



High School Open Rehearsals



BSO High School Open Rehearsal Mozart Sinfonia concertante February 5, 2026

Educator's Guide

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High School Open Rehearsals



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Introduction

About the BSO

The Boston Symphony Orchestra gave its inaugural concert in 1881, and the rest is [history](#). Led by Music Director Andris Nelsons since 2014, today the BSO reaches millions of listeners through not only its concert performances in Boston and at Tanglewood, but also via educational and community programs, radio, television, recordings, and tours.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra's mission is to foster and maintain an organization dedicated to the making of music consonant with the highest aspirations of the musical art, creating performance, and providing educational and training programs at the highest level of excellence.

High School Open Rehearsals: An overview

High School Open Rehearsals invite students in grades 8-12 to sit in on a BSO rehearsal, offering a unique glimpse into the inner workings of a world-class orchestra.

- Groups may participate in an interactive pre-concert interview from 9:30-10:00am.
- The rehearsal starts at 10:30am, when students will get an intimate look at the rehearsal process assisted by the Conductor Cam, a live recording that lets the audience see the conductor from the orchestra's point of view.
- High School Open Rehearsals are scheduled from 10:30am-1:00pm, but they may end before 1:00pm. The orchestra typically takes a short break about midway through the rehearsal.



Symphony Hall code of conduct

- Please enter quietly, keeping noise to a minimum as you enter the hall and find your seats.
- If entering during the pre-rehearsal musician interview or after the rehearsal has started, enter silently so as not to disrupt the pre-rehearsal program.
- Remain seated at all times during rehearsal while musicians are performing.
- Guests may not interfere with performers or events in any way.
- If you must leave before the orchestra's break or the rehearsal's end, please follow the instructions of the BSO usher staff to minimize disruption.
- Mobile phones should be silent and put away during the musician's interview and rehearsal.
- Photography and video are not permitted during the musician interview or rehearsal but are allowed during breaks and after the rehearsal.
- If possible, please wait for a piece to finish before leaving your seats.
- Symphony Hall has a zero-tolerance policy for bullying or harassment of any kind, including but not limited to harassment based on race, national origin, gender identity, gender presentation, sexual orientation, age, ability, religion, and citizenship. Harassment includes but is not limited to stalking, verbal or physical intimidation, offensive verbal comments, physical assault and/or battery, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome physical attention.
- If you are made to feel uncomfortable or unsafe, please immediately report any concerns to Symphony Hall staff or security personnel so appropriate action can be taken. Such acts of harassment or discrimination may lead to ejection from the premises.
- Please remember that this is a functional rehearsal for professional musicians. We appreciate you honoring these guidelines to respect the musicians and your fellow audience members.

For more information about the Symphony Hall code of conduct, check out www.bso.org.

High School Open Rehearsals



Prohibited items

- Outside food and beverages (except bottled water), including leftovers and restaurant to-go bags. If food is required due to a medical condition, please see security or another staff member for accommodations.
- Interchangeable lens camera, video, and/or audio recording equipment
- Flashlights and laser pointers
- Illegal substances
- Demonstration signs
- Noise-making devices and fireworks
- All weapons, including firearms, ammunition, knives, swords, scissors, pepper spray, and any dangerous items

All guests will be screened prior to entering Symphony Hall. Items that are confiscated may not be returned. If you are unsure about an item, please do not bring it with you.

SIGN





Audience etiquette

Here are some key points on **symphony etiquette** to keep in mind when attending a BSO performance.

Arrival: Arrive on time. Latecomers may have to wait until a suitable break in the program to be seated.

Clapping: Wait until the conductor lowers their hands to clap and avoid clapping between movements of a piece.

Dress code: Adhere to your school's dress code policy when attending with your school group.

Silence your devices: Ensure that your phone and other electronic devices are silenced or turned off before the performance begins.

Respectful behavior: Remain seated and maintain silence during the performance. Avoid talking, reaching over the balconies, or making noise that could disturb others.

These guidelines will help ensure a pleasant experience for you and your fellow concertgoers.





About the conductor, Anna Handler



Anna Handler

The German Colombian conductor and pianist Anna Handler has been performing on stages and in concert halls around the world since her acclaimed debut at the Salzburg Festival in 2022. Beginning in fall 2025, she is Kapellmeister of the Deutsche Oper Berlin, where she leads 11 opera performances in the 2025-26 season. Since 2024 she has been an assistant conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, appointed by BSO Music Director Andris Nelsons. She made her BSO debut at Tanglewood in August 2025 and makes her subscription series debut with the orchestra at Boston's Symphony Hall in the 2025-26 season.

