

Introduction – meeting the composer and performers

Haven is the final movement from a concerto called Seavaigers (pronounced 'SEE - vay – gers'), by the composer Sally Beamish. Watch the film that introduces the piece, and answer the following questions by ticking your chosen answer:

1. This music is about a journey between two places in Scotland. Which two places?
 - a. Dundee and Skye ☐
 - b. Douglas and Shetland ☐
 - c. Dundee and Shetland ☐

2. The title of the piece, "Seavaigers" means:
 - a. Sailor ☐
 - b. Sea-farer ☐
 - c. Sea-avoider ☐

3. Which two instruments are featured in this piece?
 - a. Scottish harp and fiddle ☐
 - b. Scottish fiddle and cello ☐
 - c. Harp and viola ☐

4. What is a concerto?
 - a. A long piece of music ☐
 - b. A piece for solo instruments and orchestra ☐
 - c. A piece for two solo instruments ☐

5. What is the name of the fishing boat that Sally says is the oldest boat in the area?
 - a. The Green Lady ☐
 - b. The Harp ☐
 - c. The Swan ☐

6. Listen carefully to how Chris Stout describes the fiddle (the violin). You might want to listen more than once (03:40). Can you write down some of the words he uses to describe the instrument and its sound?

7. How does Sally create a sense of uncertainty and excitement for her 'homecoming' music?
 - a. The metre (time signature) stays the same throughout, so it is easy to tap along ☐
 - b. The metre changes regularly, so it is difficult to tap along ☐

Musical Features – how the instruments are used

This piece is a concerto for two solo instruments and string orchestra. The solo instruments in *Seavaigers* are the clársach (Scottish harp), and the Shetland fiddle. The other instruments of the string orchestra are the cello, double bass, viola, and violin.

Watch the performance, and complete the activities on this page:

1. Put the instruments of the string orchestra in order of pitch:

highest pitch			lowest pitch

2. The composer uses lots of different techniques to vary the sound of the string instruments. To learn more about these techniques, match up the descriptions to their names by writing the letter of the description next to the key word. Read the paragraph below to help you.

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-------|
| a) playing two notes at once | Glissando | _____ |
| b) pressing a hand against a string / strings to stop them from sounding | Strummed | _____ |
| c) plucking a string with your finger to create a very short sound | Dampened | _____ |
| d) a trembling effect made by rapid bowing of the same note | Arco | _____ |
| e) sweep fingers across a few strings at once to create chords | Pizzicato | _____ |
| f) using the bow | Staccato | _____ |
| g) a long, smooth sound using the full length of the bow | Legato | _____ |
| h) a short, detached sound, but not plucked | Double Stopped | _____ |
| i) a glide up or down the instrument | Tremolo | _____ |

“As well as plucking the strings normally, Catriona uses some interesting harp techniques in this piece. The glissando effects sweep up and down the instrument like waves, and when she dampens the strings and strums chords, the harp almost sounds like a guitar. The string orchestra also demonstrates a lot of variety in the accompaniment. At the beginning of the piece, the cello and bass pizzicato creates a light and playful feel to the music. The cellos grab their bows and switch to an arco technique, but still play staccato when joined by the viola section to keep the music detached and delicate. When Chris begins his solo line, his melody is much more legato, which creates a contrast to the accompaniment. There are a couple of other ways in which the techniques create contrast. When the string players use double stopping to play two notes at once, the music becomes richer and more dense, but when they rapidly and quietly tremolo towards the end, the music has a trembling quality.”

3. What do you think is the most effective / interesting thing about this music? Try to use some of the vocabulary above:

Musical Features – changing metres

Metre is the organisation of rhythms into certain regular patterns, called **beats**. These beats are put into groups, known as **bars**. The **time signature** of the music tells us how big these groups are, and how they are organised. The time signature is shown as two numbers on top of each other, near the start of the music. Circle the time signature:






6
8

← The top number tells us how many **beats** are in a **bar**.

← The bottom number tells us what type of **beats** they are.

In time signatures with an '8' at the bottom, we are adding up notes called quavers, or 1/8th notes.

They look like this when alone: , like this when in pairs: , and like this in threes: .

