

The Topeka Symphony Orchestra's



January 14, 2010

School Day Concerts

Preview Packet

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INTRODUCTION

The Topeka Symphony Orchestra will perform the 12th annual “School Day Concerts” on Thursday, January 14, 2010 at the Topeka Performing Arts Center. This year, the theme is *Action Heroes, Then & Now*.

The morning program will include: *Fanfare for the Common Man* by Aaron Copland; Rossini’s *William Tell Overture*; *Egmont Overture* by Beethoven; and music from the film *Superman* by John Williams. The afternoon will include: the Copland *Fanfare*; Wagner’s *Overture to Rienzi*; music from *Spider-man*; *Egmont Overture* by Beethoven; *Superman*; and Morton Gould’s *American Salute*. Information about these pieces is included in this packet.

This guide was written by Laura McGill and edited by John Strickler. It includes a brief introduction to the music on the program, along with suggested classroom activities.

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Action Heroes Then and Now

...who are they and where do they come from ?

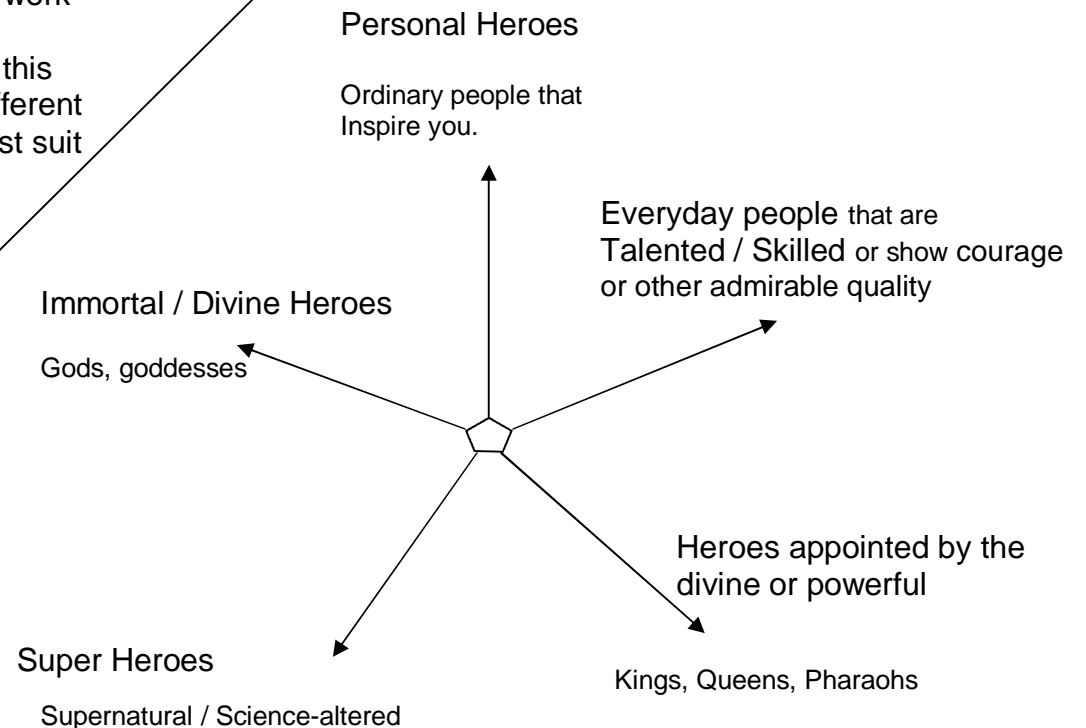
What is a Hero?

Consider these definitions of a hero:

1. A mythological or legendary figure often of divine descent
endowed with great strength or ability
2. A man admired for his achievements and noble qualities
3. One who shows great courage
4. The principle male character in a literary or dramatic work

♪ As you explore the music and ideas about heroes on this program, think about these definitions, how they are different and how they are similar. Which of these definitions best suit each musical hero?

Where Do Heroes Come From?





Copland and Gould

Celebrating Personal Heroes



Personal Heroes

Copland and **Gould** wrote music to celebrate everyday heroes. A personal hero is an everyday person that may not be famous to more than a few people. They do not seek fame or recognition but step forward when there is specific need for action. Have you ever heard someone on the news say, “Oh, no, I’m not a hero. I just did what needed to be done. Anyone else would have done the same.” And they believe it.

These people are neighbors, family members, even strangers. They come forward to perform an action that means a great deal or changes the life of another. Or, they may live their everyday lives in such a way that has a steady positive result on others, often unaware that their perseverance is inspiring to others. Do you know a person like this?

Personal heroes are not glamorous, might not wear a uniform, or have an important sounding title. They remind us that no one *has* to act in heroic ways, but that we do have the capacity and the ability to make the choice to be heroes.

* Talk with your class about the everyday people in your life that have been heroes to you. What have they done that is heroic? Even small actions can be heroic if they are sincere. Have you told this person that they are a hero to you?

