



# Crazy for Classics

Con Fuoco 2021

Presentation by Chris Martí

Kindergarten and Primary Levels



There are so many great classical pieces that should be shared with our students, but our challenge as educators is to get the kids to love them as much as we do! How do you get your 4-7 year olds to hum the theme from the *Habanera* or to recognize that they are hearing *In the Hall of the Mountain King* when they are watching the Trolls movie?

As with anything else that we are teaching, if we want our students to be engaged in the learning process, we need to help them make a connection to what they are hearing. If they are having fun, they won't even realize they are learning!

If you have never created routines using balls, plates, parachutes, body percussion, or scarves, it can be a daunting task. Start with 2 or 3 basic moves and build from there. Your students will also amaze you with their creativity. Beginning with a movement activity that leads directly into another routine using props makes the transition easier.

In the following pages, and accompanying videos, I would like to share with you some of our most favourite activities here at DoReMi. Through movement, and various activities involving everything from plates to parachutes, we will be working on theme recognition and form, notation, creativity, and ensemble playing.

Enjoy!



## Trepak – page 1/3

During the holiday season, we do a lot of activities that centre around the Nutcracker, but the favourite by far is the Trepak.

To get the students started we play “the thumb game”.

Older students don’t need any prompting and will just copy your movements, but for the youngest ones I usually say:

Show your thumbs, show your thumbs

Up and down

This way .....

That way .....

Here, there, here, there ....

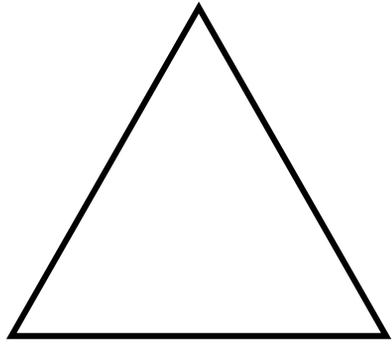
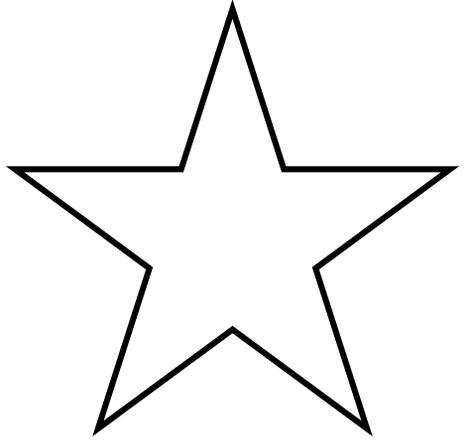
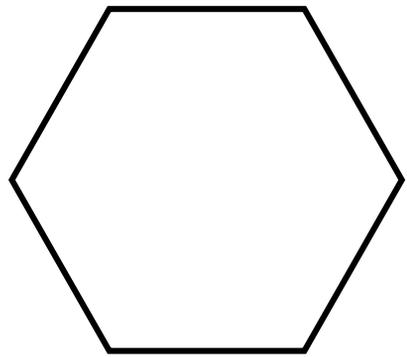
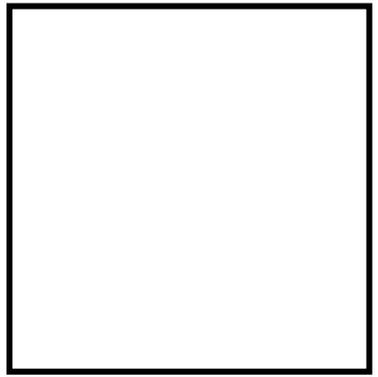
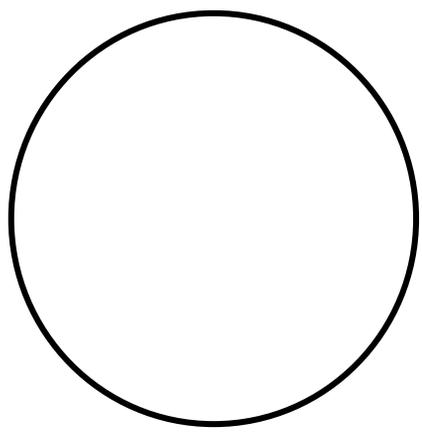
This activity allows the students to become confident with the main themes and the coda.

