AUSTRALIAN ROMANTIC & CLASSICAL & ORCHESTRA

RICHARD GILL AO | FOUNDING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Education Kit #2 2021
VOICES & INSTRUMENTS

About

The *Voyage of Musical Discovery* Education Kit is aligned with the **Music 2 and Music Extension – Stage 6** NSW HSC Music Syllabus. The material below is a stand-alone learning resource, but full educational benefit is achieved by working through the activities in conjunction with attending the live *Voyage* presentation on **Tuesday 4 May 2021, 6.30pm** at City Recital Hall, Sydney.

Voyage of Musical Discovery is presented in two parts – orchestral and chamber music from the Classical or Romantic era performed in historically-informed style followed by Australian works written in the past 25 years performed by guest contemporary ensembles, improvisers, singer songwriters or a capella voices.

Voyage establishes and demonstrates the many connections and links between the musics of different times, places and styles, and augmented by the Education Kit, listeners are given the information and tools to compose and create sounds and pieces of their own.

Voyage #2 shines the spotlight on the interplay of **Voices & Instruments** to discover how converging musical lines and personalities bring music of the past and present to life.

Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra arco.org.au

FRANZ BERWALD (1796–1868) Grand Septet in B-flat major (1828) – 1st Movement

Berwald struggled to receive appreciation for his music during his lifetime, especially in his home country of Sweden. His originality and innovation are now well recognised, and the early-Romantic Grand Septet in particular displays an idiomatic knowledge of string and wind instruments.

Sydney Chamber Choir sydneychamberchoir.org

CLARE MACLEAN (1958–) *A West Irish Ballad* (1988) – a contrapuntal modal setting of an anonymous Irish love poem.

ELLA MACENS (1991–) *Stāvi Stīvi, Ozoliņ* (2017) – based on a traditional Latvian folk text depicting a storm threatening to break the boughs of an oak tree.

Voyage of Musical Discovery
booking information

word

polyphony   individual   interplay

                                                  identity

contrast   *harmony*

vocalize   **voice**

articulate

instrument   reveal

                                              speak

ensemble   sustain   *text*

                    blend   **express**

linear

orchestration

Voices & Instruments

By studying and comparing musical examples from three different composers spanning almost two centuries, a number of important compositional features of voices and instruments can be revealed:

• an instrument in an ensemble may imitate a voice – its way of joining notes, range or sonority

• a voice in choral music may imitate an instrument – its techniques, timbre or phrasing

• musical voices move independently and express opinions, whether text is involved or not

• voices or instrumental voices can come together to form textures ranging from the homogeneous to the disparate

• different voices and instruments can be skilfully paired to forge new orchestrational colours

• the original voice of a composer too can be subject to different degrees of audibility

These features and techniques are looked at in more detail over the following pages – identifying and replicating them has the potential to add depth and maturity to your listening, singing, playing and composing.

1. Individual Lines

Think for a moment about a picture. There may be one or more important objects or people in the foreground that are centred and prominently lit, and these could be supported or contrasted by what is in the background. These distinctions also occur in music – except that in music, the roles can swap and the perspectives can shift over the span of a work.

Two of the most common terms governing the behaviour and independence of musical lines are homophony (literally: same sounds) and polyphony (literally: many sounds).

Homophonic music is most commonly melody-dominated – for example, an upper part has a clearly identifiable melodic line and the remaining parts provide harmonic support in rhythmic unison.

Stāvi Stīvi, Ozoliņ

Polyphonic music consists of multiple independently-moving melodic and/or rhythmic lines. A Bach fugue is one of the most common examples of this, but there are many others including the following:

A West Irish Ballad

Berwald *wilfully banished all melody from his compositions*

This was the view of one critic following a performance of Berwald's works in 1821 in Stockholm.[1]

What is melody? Why do people tend to get so upset when they think music has no melody?

As a group, compile a quick list of things that might help a non-musician understand what makes something melodic.

