

# Bouree from Water Music by Handel

Teacher Resources

Activities in this pack:



Information



Activity 3 **Create**



Activity 1 **Listen**



Activity 4 **Move**



Activity 2 **Move**



Activity 5 **Learn**

## Introduction

### Bourée

Composer: George Frederick Handel

Genre: Program Music

#### Learning intentions

By completing activities in this resource, students will:

- Listen to, recognise and talk about a well-known example of orchestral music
- Develop understanding of how a composer uses the elements of music to create meaning
- Manipulate the elements of music to create music

### Introduction

A bourrée is a lively dance that originated in France with two main beats in a bar.

Bourrée is from a collection of three suites composed by Handel that are known as The Water Music.

In 1717 the three suites were performed for King George I on a barge on the River Thames in London. King George I listened from another barge up ahead on the river. After this, the suites were forever known as the Water Music.





## What did you hear?

Focus Skills and Elements: Listening, Tempo, Dynamics and Expression, Timbre

Circle the answer to complete the sentence

The speed(tempo) of the music

- a) stays the same
- b) changes

The volume(dynamics) of the music is

- a) loud
- b) soft
- c) loud and soft

The notes are played mostly

- s) short and detached
- b) smoothly and connected

Write 2 adjectives that describe the mood of the music:

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This piece is based upon a tune that is heard three times. What instruments play it the third time? (Hint it is either the same as No 1 or No 2)

- a) Played by strings and wind instruments
- b) Played by wind instruments only
- c) -----





## Dance a Bourrée

A bourrée was a courtly dance. That meant it was often danced by the upper classes or royalty. It was not a folk dance but a refined aristocratic dance. It had 2 strong beats in a bar and was danced with quick, skipping steps.

- How does the music of Handel's Bourrée suggest light skipping steps?
- In pairs create 4 different movements that might be used to dance a modern Bourrée.
- Repeat each movement eight times for 8 beats before changing to the next movement. You should get through your 4 movements (32 beats) for each statement of the tune. Try with the music:

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN](#)





## Meet the instruments

Focus Skills and Elements: Methods of sound production, timbre

The second section is played by oboes and bassoons. They are known as double reed instruments because the mouthpiece you blow through to make the sound is made of 2 reeds bound together. [Introduction to the Oboe video can be found here.](#)

### Make a double reed out of a plastic drinking straw

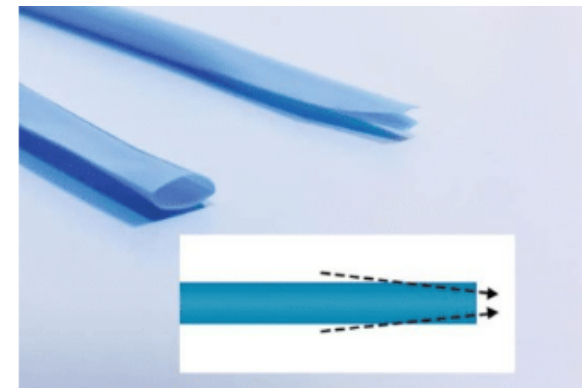
Supplies: Plastic straws, Scissors

Directions:

1. Take your straw and use your fingers to flatten down the end, creating a flat section of about 2-3cm in length.
2. Once the end of the straw is flat, take your scissors and make two cuts across the flat section. Cut diagonally in both directions to create an upside-down V-shape. Your straw should now resemble a sharpened pencil, coming to a point on one end.
3. Now it's time to play your reed! To make a sound, the reeds need freedom to vibrate, so you must place it in your mouth past your lips and teeth.
4. If you're having trouble making a sound, try flattening down the pointed edge of the straw, squeezing hard with your fingers.
5. Experiment by cutting your straw to a shorter length and noticing if and how the sound changes!

Extension Challenge:

6. Now try cutting tiny holes in the body of the straw—be sure to only cut on one side, not all the way through. Blow through your reed while covering the holes with your fingertips. Now lift different fingertips off the holes and notice how the sound changes!





## Conduct a Bourée

Focus Skills and Elements: Rhythm, Tempo, Dynamics

The bourrée has 2 beats in a bar. To show 2 beats in a bar a conductor would use their right hand to make the following pattern in the air, 1 being the down action and 2 being the up action:

Note that it is not just a straight up and down pattern but there is a little kick out to the side.

- Ask the class to use their right hand to show this beat pattern.
- Practice making the pattern big to show loud and smaller to show soft.
- Now listen to the piece again and conduct in time to the beat, making sure you show the difference between LOUD and SOFT passages.





## Cross-Curricular Activities

- This piece of music was written in 1717. What was Australia like in 1717?
- England is known for its pomp and ceremony—we just saw a coronation where people came together from all over the world to celebrate the crowning of King Charles III. What sorts of activities occur when a community celebrates together?
- The Water Music was first performed on the River Thames. Where is the Thames and why do you think it is so important for the city it flows through?
- The Water Music was performed for the King as he sailed up and down the river on his barge. It was before radios, so the only way the King could have entertainment was to bring the performers on a boat. Image what this scene would have looked like and draw your impression of the occasion.