In the 2024-25 season she led the Boston Symphony Chamber Players in Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring* in Cambridge and at Tanglewood. A Dudamel Fellow at the Los Angeles Philharmonic for the 2023-24 season, she made her Walt Disney Concert Hall debut and was immediately re-engaged to lead the Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl in July 2025. She makes her subscription series debut with the orchestra at Walt Disney Concert Hall in March 2026. Handler was music director for Janáček's *Kát'a Kabanová* for the renowned Opera Camp series at the Salzburg Festival in 2022 and returned to conduct Ravel's opera *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* and Carl Orff's *Die Kluge*. Further career highlights include appearances with the



Minnesota Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, and Frankfurt Radio Symphony and working with soloists including Barbara Hannigan, Okka von der Damerau, Sabine Meyer, and Yo-Yo Ma.

Handler conducted the incidental music from *Mazeppa* with the Berlin Philharmonic in Baden-Baden and was music director of the Bayerische Staatsoper's production of *Eva und Adam*, which premiered at the 2019 Munich Opera Festival and featured young people from around Munich who came to Germany as refugees. Growing up in Munich, Handler studied piano and conducting at the University of Music and Performing Arts Munich before continuing her studies at the Franz Liszt University of Music Weimar, the Accademia Pianistica Internazionale di Imola, and the Folkwang University of the Arts. She completed her master's degree in conducting at the Juilliard School in New York in May 2023, becoming the first conductor ever to receive the prestigious Kovner Fellowship.

As director of the Ensemble Enigma Classica, which she founded in 2019, Handler works with renowned soloists. She is particularly interested in technology-supported music mediation in real time. Conducting from the piano and chamber music collaborations with violinist Laura Handler are an important part of her musical identity. Handler received the Rising Star Award from the European Cultural Foundation Europamusicale and is a scholarship holder of the German Foundation for Musical Life. She was also awarded the Maria Ladenburger Prize for Music in cooperation with WDR, the Cusanuswerk Foundation, and Deutsche Grammophon.¹

¹ Anna Handler: Assistant Conductor, Boston Symphony Orchestra. (1970, February 5). <https://www.bso.org/profiles/anna-handler>



About Nathan Cole, concertmaster



Nathan Cole

Violinist Nathan Cole joined the BSO as concertmaster beginning in the 2024-25 season. As first associate concertmaster of the Los Angeles Philharmonic since 2011, he was regularly featured as soloist at Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Hollywood Bowl in repertoire spanning the 17th to the 21st centuries. Prior to this position, he was a member of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and the Chicago Symphony. He has appeared as guest concertmaster with the orchestras of Pittsburgh, Minnesota, Houston, Ottawa, Seattle, and Portland, Oregon.

Cole grew up in a musical family in Lexington, Kentucky. His parents, both flutists, taught lessons in the home while his grandfather told stories about his years in the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy. Cole made his debut with the Louisville Orchestra at the age of ten while studying with Donna Wiehe; he studied a further eight years with Daniel Mason, a student of Jascha Heifetz. Cole attended the Curtis Institute of Music, where his primary teachers were Pamela Frank, Felix Galimir, Ida Kavafian, and Jaime Laredo.

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Chamber music has long been an essential part of Cole's life. The Grancino Quartet, which he formed at Curtis, made its New York debut in Weill Hall. He participated for three summers at the Marlboro Music Festival, including national tours, and looks forward to leading the Boston Symphony Chamber Players. As an educator, Cole leads the orchestral repertoire program for violin at the Colburn Conservatory, while his innovative online programs allow him to work with thousands of players around the globe. A collection of Cole's articles, videos, and courses can be found on his website, natesviolin.com.²

² *About Nathan Cole: Concertmaster, Boston Symphony Orchestra Charles Munch chair, endowed in perpetuity.*

Nathan Cole: Concertmaster, Boston Symphony Orchestra Charles Munch chair, endowed in perpetuity. (1970, February 5). <https://www.bso.org/profiles/nathan-cole>



About Steven Ansell, principal viola
BSO Charles S. Dana Chair, endowed in perpetuity



Steven Ansell

Steven Ansell joined the Boston Symphony Orchestra as principal viola in September 1996, occupying the Charles S. Dana chair, having already appeared with the BSO in Symphony Hall as guest principal viola. A native of Seattle, Ansell is also a member of the acclaimed Muir String Quartet, which he co-founded in 1979, and with which he has toured extensively throughout the world. A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, where he studied with Michael Tree and Karen Tuttle, Ansell was named professor of viola at University of Houston at age 21 and became assistant principal viola of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra under André Previn at 23. As a recording artist, he has received two Grand Prix du Disque awards and a Gramophone magazine award for Best Chamber Music Recording of the Year. He has appeared on PBS's "In Performance at the White House," has participated in the Tanglewood, Marlboro, Schleswig-Holstein, Newport, Blossom, Spoleto, and Snowbird music festivals, and premiered Ezra Laderman's Concerto for Viola and Orchestra with the Berkshire Symphony.