Aaron Copland 1900 -1990

Fanfare for the Common Man

In 1942 Aaron Copland was asked to participate in a morale boosting project for the WWII war effort. A number of composers were asked to write a fanfare either titled or dedicated to a military branch or an ally of the U.S. Each of those fanfares would be performed as the opening selection for the 1942-1943 Cincinnati Symphony season.

Copland took a decidedly different approach in what he chose to honor with his fanfare. When he looked at the work being done to keep America’s role in the war going successfully, he decided it was the common, everyday man who was doing the hard work, or the “dirty” work in the war and the army. It was these undecorated people that deserved a fanfare.

A fanfare is typically an upbeat announcement of a piece, in an energetic march tempo. Copland keeps a few of the traditional characteristics, featuring brass and percussion as it honors its subject. His tempo, however, is very deliberate and solemn. The percussion section introduces the piece and the theme begins with three trumpets in unison and then adds horns and trombones, one group at a time to expand the harmonies. Never fast or flashy, it is reverential and reflective of the seemingly small, but dignified individual efforts that build success.

Though intended for one specific occasion, *Fanfare for the Common Man* has maintained wide popularity and is performed for a variety of events.

Morton Gould 1913 - 1996

American Salute

When the bombing of Pearl Harbor brought the United States into WWII, Morton Gould tried to join the military just as his brothers had done. He failed his physical because of multiple health problems and had to find a different way to serve his country. As the music director for a radio program, Gould composed and arranged music for its broadcasts. During the war years, he wrote and directed programs of pieces and soundtracks for patriotic films.

Just like Copland, Gould was also asked to write a fanfare for the Cincinnati Symphony. His contribution was titled *Fanfare for Freedom*. He was asked to write another piece by his producer, a salute to the United States. Gould chose the Civil War marching-song, “When Johnny Comes Marching Home” and delivered what he called “a very simple and direct [orchestral] translation... of this vital tune.” This set of variations was written overnight, starting at about dinner time, and completed in time for the 9 a.m. broadcast the next day. And though it was literally dashed off and Gould himself considered it as “setting” for the time in which it was written, it is one of his more popular and frequently performed works.

Rossini and his Music

Gioachino Rossini

1792 — 1868

Rossini composed thirty-seven operas in seventeen years, the last of which was Guillaume (William) Tell in 1829. His short but prolific career in opera writing thoroughly explored and expanded this popular form of theatre. He wrote comic operas, called opera buffa (BOO-fah), and serious operas called opera seria.

Even though Rossini is Italian and Wagner is German, one popular style for operas during their lifetimes was French grand opera. The 19th century's version of "bigger is better", everything on stage was over-the-top from costumes, to sets, to the size of the chorus. And the length of the production often matched. The entire production of William Tell is about six hours. The music alone is about four hours long.

William Tell is based on a play by German poet, Friedrich Schiller. Rossini liked the idea of a commoner fighting for his country and that a rebel could be a better person than a nobleman.

The overture to William Tell is the longest overture he wrote and a bit unusual in that it is made up for four distinct sections, or movements. It is a precursor to the tone poem, which is a piece for an orchestra meant to interpret or depict a non-musical idea.

The Overture to William Tell

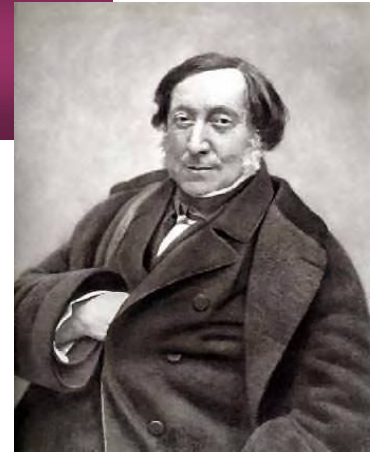
The overture's first section is a prelude depicting the Swiss countryside at dawn. A lyrical melody features the lower strings, the celli and basses, divided into seven parts.

It is interrupted by the timpani, a distant rumble of thunder.

The woodwinds indicate a few raindrops, and are joined by the strings with swirling runs and tremolo driving into the second section, the storm. There are two kinds of storms going on in William Tell, the literal storm that sets the scene for Tell's escape from Gessler, the villain of the story. Another interpretation of the storm is figurative – the turbulence of the Swiss town under Austrian rule. With booming brass, rolling drums and lightening quick strings the storm rages.

When the storm subsides, the air is calmed by a melody for the english horn. Rossini based this on a traditional tune originally played by Swiss cowherds on an Alpine horn.

The final section is the most famous, a theme also made popular by the TV show, the Lone Ranger. Rossini meant it to signify the approaching Swiss Army. The rhythm is from a dance called the gallop and it is easy to imagine either the horses of the Swiss Army or the Lone Ranger riding towards victory.