Then we translate these movements into ribbons/scarves, and plastic plates. The movements with their props correspond directly to the movements in the thumb game. The “show your thumbs” with the ribbons becomes throwing the ribbon in front of you, and with the plates it becomes a large tap/slide. Up and down remains the same, making sure the plates tap together as they quickly brush past each other. “This way, that way” with the ribbons becomes figure eights, and with the plates it mimics the thumb game exactly. The only real change is the plate portion of “here, there”. If the students are doing it in partners, they tap their plates together, if they are doing it individually or facing an audience they can clap their own plates together. Older students also enjoy alternating between tapping their own, and then the plates of the students sitting beside them.

By the time they have played these games several times, they usually know the patterns by heart, and can do the form analysis without even having to listen to the track.

For the form analysis we start with shapes, and answer the question “same or different”. Once there are a couple of shapes up there, the question becomes “same as the first, same as the second, or something new”. The coda is, of course, a tail.

Once they have analyzed the piece with shapes, we replace those shapes with letters.



a

b

c

a<sup>1</sup>

b<sup>1</sup>

coda



# In the Hall of the Mountain King – page 1/8

Recently, *In the Hall of the Mountain King* was featured as one of the themes in the *Trolls* movie, so some of your students may already recognize it.

## Movement:

The first activity we do with this one is *Head & Shoulders, Knees and Toes*. The repetitive theme works perfectly with this traditional activity, and the students love the part where the tempo accelerates. You will want the movements in the coda to correspond directly to movements in later activities, so we usually do:

clap, throw your arms (x2)

clap 7x

clap, throw your arms (x2)

the final drum roll is arm rolls, with the final chord being throw your arms (and legs if the students are sitting).

## Balls:

We usually follow this with a tennis ball activity. We start sitting down, because it allows the younger students to be successful, and also because it “contains” the activity a bit better. At the end of each theme, the balls are passed by rolling to the right.

With the older students, you could have them progress to standing, but then the pass will have to be a “bounce pass” rather than a roll.

It works well also with larger balls, but I would recommend a “bounce catch” rather than letting them dribble the balls because they will be able to concentrate on keeping the beat and are less likely to lose the balls. The coda needs a bit of variation as well, so I usually have them hold onto the larger ball with both hands and do a “squat-jump”.

One advantage of the tennis balls is that you can work on the L-R crossover by having them bounce with one hand and catch with the other.



## In the Hall of the Mountain King – page 2/8

### Percussion and Notation:

We also use this piece for rhythm activities including body percussion, non-pitched instrument percussion, creativity and rhythm notation.

For movement and body percussion activities, we have chosen “tip toe” for the 1/8 notes, “clap” for the 1/4 notes, and “freeze” for the 1/2 notes. I often have the students practise those individually. As a movement activity, tip toe, clap and freeze are self explanatory. I usually encourage them to make interesting statues, or they can freeze and do jazz hands.

For the body percussion, tip toe becomes stamp-stamp, clap is self-explanatory, but the freeze needs to make a sound. I usually have them rub their hands or cross their arms and pat their shoulders.

I put up a couple of 4-beat stories for them to practise, and then I let them create their own. You can use this activity to discuss any aspect of form analysis. One of the favourites with our students here at *DoReMi* is to create a rondo. My rhythm story becomes theme A, and then we rotate around the room with each student, or each group of students, coming up with a theme of their own.

Once we have completed this activity, we do it again, but this time we choose different percussion instruments for each of the sounds. We divide the class into 3 groups and play the stories. Generally, we pick woods for the 1/8 notes, metals for the 1/4 notes, and shakers or tambourines for the 1/2 notes.