Ansell teaches at Boston University College of Fine Arts. As principal viola of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, he is also a member of the Boston Symphony Chamber Players.³

³ Boston Symphony Orchestra. (1970, February 5). *Steven Ansell: Principal Viola, Charles S. Dana chair, endowed in perpetuity*. <https://www.bso.org/profiles/steven-ansell>



Bioluminescence Chaconne



Gabriella Smith, Composer

Gabriella Smith's *Bioluminescence Chaconne* is a shimmering, ocean-inspired piece that uses repeating patterns, glowing textures, and rising-and-falling waves of sound to create the feeling of an underwater world coming to life.

Themes

Gabriella Smith's *Bioluminescence Chaconne* grows out of her deep love for the natural world, especially the glowing organisms and underwater environments she encountered while diving. The piece creates an "auditory ecosystem" that suggests drifting sea life, flickers of bioluminescent light, and the quiet resonance of the ocean's depths. Although not driven by an overt environmental message, the music reflects Smith's sense of wonder and respect for the fragility and brilliance of marine life.

Musical Language

The work draws on minimalist and post-minimalist techniques, using overlapping ostinatos to build a rhythmic, shimmering foundation. These repeating patterns serve both as musical architecture and as a metaphor for steady underwater currents, while above them the orchestra moves in fluid, expressive gestures. Smith blends these processes to create textures that feel alive and constantly evolving, blurring the line between composed structure and natural motion.

Form

At the center of the composition is Smith's contemporary take on the chaconne, a Baroque form based on repeated harmonies. She transforms the repeating progression into an analogy for ecological cycles: each return of the harmonic loop becomes a new sonic "bloom," shifting in color, density, and texture. The 14-minute single movement unfolds in three broad sections—an opening of luminous, delicate layers; a central portion where rhythms strengthen, textures



thicken, and the orchestra builds to a glowing climax; and a final section in which the music gradually thins, returning to a transformed version of its opening light.

Orchestration

The orchestration shapes the piece's expressive arc. Smith writes for a large ensemble — triple winds, full brass, timpani, and strings — enhanced by found metal objects, kick drum, crotales, and a temple bowl. Percussion anchors much of the rhythmic motion, strings provide constant shimmer through tremolos and glissandi, winds create quick flashes of color, and brass are saved for the most powerful climactic moments. The orchestral families interact like components of a living ecosystem, each contributing to the work's glow, pulse, and continual transformation.



Sinfonia concertante for violin and viola



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Mozart's Sinfonia concertante is a three-movement work for violin, viola, and orchestra that blends symphony and concerto styles, is known for its rich sound and special viola tuning, and has remained influential through many recordings, arrangements, and appearances in books and films.

Mozart composed the Sinfonia concertante in E-flat, K.364 (320d), for violin, viola, and orchestra during his 1779 European travels, which took him through cities such as Mannheim and Paris. At the time, he was actively exploring the sinfonia concertante style, and this work is widely considered his most successful fusion of symphonic and concerto elements.

Instrumentation

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The composition features three movements written for solo violin and solo viola accompanied by two oboes, two natural horns, and strings. The string section includes divided violas, contributing to the piece's notably rich harmonic texture.

Unusually, Mozart notated the viola solo part in D major rather than E-flat major, requiring the violist to tune the instrument a half-step higher (a scordatura technique) to create a brighter tone. While this practice is less common with modern instruments, performers who use Mozart's original scordatura often find it enhances their ability to project over the orchestra.

Movements

1. **Allegro maestoso** – approx. 13:24
2. **Andante** – approx. 10:05 (in C minor, 3/4 time)
3. **Presto** – approx. 6:29 (2/4 time)

Recordings

In an October 2015 *Gramophone* review, Richard Wigmore notes that more than 40 recordings exist. He highlights as a top choice the Chandos recording (CHAN9695) featuring Iona Brown as both violinist and conductor, with Lars Anders Tomter on viola, performing with the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra. He also recommends Brown's 1989 recording with violist Nobuko Imai. A notable historical performance is the 1951 Casals Perpignan Festival recording, featuring Isaac Stern and William Primrose under the direction of Pablo Casals.

