

LSO

Beethoven & Ravel



Online Project Pack
Key Stage 2/3
Spring 2020

London Symphony Orchestra

Copyright Information

The copyrights of the text, music and arrangements in this project pack are held by:

Copyright © Rachel Leach 2020

Copyright © London Symphony Orchestra 2020

HOW TO BUILD AN ORCHESTRA by Mary Auld, illustrations by Elisa Paganelli

Copyright © Hodder and Staughton, 2020

Published by Wayland, an imprint of Hachette Children's Group

ISBN: 978-1-5263-0983-9

Unauthorised copying for any other purpose is strictly prohibited.

For further information please contact:

LSO Discovery
Level 6
Barbican Centre
London
EC2Y 8DS

About the London Symphony Orchestra and LSO Discovery

The London Symphony Orchestra is bringing the greatest music to the greatest number of people. This is at the heart of everything that it does. This commitment to serve music and the people who love music is borne of a unique ethos developed over more than 100 years. Established in 1904 by a number of London's finest musicians, the LSO is a self-governing musical collective built on artistic ownership and partnership. The Orchestra is still owned by its members and has a signature sound emanating from the combined zeal and virtuosity of these 90 brilliant musicians who come from around the world; its music-making remains firmly at the centre of the Orchestra's activities. The LSO is Resident Orchestra at the Barbican in the City of London, where it gives 70 symphonic concerts every year, and performs a further 70 concerts worldwide on tour. The Orchestra works with a family of artists that includes the world's greatest conductors – Sir Simon Rattle as Music Director, Gianandrea Noseda and François-Xavier Roth as Principal Guest Conductors, Michael Tilson Thomas as Conductor Laureate and André Previn as Conductor Emeritus. LSO Discovery, the Orchestra's community and education programme based at LSO St Luke's, brings the work of the LSO with all parts of society and engages with 60,000 people every year. The LSO reaches out much further with its own recording label – LSO Live, the first of its kind which launched in 1999 – and now streams its own music to millions around the world.

LSO Discovery has, for the past 29 years, been one of the most important ways for the LSO to realise its mission of 'making the finest possible music available to the widest number of people'. Through workshops, projects and master classes, LSO Discovery has become a world leader in taking the music and players of the orchestra into the community, and making the LSO relevant to the lives of thousands of people beyond the concert hall.



Beethoven 6

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)



Beethoven was in appearance and manner a very unlikely genius. He was often dirty, dishevelled, rude, aggressive, unpredictable, and eccentric but his music told another story. Tragedy struck at age 28 when he began to go deaf and soon he could only hear his greatest works by imagining the sounds in his head. 2020 is a very special year for Beethoven fans as the world celebrates 250 years since his birth.

Beethoven's **6th symphony**, written in 1808, was one of the first orchestral pieces to tell a story. Over 5 movements (sections) Beethoven describes a day in the life of countryfolk as they wander through the fields, listen to birdsong, celebrate the harvest, suffer a terrible storm and watch the sun reappear from behind clouds.

Movement 4 'Storm' was one of the first musical storms ever written.

It features musical depictions of:



- **Wind** – swirling scales rushing up and down.



- **Rain** - short 'next-door notes' played by the violins at the beginning.





- **Thunder** – scary rumbles from the basses and cellos.



- **Lightning** - a low note followed very soon after by a high note.



For this task you need paper and art materials. Ask your children to place the paper (the bigger, the better) landscape (longest side top and bottom) on your table. The left side of the page will be the beginning of the storm and the right side is the end (you could even write 'start' and 'end' lightly in pencil to help you remember).

1

Think about what happens during a storm. The four main elements are listed above. Draw a simple symbol to represent each element, perhaps using a different colour for each one. Make a small 'key' at the top of your page explaining your symbols.

2

Listen to Beethoven's Storm. Begin with the **lightning**. Can you spot it within the music? There are about 14 flashes of lightning in this piece.

3

Listen again and every time you hear the **lightning** draw its symbol on your page. Try to dot these 'lightning bolts' around the page. If they are near the beginning of the storm place them towards the left, if they are near the end, place them towards the right.

