



**St. Louis Symphony
Orchestra**

stéphane denève : music director

SLSO At-Home Learning Hedwig's Theme

Musical Themes

Composer John Williams, best known for his movie soundtracks to films such as *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter*, has written some of the most iconic musical themes of our time.

Let's break it down:

- A composer is someone who writes music.
- A soundtrack is music that accompanies a movie.
- A musical theme is a smaller chunk of recognizable music within a larger piece. Listen to your favorite pop song. It probably has a chorus, the recurring part that you love to sing along to. That's kind of like a musical theme in "classical" music.



One of the most recognizable musical themes in cinematic history is the main theme from Hedwig's Theme. Hedwig's Theme was composed by John Williams for the movie *Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone*. Many people believe the main musical theme represents Harry Potter's pet owl Hedwig. We first hear the theme played on the celesta before being passed around to different instruments of the orchestra.

A [celesta](#) looks like a mini upright piano. When a key is pressed down, a hammer strikes a metal plate as opposed to a piano where the hammer strikes a string. Some people say it sounds like a music box.



[Listen](#) to the first or main musical theme from Hedwig's Theme (0:00-0:40).

Musical themes can represent different people, places, events, or even emotions. And composers aren't limited to just one musical theme per piece. In Hedwig's Theme, Williams composed three different musical themes.

[Listen](#) to the second musical theme (1:37-1:47). Some people say the second musical theme represents the magical world of Hogwarts

[Listen](#) to the third musical theme (2:45-2:57). The third musical theme is often referred to as the "flying theme".

What do you think these musical themes represent?





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Musical Themes – Interactive Listening Map

[Listen](#) to the entire piece. Using the [interactive google slides resource](#), put the theme cards in order as you hear them appear in the music. You will need to download the google slides document in order to manipulate the theme cards.

In case you get stuck, the order and timings for each theme are as follows:

- Theme 1 (0:00-1:36)
- Theme 2 (1:37-2:42)
- Theme 3 (2:43-3:06)
- Theme 2 (3:07-3:19)
- Theme 3 (3:20-3:38)
- Theme 2 (3:39-3:52)
- Theme 1 (3:53-end)

Musical Themes - Creative Movement

Create a short dance or other kind of movement to represent each of the three musical themes.

- Theme 1: [Listen](#) (0:00-0:40)
- Theme 2: [Listen](#) (1:37-1:47)
- Theme 3: [Listen](#) (2:45-2:57)

Then [listen](#) to the entire piece. Each time you hear one of the themes, perform the dance or movement you created for that theme.

For a complete recording of *Hedwig's Theme* visit:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTXBLyp7_Dw



What do you know about owls? Mark H.X. Glenshaw's [blog](#) is full of information about the owls in our very own Forest Park.