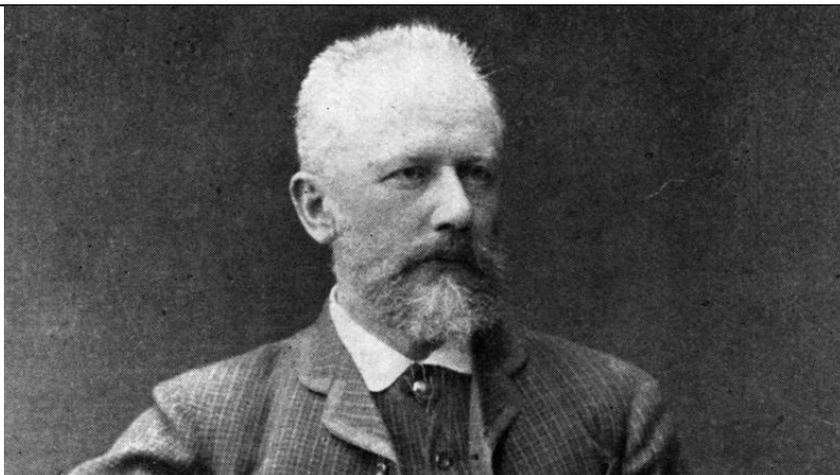
Legacy

The work has inspired numerous arrangements. In 1808, Sigmund Anton Steiner published an anonymous adaptation for string sextet titled *Grande Sestetto Concertante*, in which all six musicians share the musical material equally rather than functioning as soloists accompanied by ensemble. Another adaptation replaces the viola solo with a cello part.

The piece also appears in literature and film. In William Styron's 1979 novel *Sophie's Choice*, the Sinfonia concertante evokes childhood memories for Sophie and helps lift her from despair after a traumatic incident. Composer Michael Nyman used variations on the second movement for the soundtrack of Peter Greenaway's 1988 film *Drowning by Numbers*, in which Mozart's original music is also heard following each on-screen drowning.



Suite from *Swan Lake*



Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

In 1882, Tchaikovsky toyed with the idea of assembling a concert suite drawn from his ballet *Swan Lake* (Лебединое озеро), written six years earlier. He never appears to have reached a definitive decision, and the identity of the person who eventually compiled the posthumously published concert suite — issued as Op. 20a (TH 219) — remains uncertain.

Instrumentation

The suite is orchestrated for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets (in A and B-flat), two bassoons; four horns (in F); two cornets (in A and B-flat); two trumpets (in E and F); three trombones; tuba; three timpani; triangle, cymbals, bass drum; harp; and full strings (first and second violins, violas, cellos, and double basses).

Movements and Duration

Op. 20a, the posthumously published suite, comprises six movements and typically lasts 20-25 minutes:

1. **Scène — Moderato (70 bars)**
Adapted from the Act II Scene (No. 10) of the ballet
2. **Valse — Tempo di Valse (399 bars)**
The Waltz from Act I, No. 2

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3. **Danse des cygnes — Allegro moderato (38 bars)**
Part IV of the Dances of the Swans, Act II, No. 13
4. **Scène — Andante → Andante non troppo → Allegro (146 bars)**
The *Pas d'action*, Act II, No. 13 (part V)
5. **Czardas: Danse hongroise — Moderato assai → Allegro moderato → Vivace (107 bars)**
The Hungarian Dance (Act III, No. 20)
6. **Scène — Allegro agitato → Andante (313 bars)**
Drawn from the Act IV Scene (No. 28) and the Final Scene (No. 29)

History

In a letter to Pyotr Jurgenson dated Sept. 20/Oct. 2, 1882, Tchaikovsky noted that the French composer Léo Delibes had fashioned concert suites from his ballets, which otherwise lacked “permanent existence.” Remembering *Swan Lake* and hoping to save some of its “decent things” from being forgotten, he expressed his desire to do the same. He requested the piano reduction and full score, promising to specify which numbers to include and in what order. He also suggested that the suite could be issued both as a full score and as a four-hand piano arrangement.

Jurgenson responded positively and sent the requested materials, but it remains unknown whether Tchaikovsky ever chose the movements. No further mention of the suite appears in his surviving correspondence.

Publication

In November 1900, seven years after the composer’s death, Jurgenson released a six-movement suite from *Swan Lake* under the designation Op. 20a. The selection of movements cannot be definitively attributed: it may have been assembled by someone at the publishing house, though Tchaikovsky himself may have made preliminary decisions earlier.

