

A VOYAGE OF MUSICAL DISCOVERY

AUSTRALIAN ROMANTIC & CLASSICAL ORCHESTRA

RICHARD GILL AO | FOUNDING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Education Kit #2 2020 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 28 April 2020, 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 cappella 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 – Voices & Instruments – shines the spotlight on women composers from the past and present. The Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra's chamber musicians and Sydney Chamber Choir introduce the interplay of instruments and voices to discover converging musical roles and personalities.

Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra arco.org.au

[LOUISE FARRENC](#) (1804–75) Nonet in E-flat major Op.38 (1849) – an embodiment of a style and level of accomplishment that confirms Farrenc as a significant compositional voice, despite being neither widely performed nor well known today.

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](#)



Voices & Instruments

By studying and and working through musical examples from three different composers spanning over a century and a half, a number of important compositional techniques 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 vocalised or not. And they come together to form homogenous and unified textures. Different voices and instruments can be skilfully paired to forge new orchestrational colours, and the voice of a composer too can sometimes fail to be as audible as it ought to be. Understanding and replicating techniques such as these will add depth and maturity to your listening, singing, playing and composing.

1. Individual Lines

Think for a moment about a visual image. 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 – and similar to a moving image – roles and perspectives alter and swap 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

10

S.1
liņ, stāv sti - pri o - zo - liņ.

A.1
liņ, stāv sti - pri o - zo - liņ.

T.1
— Stāv sti - pri o - zo - liņ.

B.1
mp
Stāv sti - pri o - zo - liņ.

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

15 *mf* (110)

S1,2
to the well of lon - li - ness I sit down and I go through my

S3
mp
to the well of lon - - li - - ness

a 1/2
mp
to the well of lon - li - - ness

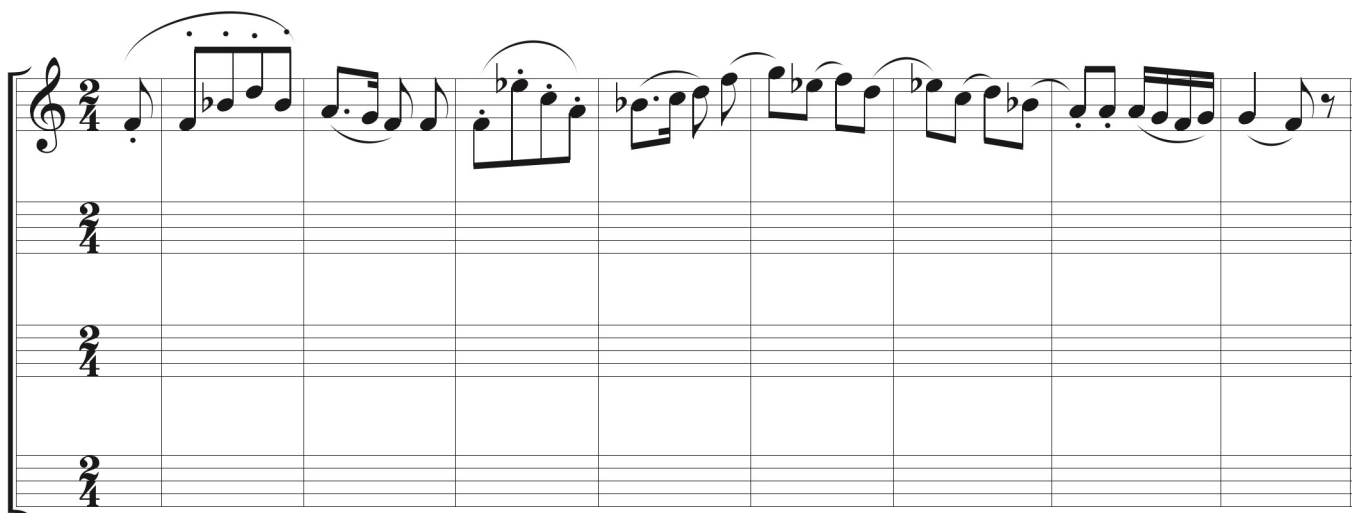
z 1/2
ah (*mp*) to the well of lon - - li - - ness *tutti*

—● Creating Linearity

When composing or arranging in a homophonic style – or harmonising a melody – a helpful method to try is the linear approach. This was a technique pioneered by composer Duke Ellington, and continued by composers such as Oliver Nelson, Gil Evans, Clare Fischer and Maria Schneider. Rather than worrying whether the particular chord tones are always accurately distributed vertically in the ensemble, write each part to be melodic. The idea is that a player or singer will always approach and play a melody in a musically expressive way. When everyone does this together, accidental vertical clashes or harmonic ambiguities can make the overall result more interesting rather than wrong sounding.

