Canadian composer Vivian Fung was inspired by Balinese *gamelan* music as she dove into composing her Violin Concerto in 2010. At the time, she had just returned home to New York from a trip to Bali and incorporated the sights, sounds and memories of her trip into the music that she wrote.

Listen to and learn more about the traditional *gamelan* music which originated in Indonesia almost 1,000 years ago. Gamelan is named for “gamel” the Javanese (language spoken in Java, Indonesia) word for hammer (pictured below). The *gamelan* ensembles are made up of several different types of percussion instruments including various gongs, metallophones, and drums. Gamelan accompanies dance performances, cultural festivals, traditional puppet theater and religious rituals.

What other instrument(s) do you know of that use a “hammer” style strike to make sound? ___________

(hint: the “hammers” are hidden under a lid in this common instrument)

Answer: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NDvS2V7HbnY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NDvS2V7HbnY)
Check out the recording of Vivian Fung's Violin Concerto on The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra's Concert Library. Fung used other instruments that aren’t taken from a traditional gamelan ensemble to create a similar mood and style in her piece. Gamelan is traditionally a large ensemble including instruments with distinct sounds coming together to create a specific mood and soundscape.

The articulation (or way the notes are played- choppy, smooth or separated) in this piece changes the mood and reminds the listener of the gamelan influence. Listen to the piece and use the timestamps below to identify the style of articulation you hear during the opening sections.

0:00-1:16: Draw a circle around the picture that best matches the articulation (smooth, choppy, separated) you hear in this segment.

1:17-1:54: Draw a triangle around the picture that best matches the articulation (smooth, choppy, separated) you hear in this segment.
IN CELEBRATION AND HONOR OF ASIAN, ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH

As part of our efforts to advance diversity, equity and inclusion in our organization and our field, we are using our platform to celebrate the contributions that Asian, Asian American and Pacific Islander composers, musicians and artists have made to The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and orchestral music as a whole during Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month and throughout the rest of the year. We invite you to explore this playlist of performances in our Concert Library featuring works by AAPI composers and musicians, including SPCO musicians Nina Tso-Ning Fan, Maureen Nelson, Eunae Koh and Eunice Kim, violists Maiya Papach and Hyobi Sim, and clarinetist Sang Yoon Kim.

Within our efforts to actively include a diverse range of voices in all that we do, the SPCO is committed to the continued commissioning of works that have been historically underrepresented on our stage and in the works that we play. In addition to the great performances already in the Concert Library, we hope you will tune into our live broadcast on May 8 to hear the world premiere of the SPCO commission Circling Back for Oboe and Cello by Viet Cuong, featuring SPCO Principal Oboe, Cassie Pilgrim, and for our June 12 live broadcast featuring the world premiere of a new work by Michi Wiancko written for SPCO Principal Clarinet, Sang Yoon Kim.

This playlist is dedicated to the victims of the shootings in Atlanta and to all who have suffered amidst growing anti-Asian racism and hostility in our community and our country. We stand in solidarity with all of our Asian, Asian American and Pacific Islander colleagues and community members who are in distress and denounce this horrific wave of anti-Asian violence and discrimination.

Johann Sebastian Bach:
Chaconne from Partita No. 2 for Solo Violin BWV 1004
Eunae Koh, violin
October 2020

Ludwig van Beethoven:
Romance No. 1 for Violin
Eunice Kim, violin
September 2019

Johannes Brahms:
Clarinet Quintet, Op. 115
Sang Yoon Kim, clarinet
Maureen Nelson, violin
Nina Tso-Ning Fan, violin
Hyobi Sim, viola
Richard Belcher, cello
October 2020

Robert Schumann:
Fairy-Tale Pictures for Viola and Piano
Maiya Papach, viola
Jeremy Denk, piano
October 2016

Ralph Vaughan Williams:
The Lark Ascending
Maureen Nelson, violin
April 2016

Vivian Fung:
Violin Concerto
Steven Schick, conductor
April 2014

Vivian Fung:
Violin Concerto
Steven Schick, conductor
April 2014

RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN AND STUDENTS

In addition to the SPCO’s free online Concert Library, our education and community engagement resources provide learning materials for children, families and educators in response to COVID-19. Explore our list of activities and supplementary materials for all ages to engage with the performances in the Concert Library and music featured in playlists!

Our newest learning activity highlights a selection from this playlist, Vivian Fung’s Violin Concerto and explores the composer’s inspiration from the sounds of traditional Indonesian gamelan music.

Get the free learning activity