Performances

The earliest documented performance took place at Queen’s Hall in London on September 1/14, 1901, conducted by Henry Wood.⁴

⁴ *Swan lake (suite)*. Swan Lake (suite) - Tchaikovsky Research. (2023, March 4). [https://en.tchaikovsky-research.net/pages/Swan_Lake_\(suite\)](https://en.tchaikovsky-research.net/pages/Swan_Lake_(suite))

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High School Open Rehearsal program

The conductor typically rehearses in program order, but this order is subject to change on the rehearsal day without advance notice.

9:30-10:00am Pre-rehearsal talk

- Interview with BSO Program Manager Zoe Murphy and a special guest

10:30am Rehearsal

- **Gabriella SMITH** *Bioluminescence Chaconne*
- **MOZART** Sinfonia concertante for violin and viola
- *Intermission*
- **TCHAIKOVSKY** Suite from *Swan Lake*

Featuring



[Boston Symphony Orchestra](#)



Anna Handler
conductor



Nathan Cole
concertmaster



Steven Ansell
viola



Digital and Supplementary Materials

Grades 9-12 • Mozart Sinfonia concertante



**Boston Symphony
Orchestra**

High School Open Rehearsals



Word Search

Grades 9-12 • Mozart's Sinfonia concertante and featured artists

BSO High School Open Rehearsal: Mozart Sinfonia concertante 2.5.26

V Q V J E R U D X S B P L K B
G H A N C W G T Q W I X S H O
Q T W S Z B N Z K O O P C A M
B E T U M I N I M A L I S M C
C T C I C T A N K Y U U M B S
X R G T Z M X P V U M G A S O
B E L E O O U D J H I O N A S
A M I H N I J T C Q N S N L V
L O S B L G S T H T E T H Z Y
L L S Q X A S R A Z S I E B C
E O A L W Q X R C M C N I U X
T J N P A R I S O F E A M R F
T C D D L M G Y N R N T L G V
B N O C T V K Z N J C O V H N
M T P D Z V Q A E H E G R K D

bioluminescence	minimalism	glissando	Paris
Mannheim	chaconne	ostinato	suite
waltz	Salzburg	tremolo	
ballet			

High School Open Rehearsals



Word Search Answer Key

Grades 9-12 • Mozart's Sinfonia concertante and featured artists

BSO High School Open Rehearsal: Mozart Sinfonia concertante 2.5.26

V Q V J E R U D X S B P L K B
G H A N C W G T Q W I X S H O
Q T W S Z B N Z K O O P C A M
B E T U M I N I M A L I S M C
C T C I C T A N K Y U U M B S
X R G T Z M X P V U M G A S O
B E L E O O U D J H I O N A S
A M I H N I J T C Q N S N L V
L O S B L G S T H T E T H Z Y
L L S Q X A S R A Z S I E B C
E O A L W Q X R C M C N I U X
T J N P A R I S O F E A M R F
T C D D L M G Y N R N T L G V
B N O C T V K Z N J C O V H N
M T P D Z V Q A E H E G R K D

- | | | | |
|-----------------|------------|-----------|-------|
| bioluminescence | minimalism | glissando | Paris |
| Mannheim | chaconne | ostinato | suite |
| waltz | Salzburg | tremolo | |
| ballet | | | |

High School Open Rehearsals



BSO Quick Quizzes: Show what you know!

🎵 Anna Handler, conductor

1. In which year did Anna Handler make her acclaimed debut at the Salzburg Festival?

- A. 2019
- B. 2022
- C. 2024
- D. 2025

2. Beginning in fall 2025, Anna Handler took on which major position?

- A. Music Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic
- B. Principal Guest Conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra
- C. Kapellmeister of the Deutsche Oper Berlin
- D. Artistic Director of Ensemble Enigma Classica

3. Which orchestra appointed Anna Handler as an assistant conductor in 2024?

- A. BBC Philharmonic
- B. Boston Symphony Orchestra
- C. Frankfurt Radio Symphony
- D. Minnesota Orchestra

4. Which of the following best describes one of Handler's interests within her musical identity?

- A. Composing electronic soundtracks for video games
- B. Technology-supported music mediation in real time
- C. Touring internationally as a jazz improviser



D. Historical performance practice on period instruments

5. What achievement makes Handler’s graduation from the Juilliard School in 2023 historically significant?

- A. She earned the highest GPA in the school’s history
- B. She became the youngest graduate of the conducting program
- C. She was the first conductor to receive the Kovner Fellowship
- D. She completed two master’s degrees simultaneously

Short-Answer / Discussion Prompts

- 1. How might Handler’s multicultural background influence her approach to conducting?
- 2. Why do you think technology-supported music mediation is important for modern audiences?
- 3. What skills or experiences might have prepared Handler for major conducting opportunities so early in her career?

