

Made in the USA

March 12, 13 & 14, 2025



Listening Guide

The story of the United States includes many inventions. Some inventions are things we can touch. Other inventions are things we can hear. Some inventions we use in our everyday lives. Other inventions help us without our even knowing it.

All inventions begin with imagination. *Schooltime: Made in the USA* celebrates several American-made inventions, how they came to be, and their lasting impact.

Use this guide with the concert playlist available in the Schooltime classroom resources section at www.pittsburghsymphony.org/schooltime. You can also click on the links in this document to go straight to the piece.

Listen carefully to each piece of music. Discuss what you hear and the decisions the composers made in creating their work. Consider if you would do anything differently. Then use the additional classroom resources available to learn more about inventions *Made in the USA!*



HANNAH ISHIZAKI

City of Bridges

Pittsburgh composer Hannah Ishizaki is the youngest female composer ever to have a piece premiered by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. She was 17 years old when the PSO presented the world premiere of “City of Bridges” on February 18, 2017.

The piece is inspired by Ishizaki’s hometown, its three rivers, hundreds of bridges, and many talented people. The PSO is proud to support the career of Ishizaki and other living composers. This piece, like many other new works by current composers, has yet to be professionally recorded. Listen closely when you hear it performed at Heinz Hall – right now it is a piece you can only hear in person!

- How can music convey the size and strength of bridges?
- What instruments would you use to depict Pittsburgh’s three rivers? How would you have them play – fast, slow, loud, soft, smooth, jagged?
- What musical choices would you make to depict the people of Pittsburgh?



ZHOU TIAN

"D-O-N-E" from *Transcend*

Zhou Tian's three-movement piece *Transcend* commemorates the 150th anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad. Thousands of skilled Chinese immigrants provided critical labor to build the railroad, including some of the most dangerous sections across the American west. Upon completion of the Transcontinental Railroad, a nationwide telegraph went out with just one word typed in Morse code: DONE.

Listen to "D-O-N-E" from the world premiere of *Transcend*, performed by the Reno Philharmonic.

- Zhou Tian uses the Morse code pattern for the word "done" as a recurring rhythm throughout the piece, as notated here. Tap along each time you hear it.



- List the instruments that perform the Morse code rhythm throughout the piece:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- About halfway through the movement, Zhou depicts the sound of a steam train. What musical choices create this effect?



HENRY MANCINI

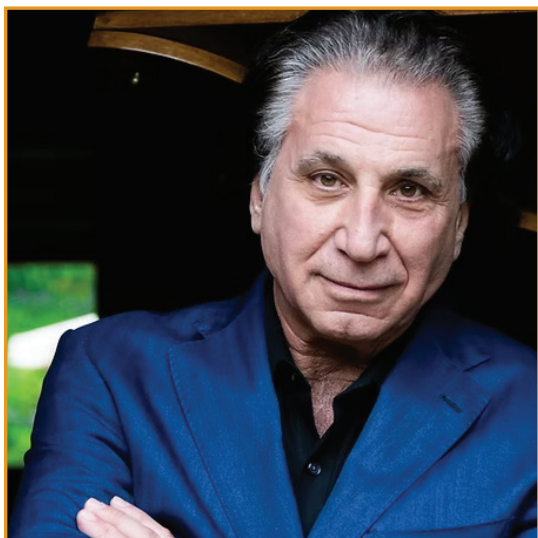
Strings on Fire

Award-winning composer Henry Mancini wrote music for movies, television, and concert halls. He wrote many songs that became well known in popular culture, including “Moon River” from the movie *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* and the theme for *The Pink Panther*.

Mancini wrote *Strings on Fire* for the Philadelphia Pops Orchestra in 1969. It is a short, fast piece that Mancini often used in his concerts.

[Click here to listen to *Strings on Fire*](#) performed by the Philadelphia Pops Orchestra.

- The PSO selected this piece to celebrate the invention of the roller coaster. What musical choices do you hear that create a sense of motion?
- Listen for the harp **glissando** about 50 seconds into the piece. What happens next? How does the music change? What do you imagine in this section?
- Do you think this piece is a good choice of music to represent a roller coaster? Why or why not?



