



Teacher resources on the Proms and Musical Repertoire

The Proms



Founded in 1895, The Proms are an annual music festival. Performances take place at the Royal Albert Hall, with smaller chamber concerts at Cadogan Hall in London, as well as outdoor *Proms in the Park* events across the UK. The Proms are very British events, but the music featured comes from all over the world. Every day for eight weeks, there are concerts performed and broadcast live on the BBC. The music is orchestral, and the programme has diversified in recent years even to include a DJ'ed *Ibiza Prom* with Pete Tong!

The Proms events inspired the creation of Playground Proms by Graffiti Classics



'Prom' is short for promenade, meaning a leisurely walk, and originally the first Proms audiences were free to stroll around while the orchestra played. Today, some of the audience still stand and 'prom' in the unseated area of the Royal Albert Hall, in front of the stage. Proms concertgoers, particularly those who stand, are referred to as 'Prommers'. For our Playground Proms, children are seated on chairs to help their concentration, but we will still refer to them as **Prommers!**

Further information about the repertoire

Here is the repertoire your young **Prommers** hear performed at the Playground Proms. Along with information about each piece and composer. Your **Prommers** might enjoy listening to and learning a bit about each piece and composer before they hear it played live with Graffiti Classics. We have included links to full orchestral performances of each piece. The children can hear each tune in its full orchestral version before they experience our string quartets version. The clips feature real Proms performances so children can see what the inside of the Royal Albert Hall looks like.

Three of the pieces featured in our show are on the BBC Ten Pieces list. They link to extensive and detailed lesson plans on the BBC website (links below). By linking with the Ten Pieces initiative <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/ten-pieces/all-resources/zdg3t39> you can extend the breadth of learning around the Playground Proms performance.

Also sprach Zarathustra – Richard Strauss
Hungarian Dance No 5 – Johannes Brahms (BBC Ten Pieces)
Boléro – Maurice Ravel
Symphony No 5 – Ludwig van Beethoven (BBC Ten Pieces)
Pizzicato Polka – Johann Strauss II
Eine kleine Nachtmusik – Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
The Blue Danube – Johann Strauss II
The Entertainer – Scott Joplin
Sailor's Hornpipe with Drunken Sailor – Traditional
Can-can (Galop infernal) – Jacques Offenbach
What a Wonderful World – Louis Armstrong

- **Also, sprach Zarathustra, Op 30**
Richard Strauss 1864-1949 German
Romantic Period

Here is a link to a performance of this piece at the BBC Proms, by the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain (NYOGB), conducted by Edward Gardner. NYOGB is the National Youth Orchestra of the United Kingdom, consisting of 164 members of ages 13 to 19 years.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4IMEw2jM8_w

First performed and conducted by Strauss in Frankfurt in 1896, this **tone poem** was composed in response to famous philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's novel *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, a meditation of man's place within the universe.

A **tone poem** is a piece of orchestral music, usually composed in one movement on a descriptive or rhapsodic theme. The **tone poem** as a musical form is an invention of the Romantic era.

Also, sprach Zarathustra is 30 minutes long with 9 musical sections. Like the clip, Graffiti Classics plays just the opening fanfare, 'Sunrise', which featured in Stanley Kubrick's 1968 film *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

- **Hungarian Dance No 5**
Johannes Brahms 1833-1897 German
Romantic Period but composed in Classical style.

Here is a link to the BBC Ten Pieces information about this piece, with full orchestral performances embedded on their page:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/ten-pieces/classical-music-johannes-brahms-hungarian-dance/zfj4y9q>

- **Boléro**
Maurice Ravel 1875-1937 French
Early 20th century Period

Boléro was composed as a ballet with Ravel imagining its performance in an open-air setting. It was one of Ravel's final compositions before illness forced him into retirement but became a huge success and his most famous work. Ravel, however, was convinced orchestras would refuse to play *Boléro* due to its almost mechanical nature with the repetitive snare drum rhythm. Here is a link to a performance of this piece at the 2014 Proms conducted by the great Daniel Barenboim. It is a long single movement piece (14 minutes) that introduces instruments one by one – in the clip, notice how Barenboim barely conducts his orchestra at the beginning, allowing the musicians to express freely to the strict drum rhythm.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_pSJOkmYBA