Teacher Answer Key and Explanations: Anna Handler Quiz

1. Correct Answer: B — 2022

Explanation: Handler’s major public breakthrough was her **2022 Salzburg Festival debut**, which launched her onto international stages.

2. Correct Answer: C — Kapellmeister of the Deutsche Oper Berlin

Explanation: Starting in fall 2025, Handler began a significant operatic leadership role, conducting **11 opera performances** in the 2025-26 season.



3. Correct Answer: B — Boston Symphony Orchestra

Explanation: She was appointed **assistant conductor of the BSO in 2024** by Music Director Andris Nelsons.

4. Correct Answer: B — Technology-supported music mediation in real time

Explanation: Handler’s biography emphasizes her interest in **using technology to enhance music communication and mediation**.

5. Correct Answer: C — She was the first conductor to receive the Kovner Fellowship

Explanation: Her 2023 Juilliard graduation was historic because she became the **first conductor ever** awarded this prestigious fellowship.

🎵 Quiz: Nathan Cole, concertmaster
High School Quiz (Grades 9-12)

Aligned to MA Arts Frameworks: HS Responding (R1-R3), Connecting (Cn1-Cn2), and Performing (P1-P3).

1. Multiple Choice (R1 — Analyze & Interpret)

Nathan Cole performed music ranging from the 17th to the 21st centuries as a soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

What does this suggest about his musicianship?

- A. He specializes only in contemporary repertoire.
- B. He is comfortable performing across a wide historical range.
- C. He performs only Baroque violin works.
- D. He prefers chamber music over orchestral playing.

2. Short Answer (Cn1 — Personal & Cultural Connections)

How did Cole’s family background help shape his early musical development?

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3. Multiple Choice (P1 — Performance Preparation)

Which major music school did Nathan Cole attend for his formal training?

- A. The Juilliard School
- B. Manhattan School of Music
- C. Curtis Institute of Music
- D. New England Conservatory

4. Short Response (R3 — Evaluate & Synthesize)

Explain why being selected as concertmaster of the Boston Symphony Orchestra is a significant achievement in a professional musician's career.

5. Multiple Choice (Cn2 — Artists' Lifelong Learning)

Which statement best describes Cole's contribution to music education?

- A. He teaches only private violin lessons in Kentucky.
- B. He leads a violin repertoire program and teaches globally through online resources.
- C. He works exclusively with elementary-level students.
- D. He teaches only chamber music, not orchestral repertoire.



🎵 **Nathan Cole, concertmaster**

🎓 **Teacher Answer Key and Explanations**

1. B — He is comfortable performing across a wide historical range.

2. Possible responses:

- He grew up in a musical household where both parents were flutists.
- His grandfather shared stories about playing in the Philadelphia Orchestra, exposing him to professional orchestral life.
- Early access to private lessons and a musical environment supported his development.

3. C — Curtis Institute of Music

4. Sample correct points:

- The BSO is one of the world's leading orchestras.
- The concertmaster is the highest-ranking musician and leader of the string section.
- It reflects national/international recognition of technical mastery and leadership ability.

5. B — He leads a violin repertoire program and teaches globally through online resources.



🎵 *Bioluminescence Chaconne* by Gabriella Smith

Quiz (Grades 9-12)

Questions (Write and discuss your responses.)

1. **Listening/Responding (MA: Responding R.07-R.09):**

How does Gabriella Smith use repeating musical patterns (ostinatos) to help create the feeling of an underwater ecosystem in *Bioluminescence Chaconne*?

2. **Musical Structure (MA: Responding R.06):**

What is a chaconne, and how does Smith reinterpret this form in a modern way?

3. **Orchestration & Timbre (MA: Responding R.07):**

Name two orchestral families (strings, winds, brass, percussion) and explain how they contribute to the “glow” or “pulse” of the piece.

4. **Artistic Intent & Meaning (MA: Connecting C.10):**

How does Smith’s interest in nature, especially bioluminescent sea life, influence the mood and imagery of the music?

5. **Creative Thinking (MA: Creating C.02):**

If you were composing your own piece inspired by an environment in nature, what musical elements (timbre, rhythm, texture, dynamics) would you use to represent it, and why?