4

Listen again and this time add in your symbol for **thunder**. Can you place these in relation to the lightning.



5

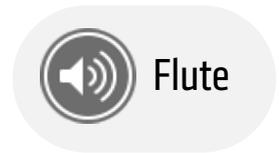
Listen for a 4th time and add the **wind** and **rain** until they have made a picture of a storm. By now they probably know the shape of the piece quite well, can you make your artwork match the music with a peak somewhere in the middle and then a calmer section towards the end?

6

At this point you might like to stop the recording and just work on the artwork adding in colours or things you can't hear in the music such as trees bending in the wind, people sheltering etc.

7

Finally, listen once more and pay particular attention to the ending. Beethoven adds a new musical idea at this point - an upwards scale from the flute. What does that represent? Can you add it onto your pictures?

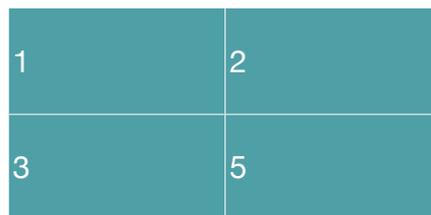


Taking it further – finish the story

Beethoven's symphony has four other sections (called movements). They each represent a different part of his day in the countryside. Here's how to listen to them:

1

Take another sheet of paper and fold it into quarters. Place the paper landscape again and number the quarters 1, 2, 3, 5 (you have already worked on '4' – the storm!) like this:



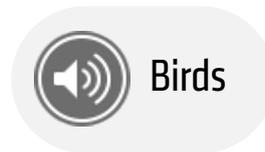
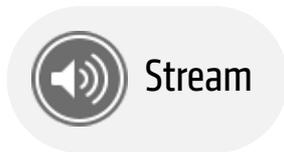
2

Listen to this section from movement 1.

Beethoven is describing a beautiful countryside scene on a lovely summer's day. Draw the scene in the first quarter of the page.

3

Movement 2 describes the flowing water of a stream or brook and at the end, birds singing in the trees. Listen to these two sections and draw what you hear in the 2nd section of the page.



4

The third movement of Beethoven's symphony represents a party! Everyone has stopped work for lunch and they are in a dancing mood. Listen to movement 3 and draw this scene in the third 'square'.

5

The final movement, after the storm, is gorgeous. The sun is out and everyone is relaxing. Draw this in the final section of the page.