William Tell by Rossini

FOCUS QUESTION: William Tell and his son display bravery in both words and actions. As your teacher reads this story to you, listen carefully for both what they say and do.

Near Lake Lucerne, a country called Uri lost its freedom to a more powerful country, Austria. New laws demanded the citizens pay unfair taxes to those who occupied their country and faced penalties if they failed to do so.

An especially cruel Governor named Gessler decided to test the loyalty of his new subjects. In the center of the public square he ordered that a hat be placed on top of a pole and demanded that all who pass by remove their hats and bow down to it. Soldiers were standing by to make sure that this was carried out.

William Tell, a skilled marksman and hunter, lived in the mountains nearby with his family. They had heard that Gessler was now in charge and knew about his reputation for cruel tricks, but had not heard the news of the empty hat that represented Gessler.

Tell and his son, Walter, went to town one day and as they entered the square noticed the odd display of a hat and the soldiers standing guard. When they continued on their way without bowing down, the soldiers drew their weapons and announced that Tell was under arrest, and informed him of his crime.

Gessler himself happened to arrive on his horse just in time to hear Tell declare, "I am free and will bow my head only to God or the Emperor himself, but never to an empty hat. Gessler was furious.

He told Tell, "You will be punished for your refusal to respect this symbol of your Governor. But since I am a fair person, I will grant you the chance to both prove your famous skills as an archer and win freedom for yourself and your son.

Walter was quick to chime in, "It is true! My father can shoot an apple from a tree at fifty paces."

Gessler replied slyly, "Then let me see you shoot an apple from your son's head. If you succeed, you are both free to go, but if you fail, your punishment is death."

Tell was horrified at this repulsive challenge, but his son marched confidently toward a nearby tree declaring, "My father will not miss. I am not afraid of his arrow."

William Tell put aside his fury and took two arrows from his quiver, hiding one inside his vest and fitting the other to his crossbow. He took his aim. Walter stood determined and still. The arrow was released and pierced its target to the core. Walter scooped up the fallen apple and ran to his father with a cry of joy.

Gessler was angry that his plan failed, but also secretly impressed by the display of skill and bravery demonstrated by this father and son. He challenged the pair, "Before you go I must know, why there is a second arrow in your vest?"

Tell replied calmly, "Had I missed my mark and struck my son, the second arrow would have pierced your heart, and I would not have missed." Tell was arrested on the spot and carried off to prison.

On the journey to prison, Tell managed to escape his captors during a fierce storm. While he wanted to return directly to his family, he knew he had to put an end to Gessler's tyranny once and for all. He hid in the forest and waited for Gessler to pass by on the way back to his castle.

As Gessler approached on the path, Tell kept his promise and struck true with that second arrow, and Gessler fell from his horse. News of Gessler's death was welcomed by the citizens who united with their neighbors of Schwytz and Unterwalden, and named their new country Switzerland. William Tell was named their hero.

Beethoven

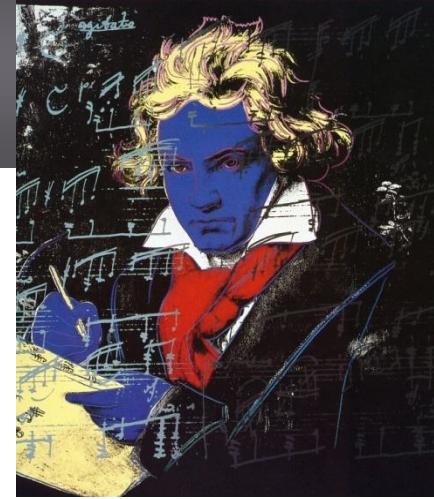
His Life and Music

Ludwig van Beethoven 1770 — 1827

Beethoven loved to write music about the quest for freedom and the right to express oneself as an individual. Beethoven himself displayed many characteristics of a hero, particularly for music in his time. He worked to bring about many of the changes that music went through as it made its conversion from what is known as the Classical era to the Romantic era.

Beethoven was a hero who came from every-day life and had the skills and talents of a composer and musician. Like all heroes, he faced many obstacles. One obstacle that he is most famous for was his deafness. Beethoven began losing his hearing in his early adulthood. As you can guess, this caused all kinds of mixed up emotions for him. He felt angry to have this one sense be taken from him, since his gift was one immersed in the world of sound. He felt scared about how it might affect his ability to perform as a musician, which he did eventually have to give up, but also his ability to compose. He was also nervous about others finding out that he couldn't hear and how that might affect his career and how others perceived him. But ultimately he was determined to keep going and we continue to benefit from his determination today.

