

# TRINITY LABAN FAMILY CONCERT: FROM BLACKHEATH TO BAGHDAD Scheherazade by Rimsky-Korsakov

Home Education Resource Pack

Concert Presenter: Lucy Drever  
Conductor: Davide Levi



# INTRODUCTION

This Resource Pack was originally produced for families attending our concert 'From Blackheath to Baghdad' at Blackheath Halls on Sunday 15 March 2020. During the concert, our presenter Lucy Drever guided the audience through a symphonic suite called **Scheherazade** written by a composer called **Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov**.

You will get the most out of this resource if you listen to our specially created playlist, 'From Blackheath to Baghdad', which can be found here:

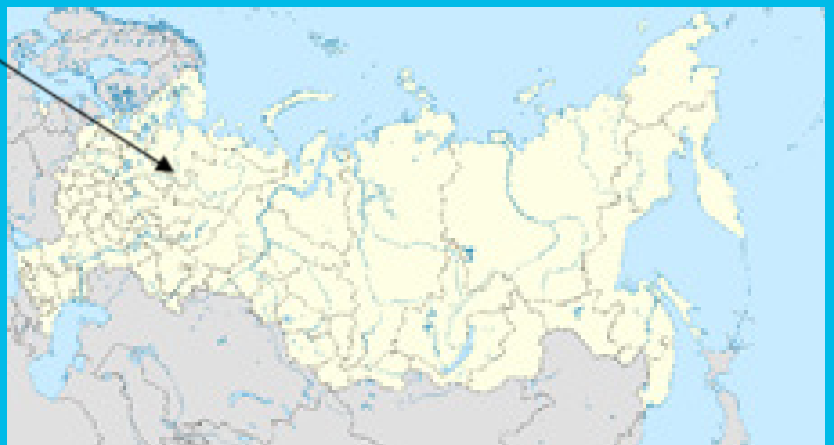
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0aA91VvQJbC6kzomhnm-VK?si=AE0MxloeQMu9DgnFsZL8pQ>

Where relevant, we have selected sections of the tracks on the playlist which are of particular interest. You can find these extracts highlighted in bold throughout this resource pack.

## WHO WAS RIMSKY-KORSAKOV?

**Pronounced: Rim-skee Kors-a-kov**

- He dreamed of travelling around the world to exotic locations
- He had a full-time job in the Russian Military
- He wrote music for his job
- He loved folk songs and fairytales (especially those from Russia!) and this piece of music is a great showcase of this passion
- He was born in 1844 in Tikhvin, Russia



- Do you know any other composers? Why not have a listen to some other composers who are influenced by the folk songs of their country? (Some examples to listen to are George Gershwin 'Rhapsody in Blue' (USA), Grace Williams 'Penillion' (Wales) and George Enescu 'Romanian Rhapsodies' (Romania). You can also try 'Romanian Folk Dances' by Béla Bartók and 'Cantus Arcticus' by Einojuhani Rautavaara.
- What is your favorite fairytale? Have a think; what kind of music do you imagine would go with it to really tell the story?
- **You can hear recordings from all of the above on our 'Blackheath to Baghdad' playlist:**  
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0aA91V-vQJbC6kzomhnmVK?si=AE0Mxloe-QMu9DgnFsZL8pQ>
- Fairytales and stories are often used as inspiration for music. Some examples of this in classical music include:
  - 'Cinderella' by Sergei Prokofiev
  - 'Hansel and Gretel' by Engelbert Humperdinck
  - **You can also find excerpts from the above on our 'Blackheath to Baghdad' playlist**
  - 'The Water Goblin' and 'The Wild Dove' by Antonín Dvořák. (There is another resource for both of these pieces on the Trinity Laban website)
- Rimsky-Korsakov was very well known for his orchestration. The orchestration of a piece of music is when you decide which instrument, or which instruments play which part of the music. For example, it might be a little unusual for a huge section of brass instruments to play a part of the music that represented a lone bird soaring through the sky, and it might be a bit odd to have a solo flute representing an angry army marching towards a battle.

## SCHEHERAZADE BY RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

- There are two main characters in this story: An angry Sultan who has many wives, and one of those wives who is called Scheherazade. Scheherazade is who this piece of music is named after.
- The Sultan finds all of his wives untrustworthy and annoying, so the day after he marries them... he has them killed!
- His wife Scheherazade comes up with a cunning plan; she plans to tell the Sultan part of a different story every evening that keeps him on the edge of his seat — so he cannot get rid of her as he wouldn't hear the rest of the tale!
- The titles of the four movements are some of the different tales that Scheherazade tells — stories about the sea, a handsome prince, love and a big party!
- The music often reflects the dialogue between the Sultan and Scheherazade- quite often you will hear Scheherazade pop up or you will hear the Sultan gruffly burst back into the music.
- How does it end? Who gets the last word?