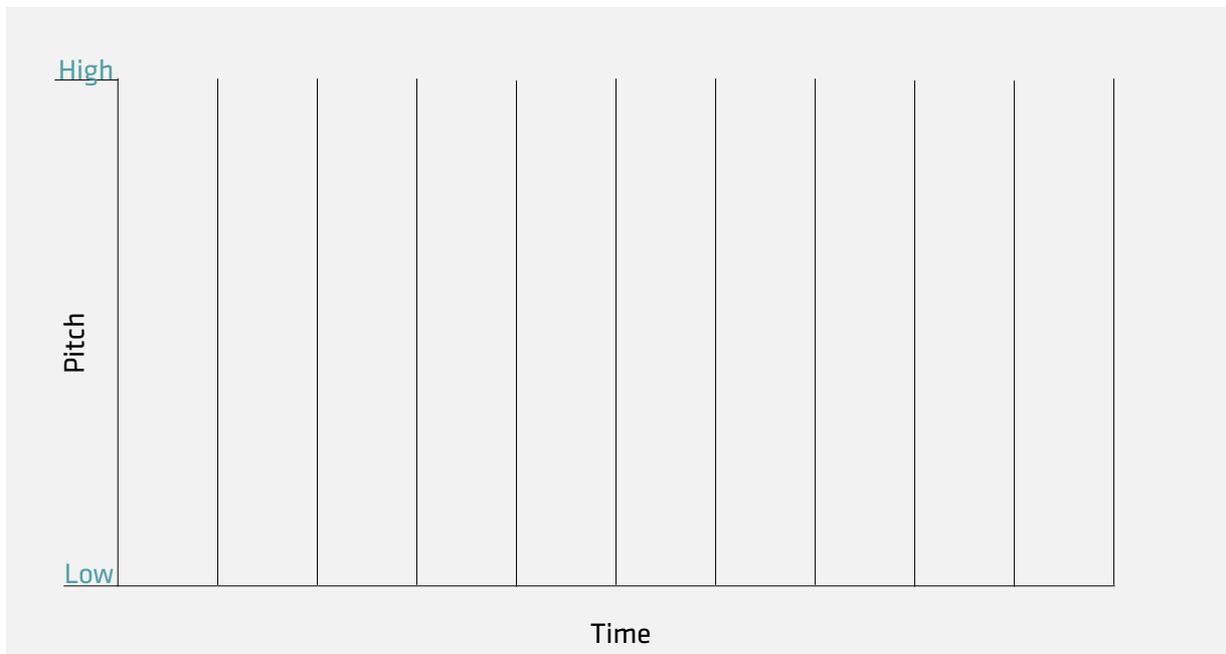


Put this page together with your storm pictures and you have artwork for the whole of Beethoven's symphony!

Extension activity (KS3+)

Rather than making artwork to describe the Beethoven's symphony, make a graphic score. Graphic scores are visual representations of music often plotted out in a very detailed way with timings and musical directions.

Place your paper in landscape orientation and draw two axis. Time is the horizontal axis running from the beginning of the music (left) to the end (right). The vertical axis is pitch – high sounds at the top, low at the bottom. It might also be useful to divide the horizontal axis into 10 second sections.



Invent symbols for the main elements in the music as above (i.e. for the storm - wind, rain etc) but now as you listen, try to plot out the events of Beethoven's music as accurately as possible. You can also add musical terminology such as dynamics (loud = f, soft = p), tempo (rit = getting slower, accel = getting faster etc) and instrumentation (violin/ strings/ woodwind etc).

Bolero at Home

Maurice Ravel (1875 – 1937)

Maurice Ravel was a French composer living and working in Paris. He wrote his most famous and talked about piece in 1928 and named it Bolero. It began life as a short piece for a ballet with a Spanish feel but became much more famous when played by orchestras alone without the dancers. **Bolero** features just three ideas that repeat over and over and one big *crescendo* – a gradual change in volume from very soft to very loud. It became one of the most successful pieces of music ever and made Ravel very, very rich.



To find out all about Ravel's amazing piece, watch this!

<https://play.iso.co.uk/performances/Ravels-Bolero/explore/masterclasses/m7/watch>



Here's how to make your own Bolero at home...

Then join in playing with us!

Bolero is made up of three musical ideas:

