with different accompanying instruments. (See Listening Guide 1 for the order of instruments.) The work closes with a grand fugue, a polyphonic form popular in the Baroque era (1600–1750), which is also based on Purcell’s theme. The fugue, like the variations, presents its subject, or theme, in rapid order in each instrument. (For a discussion of the fugue, see p. 000–000.)

The modern orchestra, with its amplitude of tonal resources, its range of dynamics, and its infinite variety of color, offers a memorable experience to both the musician and the music lover. It is clearly one of the wonders of Western musical culture.

---

**Listening Guide**

**Britten: The Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra**  
*Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell*

**DATE OF WORK:** 1946

**THEME:** Based on a dance (rondeau) from Henry Purcell’s incidental music to the play *Abdelazar* (*The Moor’s Revenge*); theme played by the Los Angeles Baroque Orchestra

**MUSICAL FORM:** Theme and variations, followed by a fugue

**WHAT TO LISTEN FOR:**

- **Purcell**
  - Original dance tune played on Baroque-period string instruments.
  - Difference in timbre between Baroque instruments and modern strings.

- **Britten**
  - Stately dance theme, played first by the full orchestra.
  - Different timbres of each of the 4 instrument families.
  - Sounds of individual instruments, played in turn by each instrument family (highest to lowest).
  - Imaginative variations of the original theme.
  - Special orchestral effects (pizzicato, glissando, trill).
  - Change from major to minor tonality, changing meters (duple, triple, compound).
  - Complex fugue at end, with overlapping statements of the theme.

**1. Theme:** 8 measures in D minor, stated 6 times to illustrate the orchestral families:

- 1. Entire orchestra
- 2. Woodwinds
- 3. Brass
- 4. Strings
- 5. Percussion
- 6. Entire orchestra
II. Variations: 13 short variations, each illustrating a different instrument.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIATION</th>
<th>FAMILY</th>
<th>SOLO INSTRUMENT</th>
<th>ACCOMPANYING INSTRUMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Woodwinds:</td>
<td>flutes, piccolo</td>
<td>violins, harp, and triangle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>oboes</td>
<td>strings and timpani</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>clarinets</td>
<td>strings and tuba</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>bassoons</td>
<td>strings and snare drum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Strings:</td>
<td>violins</td>
<td>brass and bass drum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>violas</td>
<td>woodwinds and brass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>cellos</td>
<td>clarinets, violas, and harp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>double basses</td>
<td>woodwinds and tambourine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>harp</td>
<td>strings, gong, and cymbal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Brass:</td>
<td>French horns</td>
<td>strings, harp, and timpani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>trumpets</td>
<td>strings and snare drum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>trombones, tuba</td>
<td>woodwinds and high brass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Percussion:</td>
<td>various</td>
<td>strings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Order of introduction: timpani, bass drum, and cymbals; timpani, tambourine, triangle; timpani, snare drum, and wood block; timpani, castanets, and gong; timpani and whip; whole percussion section)

III. Fugue: Subject based on a fragment of the Purcell theme, played in imitation by each instrument of the orchestra in the same order as variations:

Woodwinds: piccolo
flutes
oboes
clarinets
bassoons

Strings: first violins
second violins
violas
cellos
double basses
harp

Brass: French horns
trumpets
trombones, tuba

Percussion: various

Full orchestra at the end with Purcell’s theme heard over the fugue.