These symbols are examples of music notation. Practise drawing them here:

1. Draw 6 single quavers to fill this bar

6
8

2. Draw 3 pairs of quavers to fill this bar

6
8

3. Draw two groups of three quavers to fill this bar

6
8

You'll notice that there are six quavers in each of these bars. They are just grouped differently.

One of the features of the music was its changing metres. To understand more about different metres, follow the instructions to fill in these bars:

7
8

pair, pair, three

3
8

three

9
8

three, pair, pair, pair

9
8

three, three, three

10
8

three, three, pair, pair

5
8

pair, pair, single

Can you come up with three different ways to fill up this bar?

11
8

11
8

11
8

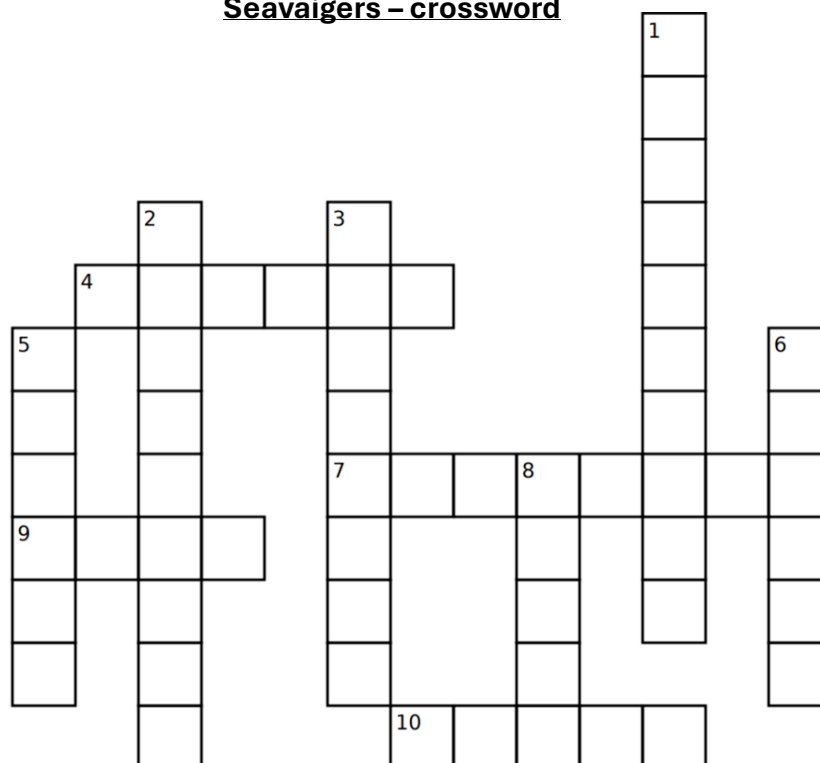
Seavaigers – creative responses

WRITING: write a poem or short story called “Homecoming”, in which your main character (protagonist) overcomes a difficult situation to make it home, or back to a place of safety. To plan your poem or story, start by coming up with some descriptive words to describe the contrasting feelings of being somewhere unsafe and unfamiliar, and somewhere safe and familiar.

DRAWING / ART: draw a sailing boat at the centre of your page. Make one half of the background dark and stormy, and the other half calm and safe. Experiment with colour, shape, and texture to create as much contrast as possible.

CULTURE / RESEARCH: in this piece, the composer explored the sounds and culture of Scotland. What would the sounds of your ‘homecoming’ be like? Find out more about the instruments, music and performing artists of a culture linked to you (this could be where you are from, where your parents or grandparents are from, or a culture that you feel connected to). Create a poster (physical or digital) to showcase the sounds of your ‘homecoming’.

Seavaigers – crossword



1. The lowest-pitched instrument of the string orchestra
2. Plucking the strings
3. The name of the Scottish harp
4. The name of the Shetland violin
5. Creating a smooth, sustained sound
6. The highest-pitched instrument of the string orchestra

7. Creating a short, detached sound
8. The second largest instrument of the string orchestra
9. Playing the strings with a bow.
10. The second smallest instrument of the string orchestra