

**SYMFOMANIA!**  
DO IT YOURSELF

# RICHARD STRAUSS

## AN ALPINE SYMPHONY

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### A MUSICAL STORY

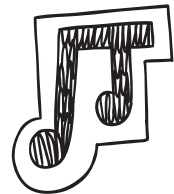
Today, we are listening to "An Alpine Symphony" by Richard Strauss. This piece of music tells the story of an excursion in the mountains. Will you come along on the adventure?

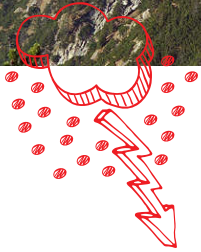
### WHO IS RICHARD

Richard Strauss was born in 1864 in Munich, Germany. His father was the principal horn player in the Bavarian Court Opera in Munich. He took Richard with him from a very young age to the orchestra's rehearsals. Strauss soon caught the musical bug and started to write music alongside his violin and piano lessons. He wrote his first piece at the age of six! Richard was apparently such a diligent composer that by the age of 18 he had written 140 works!

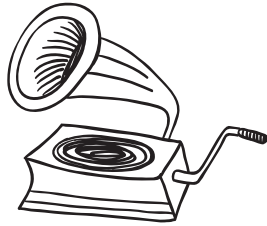


Strauss' wedding was also full of music. He married Pauline de Ahna, a professional singer. Richard enjoyed writing love songs for Pauline. They were happily married all their lives and had a son, Franz. Richard had a vivid imagination and drew inspiration for much of his music from fairy tales, stories and nature. He loved long walks and built a country house near the Zugspitze, the highest peak in Germany. He died in that country house at the age of 85.





## ACTIVITY:



In what follows, there are five fragments from Richard's musical story. Connect the right photo with the right musical fragment. Can you recognize the various scenes from nature?

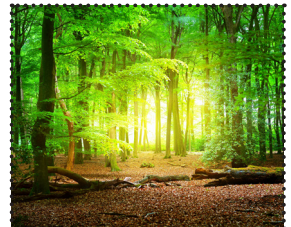
FRAGMENT 1

SUNRISE



FRAGMENT 2

A HIKE THROUGH  
THE FOREST



FRAGMENT 3

ON THE MOUNTAIN  
MEADOW



FRAGMENT 4

THE WATERFALL



FRAGMENT 5

THE STORM



## DID YOU KNOW THAT



Strauss based his Alpine Symphony on a true story... From his own life!

In 1879, as a young man, Strauss and a few friends went on a long hike in the Alps. The group had planned to climb the mountain at Heimgarten. They enjoyed the lovely views along the way. But a violent storm broke out and the hikers had to flee down the mountain.

Strauss was inspired by this hike and based the music of his "An Alpine Symphony" on the experience. In this work, we experience a musical day in the mountains. In 22 sections, Strauss describes the journey of a hiker climbing a high mountain. For example, he takes us along a sleepy sunrise, a foggy landscape, a brook, a lovely waterfall and a large forest. When the wanderer reaches the summit at last and enjoys the stunning view, fate strikes. The weather turns stormy and he has to flee down the mountainside. An Alpine Symphony closes with a soft sunset.



# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF RICHARD

Richard Strauss loved doing the same thing every day. He would get up at the same time every day, and went on two walks a day, played a game of cards over lunch and composed at set times of the day.

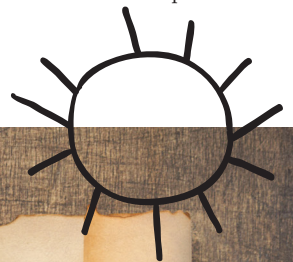


Richard Strauss at his piano

## ACTIVITY:

What does a day in your life look like?

Are you a creature of habit like Richard? Or do you prefer things to be a bit more unpredictable? Describe in this mini-diary the most fun, amusing, exasperatingly boring, unbelievably special or deadly normal day you ever experienced.



## ACTIVITY:

write your own piece of music!

Write your own piece of music based on the above diary.