Beethoven also influenced efforts towards making music more readily available in public concert halls, beyond the salon walls of the wealthy. In the early 1800's, nobility had a considerable amount of control over music, from who

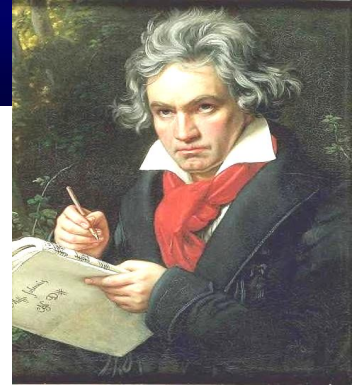


published it, where and for whom it was performed. They even influenced which composers were able to make a career of their talents. The composers they did not fund were forced to take up additional music appointments or give up a career in music altogether. Beethoven himself had aristocratic financial support for his compositions. Some were true fans of his work and some just liked the idea of backing this new exciting composer. He eventually found other ways to fund his compositions that left him freer to write what he was really thinking and feeling.

As Beethoven's music made the transition from the classical to the romantic style, he explored new ways to use the sounds of a symphony orchestra in particular. He used new combinations of instruments. Breaking textures and continuity of rhythmic patterns provided new, sharper contrasts in his music. He delved into a wider range of emotions and demanded his listeners absorb and react to his ideas. As with all new things, there was some resistance along the way, but overall his exciting, intelligent approach to music was celebrated as a triumph in its contribution to and expression of humanity.

Egmont by Beethoven

The Story and the Music



The Story Behind the Music

Beethoven worked with a famous writer name Goethe (GUR-tuh) to bring the story of Count Egmont to life through music. Beethoven was very happy to write music celebrating this inspirational character because he, just like Goethe, valued freedom for individuals.

The story of Count Egmont takes place in the Netherlands during the middle 1500's. Egmont was a Flemish nobleman who at one time had served and been loyal to the Spanish. He believed in religious tolerance, allowing people to practice their own religions. But at the time of this story, Spanish rule was punishing Protestants in the Netherlands because they were not Catholic.

When troops, under the command of the cruel Duke of Alva, were sent into the Netherlands to enforce Spanish law, it was not long before the defiant Egmont was arrested for treason and sentenced to execution without a trial. While in prison, his beloved, Clara, tries and fails to help him escape. She poisons herself and dies. As Egmont awaits his own death, she appears to him in a vision and tells him that the people of the Netherlands will be inspired by his words and commitment to them and revolt. And this is exactly what happens. Egmont's death does not lessen the principles that he stood for, and the ending is a victory for the people.

The Music Behind the Story

The story of Egmont features two opposing forces--Spanish rule under King Phillip II and the resistance mounted by Count Egmont. We can clearly hear two opposing musical ideas in the overture.

At the beginning we hear a theme in a minor key that represents the tyrant, the Duke of Alva. It might also be thought to represent the brutal force of repression experienced by the Netherlanders. The theme is slow, heavy and dark sounding, played in the lower register of the strings. The woodwinds answer with a melancholy tune—perhaps representing the sadness and sense of betrayal felt by the Dutch people.

A short melodic phrase is repeated several times by the violins and woodwinds and leads directly into the main part of the overture. Again, the contrast between force and imploring lament is very evident. A sweeping, plunging theme is stated by the cellos. This is followed by an agitated 4-note figure played many times by the violins, which creates tension and suspense as it rises to a loud climax by the full orchestra.

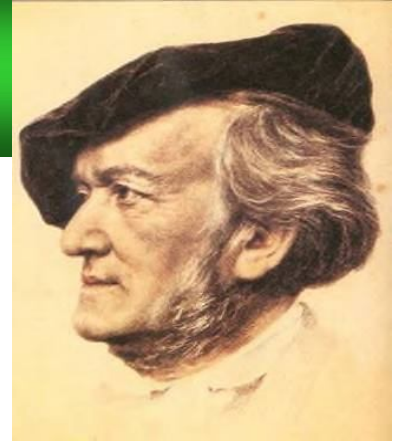
The tyrant's theme from the beginning returns, but it is faster, more defiant and seems to shout out, determined to win. After one last statement of this theme by the full orchestra, the headlong pace of the orchestra is suddenly cut short by the sharp stroke of the sword as Egmont's head falls to the ground. Surely the villain has won. But not according to Beethoven and Goethe.

Out of the depths of defeat, we hear a fresh excitement spread throughout the orchestra, building to fanfares of triumph and victory. Egmont has not prevailed personally or won freedom for himself, but his death has inspired the people of the Netherlands to rebel and win back their freedom themselves. This celebration is very clear as the piece concludes. Goethe asked Beethoven for a "Symphony of Victory" and Beethoven delivered.

Talk it over

Since audiences hear the overture before they see the play, what kind of reaction do you think they might have when they first hear a musical announcement of triumph, and then see the hero put to death? What kinds of questions might they ask? Do you think they guessed what Beethoven and Goethe were saying by insisting that the fight for individual liberty did in fact persevere?