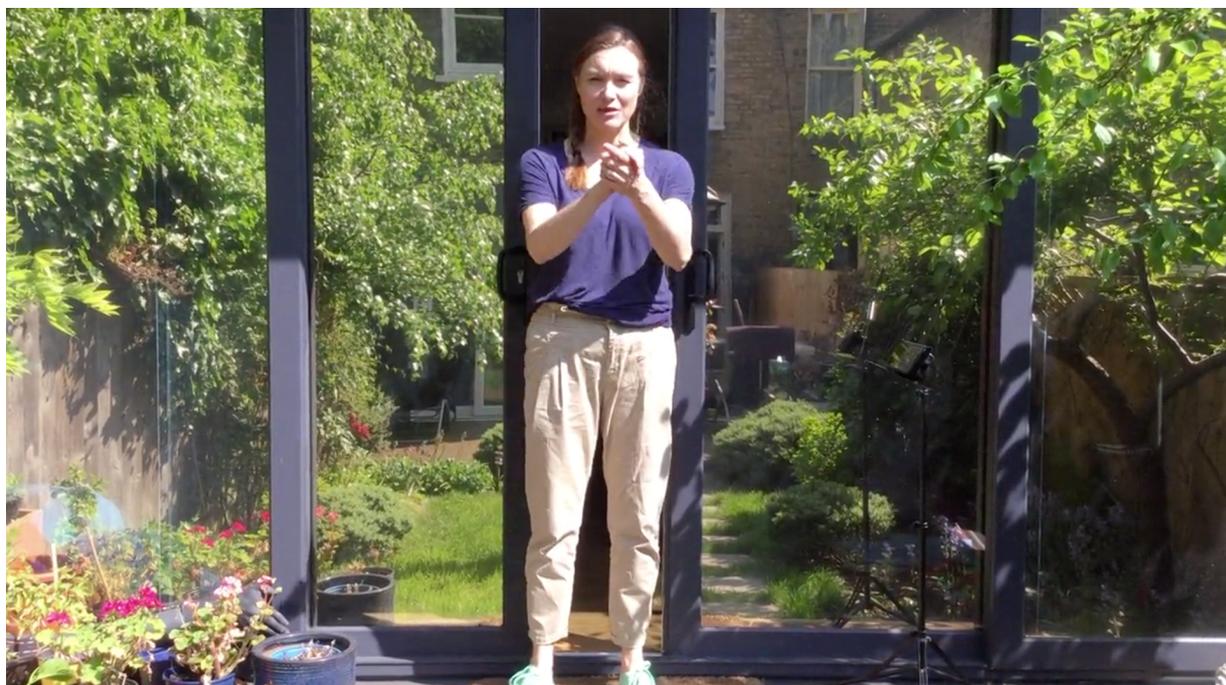
Idea 1: The bassline

The first idea to get to grips with is the bassline. You can perform it without any equipment at all using just your body!

Try this pattern, very slowly and steadily:

This sign means 'repeat'

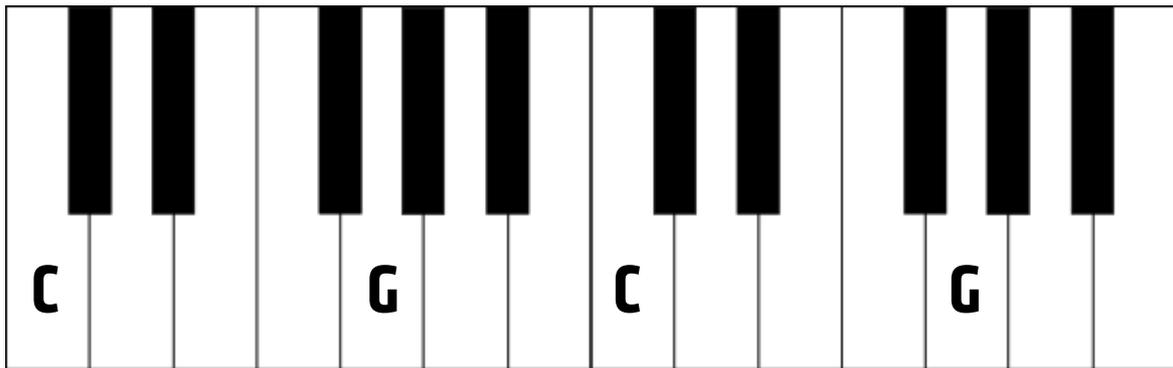
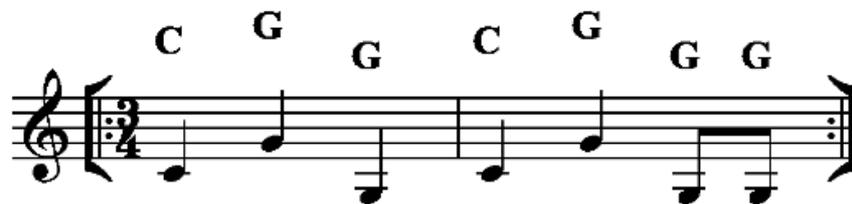
Knees Clap Stamp Knees Clap Stamp Stamp



The two 'stamps' together at the end are quavers. That means they are quicker than the other notes (crotchets). Try to fit two stamps into the space you had one before. If this is too tricky, just do one stamp!