***Bioluminescence Chaconne* by Gabriella Smith**

Teacher Answer Key and Explanations

Aligned with the Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Framework for Music

- 1. She layers repeating patterns to mimic constant underwater motion.**
Explanation: Ostinatos create steady pulses that feel like ocean currents or drifting organisms.
- 2. A chaconne is built on a repeating harmonic progression, and Smith reimagines it by focusing on changing textures instead of traditional variations.**
Explanation: She treats each repetition as a new “bloom” of sound rather than a standard Baroque variation.
- 3. Example: Strings create shimmering textures with tremolos, while percussion provides rhythmic pulses that feel like glowing or flickering light.**
Explanation: Each instrumental group imitates different aspects of bioluminescent movement or energy.
- 4. Her fascination with glowing underwater life shapes the music into an evolving soundscape that feels fluid, luminous, and alive.**
Explanation: The piece mirrors the beauty and mystery of ocean ecosystems.
- 5. Students may describe choices such as soft textures for forests or sharp rhythms for storms, demonstrating how musical tools can represent natural environments.**
Explanation: This assesses their ability to connect musical decisions to expressive intent.



Student Quiz: Mozart's Sinfonia concertante for violin and viola

1. Multiple Choice

Mozart's Sinfonia concertante is best described as:

- A. A symphony with no soloists
- B. A concerto featuring piano and orchestra
- C. A work that blends symphony and concerto elements
- D. A chamber piece for five solo strings

2. Short Answer

What unusual tuning technique does Mozart require for the solo viola, and why did he use it?

3. Multiple Choice

Which instruments accompany the solo violin and viola in this work?

- A. Two flutes, timpani, and strings
- B. Two oboes, two natural horns, and strings
- C. Clarinet, bassoon, and strings
- D. Trumpets, trombones, and organ

4. Short Answer / Discussion

Why is the Sinfonia concertante considered a successful example of Mozart's exploration of the sinfonia concertante style during his 1779 travels?

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5. Short Answer / Analysis

Name one way the Sinfonia concertante has influenced later music, literature, or film. What does this suggest about the work's lasting cultural impact?



Teacher Answer Key and Explanations

Aligned with Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Frameworks
(Music: Artistic Practices — Responding, Creating, Connecting, Performing)

1. Correct Answer: C

Explanation:

The piece is known for blending **symphonic structure** with **concerto-style solo writing**, which makes it a hallmark example of the *sinfonia concertante* style.

MA Framework Connection:

- **Responding (R.PK-12.1 & R.PK-12.7):** Students analyze how musical elements combine to create stylistic characteristics.

2. Sample Answer:

Mozart requires the violist to use **scordatura**, tuning the instrument **a half-step higher** than normal. This creates a **brighter, more projecting tone** that helps the viola stand out against the orchestra.

MA Framework Connection:

- **Performing (P.PK-12.4):** Demonstrate understanding of technical demands (e.g., tuning).
- **Connecting (C.PK-12.1):** Understand how instrument modification affects expressive qualities.

3. Correct Answer: B

Explanation:

The orchestration includes **two oboes, two natural horns, and strings**, with string parts including **divided violas** for harmonic richness.

MA Framework Connection:

- **Responding (R.PK-12.6):** Identify and describe musical instrumentation and timbre.



4. Sample Answer:

The work successfully merges **symphonic breadth** with **virtuosic solo writing**, showing Mozart at the height of his interest in the *sinfonia concertante* genre during his European travels. Its balance of large-scale form and soloistic interplay makes it one of the finest examples of this hybrid style.

MA Framework Connection:

- **Connecting (C.PK-12.2):** Explain connections between musical works and historical or cultural contexts.
- **Responding (R.PK-12.8):** Interpret meaning within a musical work based on contextual knowledge.

5. Sample Answer:

Examples students may cite:

- The **Grande Sestetto Concertante** arrangement (1808)
- Adaptations replacing viola with cello
- Use in *Sophie's Choice*
- Michael Nyman's variations and Mozart's original in *Drowning by Numbers*

This shows the work's **enduring influence** in performance, arrangement, literature, and film, demonstrating its strong emotional and cultural resonance.

MA Framework Connection:

- **Connecting (C.PK-12.1 & C.PK-12.2):** Understand how music connects to other art forms and cultural expressions.



Student Quiz: Tchaikovsky's Suite from *Swan Lake*

1. Multiple Choice

Why did Tchaikovsky first consider creating a concert suite from *Swan Lake*?