Wagner and his Music



Richard Wagner 1813—1883

Richard Wagner (REE-card VAHG-ner) learned about the story of *Rienzi* when he was going through a difficult period in his life. He was having trouble making enough money as a composer and conductor to pay his bills. Wagner came across the novel based on the real person, Cola di Rienzi, and felt he could relate to the way this hero must have felt about the times he was living in.

Wagner felt that the people in power were often too absorbed with unimportant things or creating drama out of silly matters. The aristocracy sometimes enjoyed too much shallow self-indulgence. The thing that would help people rise above this, Wagner thought, would be honorable thoughts and actions -- a moral and spiritual renewal.

However, the thing that was going to help Wagner rise above his financial difficulties was a successful and popular opera, and that is exactly what he achieved with *Rienzi*. Wagner was able to bring this story to life in music by incorporating many of the elements he despised in the culture around him, extravagance.

The staging and performance of *Rienzi* included lavish sets, fancy costumes as well as themes of passion, violence, and ceremony in the form of great processions for a chorus (a chance to get lots and lots of people on stage to sing all at once.) And the audience loved it. The entire production also happened to be about five hours long. One account of the first performance mentions that Wagner was nervous about the length of his opera and had the clocks near the stage stopped so that the audience couldn't be sure just how much time was going by.

The Overture to *Rienzi*

While the opera is rarely performed today the Overture to *Rienzi* is still a popular piece for concert halls today. At just under twelve minutes, the piece provides a collage of the themes and melodies from the full production and the only cast of characters — a symphony orchestra!

The piece opens with a trumpet call, meant to summon the common people in the story to rise up against their oppressors. From this call opens the first major theme in the overture, *Rienzi's Prayer for the People*. It is first played and developed by the strings and then answered by the brass. It is an example of the Germanic interest in melodies that sound like hymns.

A drum roll breaks this slow majestic melody and the trumpet once again calls out. This is followed by the main section, a robust theme with a battle hymn in the brass and a lively march. You will once again hear the *Prayer* theme, but much faster. The overture comes to a close with a spirited intensity.

Rienzi by Wagner

The story of the hero Rienzi takes place in Rome during the middle 1300's. The first scene opens with a feud between two powerful noble families. As a crowd gathers, Rienzi comes in and puts a stop to the fighting. His followers urge him to bring peace to the city by seizing power from these nobles and imposing order.

Adriano, who is in love with Rienzi's sister Irene, says that he will help Rienzi, even though their families have fought in the past. He is worried that Rienzi's plans to bring peace are too ambitious and won't work. He also knows that some of the others who have pledged loyalty to him are lying.

Rienzi continues to gain more trust and popularity with the citizens of Rome, and they rally around him as their Tribune, someone who will fight for the rights of ordinary people. However, as he gains this trust and power, he also lets the power go to his head, and believes he is the only person who can bring peace to this once glorious city.

The nobles of the city, especially the heads of the two families, want to take power over the city themselves. They are angry that Rienzi, a mere common person, has gained so much power and influence over the citizens of Rome. They don't trust that he will be responsible. For example, Rienzi declares for the Roman people, the right to interfere in German politics and elect the German emperor.



The two powerful families of noblemen try and fail to assassinate Rienzi and seize control of the Capitol. The citizens are angered by this. However, Rienzi is so determined to bring peace that he decides not to punish either of these families for their actions.

The nobles prepare to attack Rienzi and he urges the citizens to take up arms and leads them into battle. Adriano is worried that Rienzi is risking the lives of the citizens by asking them to fight. He advises Rienzi against this, but Rienzi ignores him. Adriano is also torn in his loyalties between his family and his love for Irene. But when Rienzi returns from battle victorious, and brings with him the body of Adriano's father, Adriano pledges to take revenge, and becomes Rienzi's enemy.

A group of citizens gather to discuss Rienzi and his interference in the election in Germany. Because of this intrusion, Germany has removed some of its support for Rome. Then one man tells the crowd that Rienzi has also tried to make an alliance with the same nobles that he is fighting against. Adriano steps forward and confirms this is true. They all decide to attack Rienzi at his victory celebration the very next day.

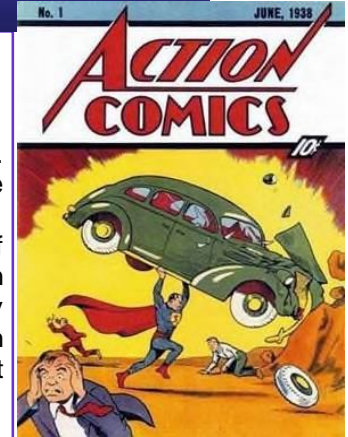
When Rienzi arrives for the celebration, he learns he has been banned from the church and his followers have deserted him. His sister Irene insists on staying by his side. The two are cornered in the Capitol building and angry throngs of people surround them and set the building on fire. Rienzi and Irene are trapped by the flames. Adriano rushes into the Capitol to save Irene, but it collapses, crushing all three in the rubble.

