

# Listening Guide

## Handel: *Water Music*, Suite in D major, excerpts

**DATE OF WORK:** 1717 (first performance)

**GENRE:** Dance suite

**MEDIUM:** Orchestra (2 trumpets, 2 horns, 2 oboes, bassoon, strings, and continuo; timpani added in recording)

**MOVEMENTS:** Allegro  
Alla hornpipe  
Minuet  
Lentement  
Bourrée

(Shorter recordings include Allegro only.)

**First Movement: Allegro; A-B-A' form, 4/4 meter, D major**

**WHAT TO LISTEN FOR:** Fanfare-like opening with quick exchanges between brass and strings. Distinct timbres of historical brass, woodwinds, and string instruments. 3-part structure (**A-B-A'**); **B** section with dotted rhythms, followed by a return of the opening. Percussion (timpani) added to orchestra.

**A** section—opening fanfare-like theme in trumpets, answered by descending scales in violins, in D major; idea repeated in horns and cello:

Trumpet I, II

Violin I

**B** section—a dotted-rhythm theme announced by trumpets begins in A major:

Dotted-rhythm theme taken over by French horns; short exchanges between strings and brass.

**A** section—return to opening theme, with varied rhythm; cadence in D major. Gentle, spaced chords lead to next movement.

## Second Movement: Alla hornpipe; A-B-A form, 3/2 meter, D major

**WHAT TO LISTEN FOR:** Alternation between strings/woodwinds and brass (trumpets and French horns) in first section.  
 Ascending melody with leaps and trills.  
**B** section for strings and woodwinds only (no brass); descending melody in minor key.  
 Return of opening (3-part structure **A-B-A**), in major key.

**A** section—disjunct theme in strings and double reeds, with trills, later answered by trumpets and French horns; in D major, at a moderate, spritely tempo:

Continued alternation of motives between brass and strings.

**B** section—strings and woodwinds only (no brass); fast-moving string part with syncopated winds; in B minor:

**A** section—repeat of entire first section; ends at close of section in D major.