The next step is to translate their images into rhythm notation. I simply put the rhythm cards on top of the pictures, and then we do the activity again.



# In the Hall of the Mountain King – page 3/8

## Form Analysis:

The final step in this entire process is to bring them back to *In the Hall of the Mountain King* by having them recognize these note values in the piece and decode the form. I have included the pages for the final product in body percussion format. I usually have the students create the rhythm notation charts as a class activity, using poster boards and the rhythm cards. Once we have the piece completely decoded, then we play along. I set the sheets up to follow the piece:



coda

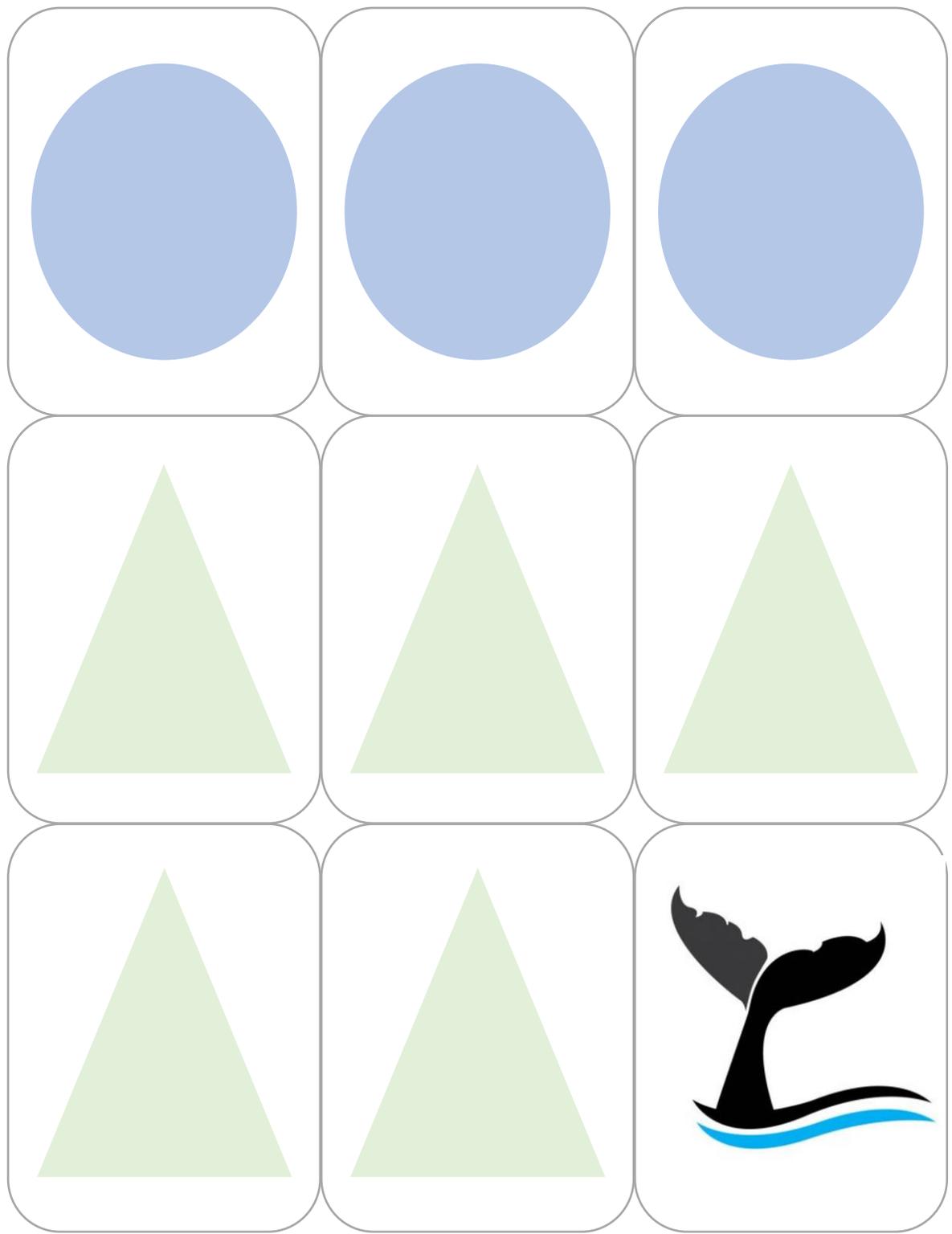
We often divide the class into two groups (a triangle group and a circle group) and do both the body percussion and non-pitched instrument activities following the charts.