In a 1962 television broadcast[2] for children called *What Is a Melody?*, Leonard Bernstein says the following:

> *Well, I think the answer is in the fact that melody can be a lot of different things: it can be a tune, or a theme, or a motif, or a long melodic line, or a bass line, or an inner voice.*

Bernstein goes on to explain that the people who claim not to like music without a melody, are perhaps confusing melodies with tunes. That is, something that has a clear beginning, middle and end, can be easily remembered, and that you can whistle or sing.

Tunes, songs, passages, movements and whole operas are made up of intricate networks of melodic events and elements – including Bernstein's items from above: themes, motifs, bass lines, and inner voices.

This passage from the beginning of Berwald's Grand Septet demonstrates these different melodic aspects. Listen to and watch just twenty seconds of the clip **six times in a row**.

Put your attention onto the following:

1x: **clarinet**	2x: **bassoon**
3x: **horn**	4x: **violin/viola**
5x: **double bass/cello**	6x: **everything**

Notice how each part has its own built-in melodic line. The writing is linear and each voice has something important to do. Along with a solid knowledge of the individual instruments, Berwald achieves linearity with a combination of:

• upward and downward movement

• repetition

• a mixture of large and small jumps

• something unexpected

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[1] https://www.swedishmusicalheritage.com/composers/berwald-franz
[2] https://www.leonardbernstein.com/lectures/television-scripts/young-peoples-concerts/what-is-melody

⟶● Creating Linearity

The concept of linearity in music arranging and composing is so important, that Bill Dobbins dedicates an entire book to it:
Bill Dobbins, *Jazz Arranging and Composing: A Linear Approach*. Rottenburg, Germany: Advance Music, 1986.

He explains that in the jazz idiom, Duke Ellington (1899–1974) was the pioneer of giving every instrument a melodic – or linear – part. This approach has been continued and developed by composers such as Gil Evans (1912–88), Oliver Nelson (1932–75), Carla Bley (1936–), Maria Schneider (1960–) and many others.

However, Berwald shows us that this idea is not restricted to jazz composition. He is one of thousands of composers – if we just take those starting with B – from Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Bartok, Babbitt to Bernstein who have created rich and varied vertical harmonies from linearity.

To Clarify:
Dobbins demonstrates that linear part writing is a way of spicing up the vertical harmonies. A player or singer will instinctively interpret a strong line in a more expressive way than they would a static or secondary part. When everyone does this together, vertical tonal clashes or harmonic ambiguities can make the overall result sound richer and more exciting rather than wrong-sounding.

The best way to understand this is to try it.

STEP 1 Take this paraphrase of Berwald's clarinet line from before and harmonise it in diatonic homophony as you would normally do. In other words, work out what you want the chords to be, and distribute the corresponding tones in more or less the same rhythms across the remaining three parts. Choose any four instruments or voices that you have access to.

STEP 2 Take each individual part and play or sing it through on its own. Turn it into a more compelling melody by making small adjustments to only the pitches and intervals. It takes practice, but what you are aiming for is to transform static lines into engaging lines. Don't worry if your chord spellings end up changing.

STEP 3 When each part has been individually altered and improved to give it direction and linearity, put it all together again and play it through. Trust your ears, and adjust anything further that doesn't feel quite right – including the original melody.

2. Words to Music

Words can provide the composer with all sorts of ideas for writing melodically – whether setting text to music, or translating the built-in rhythms and natural accents of speech into instrumental lines. The melodic choices – when skilfully done – can suggest or evoke meanings and moods that support or even reach beneath the surface of a text.

Consider the following examples, and propose some theories as to why the composer has chosen to write these melodies with the particular texts.

Stāvi Stīvi, Ozoliņ

A big storm boastfully threatens   *to break the boughs of the oak tree.*

Stand firm, stand strong, oak tree!

A West Irish Ballad

━━● Setting Text

Go back to the collection of words at the top of page 2. Choose one and look it up in a thesaurus, then select any five or six of the synonyms you like the sound of. Australian composer Don Banks (1923–80) did a similar thing to create the text for *Settings from Roget* (1966), composed for jazz vocalist Cleo Laine (from notes in the Don Banks Archive, National Library of Australia).

