

Classics for Kids



## “Hornpipe” from Water Music

George Frideric Handel  
Born: February 23, 1685  
Died: April 14, 1759

George Frideric Handel was born in Halle, Germany, but since he spent most of his professional life in England he is better known as George Frederick Handel.

Although Handel was very interested in music, his father (who was a barber and surgeon) was not. There’s a story that Handel smuggled a clavichord—a VERY quiet instrument—into the house so that he could practice in secret. Handel’s father insisted that his son become a lawyer until the day that Handel sat down at the keyboard and dazzled a duke, who then convinced Handel’s father to let his son study music.

What Handel really loved

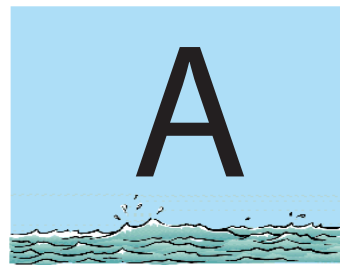
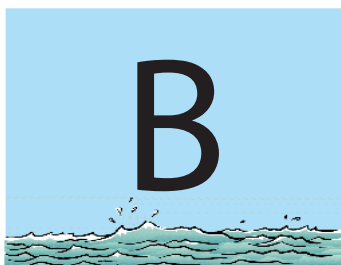
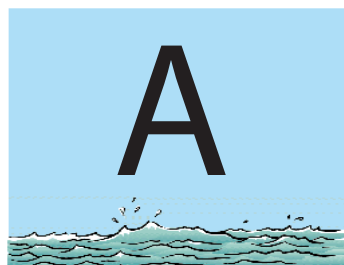
was opera. At the time, Italy was the place to learn about that, so Handel went to Italy for four years. After he returned home to Germany, he was hired as court composer to a prince. However, he immediately asked for time off to go to England, where people really liked Italian opera. When the English became tired of opera, Handel built a whole new career for himself composing oratorios.

Through a strange set of circumstances, Handel’s princely German employer wound up becoming king of England. When he got to London, he didn’t need to hire a court composer because he found his court composer from Germany—namely Handel—was already there!



Handel’s *Water Music* was written for a big party given by King George I of England on the Thames River. King George just happened to be Handel’s boss in Germany and some people think that Handel wrote *Water Music* to return to the King’s good graces. However, it’s more likely that the King simply wanted to impress his guests and asked Handel to write music especially for the occasion. The party rode down the river on a huge barge and the musicians were on another boat right next to them. One report said that the King liked the music so much that he had the musicians repeat it three times.

As you listen to the “Hornpipe” from Handel’s *Water Music*, can you tell that it was written to be played outdoors? What is the clue? It is the instruments. Handel used wind instruments, especially horns, because their sound carries much better outside. Notice how Handel used the instrument families to offset each other. Follow the listening map below. The form of the “Hornpipe” is ABA. Can you hear the mood of the B section change, while staying light and dancelike? What instruments did Handel use here? Did he mix them up or keep the families together?



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# Do you know?

Write the name of the instrument that is being played on the line below the musician. Then, write the family of instruments to which it belongs (brass, strings or woodwinds) underneath. Circle the one that you hear in "Hornpipe."



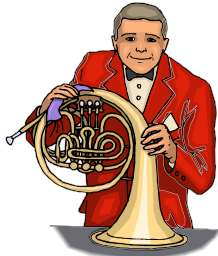
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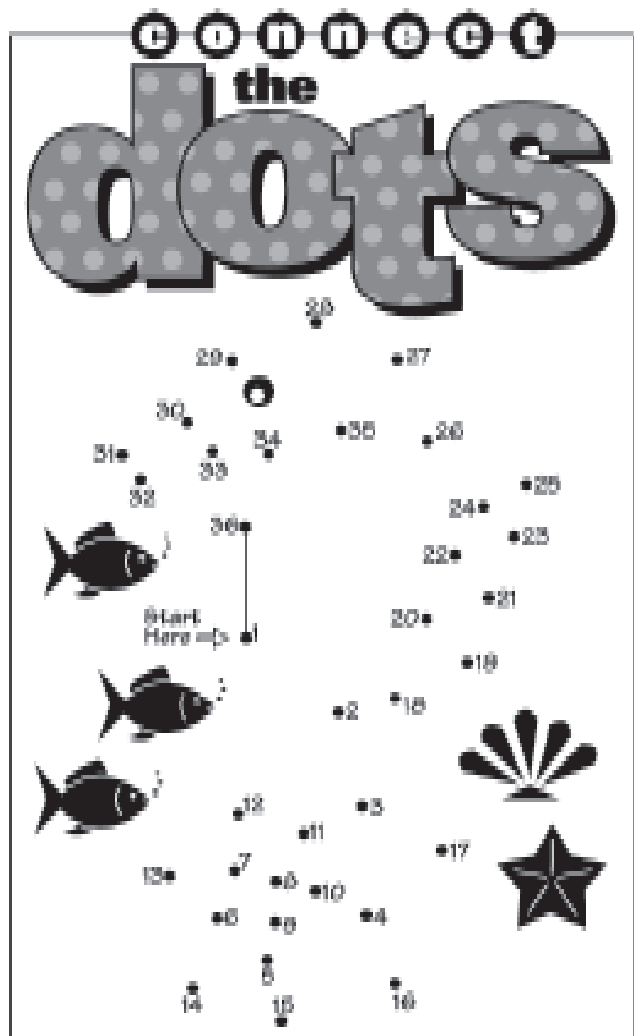
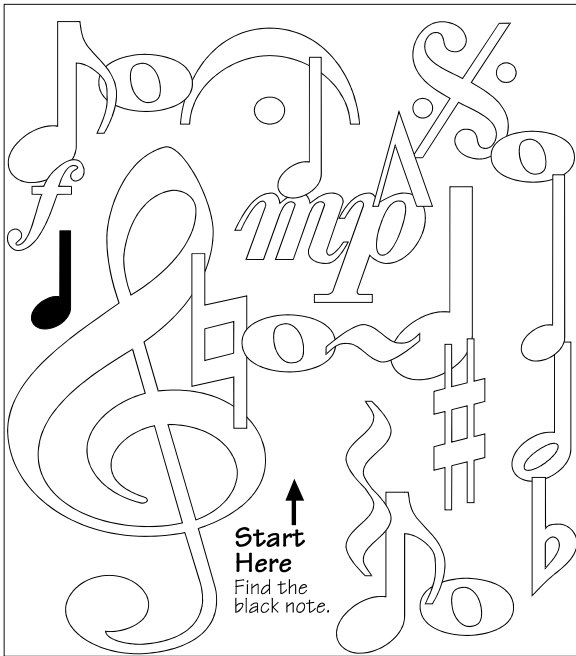
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Here's your chance to create your own piece of art as you listen to Handel's "Hornpipe."

Draw a picture, or write your own story, if you wish, on blank 8 1/2" x 11" paper. Send us your art and we may post it on our *Classics for Kids* website for you to share with others.

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