Modern Superheroes



Many of the heroes on the program have been real people in history called on by circumstances or by others to lead in times of trouble. Superman and Spider-Man are characters that come from the imaginations of writers and artists, also in times of trouble. Perhaps the creators of these super heroes didn't see a real person able to accomplish the heroic acts needed to respond to the challenges at hand.

These modern heroes reflect the periods from which they came. Both reveal the popularity of science fiction in the 20th century. Superman is an alien from another planet that adopts the identity of an American to fit in, and Spider-Man is a regular person who adopts the identity of a creature modified by science. The characters' powers explore the possibilities of science fiction and real scientific discovery. Both Superman and Spider-Man have continued to adapt to the times over the decades so that they remain relevant and interesting to their audiences.



Spider-Man was created in 1962 by a man named Stan Lee. Lee wanted to create a role model that teens and kids could relate to, a person with regular problems and worries, but also with certain talents.

Peter Parker was a teenager who was good at science but was bullied for being a hard-working student. Parker became Spider-man when he was bitten by a radioactive spider and transformed by science. His alterations include spider-like powers of strength, the ability to jump and climb walls, a sixth "spider-sense" to alert him when danger is coming. The web he shoots is of his own design, his scientific knowledge put into action.



The music by **Danny Elfman** — Danny Elfman has composed film scores for a wide variety of pictures, but seems to have a taste for darker, more quirky films. He has partnered with Tim Burton on many projects including Edward Scissorhands and Batman. Elfman has said about his work, "I prefer to push myself in the direction of being a composer who you never know what he's doing next."

The score for Spider-Man gives this hero a theme with a different sound. There is a more dominant sense of darkness and mystery throughout. How does Elfman create this effect? Also imagine the movement of a spider. How is the climbing, jumping, and swinging from his web depicted?



Superman and John Williams

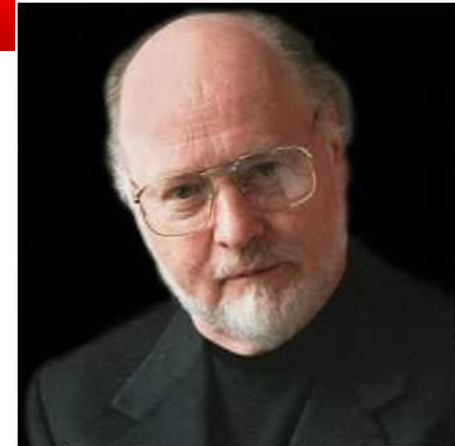
Superman was created by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster when they were in high school in the early 1930's. At this time in American history, the country was experiencing a deep economic depression. When people are unemployed they may feel discouraged and even powerless in their search to find ways to supply basic needs for themselves and their families. At the same time, Americans were anxiously watching and listening to news of a new World War in Europe. It became clear that soon the United States would have to go to war, too, to help those countries in Europe who were our friends and allies.

Superman could provide an escape, if only imaginary, in the form of a powerful character able to take action and persevere against serious problems in the world. Superman fought crime and generally stood for the moral codes and values of modern America as it became a super power in the world.

This super hero also reflected the times of the 1930's and 1940's through the eyes of an immigrant. The families of the creators, Jerry and Joe were recent immigrants to the U.S. and were trying to fit into American culture. Superman's alter ego, Clark Kent was also trying to join American culture and fit in as a citizen.



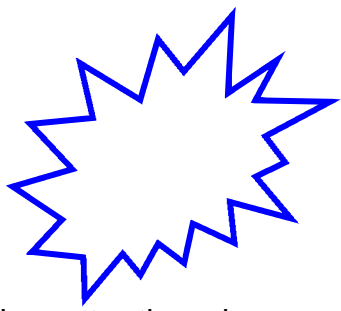
Science and imagination came together to give Superman his powers. These included the ability to fly, super-strength, vision powers (such as x-ray, infra-red, telescopic, and microscopic visions), invulnerability to everything but a magical substance called Kryptonite.



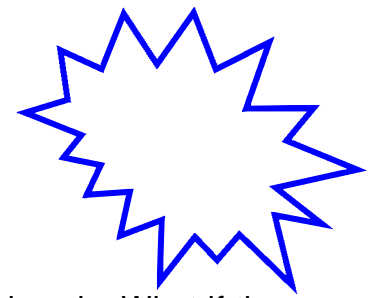
American composer, **John Williams** wrote the score to the movies featuring Superman. He is not only a composer, but an arranger, conductor, and pianist. Williams has acted as composer and music director for over 75 films including the first three *Indiana Jones* movies, *E.T.*, *Star Wars*, *Harry Potter* and *Jurassic Park*.

When you hear his music at the concert, ask yourself if you hear more depictions of Superman's triumph over his enemies or struggle as he battles them. Why do you think that?

How does that add to what you think of when you imagine the character, Superman? How does Williams portray the fast flight of Superman? How does he portray his strength?