If you have an instrument...

The bassline is quite easy to play. It just uses three pitches C, high G and low G, and it looks like this:



Or if you don't have an instrument...

... be creative and raid the cupboards! You just need three different sounds. Something high, something low and something in the middle. Try three saucepans hit with a wooden stick or fill glasses with different amounts of water and tap them with a spoon - gently!



Play with us!

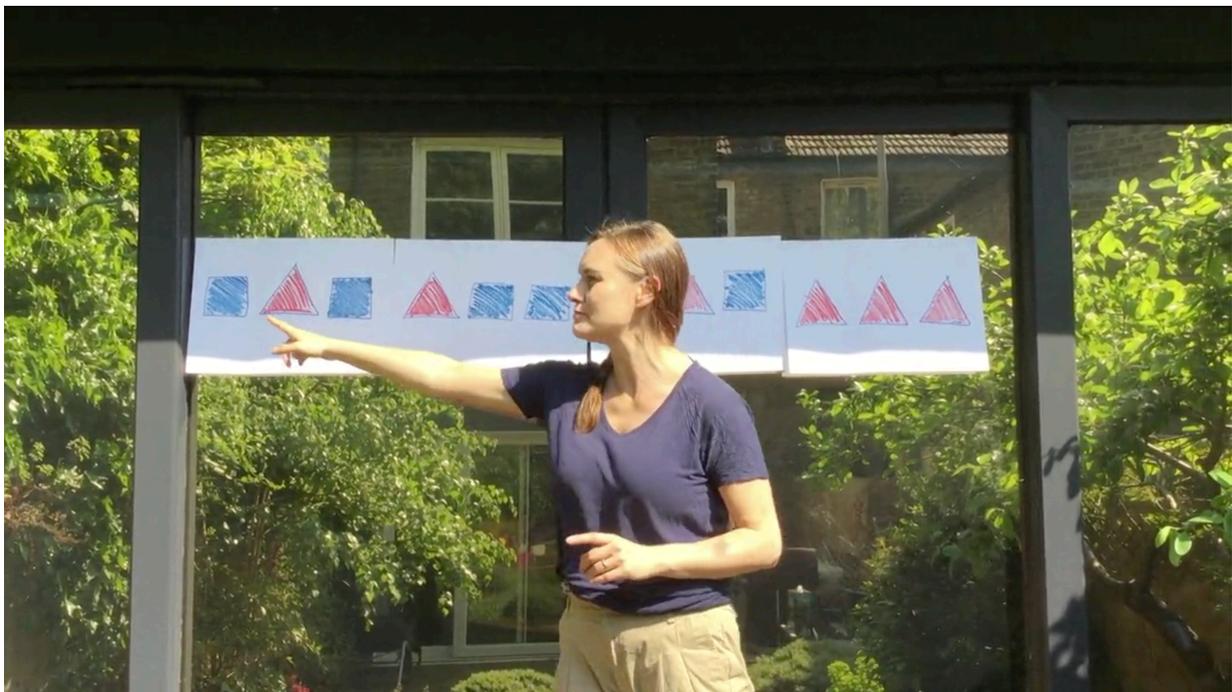
When you have mastered the bassline try playing along with us. You can listen and watch Bolero here:



The bassline you just learnt is played all the way through and you'll hear it really clearly played by pizzicato (plucked) strings at the beginning. Join in!

Idea 2: The repeating rhythm (also known as the 'ostinato')

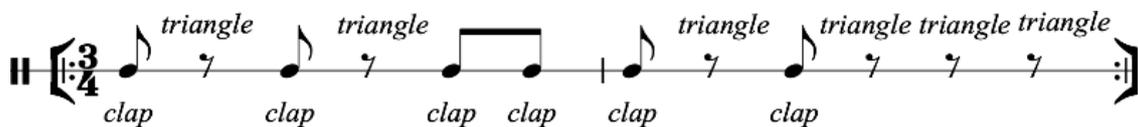
Now move onto the rhythm. Ravel's rhythmic ostinato is extremely complicated when written down but you can easily learn it by using this 'score'.