Set the following melody from the Farrenc Nonet in diatonic homophony as you would normally do. Harmonise the melody in three accompanying parts – e.g., SATB, string quartet, or any other group of four instruments.

- Decide what key it is in, how frequently the chords should change, and what chords to use
- Distribute the chord tones amongst the accompanying parts, keeping each within a singable range



The image shows a musical score for a melody in 2/4 time. The melody is written on a single staff in treble clef. It consists of 10 measures. The first measure has a quarter note G4. The second measure has a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5 beamed together. The third measure has a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4 beamed together. The fourth measure has a quarter note F4, a quarter note G4, and a quarter note A4 beamed together. The fifth measure has a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4 beamed together. The sixth measure has a quarter note D4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note F4 beamed together. The seventh measure has a quarter note E4, a quarter note D4, and a quarter note C4 beamed together. The eighth measure has a quarter note B3, a quarter note C4, and a quarter note D4 beamed together. The ninth measure has a quarter note C4, a quarter note B3, and a quarter note A3 beamed together. The tenth measure has a quarter note G3. Below the melody staff are three empty staves, each with a 2/4 time signature, intended for accompaniment.

Now, take each individual part and play or sing it through on its own. Your job is to turn it into an interesting melody by changing the notes and intervals. It takes practice, but like Farrenc's melody, you want to aim for a mixture of upward and downward movement, some repeated motifs, large and small jumps, as well as a few harmonic surprises. Transform your parts from static lines into something fun to play. Ignore the overall key and chords you chose from before.

Do this to each of the parts independently. Put it all together again, and see how it sounds. Trust your ears, and adjust anything that doesn't feel quite right – including the original melody!

The following book looks at this process in detail, and includes many examples and exercises. The principles of linear composition can of course be applied and extended beyond a jazz idiom.

Bill Dobbins, *Jazz Arranging and Composing: A Linear Approach*. Rottenburg, Germany: Advance Music, 1986.

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.1 *mp*

Lie-la vē - tra ——— lie-lī-jās, o - zo - lam ——— za-rus lauzt.
A big storm boastfully threatens to break the boughs of the oak tree.

S.1 *mp*

Stāv stī - vi o - zo - liņ, stī - pri o - zo - liņ,
Stand firm, stand strong, oak tree!

A West Irish Ballad

sofvo voce
mp

It was late last night the dog was speaking of you;

f broadly

S.1 *f* My heart is as black,
 S.3 *f* heart, black
 A.1 *f* My heart is as black,

● 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.

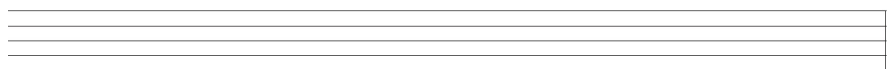
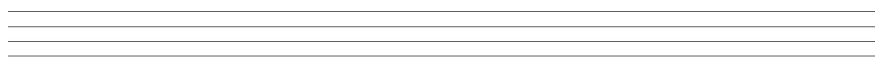

Before deciding on notes or rhythms, read your sentences out loud at least six times in a row, or until you can recite them off by heart.

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 TV 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.

Unison and Doubling

The image shows a musical score for three parts: solo (s), s 1/2, and a. The solo part is in treble clef with a 2/3 time signature. The s 1/2 part is in treble clef with a 1/2 time signature. The a part is in treble clef with a 2/3 time signature. The lyrics are: "ta - - ken the moon, you have ta - - ken the sun from me; and my ah ta - - ken the moon, you have ta - - ken the sun from me; and my". The solo part has a melodic line with a fermata over the first two measures. The s 1/2 part has a sustained chord with a fermata. The a part has a melodic line that is a lower octave version of the solo part.