## Introduction to the Orchestra:

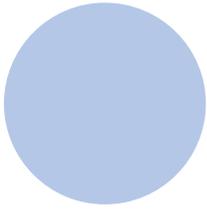
Since the main theme repeats in various parts of the orchestra, we sometimes use this piece to introduce the instruments. A great resource for that is the *Beethoven's Wig* series. Each of the CDs has both a very well orchestrated instrumental version of the great classical pieces and a very amusing version with lyrics. Our students love them! The second CD includes *In the Hall of the Mountain King* and *It's the Same Every Verse*, with lyrics that describe the different parts of the orchestra that are playing the theme. The vocals match the pitch of the instruments, and this is a fun and engaging way to begin to discuss the orchestra.











## Can Can – page 1/3

One of the absolute favourite activities with our students ages 2 through 12 is the “kicking song”.

Since this is not one of the well-known composers, I like to start the activity with a chant. We keep the beat with our feet, tapping the desk, patting our thighs, any way the students choose.

*We often hear Beethoven*

*We often hear Bach*

*But we don't very often*

*Hear Offenbach*

I have a simplified version of the piece that we use for the movement activity. The goal is for them to hear the different themes and change their movements accordingly. In the “kicking” part, I encourage the older students to do it properly, but younger students will have difficulty just switching from one leg to the other.

Sometimes it's fun to show them what the dance actually looks like, but it's difficult to find a video that would be appropriate to present to the class. You could tell them that it is still performed regularly at the *Moulin Rouge* in Paris (picture included - my Mom is the lady in the purple dress!). This is the link to one that is reasonably modest, and that I am willing to show:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QvccyANdjnk>

### Dance Activity

The activity has 3 main themes, which repeat, followed by a coda

Theme one: free dance (we use bells)

Theme two: clap, clap, clap, clap (descending to match the music)  
wiggle, wiggle, wiggle, wiggle

Theme three: the kicking theme

Coda: is the “go crazy” part.



## Can Can – page 2/3

### Parachute Activity

The next activity we do is with the parachute. For this one, I use the full version of the piece.

Introduction: tip toe, freeze (following the music)

Theme one: trotting with knees high. With younger students we only go in one direction, with older students, I have them change direction with the phrasing.

Theme two: up and down and shake it, shake it, shake it, shake it

There is a short bridge before theme three, so continue shaking, getting faster/slower, bigger/smaller to match the music

Theme three: as soon as they hear the kicking theme, they switch to the “washing machine” movement.

Coda: continue shaking, making the movements match the music. End by either throwing the parachute up or all going under.

### Vocabulary

Although the piece lends itself very well to form analysis using the shapes, I often use it instead to introduce vocabulary words. We also do a great number of activities with the *Carnival of the Animals*, and so I juxtapose this piece with “The Tortoise”.

We discuss how Saint-Saëns changed the tempo as well as the rhythm (6/8) to make it sound like a tortoise moving. The students have great fun trying to do the “kicking theme” at this slower tempo.

I like to introduce vocabulary words in opposites groups, so this one would be **allegro** and **lento**.





## Carnival of the Animals – the Kangaroo

Another movement activity from the *Carnival of the Animals* that we use to introduce vocabulary is the Kangaroo. For this one, we are working with **staccato** and **legato**.