It might help to make your own bigger version of this diagram and stick it up on the wall in front of you.

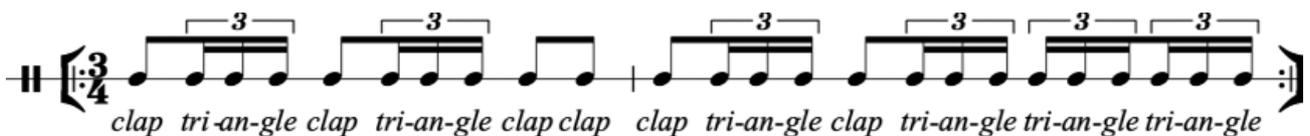


Enlist the help of a family member and ask them to slowly point to the symbols one by one moving across from left to right. Say 'square' on every square and 'triangle' on every triangle. Then, replace the word 'square' with a clap but keep saying 'triangle' on the triangles, like this:



Next, replace the word triangle with three quick claps ('tri-an-gle'). Practise this a few times – you are now performing Ravel's rhythm!

Ravel's rhythm actually looks like this:



If you have an instrument...

Ravel uses just one pitch for this – C. So, if you have an instrument with a C on it, try playing the rhythm steadily on a C – be careful not to get faster, its not as easy as you think! If you don't have a C, just pick any note and stick to it.

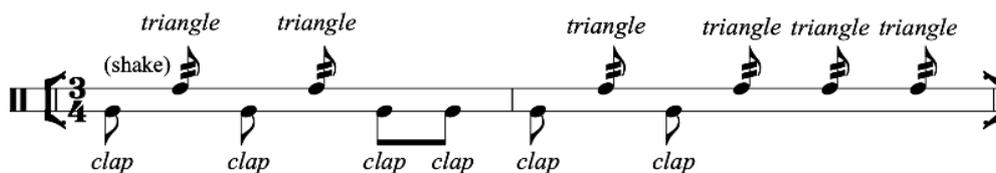
Famously the rhythm is played on a snare drum throughout. If you have a drum or something similar, give it a go.



Or if you don't have an instrument...

... time to get creative again! You need something that makes a short 'crisp' sound like a drum.

The full pattern is quite hard so it might be fun to split up the pattern with a family member like this:



You could replace the tricky 'triangle' rhythm with a quick shake of something (A container filled with rice?) or a quick crunchy sound (a newspaper crunched up?).

Try to keep the rhythm as steady as possible

Play with us!

