

WILLIAM TELL OVERTURE

GIOACHINO ROSSINI (1792–1868)

BIOGRAPHY: Italian opera composer Rossini wrote so much popular music for opera in the 1800s that he was able to retire at the young age of 37 and devote his time to food and travel. His first composition was at the age of 15 and Rossini ended up with **34 operas** by the age of 31, meaning he wrote over 2 per year in that time! Rossini is most known for the operas *Barber of Seville*, *Semiramide*, and *Cinderella*. Rossini came from a very musical family– his mother was an opera singer and his father was a trumpet player. Rossini began playing the trumpet with his father, and studied music with their priest. By the age of 12, Rossini had composed his first set of 6 sonatas, and two years later, began studying at a music school in Bologna. He studied voice, cello, and piano, before finally moving on to his true passion: **composition**. Rossini’s music often gains momentum with thrilling crescendos (soft to loud) and tempo increases (quicker over time). In short, his music is an exciting race to the finish! [Read and Listen on Classics for Kids.](#)



▶ [LISTEN](#) to *William Tell* Overture

ABOUT THE MUSIC: *William Tell* was the final opera that Rossini composed and it follows the story of a Swiss folk hero, Tell. Tell, with the help of a redeemed fugitive, brings freedom back to their country. The Overture to *William Tell* is incredibly well-known and is used in popular culture constantly, most memorably in cartoons such as Bugs Bunny and Mickey Mouse. The Overture includes four sections: *Prelude Dawn*, *Storm*, *Call of the Cows*, and *March of the Swiss Soldiers*. Each section is uniquely represented by voices of the orchestra to set a specific tone. The two latter sections, *The Call of the Cows*, and *March of the Swiss Soldiers* are the two most recognized and they have a stark contrast. The *Call of the Cows* signals peaceful daybreak, the melody carried sweetly by English horn and bassoon, and the *March of the Swiss Soldiers* depicts the excitement of a military expedition with a bright fanfare and galloping intensity. The finale section *March of the Swiss Soldiers* is featured on the concert and is a perfect example of the famous Rossini crescendo and his “full speed ahead” writing style for operatic overtures.

[WATCH](#) *William Tell* Overture used in Looney Tunes or

[WATCH](#) Minnie Mouse’s version

WILLIAM TELL MOVEMENT CHALLENGE

Use the listening and movement map to follow along to the sections of the piece!

Movement Key

- A** Gallop & hold the reins
- B** March in place
- C** Pat or clap along
- D** Slow & flowy movement

Listen [Spotify](#) or [Youtube](#)

Tag us on Facebook to show us you completing the challenge!

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Fanfare introduction—Get Ready!		Spotify	YT
A	Gallop & hold the reins	:14	:14
B	March in place	:26	:25
	Transition—Take a break!	:38	:36
A	Gallop & hold the reins	:45	:42
C	Pat or clap along	:57	:53
D	Slow & flowy movements	1:09	1:05
C	Pat or clap along	1:32	1:25
B	March in place	1:45	1:37
	Transition—Take a break!	1:58	1:48
A	Gallop & hold the reins	2:04	1:54
	Ending—Freestyle!	2:16	2:05