Create your own Superhero



No matter the advances we make in our society, there are always challenges to face, new problems to decode. What if there was a new superhero to help us solve these conundrums? That is your task! First, brainstorm with your class challenges that your state, country or the whole world is facing today. Science can be a good place to start where innovations pop up in the news everyday.

Create a new superhero whose mission it is to help combat this challenge. A well developed super hero has the following characteristics:

- A back story or history — A reason he/she exists and their motivation to act. This can also include a dual-identity, or personality the hero adopts when hiding in plain sight.
- Super powers — Choose 3-4 abilities that your character has that are especially useful in solving this problem.
- Vulnerability / Limitations — A superhero that is invincible in every way is boring because there is no risk or possibility that he/she can't succeed. Think of at least one or maybe two things that can harm or inhibit your superhero.
- Nemesis — An enemy who has motivations of his/her own that are in direct conflict with your superhero's.
- Costume — The special attire the hero wears that contributes to their identity and may also aid in their abilities.

Addresses standards: 5th -8th grades

Writing:

1.1.9 – Selects words that are suitable and create appropriate imagery

Literature:

2.1.1 - describes aspects of characters including actions and motives

Music: Basic

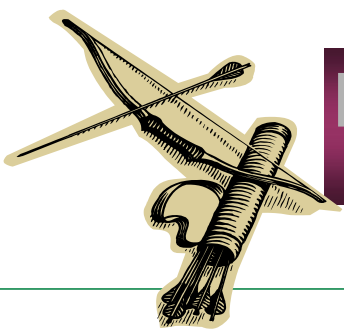
4.3.1 – composes short pieces using a variety of sound sources

3.2.1 – improvises simple rhythmic and melodic ostinato accompaniments.

- Write both a short narrative describing your hero and draw a picture so that we can see the visual representation of the full effect of the costume.
 - Transfer a shortened form of this information to a superhero trading card. Use an index card that is unlined both front and back. Include the illustration, name of your superhero, and his/her cause on one side and on the other detail their abilities, nemesis, and limitation.
 - Present both the narrative and card to the class.

And what else does any self-respecting superhero need?
A musical theme, of course!

- Write a short theme for your hero, 4-8 bars long.
- Or write a short rhythmic ostinato to represent your hero
- Specify which groups of instruments you would like to feature and why. Think about tempo. What speed of music will best represent your hero and his/her mission?
- Ask the music teacher for simple melodic instruments to help you write your theme. Or, if you are a musician, bring along your own instrument.



Bravery - Actions Speak Louder than Words

An **idiom** is a phrase that taken literally, doesn't make sense, but over time has a meaning that people agree on and understand. For example, "under the weather" means that a person doesn't feel well, and not that they are being followed around by low hanging clouds.

Think about the idiom, "*Actions speak louder than words*". What does this phrase mean to you?

Clearly an action doesn't say anything using words. And yet we can understand what someone thinks or feels based on what they do. Sometimes a person's actions make the words they say appear even more convincing, and sometimes a person's words and their actions seem to be contradictory, or the opposite of each other.

Can you think of a time where a person's actions 'spoke' louder than their words? Did their actions and words seem to go together? Did anything that person say or do surprise you, or did they act and speak in a way that you expected them to?

What is the opposite of bravery? Jot down a few words that come to mind. Is one of the words you thought of "fear"? If you think these two might be opposites, can you also think of a way in which they go together?

When do people use words to depict bravery? What kinds of circumstances might call on a person's bravery? What kinds of things might they be feeling?

Tell about a time when you had to be brave. How did you use words? What actions did you take? What was difficult about the choices you made? What was easy?

William Tell and his son Walter do lots of speaking and acting to demonstrate how they feel about their freedom. Compare and contrast the differences between the choices they make with their actions and words, and the consequences.

→ Make a list of the words and phrases that Tell uses in different places in the story to demonstrate his bravery.

→ Explain why each of these instances are examples of bravery. What are the consequences of his saying these things? What might have been the consequences if he had not said what he believed.

→ Make a list of the actions that Tell takes that demonstrate his bravery.

→ Talk about why each of these actions demonstrate bravery, and the consequences that Tell and his son faces as a result. What if he had not chosen to take the actions he did?

Tell's son Walter also speaks and acts in brave ways that support his father. Make similar lists comparing his words and actions to those of his father.

→ What were the consequences of his choices?

→ What if he had decided to remain silent, said different things, or acted in different ways?

Addresses standards in 5th-8th grades:

Literature:

2.1.1 - id./describe reasons for character's actions & consequences

2.2.3 - id. / describe major conflict in a story and events related to it.

