

John Williams, conductor

Kentucky Learning Goals and Academic Expectations

1.14 Students make sense of ideas and communicate ideas with music.

2.23 Students analyze their own and others' artistic products and performances using accepted standards.

1.4 Students make sense of the various messages to which they listen.

John Williams (1932-Present)

John Williams was born into a musical family on Long Island, New York in 1932. After his family moved to Los Angeles, Williams studied music at the University of California-Los Angeles. Later, he studied piano at the Julliard School in New York.

Williams wrote the music for several television programs, in-

cluding *Gilligan's Island* and *Lost in Space*. He has written the music for over eighty movies and has been nominated for an Oscar™ award for best film score more than forty times! Some of his most popular music was written for all of the *Star Wars* movies, the *Indiana Jones* movies, the *Home Alone* movies, the *Harry Potter* movies, and many others. Williams won

his third Oscar™ for the best original music score for *Star Wars* in 1977.

He also has composed concert pieces, including symphonies and several concertos.

From 1980 to 1993 Williams was musical director and conductor of the Boston Pops Orchestra.

The Story of Star Wars

Star Wars was released in 1977 by writer/director George Lucas. The story is set in the future in a galaxy far, far away, but it employs a commonly used theme - the struggle between good and evil.

The Force is a power that can be used for good or evil (the dark side). Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia, the Jedi knights, with the

help of Han Solo, win over the dark side and Darth Vader. Each *Star Wars* film begins with words going across the screen. This is a short story that tells us what is going to happen in the movie. "A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...." is the line that appears first in the opening for each film. This can be compared to the fairy tale opening of, "Once upon a

time, in a faraway land..."



The Music of Star Wars Main Theme

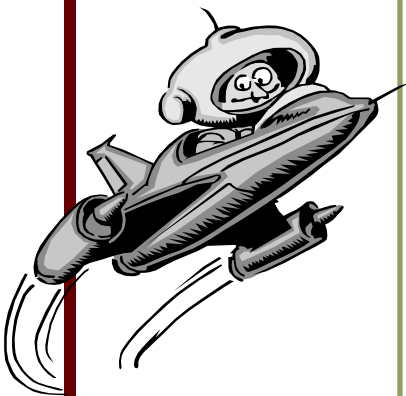
John Williams' main theme from *Star Wars* is a powerful composition for full orchestra. He uses all the instruments of the orchestra, especially brass and percussion, to make the music very dramatic. It helps to set the mood of intergalactic space travel in the movie.

In the music of *Star Wars*, John Williams used a technique that has been around for a very long time. He used a special melody or rhythm, or certain instruments to represent a character, place or mood in the story. Musicians call these segments of music "leitmotifs" or themes. Sometimes the music will change a little, but the character, place or mood can still be heard in the music.

In *Star Wars*, there are different themes that match the different characters. The first one you will hear is called the Main Theme. It represents Luke Skywalker and sounds very majestic. Here is what the music looks like:



Another theme that is heard is the Rebel Fanfare. This represents the Rebel Alliance. This theme is very loud and brassy. Can you hear the brass instruments? Here is what the *Rebel Fanfare* looks like:



The Music of Star Wars (continued)

Another main musical theme is the innocent and romantic music for Princess Leia. Here is what Princess Leia's theme looks like:



Williams Activities - Themes to Represent Characters

1. Name a familiar character, for example from: *Spongebob Squarepants*, *Sesame Street* or the *Rugrats*, and ask the students if any songs come to mind. Chances are they will be able to sing or hum the theme to one of these characters.

2. Explain to the students that composers will often use a particular piece of music when they want us to think of a certain character or event that is taking place.

When a composer does this, he/she writes a theme for that character. Ask how many of the students have seen or heard of *ET*, *Harry Potter*, or *Star Wars*. Tell them that they will be listening to some music by the composer, John Williams, who wrote the music used in these movies.

3. Play the very beginning of *Star Wars*, Main Title, (Track 25) and see if the students recognize the music as being related to *Star Wars*. If they do not, explain to them that they will be listening to music that was used in the movie.

Tell the students that when John Williams wrote the music for *Star Wars*, he wrote themes to represent three different characters: Luke Skywalker, The Rebel Alliance (the bad guys), and Princess Leia.

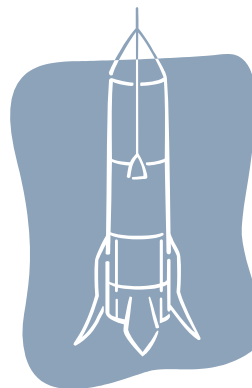
4. Play *Star Wars*, Main Title, (Track 25). As the music is playing, identify the character that each theme represents. After listening, generate a list of musical characteristics found in the music. These may include loud, soft, fast, slow, the direction of the melodic line, style of music they hear, and instruments used. Discuss which musical characteristics would best fit the individual characters.

5. Distribute copies of the "Who Do You Hear" worksheet (provided on page 28). Tell the students that you are going to play the themes that were heard in *Star Wars*. As they listen to the music, call out a number. The students should circle the character whose theme is playing when you call the number.

*The following themes corre-

spond with the answer sheet. Call the numbers at the following times on the audio CD:

1. CD time 3:29 - 4:05 Princess Leia
2. CD time 2:15- 2:23 Rebel Alliance (Stormtrooper)
3. CD time 0:17 - 0:40 Luke Skywalker



West Virginia Content Standards and Objectives

Music; Standard 2: Exploring (MU.S.2) Students will: read and notate music; listen to, analyze, and describe music; and evaluate music and music performances.

Standard 4: Relating (MU.S.4) Students will: understand relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts; and understand music in relation to history and culture.

Ohio Academic Content Standard Benchmarks

Music; Analyzing and Responding By the end of the K-4 program:

- A. Identify and demonstrate elements of music using developmentally appropriate music vocabulary.
- B. Identify the sounds of a variety of instruments including orchestra, band and classroom instruments.
- C. Discuss and evaluate individual and group music performance.

Valuing Music/Aesthetic Reflection By the end of the K-4 program:

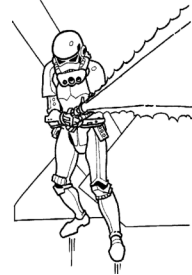
- C. Demonstrate how music communicates meaning of text, feelings, moods or images, and influences personal preferences.

Connection, Relationships and Applications By the end of the K-4 program:

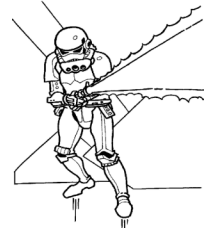
- A. Explain ways that music interrelates with other arts disciplines and with various disciplines outside the arts.

Williams - Who Do You Hear Worksheet

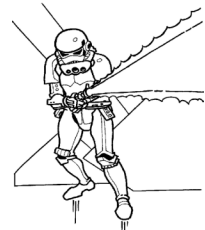
1.



2.

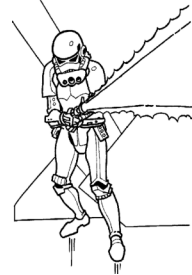


3.

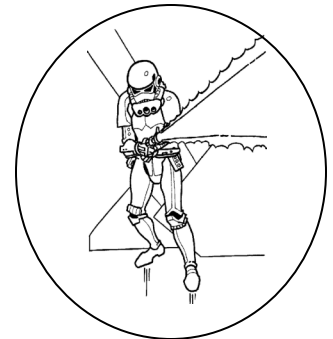


Williams - Who Do You Hear Worksheet (Answer Key)

1.



2.



3.

