

SCOTTISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Masterworks 2021 riSE and fLY

Learning Resource Pack

Created by Rachel Leach and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra

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SCOTTISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

INTRODUCTION

riSE and fLY

This Learning Resource Pack is designed to complement the Scottish Chamber Orchestra's filmed performance of *riSE and fLY* by Julia Wolfe and the accompanying video resources. The pack contains composing tasks for upper secondary school music pupils, and we suggest that you use it to continue exploring musical themes and concepts after having watched the concert.

You can find the full performance film and video resources at www.sco.org.uk/riseandfly

COMPOSING TASKS

The tasks outlined below adopt the same working method that Julia Wolfe used to create *riSE and fLY*. The tasks are designed to be flexible and work with whatever resources you have in the classroom or at home. They may be completed by pupils working individually or in groups, using body percussion, acoustic or electronic instruments, found objects, or computer.

Warm-up (based on the opening section 0'00 – 2'00)

- Stand in a circle
- Ask everyone to copy you and demonstrate long sounds such as rubbing the hands together, humming, a quiet rumble on the knees or with feet
- Ask everyone to copy a series of 'short, sharp' sounds such as a shout of 'hey!', a clap, a stamp, a quick loud rumble on the knees, a 'whoosh' sound
- Appoint two sensible leaders and ask them to stand on opposite sides of the circle
 - Leader 1 will make a continuous piece using long, soft sounds
 - Leader 2 will make random, infrequent short, sharp, loud sounds
 - The rest of the group will try to copy both leaders at the same time
 - The piece will end with everyone on a pulse, led by leader 1. This can be clapped, tapped, stamped – whatever leader 1 chooses
- Try this several times. After each attempt discuss what worked well and what could be changed. Keep switching leaders

Task 1: New York City Riffs and Ostinatos

(For a full explanation of riffs and ostinatos, watch our short 'concept' film)

- Ask your class to think of a sentence about New York City. You can also do this using a more familiar location or a related topic – something you are studying elsewhere, or a topic of the group's choosing. Encourage your students to create a long and complex sentence – this will make for a more interesting riff later. The more complex the words, the better the riff/ ostinato
- Play a steady pulse and ask your students to turn their words into a repeating rhythm

So, "New York City skyscrapers touch the sky, subways rumble below" becomes -



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Task 3: Cadenza

Again, it might help to watch our short 'concept' film on concerto form and cadenza before starting this activity or our interview with Colin Currie. Both feature examples of Wolfe's amazing body percussion cadenza

A cadenza is basically just a moment of musical showing off. Invite any willing students to 'freestyle' over a pulse provided for them by the rest of the class tapping their feet just as the orchestra do towards the end of the cadenza in *riSE and fLY* (at about 14'45 into our performance)

Taking it further

Structure - If you have tried all the tasks above, challenge your students to structure their ideas into one big piece. Like Julia Wolfe, they may choose to go for one through-composed movement, or you could encourage them to repeat sections to create a more 'classical' form such as **Binary** (A-B), **Ternary** (A-B-A) or **Rondo** (one recurring idea, as many contrasting ideas as you like: A-B-A-C-A etc)

Notation – Julia Wolfe's unique notation system is below. Perhaps your students would like to have a go at using it for their compositions, or maybe they would like to invent their own.

Instruments – all of the above tasks can of course be done using conventional instruments or 'street drums'. If using the former, encourage your musicians to choose from this 'toolkit' from Julia Wolfe's sound world:

- **Cluster chords**
- **Percussive sounds**
- **Extended techniques such as blowing without pitch, scraping strings heavily, glissando, pitch bend, tremolo**
- **Shimmering drones**

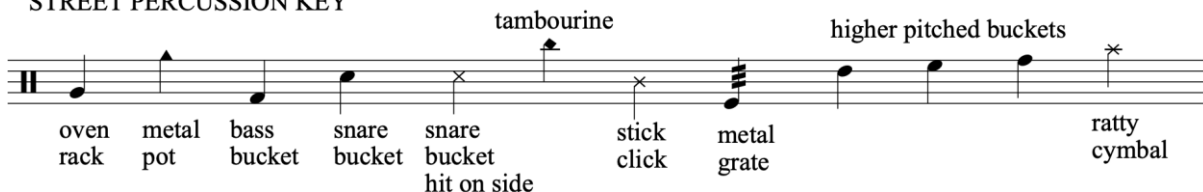
JULIA WOLFE'S NOTATION

BODY PERCUSSION KEY



A musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The staff contains eight notes with various symbols above them: a cluster of notes with an 'x' above, a note with an 'x' above, a note with a dot above, a note with a dot above, a note with a dot above, a note with a dot above, a note with a dot above, and a note with a dot above. Below the staff are labels for each note: rub hands together, blow into hands, chest, lap, clap, back of hand clap, snap (click), and foot stomp.

STREET PERCUSSION KEY



A musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The staff contains ten notes with various symbols above them: a note with a dot above, a note with a dot above, a note with a dot above, a note with a dot above, a note with an 'x' above, a note with a dot above, a note with an 'x' above, a note with a dot above, a note with a dot above, and a note with an 'x' above. Below the staff are labels for each note: oven rack, metal pot, bass bucket, snare bucket, snare bucket hit on side, tambourine, stick click, metal grate, higher pitched buckets, and ratty cymbal.