Hedwig's Theme

SLSO Learning Lab

ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

For Music Educators

For grades 3–6

Objectives

Students will:

- Recognize the themes in John Williams' *Hedwig's Theme*
- Create movements to illustrate different characteristics of each theme in *Hedwig's Theme*

Standards

Missouri Music Learning Standards

- MU: Cr2A.3-5a
- MU: Re7B.3-6a

Illinois Music Learning Standards

- MU: Cr2.1.3-5
- MU: Re7.1.3-5b

Materials

- Recordings of *Hedwig's Theme* by John Williams
- Video demonstration of a celesta
- Listening map in Google Slides (Download the Google Slides file to interact with the activity)

Vocabulary

- Composer
- Theme
- Soundtrack / Film Score
- Celesta

Requirements to satisfy learning objectives

- For each of the three musical themes, discuss the various elements of music, and create a list of descriptive words for each theme
- Select one musical element for each theme, it can be the same element or a different element for each theme, which students should illustrate in their student-created movements
- Share movements and discuss how the selected musical element was illustrated in the movement

Order and timings

Hedwig's Theme

- Theme 1 (0:00-1:36)
- Theme 2 (1:37-2:42)
- Theme 3 (2:43-3:06)
- Theme 2 (3:07-3:19)
- Theme 3 (3:20-3:38)
- Theme 2 (3:39-3:52)
- Theme 1 (3:53-end)

Assessment

Musical Themes (4-point rubric)

- Recognizes the three musical themes
- Illustrates the musical themes in order as they appear in the music
- Creates a movement highlighting at least one musical element from a selected theme
- Explains the element of music they selected to highlight in their movement and how they represented that element through movement

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Composer John Williams, best known for his movie soundtracks to films such as Star Wars and Harry Potter, has written some of the most iconic musical themes of our time.

Let's break this sentence down:

- A composer is someone who writes music.
- A soundtrack is music that accompanies a movie.
- A musical theme is a small bit of recognizable music within a larger piece. Listen to your favorite pop song. It probably has a chorus, the recurring part that you love to sing along to. That's kind of like a musical theme in "classical" music.



Musical Themes in *Hedwig's Theme*

One of the most recognizable musical themes in cinematic history is *Hedwig's Theme*, composed by John Williams for the movie *Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone*. The name suggests that the main musical theme represents Harry Potter's owl, Hedwig. We first hear the theme played on the celesta before it is passed around to different instruments of the orchestra.

A celesta, sometimes spelled celeste, looks like a miniature upright piano. When a key is pressed down, a hammer strikes a metal plate (a piano's hammer strikes a string). You might think it sounds like a music box.



Listen to the first theme from *Hedwig's Theme* (0:00-0:40).

Musical themes can represent different people, places, events, and even emotions. And composers aren't limited to just one musical theme per piece. For *Hedwig's Theme*, Williams composed three different musical themes.

Listen to the second musical theme (1:37-1:47). Some people say the second musical theme represents the magical world of Hogwarts. Do you agree? Why? If not, do you have a different idea?

Listen to the third musical theme (2:45-2:57). The third musical theme is often referred to as the "flying theme." Do you agree with this name? Why or why not? What makes the music sound like flying?

Musical Themes – Interactive Listening Map

Listen to the entire piece. Using the interactive Google Slides, put the theme cards in order as you hear them in the music. You will need to download the Google Slides in order to manipulate the theme cards.

Musical Themes – Creative Movement

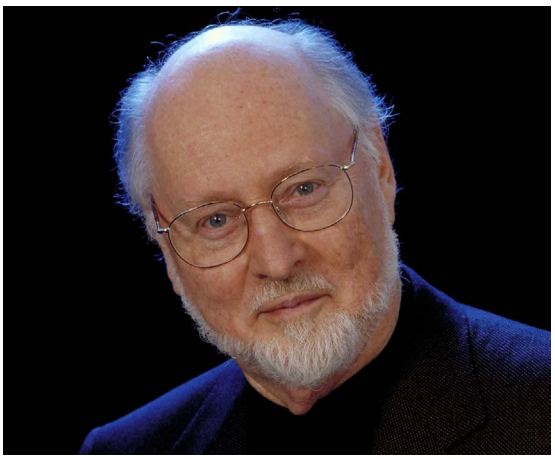
Create a short dance or other kind of movement to go along with each of the three musical themes.

- Theme 1: Listen (0:00-0:40)
- Theme 2: Listen (1:37-1:47)
- Theme 3: Listen (2:45-2:57)

Then listen to the entire piece again. Each time you hear one of the themes, perform the dance or movement you created for that theme.

What do you know about owls? Mark H.X. Glenshaw's blog is full of information about the owls in our very own Forest Park.





John Williams (b. 1932) is an American composer born in New York. While Williams also plays the piano and conducts, he is best known for composing music for movies. These compositions are called film scores or soundtracks. Among his many works, Williams wrote the film scores for *Star Wars*, *Jaws*, and the first three *Harry Potter* movies. John Williams has won many awards and is one of the most recognized composers of all time.