Add a few joining words – e.g., I, you, is, at, of, a, the, to, from, means, this etc. – to make a sentence or two. It doesn't have to make complete sense.

Before deciding on notes or rhythms, read your sentences out loud at least six times in a row, or until you can recite them off by heart.

Pay attention to the natural rhythms of the words, the pauses and emphases, variations of pitch in the spoken voice, and what the mouth, lips, tongue and throat are doing to produce the sounds.

Identify any patterns, rhymes or similar sounding words. What are the most important words?

What does it – or could it – mean? Is a mood or atmosphere implied by any specific word or combination of words?

Translate the text into a singable phrase – make sure it falls comfortably within your vocal range. Replicate the spoken rhythms as accurately as you can, but make sure they aren't too complicated to read. As expressive enhancements, add articulations, slurs and dynamics.
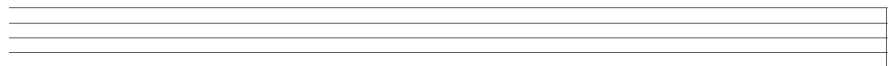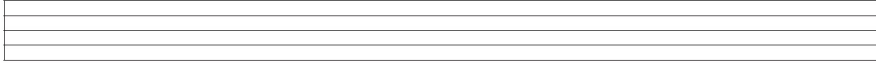
3. Layers

A strong and well-constructed melody can withstand alteration and modification. And – in a similar way to the gradual but sometimes unpredictable actions of a character in a movie or series – this makes a work interesting and keeps a listener wondering what might happen next. There are many different compositional techniques for changing a single melodic line, especially when taking avail of multiple instrumental or vocal parts.

Doubling

Having multiple voices sing a melody, or doubling a line in octaves does not necessarily make it louder, but gives it more weight and creates a thicker and richer texture, as in these examples.

Berwald
[listen]

A West Irish Ballad

Heterophony

The technique of distributing different versions of a single melodic line simultaneously across multiple parts, occurs often in the music of Stravinsky, Messiaen, Britten and Boulez.

A West Irish Ballad

The above passage does this in a way that the upper part almost sounds like an echo, or shadow of the melody.

Distort & Extend

A further method of adding texture to a melody is to add non-conventional sounds. These can include sound effects, electronics, or extended techniques and are often notated in aleatoric boxes or improvised. In the examples below, the singers are given suggested pitches or effects, and make their own decisions as to the timing and execution.

Stāvi Stīvi, Ozoliņ

Aleatoricism is a way of introducing chance elements into music. Pierre Boulez (1925–2016) coined the term to set his pieces apart from the so-called indeterminacy of John Cage's (1912–92) music.

The aleatoric box provides some fixed parameters e.g., a group of pitches, while leaving the timing, octave, and durations etc. up to the players. Boxes such as these can be seen in the compositions of Witold Lutosławski (1913–94) and are also the way many orchestral textures in soundtracks are created including prominently in *The Lord of the Rings* films composed by Howard Shore (1946–), the television series *The X-Files* by Mark Snow (1946–), and video game *EverQuest II* by Laura Karpman (1959–).

Stāvi Stīvi, Ozoliņ

Try out the above ad-lib and aleatoric sections from *Stāvi Stīvi, Ozoliņ* as a group – listen to the overall effect of many small autonomous sound objects moving in their own ways.

How do the textures change if more – or fewer – voices take part?
What effect do these more open sections have on the adjoining fully-notated phrases?

Take your thesaurus melody from before and experiment with treating it in different ways to multiply it vertically and horizontally.

Double it, split if between different voices, add versions at different speeds or in different keys, take bits and repeat and change them, and mix in some atmospheric noises and effects.

Gather together a group to sing or play, and try out your creation.

Hauptstimme & Nebenstimme

In dense or multi-layered textures, it is sometimes necessary to indicate which part has the main melody or which should be most prominent. The above terms were devised by Arnold Schoenberg of the Second Viennese School, and along with special brackets above the staves in the score, they indicate the primary and secondary voices respectively in ensemble writing.

Another way is to write *lead* above the part, or *melody* as Macens does in the above example.

