class. If a student has a musical instrument of his/her own, encourage them to play it for the class to produce a mini – concert of their own creation.

What is a conductor?

This man or woman is the leader of the orchestra. They keep the orchestra playing together, with the same tempo (speed), dynamics (loud vs. soft) and general feeling of the music. *Exercise:* have students take turns being the "conductor" of the class. The class should be split into groups of speed, (one group being fast and the other slow), and groups of dynamics, (one group being *forte* and the other *piano*). It is then up to the "conductor" to create his/her own symphony!

How much does the orchestra need to practice?

Generally, the orchestra practices together 4 or 5 times before a performance, each time for a period of two or three hours.

What does "warming-up" mean?

"Warming-up" means different things for different kinds of musicians. For example, a wind player (ie: flutist, oboist, tuba player,) needs to blow air into the instrument to literally warm it up; the musician will also have to be ready physically because wind instruments demand breath control and strength. The same concept applies to a singer. Singers/vocalists are musicians even though they don't have an instrument they can hold. Their instrument is in
their bodies and they need to ensure that it's ready to sing just like a trombone or a clarinet should be to play.

A string player, on the other hand, needs to ensure (as do all other instruments) that his/her instruments are in tune, and that it doesn't need any adjustments.

Why does the Concertmaster come on stage just before the conductor?

The concertmaster's entrance signals that the concert is about to begin. He supervises the tuning of the orchestra at the beginning and during the concert. The orchestra follows his lead when standing to acknowledge applause at the conclusion of a piece.

How does the conductor know which instrument should play and when?

The conductor has everyone's music in front of him. This is called the *score* and contains the music of all the instruments.

Italian Terms

Adagio	slow, leisurely
Allegro	lively, quick pace
Allegro non troppo	not too quickly
Andante	a walking pace
Crescendo	gradually louder
Fine	end
Forte	loud
Piano	quiet
Rubato	hurrying ahead and lingering for expression
Tutti	all

Follow-up Activities

1. Draw pictures of what you liked most in the concert and then mail them to Platypus Theatre.
2. Write letters to the musicians in the orchestra. Ask about instruments and their jobs.
3. Find out more about the composers, instruments and music you heard and liked.
4. As a class, compose a piece of music! For example, a piece of music that describes walking through a forest, or riding a horse through a field of flowers!