All the timings below refer to tracks on our 'From Blackheath to Baghdad' playlist: <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0aA91VvQJbC6kzomhmmVK?si=AE0MxloeQMu9DgnFsZL8pQ>

Answer True or False to the following statements:

The character of Scheherazade is mostly portrayed by the wind section:  
You can hear Scheherazade's theme on 'Scheherazade: The Sea & Sinbad's Ship' from 0'43 — 1'30

TRUE

FALSE

The Sultan is mostly portrayed by the violins:  
You can hear The Sultan's theme on 'Scheherazade: The Sea & Sinbad's Ship' from the opening until 0'21

TRUE

FALSE

The music creates an image of the sea all the way through:  
You can hear the sound of the sea in the lower strings from 1'33 onwards in 'Scheherazade: The Sea & Sinbad's Ship'

TRUE

FALSE

There is only one percussion instrument involved in this piece of music:  
You can hear the percussion in 'The Festival at Baghdad' from 1'15 until the end of this track

TRUE

FALSE

Part of the conductor's role is to indicate how fast and slow the orchestra should play:

TRUE

FALSE

The composer, Rimsky-Korsakov, wanted people who listened to this piece of music to follow the story exactly and to not make up their own ideas of what it was about:

TRUE

FALSE

The piece — like a lot of orchestral music — is structured into different **movements**, like chapters in a book:

- **Movement 1:** The Sea and Sinbad's Ship
- **Movement 2:** The Kalandar Prince
- **Movement 3:** The Young Prince and the Young Princess
- **Movement 4:** Festival at Baghdad. The Sea. The Ship breaks against a cliff.

Each of the two main characters have their own **musical theme**. A musical theme is a collection of notes that, in this case, represents a leading character from our story. Listen out for them!

Describe **Scheherazade's** theme in two words:  
**You can hear Scheherazade's theme on 'Scheherazade: The Sea & Sinbad's Ship' from 0'43 — 1'30**

.....

Describe the **Sultan's** theme in two words:  
**You can hear The Sultan's theme on 'Scheherazade: The Sea & Sinbad's Ship' from the opening until 0'21**

.....

Describe the music that represents the **Young Prince and Young Princess** falling in love:  
**You can hear them falling in love on 'The Young Prince'; listen out for the wind flourishes towards the end (2'50 — 3'05) which are repeated by the violins straight after**

.....



The composer also uses different **instruments** to represent the characters and events in the story.

**Circle the correct instruments — sometimes the answer is more than one instrument!**

What has the composer used to represent Scheherazade?  
(0'43 — 1'30 in 'The Sea & Sinbad's Ship')



Which instruments has the composer used to represent the Sultan  
(the opening until 0'21 of 'The Sea & Sinbad's Ship')



There are a few woodwind solos at the beginning of 'The Tale of the Kalandar Prince' (0'45 — 1'52).

Circle any instruments below that have a solo.



What instrument makes a sudden appearance as the angry Sultan?  
(the opening until 0'54 of 'The Fight')



Who has the last word in the entire piece?  
(listen to 'The Triumph of Scheherazade')



# ANSWERS

Answer True or False to the following statements:

The character of Scheherazade is mostly portrayed by the wind section:

**TRUE**

FALSE

**Scheherazade is mostly portrayed by the string section.**

The Sultan is mostly portrayed by the violins:

**TRUE**

FALSE

**The Sultan is mostly portrayed by the wind and brass sections.**

The music creates an image of the sea all the way through:

**TRUE**

FALSE

**The music creates an image of the sea at the beginning and towards the end of the piece. The music of the second movement portrays a prince, and the music of the third movement portrays a young prince and princess falling in love.**

There is only one percussion instrument involved in this piece of music:

**TRUE**

FALSE

**There are many percussion instruments involved in this piece. The percussion instruments are timpani, bass drum, snare drum, cymbals, triangle, tambourine and tam-tam.**

Part of the conductor's role is to indicate how fast and slow the orchestra should play:

TRUE

**FALSE**

**The conductor is also in charge of making decisions on other things, including how loudly or quietly each section or soloist should play.**

The composer, Rimsky-Korsakov, wanted people who listened to this piece of music to follow the story exactly and to not make up their own ideas of what it was about:

**TRUE**

FALSE

**Even though there is a story behind this piece of music, Rimsky-Korsakov did not want his audience to only associate the music with the title of each movement. He said "...I meant these hints [themes] to direct but slightly the hearer's fancy on the path which my own fancy had travelled, and to leave more minute and particular conceptions to the will and mood of each."**

# ANSWERS

Each of the two main characters have their own **musical theme**. A musical theme is a collection of notes that, in this case, represents a leading character from our story. Listen out for them!

Describe **Scheherazade's** theme in two words:

**Some words you could use are delicate, pretty or dream-like.**

Describe the **Sultan's** theme in two words:

**Some words you could use are angry, loud, bossy or serious**

Describe the music that represents the **Young Prince and Young Princess** falling in love:

**Some words you could use are gentle, sweet or romantic.**

Answer the following questions by circling the correct instruments — sometimes the answer is more than one instrument!

What has the composer used to represent Scheherazade?

**Answer: The violin**

Which instruments has the composer used to represent the Sultan?

**Answer: The French horn and the trumpet**

There are a few woodwind solos at the beginning of the second movement (The Kalandar Prince.) Circle any instruments below that have a solo.

**Answer: The bassoon and the oboe**

What instrument makes a sudden appearance as the angry Sultan?

**Answer: The bass drum makes a sudden appearance as the gruff Sultan in the fourth movement.**

Who has the last word in the entire piece?

**Answer: The violin - Scheherazade has the final word!**

## Photography Credits:

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