Torvill and Dean famously won an Olympic gold medal skating to this piece in the 1984 Sarajevo Olympics.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Til6Pv3NgCl>

- **Symphony No 5**
Ludwig van Beethoven 1770-1827 German
Classical Period

Here is a link to the BBC information about this piece and composer with embedded links to an orchestral performance. We suggest this symphony is a great piece to inspire artistic response from children when listening but more about that later:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/ten-pieces/KS2-ludwig-van-beethoven-symphony-no-5-1st-movement/zrsf3k7>

Graffiti Classics perform a disco adaptation of this symphony called *A Fifth of Beethoven* by Walter Murphy, which featured in the famous movie *Saturday Night Fever*.

- **Pizzicato Polka**
Johann Strauss II 1825-1899 Austrian
Romantic Period

Johann Strauss II was born to a famous composing family. And he became known as the King of Waltz. *Pizzicato Polka* was a hugely popular tune by Strauss. *Pizzicato* means plucked strings. The whole piece is plucked instead of bowed.

A polka is a traditional folk-dance style. The piece consists of four melodies and is written in ternary form (A-B-A).

Here is a clip from the BBC Proms during COVID, so there is no audience:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yhv7irP2b3E>

- **Eine kleine Nachtmusik**
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart 1756-1791 Austria
Classical period

Children, can you guess what *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* might mean?

It means *A little night music*. Mozart was a child prodigy (a child who is much more talented than usual for their age) and was composing music from the age of five years old and could also play the piano and violin. *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* was composed when he was an adult and is a *serenade* – a piece of undemanding ‘background’ music usually written for a special events like a dinner or banquet.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oy2zDJPIgwc&ab_channel=AllClassicalMusic

- **The Blue Danube**
Johann Strauss II 1825-1899 Austrian
Romantic period

Strauss’s most famous tune, inspired by the beautiful River Danube. We like to include this waltz to introduce the children to 3/4 time in our workshops. The waltz was a popular ballroom dance in the 18th century that originated in Austria. The waltz is still danced across the world today.

The famous 1, 2, 3 count with one large step to travel and then two steps with feet together is the basis for the graceful dance.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3uNKqZND1yY>

- **The Entertainer**
Scott Joplin 1868-1917 USA
Early 20th Century Period

Joplin, the King of Ragtime, composed over one hundred ragtime pieces including two operas and a ballet. Ragtime was a popular musical style originated in African American communities in the USA. It is notable for its syncopated off-beat ‘ragged’ rhythm.

After Joplin’s death, ragtime quickly evolved and influenced other mainstream music styles such as jazz and big band swing. Joplin's ragtime was rediscovered in the early 1970s by Joshua Rifkin. And the Oscar winning film *The Sting*, featured several of Joplin's compositions, including *The Entertainer*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jxl82OGGZql>

- **Sailor’s Hornpipe with Drunken Sailor**
Traditional

Otherwise known as *Jack the Lad*, the *Sailor’s Hornpipe* is played on the Last Night of the Proms in London. It is part of Sir Henry Wood's *Fantasia on British Sea Songs*. **Prommers** traditionally bring miniature foghorns and party horns and blow them along to the music. This creates a loud, frenetic finale as the music reaches its fastest speed. We adapted this piece by adding the *Drunken Sailor*. There are lyrics in this pack for you to learn with your **Prommers**. There are also further activity suggestions for this piece.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cZyNtZtSqE>

- **Can-can**
Jacques Offenbach 1819-1880 French
Romantic Period

Otherwise known as *Galop infernal* from his famous comedy operetta *Orpheus in the Underworld*, the *Can-can* became a hugely popular music hall and cabaret dance in the 1840s. It features high kicks, splits, and cartwheels. We have ideas for our **Prommers** to develop simpler moves in time to the music!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sf9CtbLGzgw>

- **What a Wonderful World**
Bob Thiele (as 'George Douglas') 1922-1996 and
George David Weiss 1921-1910 American
Sung by Louis Armstrong 1901-1971
Mid 20th century period

This song was sung by [Louis Armstrong](#) and released as a single in 1967, reaching No 1 in April 1968. It was reissued as a single in 1988 after it was heard in the film *Good Morning, Vietnam*.

https://youtu.be/rBrd_3VMC3c?si=OqqR8FKki9te1PTH