Having many voices sing a melody together does not necessarily make it louder, but gives it more weight and creates a thicker and richer texture, as in this example from *A West Irish Ballad*.

Distribute

[Farrenc audio excerpt](#)

In this excerpt from the first movement, Farrenc shares related motifs around different voices in the ensemble. Listen to approx. 30 seconds to identify which of the nine instruments have melodic material, and how it is distributed.

Heterophony

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

The image shows a musical score for three parts: s, a, and s. The s part is in treble clef with a 2/3 time signature. The a part is in treble clef with a 2/3 time signature. The s part is in treble clef with a 2/3 time signature. The lyrics are: "You pro - - mised me that you you said a lie to me, that you would be before me where the sheep are flock'd; I gave a whis - - file and three hundred cries". The s part has a melodic line with a fermata over the first two measures. The a part has a melodic line that is a lower octave version of the s part. The s part has a melodic line that is a higher octave version of the s part.

The above example from *A West Irish Ballad* 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 each situation, a performer is given a suggestion as to which sounds to include, but has freedom as to which exact rhythms, notes, durations and phrases they play. When a number of singers or players do this at the same time, the resulting texture can be extremely effective.

32 **f** Repeat in own time to "Vētra nāk" (The wind is coming)

S.1 **f** Repeat in own time to "Vētra nāk"

A.1 **f** Repeat in own time to "Vētra nāk"

T.1 **f** *pp* **f**
Ooh

B.1 **f** *pp* **f** *mp*
Ooh

88 **pp** **L** Ad-lib calm & gentle wind noises. **rall.** **p** **pp**

S.1 Caur. Caur, o - zo - liņ.

A.1 **pp** Ad-lib calm & gentle wind noises. **mp** **pp**
Caur. Vē-tra bi-ja un vē-tra caur, o - zo - liņ.

Try out the 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 the open sections have on the fully-notated phrases?

● Make your own

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

Double it, split it 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.

39 *mp* *(melody)* *(melody)* *(melody)*

S.2 - di vē - ji-ņu caur, vējš, nāk, vējš, nāk. Ooh Vē-tra

A.2 *mp* *(melody)* *(melody)* *(melody)*

Laid Vējš, nāk Nāk, vējš, nāk.

T.2 - di vē - ji-ņu caur, caur, sa-viem za - riem.

B.2 *mp*

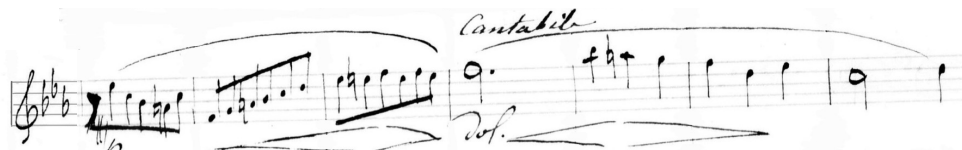
Laid vē - jņ caur, Caur, caur, caur, sa-viem za - riem. Vē-tra

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. Do you agree?
 (from Erich Leinsdorf, *The Composer's Advocate: A Radical Orthodoxy for Musicians*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982, 179.)

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*... Farrenc makes no doubt about this in the following passage for the violin, even adding *cantabile* above the sustained line.



S.1
liņ, Vējš nā - k! O - zo-lī - ti, vējš nā - k!

A.1
-liņ. Vējš nā - k! Vējš nā - k!

The reverse also occurs when voices temporarily occupy an instrumental role. In the above right example from *Stāvi Stīvi, Ozoliņ*, ending the soft sustained chords with an accented k gives the impression of a note being chopped off, perhaps like the distant snap of a snare drum or even the soft click of a digital edit point.

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 techniques – the voices are imitating the articulations of instruments (Dm dm and Ah-) – perhaps the chiming of distant bells.

Soprano 1
Ah Sh Ah Sh Ah Ah

Alto 1
Oo Ah Ah Oo Ah

Tenor 1
Dm dm, sheow Dm dm, sheow Dm dm, ah

Bass 1
Dm, Foo Dm, Foo Dm.

There is an inherent length to each note on an instrument or voice, and this will vary depending upon range, dynamic, context and individual. One of the techniques that composers adopt to extend the natural sustain of an instrument is to arpeggiate, or outline the chord tones.