### Story

I like to start the activity by sharing videos of baby kangaroos in pouches, and kangaroos hopping around. Then to prep for the activity I like to tell a story:

The mother kangaroo took the baby to the shopping mall, but s/he was getting bored and in the clothing section of the big department store, s/he decided to play hide-and-seek.

We follow that up with a discussion of whether or not that would be a good idea, and where it *would* be safe/appropriate to play that game.

The mother can't find the baby, gets very worried, and hops all over the store looking for him/her.

### Activities

As we are listening to the piece, we want to hear when the mother kangaroo is hopping, looking, and for the finale where she takes him/her in her arms to cuddle.

I find that once I let them loose to hop, they aren't always paying close attention to the music, so I start with a smaller movement. We take 2 fingers together from one hand and do the "hopping" either in our other palm or on the desk, or on the floor in front of us if we are in circle. For the "looking theme", we put one hand above our eyes and pretend to look in every direction. The "cuddle" music is really quick, so they have to listen very closely, and give themselves a hug.

This translates directly to gross motor movement, with the students hopping around the room. It also translates well to non-pitched percussion instruments. We often do both themes on the rhythm sticks, but 2 different instruments and 2 different groups is also quite effective.

Although we use it for vocabulary discussion, this piece also works well with the shape game and form analysis.



# Largo – Going Home – Page 1/4

This is a great opportunity to discuss the different movements in the symphony. We like to call the second movement the “put you to sleep slow” movement, and introduce the vocabulary term “largo”.

We also discuss the fact that these slow movements often have absolutely beautiful melodies, and that this one was so lovely it was turned into a song.

My favourite artist to perform this song is Sissel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJFhTb1gi6Y>

First, we listen to the instrumental version. The one I’m using comes from “Whacked on Classics”. I chose this one because it is short and concise.

## Movement

We do free movement dance with scarves, but I want the students to focus on the phrasing. I often let the students decide how they want to indicate the phrase endings. Sometimes we just stop and shake the scarves, but frequently we like to reform as a circle and shake them inside the circle together.

## Singing, Harmonization & Ostinati

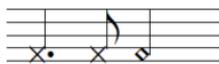
Next we learn to sing the song. I have included the lyrics in your handout.

This is a great performance piece, and there are a number of things that we can add to the singing.

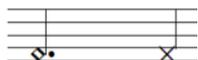
First is the harmony. We use a half-note harmonic rhythm. I have simplified the chord progression, and included the chart in your handouts. We have done this on resonators, as you see in the video, but also on boomwhackers and on Orff instruments.

We also layer on to this 2 different ostinati:

– usually on woods or hand drums



– usually on metals such as triangles or cymbals.



As you see in the video, we usually do the introduction with the rain stick. When you put all of this together, it can become an amazing performance presentation.



# Largo – Going Home – Page 2/4

Lyrics:

Going home, going home

I am going home

Quiet light, some still day

I am going home

It's not far, just close by

Through an open door

Work all done, care laid by

Going to fear no more

Mother's there expecting me

Father's waiting too

Lots of folk gathered there

All the friends I knew

All the friends I knew

Going home, going home

I am going home



# Largo – Going Home – Page 3/4

I I I I V<sup>7</sup> V<sup>7</sup> V<sup>7</sup> V<sup>7</sup>

I I I I IV V<sup>7</sup> I I

IV IV I IV IV I IV IV

IV IV I IV IV I IV IV

I I I I V<sup>7</sup> V<sup>7</sup> V<sup>7</sup> V<sup>7</sup>

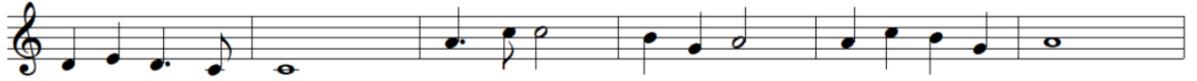
I I I I V<sup>7</sup> V<sup>7</sup> I I

V<sup>7</sup> V<sup>7</sup> I I I I I I

V<sup>7</sup> V<sup>7</sup> I I



# Largo – Going Home – Page 4/4





## William Tell – page 1/3

The form analysis for this is fairly complicated, but the students get it once they've done the activities a few times.