RICHARD DANIELPOUR

“Prologue” from *Pastime*

Pittsburgh hosted Major League Baseball’s All-Star game in 2006. Composer Richard Danielpour wrote a five-movement piece for baritone and orchestra to celebrate the event and pay tribute to three baseball legends: Josh Gibson, Jackie Robinson, and Hank Aaron. *Pastime* features the poetry of acclaimed American writer **Michael S. Harper**, who often used syncopation and rhyme to create a sense of jazz in his poems.

Read the opening lines of the “Prologue” from *Pastime*:

BASEBALL (ORB)

Michael S. Harper

Ballbearing at the center
Stitch neither vertical

nor horizontal flight
of same 9 players on

either team alternating
over the points of a

diamond abrasive gemstone

- What images come to mind when you read these words?
- Read the opening lines of the Prologue out loud. How does the rhythm feel?
- What do you imagine the music for the poem will sound like?



GEORGE GERSHWIN

III. Allegro from Piano Concerto in F Major

“Composers have been walking around jazz like a cat around a plate of soup, waiting for it to cool off so that they could enjoy it without burning their tongues.” – Walter Damrosch

George Gershwin made waves in the music world by combining elements of jazz and classical music in his pieces for orchestra. Listen for Gershwin’s many musical influences in his piano concerto, including ragtime and blues.

Click here to listen to the last movement of Gershwin’s Piano Concerto, performed by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra!

- How does the movement begin? What instruments do you hear? What words would you use to describe the feeling of the music?
- Tap along to the beat of the music when the piano enters. How does the piano line up with the beat? How does it change when the strings join?
- Gershwin plays with tempo throughout the entire final movement. Count how many times the tempo changes.
- Listen for the **gong** about five minutes into the movement. What happens next? How does the music change? What words would you use to describe the feeling of the music now?



JAMES HORNER

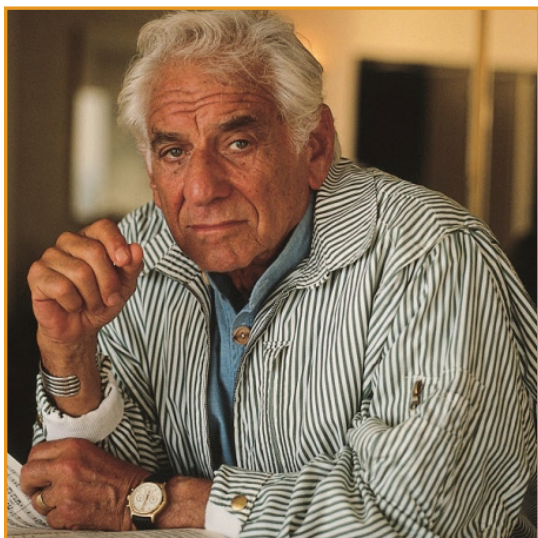
Music from *Apollo 13*

The movie *Apollo 13* tells the story of NASA's attempt to have humans land on the moon for the third time. When the oxygen tanks ruptured, the crew used the lunar module as a lifeboat and eventually returned safely to earth.

Film composer James Horner wrote the music for *Apollo 13*, combining chorus with orchestra to express the action and emotions of the story, as he often did in the more than 100 film scores he wrote.

[Click here to listen to an example of music from *Apollo 13*](#), performed by the Danish National Symphony Orchestra.

- What instrument opens the piece?
- What instrument introduces the main theme?
- Why do you think Horner chose these two instruments to begin the music?
- The process of arranging a piece of music to be played by the instruments of an orchestra is called **orchestration**. The original score for *Apollo 13* includes a chorus, but some versions of the music use an orchestra only. What instruments would you choose to perform the part of the chorus (heard from 2:47 to 4:25 in the recording)? Why?



LEONARD BERNSTEIN

Overture to *Candide*

Leonard Bernstein was one of the nation’s most influential composers, conductors, and educators. His Overture to *Candide* concludes *Schooltime: Made in the USA* as a tribute to the spirit of creativity and inventions yet to come.

The overture features all the instrument families of the orchestra in starring roles and plays with contrasting tempos and motifs. Its playfulness embodies the spirit of imagination at the heart of invention.

[Click here to watch Leonard Bernstein conduct the London Symphony Orchestra’s performance of his Overture to *Candide*.](#)

- What instrument begins the piece?
- Which instrument family introduces the theme? Which instrument family interrupts them?
- Follow along to the **form** of the overture. Describe the tempo and feeling of each section:

Section	Words to describe the tempo:	Words to describe the feeling:
A		
B		
A		
B		
A		
CODA		