Note when listening to the following short passage from the first movement of the Farrenc to how the arpeggiated quavers in the different instruments activate and extend the music. In this recording, each instrument and player treats their passage in a slightly different way, and this brings the music to life.

The image displays a handwritten musical score for an orchestral excerpt. The score is written on ten staves, each labeled with an instrument: Fl. (Flute), Ob. (Oboe), Cl. (Bb) (Clarinet in B-flat), Hrn. (Eb) (Horn in E-flat), Bsn. (Bassoon), Vln. (Violin), Vla. (Viola), Vcl. (Violoncello), and Db. (Double Bass). The music is written in a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a common time signature (C). The notation includes various note values, including quavers (eighth notes), and features arpeggiated patterns where notes are played in a sequence rather than simultaneously. The handwriting is clear and professional, with some dynamic markings like 'f' (forte) and 'p' (piano) visible. The score is presented on a grid background.

[Farrenc audio excerpt](#)

How much are these differences due to the particular acoustic and technical qualities of the instruments themselves?

And how might these vary between period instruments and modern instruments?

When a composer develops a thorough knowledge of sustain, a world of new orchestrational possibilities open up. Rather than distributing notes and passages based on instrument family, range or volume – sustain can act as the primary criteria for deciding who plays and in what combinations. This moves a composition away from restricting instruments to traditional roles, so that fresh and unusual sound colours can be created and highlighted. This topic will be explored in more detail in **Voyage of Musical Discovery 3 – Texture & Timbre** in August.

—● 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 glissandi
- 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 an interesting score image 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–).

Final Thoughts

There may be many reasons to account for why Louise Farrenc has not received widespread recognition as a composer. Gender politics have most certainly played a role, and despite gradual improvements to the gender imbalance, there is still work to be done to increase the opportunities for and cultural visibility of women composers. American composer Laura Karpman (1959–) 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.)

The compositional fluency demonstrated by the three composers discussed above should serve as a reminder that women composers must no longer be invisible. Clare Maclean and Ella Macens tackle this issue head-on with their music. Their sophisticated techniques and originality of style ensure that each and every voice – from poet, translator, chorister and especially composer – is given the attention and audibility it 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

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 and dovetailing, heterophony, and extension through aleatoric boxes and improvisation

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

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

Multiple examples of instruments imitating voices, and voices imitating instruments

Arpeggiation as technique for extending a static harmony

Attention drawn to individual qualities of instruments and players, including differences between period and modern instruments and interpretation

Composition exercise aligning all elements studied

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

Related material is contained in further 2020 *Voyage of Musical Discovery* presentations and accompanying Education Kits:

#1 MOTIVIC DEVELOPMENT | March

Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra

ANTON EBERL Symphony in E-flat major Op.33 (1803)

Nick Russoniello

NICK RUSSONIELLO Suite for Saxophones and Loop Station (2019–20)

#3 TEXTURE & TIMBRE | August

Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra

MOZART Serenade No.6 in D major, K.239 (1776)

Taikoz

IAN CLEWORTH *Home* (2017)

[Voyage of Musical Discovery 2020 information](#)

Web References

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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>

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

Louise Farrenc biography

<https://www.notablebiographies.com/supp/Supplement-Ca-Fi/Farrenc-Louise.html>

Clare Maclean profile at Australian Music Centre

<https://www.australianmusiccentre.com.au/artist/maclean-clare>

Ella Macens website biography

<http://www.ellamacens.com/bio>

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Farrenc audio (from 5:57)

<https://youtu.be/v4p1q0mNjoo?t=357>

Page 11

Farrenc audio (from 1:59)

<https://youtu.be/v4p1q0mNjoo?t=119>

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Voyage information | <http://www.arco.org.au/voyage-of-musical-discovery>

Recordings and Score Links

Farrenc score on IMSLP (public domain)

[https://imslp.org/wiki/Nonet%2C_Op.38_\(Farrenc%2C_Louise\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Nonet%2C_Op.38_(Farrenc%2C_Louise))

Period instrument recording of Farrenc on Youtube

<https://youtu.be/v4p1q0mNjoo>

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