First, I discuss with them the various themes, and we give them names such as:

Theme A: galloping (they probably have never heard of the Lone Ranger)

Theme B: backwards

Theme C: short

Theme D: fanfare

In addition to those, we have the introduction, the interlude and the coda.

### Movement

You could have them make up movements to each of the themes and either have every student switch between the various movements, or assign each movement to a group.

If you have different groups do individual movements, it translates directly into their scarf activity.

### Scarves

For this activity, it's helpful if the names you assign to the themes in some way can correlate to the colour being used (galloping=green, B=backwards=blue).

The students can either be seated in a circle, or be in scatter formation around the room. They can be together in their groups, or interspersed amongst each other. For the introduction, they just wiggle the scarves to match the music. Then they get to wave their scarves when they hear the theme that corresponds with their colour. The idea is to be creative, and to have the scarf movements reflect the music.

In the interlude, we pass the scarves. The challenge for this is that they will probably not get the same colour that they started out with and they need to be ready for the themes when they return.

For the coda, we wave/wiggle the scarves to match the music, but when they hear the galloping theme return, they need to freeze.



## William Tell – page 2/3

### Cups Routine

My students absolutely love cups routines, so I composed one to go with this piece. The full routine is included in your handouts. I tried to make many of the motions from the scarf activity match the cup routine, so in the introduction, they are just circling their cups on the floor, in the interlude they are passing their cups, and when the galloping theme returns during the coda, they freeze and change movements.

The track we are using comes from *Listening Resource Kit Level 5* by Denise Gagne

The full form of the activity is as follows:

**intro A B C A D interlude D A C A coda i A coda ii**



# William Tell – page 3/3

## Cups Routine

**intro A B C A D interlude D A C A coda i A coda ii**

Intro: swirl cups around counter clockwise on the floor in front of you

A (galloping): tap L  
grab R  
up  
down (in front of self, or pass R)

B (backwards): L R L clap  
L grab R hit glass into L down

C (short): clap clap  
tap tap (hands together)

D (fanfare): pick up R and pass in large arc to the R  
grab R, double tap into L and double tap floor  
(following the 1/8 notes in the music)

Interlude every 4 beats grab with R and slide/pass to R

Coda i hold side with R, lean to L and double tap end to left, then  
double tap floor in front

Coda A freeze

Coda ii with both hands on sides, roll cup away from you tapping  
side, bottom, top, side on floor



# Resources

This list includes the resources mentioned in the video, but also my go-to books/recordings for when I am planning activities using classical pieces.

*Listening Fun with Scarves and Tennis Balls* by Dan Fee

Published by Themes & Variations and available at [www.musicplay.ca](http://www.musicplay.ca)

*More Listening Fun with Parachutes, Paper Plates, Ribbons and Scarves* by Dan Fee

Published by Themes & Variations and available at [www.musicplay.ca](http://www.musicplay.ca)

*Parachutes and Ribbons and Scarves, Oh My!* by Artie Almeida

Published by Heritage Music Press and available at [Amazon.ca](http://Amazon.ca)

*Percussion Parade* by Artie Almeida

Published by Heritage Music Press and available at [Amazon.ca](http://Amazon.ca)

*Listening Resource Kit Levels 1-5* by Denise Gagne

Published by Themes & Variations and available at [www.musicplay.ca](http://www.musicplay.ca)

*Whacked on Classics and Whacked on Classics II* by Tom Anderson

Published by Hal Leonard and available at [Amazon.ca](http://Amazon.ca) or through your local music store.

*Let's Have a Musical Rhythm Band* by Phoebe Diller

Published by Alfred Publishing and available at [Amazon.ca](http://Amazon.ca) or through your local music store.

*Beethoven's Wig Sing Along Symphonies 1-4*

CDs available at [Amazon.ca](http://Amazon.ca)