



SLSO At Home Learning

The Composer is Dead



The Composer is Dead is a story with musical accompaniment. Before watching the video, make some predictions about the story:

- What is a composer? (A **composer** is someone who writes music.)
- Could this story have something to do with music?
- Where might the story take place?
- Who might the main characters be?
- Might the story be scary? Why?

View [The Composer is Dead](#) by Nathaniel Stookey. After viewing, discuss the following:

- Did the orchestra murder the composer?
- What does it mean when an orchestra “murders” a composer? (A figure of speech. For example, “You killed that test!” meaning you were prepared for the test therefore you completed it quickly and earned a 100%.)
- What does it mean when an orchestra “keeps a composer alive”?

The Composer is Dead is a **figure of speech** – a word or phrase used in a non-literal sense for effect. Like having a double meaning. Brainstorm other figures of speech you have heard or even used.

Using [The Composer is Dead Vocabulary Cards](#), create an action or illustration for each vocabulary word. If you have a copy of the book, read the book and pause to act out each vocabulary word, or act the word out along with the video.

A **melody** is a sequence of notes that is musically satisfying. A musical **theme** is a recognizable melody upon which part or all of a musical composition is based. Composer Nathaniel Stookey uses a handful of themes through his musical story. Listen to [The Composer is Dead](#) and follow along with the listening map to identify all the different musical themes.

Nathaniel Stookey (b. 1970): First commissioned to write a piece for the San Francisco Symphony at age 17, Nathaniel Stookey has collaborated with many of the world’s greatest orchestras. The San Francisco Symphony commissioned, premiered, and recorded *The Composer is Dead* (2006), a sinister guide to the orchestra with narration by Lemony Snicket. It has been performed by hundreds of orchestras worldwide and cited as one of the five most performed works of the 21st century.



