

NLO Shorts: An Introduction to the Orchestra



The Viola

Watch the NLO Shorts videos introducing the instruments of the orchestra. You can find them on the New London Orchestra YouTube channel, or on their website at bit.ly/NLOShorts. As you are watching the videos, answer the questions below. If you're unsure about spellings, turning on subtitles might help! Some keywords are given to guide your answers to some questions.

1. In as much detail as you can, describe how a violist makes a sound on their instrument. [1]

Bow | Strings | Fingers | Reed

2. Listen carefully to the extract from Bela Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra* (1:01).

A. In general, does the melody move by step or by leap? [1]

- B. In what direction does the melody move? Describe in as much detail as you can; don't forget to locate when this happens. [4]

Ascending | Descending | Staying the same | The beginning | The middle | The end

3. Which clef does the viola typically use? [1]

Treble | Alto | Tenor | Bass

4. What does a mute do to the sound of a viola? [1]

Louder | Softer | Change the pitch

5. Listen carefully to the extract from Toru Takemitsu's *A Bird Came Down the Walk* (2:38). From 2:44–2:45, how many notes is the viola playing simultaneously? [1]

Extension: Research the history of William Walton's *Viola Concerto* and write a short essay about what you have found. You might like to consider Walton's dates (when he was born & died), when this piece was written, why it was written and for whom, and the circumstances surrounding its first performance.