- A. He wanted to replace the ballet entirely.
- B. He hoped to preserve good material from the ballet so it wouldn't be forgotten.
- C. He planned to write a new opera based on the ballet.
- D. His publisher demanded a shorter version.

2. Short Answer

Who ultimately selected the six movements that appear in the published Suite from *Swan Lake*, Op. 20a?

3. Multiple Choice

Which of the following best describes the instrumentation of the Suite from *Swan Lake*?

- A. Small chamber ensemble with strings only
- B. Solo violin, piano, and small wind section
- C. A large orchestra with full winds, brass, percussion, harp, and full strings
- D. A brass band with added timpani

4. Short Answer / Discussion

Why is the suite considered historically uncertain, and what does this uncertainty reveal about the publication process after Tchaikovsky's death?

High School Open Rehearsals



5. Short Answer / Analysis

Choose one movement from the suite (e.g., *Valse*, *Danse des cygnes*, or *Czardas*) and explain how its style or mood contributes to the overall character of *Swan Lake*.



Teacher Answer Key and Explanations

Aligned with Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Frameworks (Music: Responding, Connecting, Performing)

1. Correct Answer: B

Explanation:

Tchaikovsky admired how composers like Léo Delibes created concert suites that gave their ballet music “permanent existence.” He wanted to preserve the strongest musical moments from *Swan Lake* so they wouldn’t fade into obscurity.

MA Framework Alignment:

- **Connecting (C.PK-12.2):** Explain how music relates to cultural or historical contexts.
- **Responding (R.PK-12.7):** Analyze musical intent based on contextual information.

2. Sample Answer:

The identity of the compiler is **unknown**. The suite was published posthumously in 1900, and while Tchaikovsky may have considered selecting movements, there is no evidence he finalized the choices.

MA Framework Alignment:

- **Connecting (C.PK-12.1):** Understand how music is shaped by people and decisions over time.
- **Responding (R.PK-12.9):** Evaluate how historical gaps shape interpretation.

3. Correct Answer: C

Explanation:

The suite features **full winds (including piccolo), large brass section, extensive percussion, harp, and full strings**, characteristic of a late-Romantic orchestral palette.

MA Framework Alignment:



- **Responding (R.PK-12.6):** Identify and describe musical timbre and instrumentation.
- **Performing (P.PK-12.4):** Understand the musical implications of large orchestration.

4. Sample Answer:

The suite's origins are uncertain because Tchaikovsky never confirmed his final movement choices, and no instructions survive. The version published by Jurgenson in 1900 may reflect editorial decisions rather than the composer's intent. This highlights how posthumous publications can involve speculation, reconstruction, or choices made by publishers rather than composers.

MA Framework Alignment:

- **Connecting (C.PK-12.2):** Interpret how musical works evolve over time through cultural institutions.
- **Responding (R.PK-12.8):** Support interpretations using historical evidence.

5. Sample Answer:

Examples may include:

- **Valse (*Tempo di Valse*):** Creates elegance and courtly atmosphere typical of Act I.
- **Danse des cygnes:** Light, precise articulation evokes the swans' graceful movement.
- **Czardas:** Provides a lively folk-dance character reflecting Act III's diverse dances.

Each movement shows a different facet of the ballet's emotional palette, demonstrating Tchaikovsky's skill at portraying story and character through orchestral color.

MA Framework Alignment:

- **Responding (R.PK-12.4):** Analyze expressive qualities in music.
- **Connecting (C.PK-12.1):** Explain how music conveys character, emotion, or narrative.



Additional resources

Please use the links below to access quizzes and an editable social story to prepare students and chaperones for their experience at Symphony Hall.

Social story

- [Social Narrative](#) – Also available on the BSO website

Lesson plans and slideshow presentations

- [Bioluminescence Chaconne Lesson Plan & Slides](#)
- [Sinfonia concertante lesson plan](#) (online)
- [Sinfonia concertante slide deck](#) (Google slides)
- [Swan Lake suite lesson plan](#) (PDF)

Activities (PDF — download and print)

- [Word Search](#)
- [Word Search Answer Key](#)
- [Quiz: Anna Handler, Conductor](#)
- [Quiz: Nathan Cole, Concertmaster](#)
- [Quiz: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart](#)
- Scan the QR code to learn about the [history of the BSO](#).



Listen and watch

- [Mozart: Sinfonia Concertante in E flat Major, K. 364 - Julian Rachlin & Sarah McElravy](#)
- [Tchaikovsky – Swan Lake Suite, conducted by Sylwia Janiak-Kobylińska](#)