**STEP 1:** Read your diary over once more and choose a few points that you would like to set to music in your musical story. For example:

Brushing your teeth.  
Going to school by bike.  
Playing soccer during recess.  
Hearing the school bell rings.  
Hmm... a delicious dessert!  
Brushing your teeth.  
Zzzzz, time for a good sleep.

**STEP 2:** Look for sounds that belong to each part of the list. Use your voice, your body or objects and instruments.

**STEP 3:** Play your piece of music for your mom, dad, brother or sister. Can they guess what experience you are depicting?

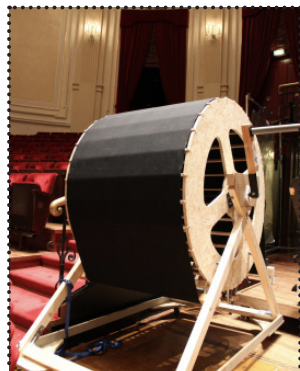


# WOW, WHAT AN ORCHESTRA?

Richard Strauss envisioned a grand work for his Alpine Symphony. He wrote for a mega-orchestra of up to 140 musicians. To imagine the story of the mountain hike as vividly as possible, Strauss used unconventional instruments. We will show you a few of the more unusual ones:



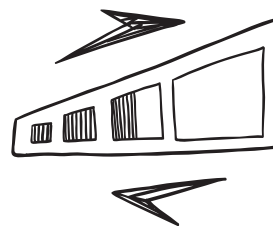
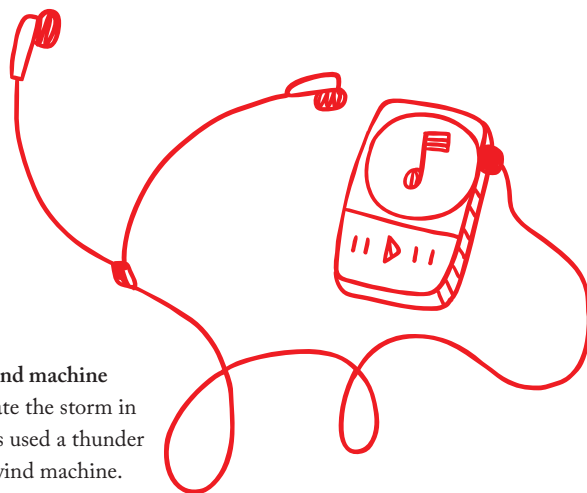
LISTEN **HERE** TO A THUNDER MACHINE



LISTEN **HERE** TO A WIND MACHINE

## Thunder and wind machine

In order to imitate the storm in the story, Strauss used a thunder machine and a wind machine.



## Cowbells

We have listened carefully to the fragment on the mountain meadow, and can now recognize this unusual instrument. Strauss brings the grazing cows in the meadow to life by the sound of the cowbells.



## And a bunch of horns!

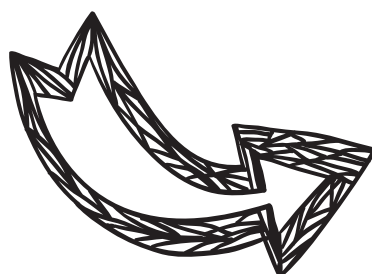
In an ordinary orchestra, there are usually four to six horns. In the Alpine Symphony, there are no fewer than 16 of them! But you won't see all the horns at play. Richard had 12 of the 16 musicians play from backstage. In this way, he created the effect of hunting horns that a hiker can hear in the distance.

**HERE** YOU CAN SEE A FEW HORNS PLAYING BACKSTAGE.



# EXTRA: A GAME OF CARDS WITH STRAUSS?

Richard not only loved music but also enjoyed playing cards. His favourite game was 'skat', a German card game played with three players. At one point, Richard played every day during his lunch break!



## ACTIVITY:

Do a bit of Richard Strauss and challenge your friends or family to a fun game of cards!

**ENJOY THE LOVELY MUSIC OF RICHARD STRAUSS!**