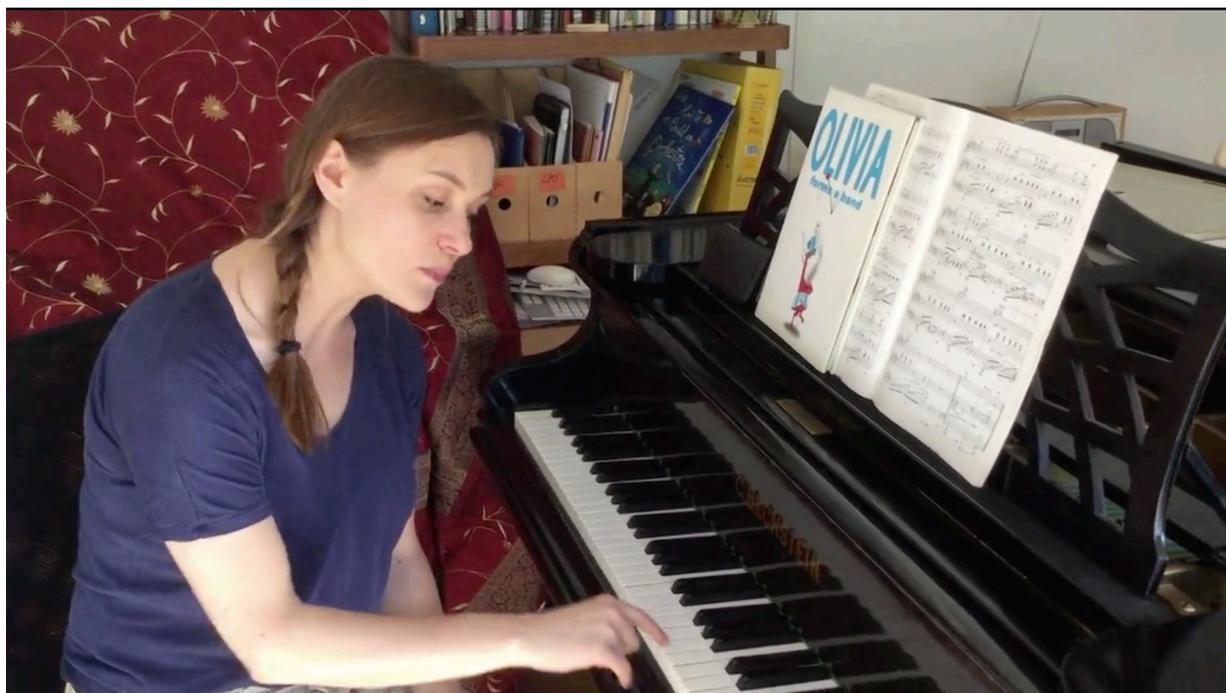


When you have mastered the rhythm (ostinato) try playing along with us. Return to the full performance and perhaps listen for a while to Sam on the Snare Drum until you get the speed and feel of it. Then...
join in!



Idea 3: The twisty melody

Bolero contains a wandering, twisty melody. It is very unusual and quite difficult to play and you do need a pitched instrument (or confident singing voice) to perform it.



If you have an instrument have a go at creating your own melody. Here are some 'rules':

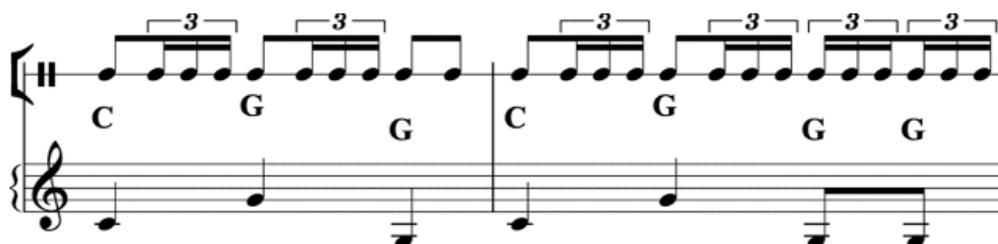
- Begin on C, snake up and down, end on C
- Use only next-door notes
- Keep it short and simple and if it repeats, make sure its the same every time



Make your own Bolero (without us)

You need at least three people to make your own Bolero

The bassline and ostinato fit together like this:

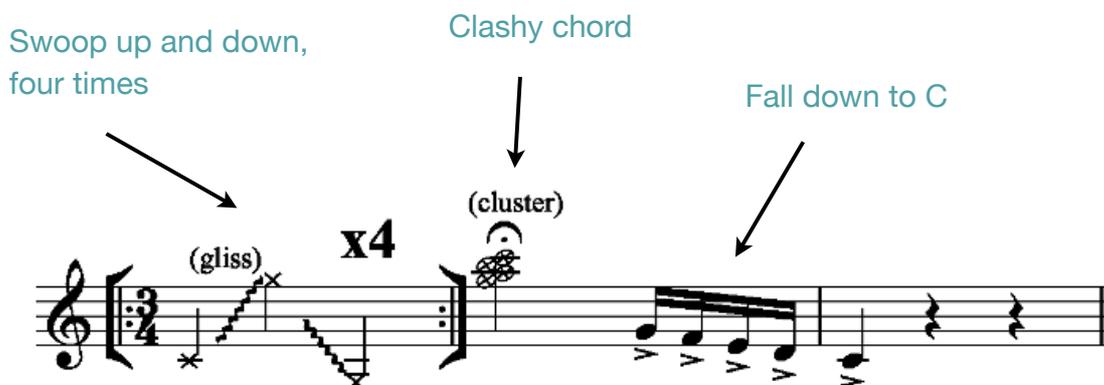


The melody should just float on top.