Schoenberg also made an annotation in the margin of one of his scores, stating that the human voice is always of primary importance if it is present in a work.
(from Erich Leinsdorf, *The Composer's Advocate: A Radical Orthodoxy for Musicians.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982, 179.)

Do you agree?

4. Sustainability

One of the defining qualities of the voice is its natural ability to sustain. In lessons, instrumentalists are frequently reminded to *play as if singing...*

The reverse also occurs when voices occupy an instrumental role. In the example below from *Stāvi Stīvi, Ozoliņ*, ending the soft sustained chords with an accented k gives the impression of a note being chopped off, like the distant snap of a snare drum or the foreboding crack of a branch.

The soprano entry on the left from *A West Irish Ballad* has an instrumental quality too. The Ta-ka imitates the articulation of trumpets, reinforced by the momentary surprise of hearing an F♯ over the top of the offset and sustained quintal harmony of the other voices.

At the very beginning of *Stāvi Stīvi, Ozoliņ*, the composer combines both of the above the techniques – the voices are imitating the articulations of instruments (Dm dm and Ah) – perhaps the chiming of distant bells.

There is an inherent length to each note on an instrument or voice, and this will vary depending upon range, dynamic, context and individual. Looking at and listening to the passage below leaves no doubt as to Berwald's mastery of harnessing the potential of sustain as an orchestrational tool.

This excerpt begins with a similar version of the opening passage you listened to earlier (page 4). Note how the short-sustaining pizzicato arpeggiation emphasises the long-sustaining wind lines. Then listen to how the syncopated upper strings activate the accented wind chords, followed by the clarinet, bassoon and horn elongating the phrases even further with dovetailed entries. At first glance these techniques may look straightforward, but with a mere seven instruments, Berwald manages to achieve an almost orchestral density here due to his sensitive handling of sustain.

<u>listen</u>

To Discuss

How do think a single staccato note on the different wind instruments above would compare with the lengths of the different string pizzicati?
And what about a note held for a single breath compared to a single bow-take?
What factors influence the differences?
And how might these vary between period instruments and modern instruments? Or with multiple players on a single part?

If you have instruments at hand, conduct your own experiments on natural sustain.

When a composer develops a thorough knowledge of sustain, a world of new orchestrational possibilities opens up. Rather than distributing notes and lines based on instrumental family, range or volume – sustain can act as the main criteria for deciding who plays and in what combinations. This moves a composition away from instruments occupying traditional roles, so that fresh and unusual sound colours can be created and highlighted. This topic is explored in more detail in **Education Kit #3 – Texture & Timbre**.

⟶● Optional Final Tweaking

Return to your most recent multi-part exercise from above, and apply some techniques of sustain. Experiment with ways to bring the individual colours out of voices and instruments, rather than adding new colours to instruments.

Some suggestions:

• switch around the range: set a low instrument or voice into its upper range, or a high one low
• turn something melodic into something percussive, and something percussive into something melodic
• activate and extend a long note with quick scalic runs, arpeggiation or glissando
• take the successive notes of your existing melody and distribute them individually to different sustaining instruments or voices in quick succession
• experiment with contrasting mellow with bright sounds
• try a version by creating a score as you would draw a picture. Fill up some empty spaces with dots, lines or squiggles, and leave others blank. Moves things in and out of focus, or turn the whole page upside down. You never know what you might discover!

A number of the above sustain techniques have been drawn from the teaching and compositions of Australian-based composer Julian Yu (1957–).

Berwald said on one occasion that a work is written in its "own peculiar style" for the reason that art must do more than merely preserving the past.
(from https://www.swedishmusicalheritage.com/composers/berwald-franz)

Glass Blowing & Glass Ceiling

Franz Berwald had considerable trouble earning a living composing music, and worked variously as a podiatrist in Berlin, and later the manager of a glassworks then saw mill in Sweden. The prospect of working in jobs outside the music scene is still the reality for many composers today, yet what we know of Berwald's musical skill should serve as a reminder that financial outcomes cannot act as an accurate measure of artistic success.

