

Music Quiz for November SoR Newsletter

1. Q. Who composed this piece of music?

A. Ravel

2. Q. What country inspired this piece of music?

A. Spain

*Maurice Ravel's "Boléro" premiered in 1928, and is one of the last pieces he composed before illness forced him into retirement Boléro. While on vacation at St Jean-de-Luz, Ravel went to the piano and played a melody with one finger to his friend Gustave Samazeuilh, saying "Don't you think this theme has an insistent quality? I'm going to try and repeat it a number of times without any development, gradually increasing the orchestra as best I can." Much to his surprise, Boléro became Ravel's most famous composition, despite his prediction that most orchestras would refuse to play it.*

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3. Q. Who composed this piece of music? Borodin Symphony #2 "In the Steppes of Central Asia"

A. Borodin

4. Q. What place inspired this piece of music?

A. Steppes of Central Asia

*In the Steppes of Central Asia had been intended to be presented to celebrate the silver anniversary of the reign of Emperor Alexander II of Russia, who had done much to expand the Russian Empire eastward. The intended production never occurred, but the work has been a concert favorite since its first performance, on 20 April 1880. The work depicts an interaction between Russians and Asians in the steppe lands of Central Asia. A caravan of Central Asians is crossing the desert under the protection of Russian troops. The opening theme, representing the Russians, is heard first; after it, the strains of an ornamented eastern melody on English horn, representing the Asians. The melodies eventually combine contrapuntally. Amid these two ethnic melodies Borodin inserts a "traveling" theme in pizzicato that represents the plodding hoofs of the horses and camels. At the end, only the Russian theme is heard.*

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5. Q. Who composed this piece of music? Schumann Symphony #3 "Rhenish"

A. Schumann\*

6. What river inspired this piece of music?

A. Rhine

*Symphony No. 3 in E♭ major, Op. 97, also known as the Rhenish, is the last symphony composed by Robert Schumann (1810–1856). He was inspired to write the symphony after a trip to the Rhineland with his wife Clara. This journey was a happy and peaceful trip, which felt to them as if they were on a pilgrimage. He incorporated elements of the journey and portrayed other experiences from his life in the music. It premiered on 6 February 1851 in Düsseldorf, conducted by Schumann himself, and was received with mixed reviews, "ranging from praise without qualification to bewilderment". However, according to historians, members of the audience applauded between every movement, especially at the end of the work when the orchestra joined them in congratulating*

Schumann by shouting "hurrah!".

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7. Q. Who composed this piece of music? Gershwin An American in Paris

A. Gershwin

8. Q. What city inspired this piece of music?

A. Paris

*An American in Paris is a jazz-influenced orchestral piece by American composer George Gershwin first performed in 1928. In this piece, Gershwin incorporates aspects of Ravel and Debussy unusual composition styles, and musically portrays his impressions from his stay in Paris. The piece evokes the sights and energy of the French capital in the Années folles.*

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9. Q. Who composed this piece of music? **Copland** Appalachian Spring section 7 "Simple Gifts"

A. Copeland

10. Q. What place inspired this piece of music?

A. Appalachians

*Copland's popular orchestral suite "Appalachian Spring" originated as a ballet, which tells of 19th-century American pioneers building a new farmhouse. The suite is packed full of all-American tunes, including a Shaker song, **Simple Gifts**. You might recognize the tune – it's the basis of the popular hymn **Lord of the Dance**. The tune was written in 1848 and is of Shaker origin. Several Shaker manuscripts indicate that this is a "dancing song" or a "quick dance". "Turning" is a common theme in Christian theology, but the references to "turning" in the last two lines have also been identified as dance instructions. When the traditional dance is performed properly, each dancer ends up where they started, "come 'round right". These are the lyrics:*

*'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free  
'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,  
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,  
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.  
When true simplicity is gained,  
To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed,  
To turn, turn will be our delight,  
Till by turning, turning we come 'round right.*

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11. Q. Who composed this piece of music? Sibelius Finlandia Opus 26

A. Sibelius

12. What place inspired this music?

A. Finland\*

*Finlandia, Op. 26, is a tone poem by the Finnish composer Jean Sibelius. It was written in 1899 and revised in 1900. The piece was composed as a covert protest against increasing censorship from the Russian Empire. Most of the piece is taken up with rousing and turbulent music, evoking the national struggle of the Finnish people. Towards the end, a calm comes over the orchestra, and the serene and melodic **Finlandia Hymn** is heard. Often incorrectly cited as a traditional folk melody, the Hymn section is of Sibelius' own creation. It is also sung as a **Christian hymn** (Be Still, My Soul, Hail, Festal Day, in Italian evangelical churches: Veglia al mattino, and was the national anthem of the short-lived African state of Biafra (Land of the Rising Sun). In Wales the tune is used for Lewis Valentine's patriotic hymn Gweddi Dros Gymru (A Prayer for Wales).*