Reading:

1.4.4 - responds logically to literal, inferential & critical thinking questions

1.4.8 - links causes and effects in narrative text



A Picture Speaks a Thousand Words

Graphic novels are gaining in popularity with both kids and adults, and are being taken more seriously as a new form of literature. The main way in which graphic novels differ from comic books is that they contain a complete story within their covers that does not continue in a following issue. The subject matter ranges widely and can be fiction or non-fiction. Graphic novels use panels, brief narrative text and speech bubbles to tell the story, just like comic books

Students will re-tell the story in graphic novel form based either on listening to the story or to Rossini's music or both. Choose from the following activities to re-tell this story. For more interesting results, split the class in half and assign equal numbers to each group one of the two options.

The following **jobs** should be distributed among the students in each group:

Planner — In charge of the layout of the pages. Decides how many panels there will be, how they are positioned (vertical or horizontal) and where the text will be placed. Draws the panels and text boxes.

Writer — creates the text, both narrative and dialogue that will tell the story.

Penciler — copies the text on to the final page in neat handwriting, usually all capital letters, and then traces it in ink.

Inker — Draws and inks, or colors, the illustrations. (This can be shared by two people. One can pencil in the drawing, another add color.)

Listen to the music by Rossini and list the images and colors that come to mind. Retell the story as depicted by the music as a graphic novel. Your story may be a series of illustrations and does not need to include text (but you can choose to write too), but *do provide the subtitles of the four sections of the music.*

There are four distinct sections of the music, so keep in mind these parts will need to be obvious to your audience. Each section should have at least 3-4 panels.

The four sections are:

I. Prelude

II. Storm

III. Call of the herdsman

IV. Finale — gallop, cavalry charge

When you listen to the story, your imagination can't help but create images to go along with it.

As you listen to your teacher read the tale, make a list of the images that pop into your head, or sketch them.

Retell this story as a graphic novel.

♪ Decide what elements you will pay attention to in this form.

♪ Consider your color scheme and style.

♪ Decide how you will use text, both narrative and dialogue.

♪ Your story should include at least 12 panels.

Addresses standards: 5th-8th grades

Literature: Uses literary concepts to interpret text

1.1 – describes aspects of characters'(actions & motives) & the influence on plot.

1.5 – identifies the uses of literary devces such as foreshadowing.

Writing:

1.1.1 – develops a focused piece of writing with plot elements.

Art: Basic

3.2.2 – creates art works based on images, subjects, & symbols

6.3.2 – creates art works that incorporate cross-curricular concepts.



Comedy and Tragedy

In Egmont and Rienzi



Normally, we think of comedy as something that is happy or makes us laugh. Tragedy is usually something sad, or means that bad things happen to the main characters. But in literature or other dramatic works, the ideas and function of comedy and tragedy are much bigger. All dramatic stories center on an event that disrupts normal every day life. What makes the story and even the hero of a story tragic or comedic depends on how the story ends, as well as how the heroes reacts to the circumstances they finds themselves in.

At first glance the stories of Egmont and Rienzi both seem to be tragedies because they both end with the deaths of the heroes. Take a look at these descriptions of comedies and tragedies and the kinds of heroes that appear in these stories. Think about the stories of Rienzi and Egmont. Are both these stories really tragedies? How do these examples change how you think of these heroes? Can you find tragic and comedic elements in both?

Comedy:

The Story –

- The story celebrates a person's contributions to the community. Features a renewal of the human spirit.
- Any disruptive presence (like a villain), is banished, punished, or reformed. The characters look to the future for a meaningful, shared life
- The story ends with a group celebration and the people in the story come together again with a renewed or redefined 'normal' everyday life

The Hero –

- Has the ability to adapt and meet challenges They may see unexpected and surprising events as opportunities
- Questions tradition and those in authority
- Accepts or adjusts to the individual demands on his/her life to suit the needs of the community

◇ The comedic hero is easy to relate to because we want the same thing they do, peace and harmony in life and in the community. We sympathize with the sacrifices they make and admire the way they reach their goals.

Addresses standards 5th-8th grades

Reading:

- 1.4.7 – Compares/contrasts varying aspects (characters' traits and motives, problem/solution, viewpoints) in text
- 1.4.8 – explains cause/effect relationships in narrative text

Tragedy:

The Story –

- Begins with the freedom to make choices and moves towards inflexible consequences
- There is an emphasis on human suffering
- The conflict is resolved only with the death of the hero

The Hero –

- Wants to solve the challenge in the story by themselves, with no help from anyone else. They stick with a plan of action and follow it to their doom.
- The hero responds only to his/her own idea of the truth and is "larger-than-life".
- Because the hero only listens to and answers to him/herself, the character seems apart from the rest of the society, or isolated. However, this person also tends to hold a powerful and important public position in the story.
- Believes anyone who disagrees with them is just a part of the problem.

◇ You may be wondering why we would want to hear a story about a person who seems so stubborn. This kind of hero is interesting because they are free in a different kind of way. They are free from caring about what the rest of society thinks of them. They are also willing to suffer for their beliefs as they try and achieve their goals, which may be just as noble as that of the comedic hero.

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