Gender politics too have played a significant role in many composers' voices not being heard. Despite some improvements to the gender imbalance, there is still much to be done to increase the opportunities for and cultural visibility of women composers. American composer Laura Karpman believes that music itself "can serve as a vehicle for social change," and that "as with all fields, women must be at the top in order for younger people to see that this career path is even a vague possibility." (from Kelly, J. and Karpman, L. (2013). 'Laura Karpman' in: J. Kelly, *Conversations with Composers in the United States*. Boston: University of Illinois Press, 322–341.)

Clare Maclean and Ella Macens tackle this head-on with their music. Their sophisticated techniques and originality of style ensure that each and every voice – from poet, translator, chorister, instrumentalist and especially composer – is given the attention and audibility it rightfully deserves.

Anticipated Learning Outcomes

Introduction of Voices & Instruments in terms of independent movement, multiple layers, orchestration, and imitating one another

Definition of homophony and polyphony with score examples

Differentiation of melody and tune with reference to Bernstein

Identification of main features of the melodic in music

Linear composition as concept through arranging exercise and reference text

Techniques, approaches and exercises for setting words to music

Thesaurus exercise from Don Banks as text source

Techniques for modifying melodies across multiple parts including unison and doubling, distributing, heterophony, and extension through aleatoric boxes and improvisation

Overview of aleatoricism and reference to several main proponents

Definition of Second Viennese School terms of *Haupstimme* and *Nebenstimme*

Introduction to concepts of orchestration following natural ability to sustain as guiding criteria

Multiple examples of voices imitating instruments

Arpeggiation, syncopation and dovetailing as technique for extending and activating a sustained tone

Exercises relating to identifying inherent qualities of instruments, including differences between period and modern instruments

Composition exercise aligning all elements studied

Raising awareness of gender imbalance in composition, and suggestion that music itself can contribute to social change

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Related material is contained in further 2021 *Voyage of Musical Discovery* presentations and accompanying Education Kits:

#1 MOTIVIC DEVELOPMENT
Wednesday 17 February, 6.30pm
CITY RECITAL HALL, Sydney

Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra
MAX BRUCH Serenade on Swedish Melodies for Strings in C minor (1916)

Nick Russoniello
NICK RUSSONIELLO Suite for Saxophones and Loop Station (2018)

#3 TEXTURE & TIMBRE
Thursday 5 August, 6.30pm
CITY RECITAL HALL, Sydney

Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra
HAYDN Symphony No.103 in E-flat major *Drum Roll* (1795)

Taikoz
KERRYN JOYCE & RYUJI HAMADA *Flowing Water* (2019)
IAN CLEWORTH ... *like a ripple…* (2012)

[Voyage of Musical Discovery information](#)

Web References

Page 1
Voyage Booking link
https://www.cityrecitalhall.com/whats-on/events/voyage-of-musical-discovery-2-voices-instruments/

Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra | http://arco.org.au

Franz Berwald information
https://www.swedishmusicalheritage.com/composers/berwald-franz

Sydney Chamber Choir | https://www.sydneychamberchoir.org

Clare Maclean profile at Australian Music Centre
https://www.australianmusiccentre.com.au/artist/maclean-clare

Ella Macens website biogrpahy
http://www.ellamacens.com/bio

Page 4
Berwald on YouTube (from 2:06)
https://youtu.be/4SHcbcDTd7w?t=126

Page 8
Berwald on YouTube (from 3:48)
https://youtu.be/4SHcbcDTd7w?t=228

Page 12
Berwald on YouTube (from 2:49)
https://youtu.be/4SHcbcDTd7w?t=169

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Voyage information | https://www.arco.org.au/2021-voyage-of-musical-discovery

Recordings and Score Links

Berwald score on IMSLP
http://ks4.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/b/ba/IMSLP405875-PMLP114343-Berwald-septet-score.pdf

Live recording of Berwald from Hessischer Rundfunk in 2019 on YouTube
https://youtu.be/4SHcbcDTd7w

Maclean and Macens score excerpts have been provided courtesy of the composers and Sydney Chamber Choir.