*The most important thing about Ravel's piece is the **crescendo**. Bolero is the longest crescendo in all of orchestra music (crescendo just means gradually getting louder). So, start your piece very quietly and gradually get louder until you are playing very loudly indeed!*

The Coda

Ravel adds a 'Coda' (special ending) to his piece. It looks (roughly) like this:



Taking it further



You will need to find a swooping up and down sound, something clashy and a fall down to C. You might also like to add in some big bangs (on the beginning and end) and any other 'splashy' sounds you can get your hands on (cymbals/ gongs/ saucepan lids/ doorbells!).

Listen to the Coda here:



Coda

... and play along with us or add a coda onto your own version of the piece.



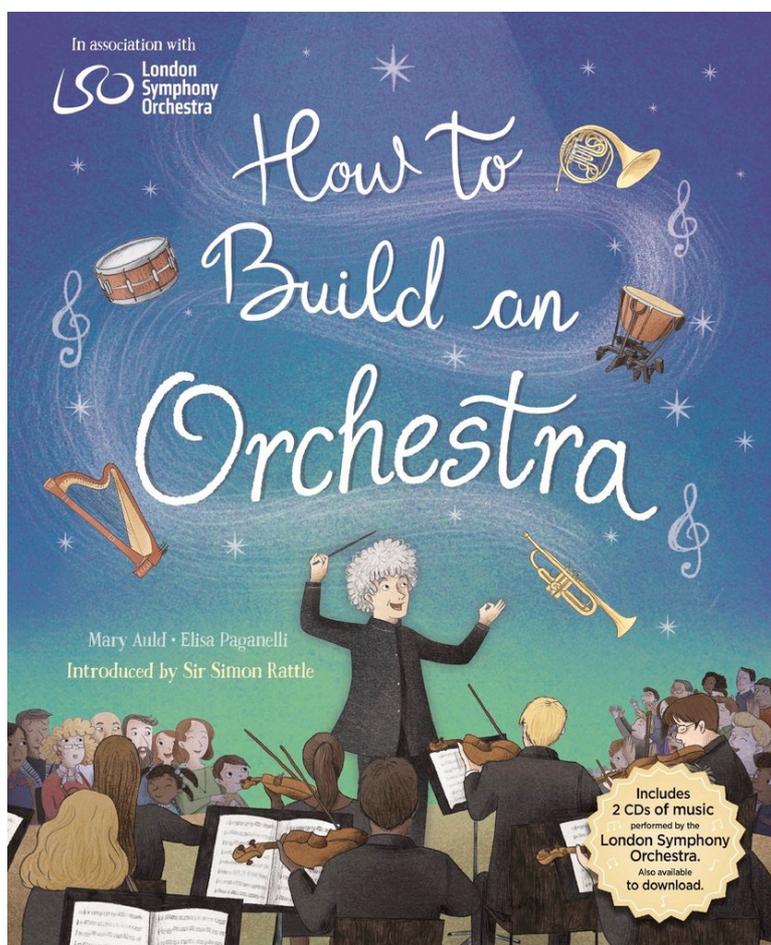
Get in touch

We would love to hear and see your versions of Bolero, especially those with 'unconventional' instruments! Send us your performances on twitter here or by tagging @londonsymphony.



© Copyright Rachel Leach London 2020

How to Build an Orchestra Book



Discover everything about orchestras and their instruments with this beautifully illustrated childrens' book, produced in association with Hachette Children's Group.

This wonderfully illustrated story follows a conductor who is auditioning each instrument for his orchestra. With accompanying CDs and downloadable music, follow our conductor on his journey and uncover every detail of an orchestra.

With pictograms of a full-size symphony orchestra and information on all of the music featured, as well as a foreword by Sir Simon Rattle, Music Director of the LSO, this is the must-have book on the orchestra and its instruments for children aged 7+.