

BOB'S FOUR FILTERS

FROM YOUR WINDSOR SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

wso #MYWSO



WHO THE HECK IS BOB?

BOB FRANZ IS MAESTRO ROBERT FRANZ'S FATHER. BOB DIDN'T KNOW A LOT ABOUT INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC WHEN MAESTRO FRANZ STARTED CONDUCTING, SO MAESTRO DEvised THE FOUR FILTERS TO HELP HIS DAD LISTEN ACTIVELY AND GET MORE FROM AN ORCHESTRAL PERFORMANCE.



USING THE FOUR FILTERS

Bob's Four Filters can help you figure out what is happening on stage during an instrumental concert, but can also be used to listen to recordings, and for other types of music that you want to understand.

There's no right or wrong way to use Bob's Four Filters, and you might even be able to think of other filters that help you listen. Here are some things to try:

- Listen for one filter for one minute, then switch to another one
- Try to hear two filters at the same time and think about how they fit into one another
- Identify contrasts within a filter, such as changing rhythms
- Consider the science behind what you are hearing (such as vibrations and wavelengths)
- Think about what the composer might be trying to convey using the different filters

FILTER # 1: MELODY

We usually associate melody with a tune that can be sung. In choral music, it is often sung by the soprano section, but in the orchestra, you might have to hunt for it when it isn't being played by the highest pitched instruments.

Modern composers don't always follow "traditional" rules for melodies. Their melodies may not be easy to sing along with.

Is it harder to hear melodies like this?

Why do melodic phrases stand out to us? What makes them melodies?

DID YOU KNOW? In Middle English, the word "melody" means "sweet music"

FILTER #2: RHYTHM

Rhythm is one of the earliest and most primal forms of music. From heartbeats to drumbeats, we feel rhythm at our cores. In music it is often easiest to hear in bass lines and drums but it moves easily to other instruments.

Does the rhythm of a piece feel steady or unsteady?

Is the rhythm fast or slow? Are the notes long or short?

What instrument is playing the rhythm? Does the rhythm change to another instrument?

DID YOU KNOW? The earliest drum known to researchers dates back 37,000 years

FILTER #3: TEXTURE

We usually think of texture as something we can touch – soft or hard, smooth or rough. Composers use layers of sound to create texture in music using pitch, timbre, dynamics, and more. Music can be thick (lots of instruments and sounds at once) or thin (played on only a few, or even just one, instruments).

Can you identify the elements making up the texture of a song?

Is the texture harmonic?

Does the texture mimic a particular soundscape (such as the sounds of nature)?

DID YOU KNOW? The word “soundscape” was first used in music by Canadian composer Murray Schafer

FILTER #4: VISUAL

Some people think that going to the symphony means just enjoying the sounds, but there's also a lot to look at. The movement of the conductor and the musicians is like a dance that stays in one place, and the Capitol Theatre is a beautiful backdrop

How does the movement of the musicians change the music?

Do all the bows in the string section move up and down in unison?

How do the percussionists move compared to other musicians?

DID YOU KNOW? Most orchestra auditions are "blind": players perform behind a screen so the listeners can't tell their race or gender.

FOUR FILTERS, ONE PERFORMANCE

When listening to the WSO perform, think about how the Four Filters are working together to produce what you hear.

What is the composer trying to say by employing melody, texture and rhythm?

Do you think your reaction to the music is what they were going for? Why or why not?

TEAMWORK!

THE ORCHESTRA IS LIKE A COMMUNITY - PEOPLE OF VERY DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS WORKING TOGETHER TO CREATE SOMETHING. EACH MUSICIAN HAS A SPECIAL JOB AND CONTRIBUTES TO THE COMMON GOAL OF MAKING MUSIC COME ALIVE. EACH INSTRUMENTAL FAMILY IS QUITE DIFFERENT IN TEXTURE AND SOUND. WORKING TOGETHER, THEY CAN PRODUCE ALL THE MUSICAL SOUNDS THE COMPOSER WROTE.



AT THE CAPITOL: CONCERT ETIQUETTE

Just like going to a school assembly or to any public event, there are rules that must be followed to make sure that everyone has a great time:

1. **Listen actively!** Your ears don't work if your mouth is open.
2. **Turn off your phone!** It's very distracting when trying to work on stage to see phones shining in the audience (this goes for teachers and chaperones, too!).
3. **Use the washroom before or after the concert!** These concerts are only 45-minutes in length and it is very distracting to your neighbours if you are trying to climb over them to get out of your row.



WHEN THE LIGHTS GO DOWN

Here's what to expect when your concert starts:

- The musicians will be on stage and might be practicing or moving around. They will sit down when it's time to start, and the lights in the theatre will be turned down
- The first new person to enter the stage is the **Concertmaster**. Applaud when they enter! In an orchestra, the **Concertmaster** is always a first violin player that sits to the left of the conductor. They are responsible for tuning, making sure that the string instrument bows all move in the same direction, and, if there is a piece with no conductor, leading the whole orchestra
- The **Concertmaster** will tune the orchestra. The WSO's tuning note is called **A-441**, and is played by the oboe. The other instruments will try to match the note exactly to get in tune
- After tuning, the **Conductor** will come on stage. Applaud again!
- Applaud at the end of each piece the orchestra plays (if you're not sure when to applaud, wait for the conductor to turn around and bow). This is a way of thanking the orchestra.

TUNING WITH A-441

When musicians tune their instruments, they are adjusting the instrument itself so that the orchestra all plays at the same pitch. Watch the musicians as they tune: you'll see string players turning pegs at the top of their instrument to tighten or loosen strings; you'll see brass players pulling out and pushing in pieces of tubing to change the length of the instrument; you'll see woodwind players pulling out or pushing in their joints to change the length of the instrument; you'll see the timpanist lean very close to listen to each drum – they are adjusting the tension of the drumhead using a foot pedal!

Why does the orchestra use A-441 to tune?

A is the orchestra's favourite tuning note, because every string instrument has an **A** string. The number tells us how many vibrations per second the note has. The WSO uses **A-441**, which vibrates 441 times every second, but some orchestras use **A-440** to tune, and some use **A-442**. So even though these notes are all **A**, **440** is very slightly lower (fewer vibrations) and **442** is very slightly higher (more vibrations).

Why does the oboe give the tuning note?

In the early days of orchestras, there were only strings. Oboes were the first wind instruments that were added, and it was easier to hear them over all the strings, so they had the responsibility of playing the tuning note. Today, this has become a tradition, even though there are machines and apps that can help tune (and the oboe player often uses one to make sure their note is correct!).

NOW THAT YOU KNOW

Classical music can sometimes feel a little difficult to understand. But when you arrive at the Capitol Theatre for your field trip, using Bob's Four Filters can help demystify what's going on.

Thanks Bob!



SEE YOU AT THE CAPITOL!

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