**Listening Activity: Handel and The Royals**

One of the most celebrated composers from the Baroque era is George Frideric Handel. His music is often heard today in both mainstream media (especially his famous "Hallelujah Chorus") and in concerts. Even though he was German, Handel lived in England for a significant portion of his life, and his music was beloved by the English (including the British Royal family). The Royal Family commissioned Handel on numerous occasions to write works for their celebrations, with one of those works being *Music for the Royal Fireworks*. This collection of pieces for orchestra was composed to accompany a fireworks display in London for a celebration of the end of the War of Austrian Succession. It was premiered on April 27, 1749. This listening activity will explore and introduce this magnificent work.

Click [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_qzB_5O-aK0) to listen to *Music for the Royal Fireworks*. Listen to the Overture (0:00 until 8:34) and answer the questions below. There are no right or wrong answers, just answer based on your impression of the piece.

1. This recording features a Baroque orchestra (an orchestra that resembles those of Baroque era: the time period in which this piece was written). What differences do you notice between a Baroque orchestra and a standard symphony orchestra of today (click [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0cZT34Y-cs) to listen to a modern symphony orchestra) ?

2. How would you describe the mood or atmosphere of this piece?

3. How does Handel achieve this mood/atmosphere musically? Refer to specific musical devices (e.g. rhythm, melody, dynamics, instruments) in your answer.

4. Do you think this piece sounds appropriate given the event for which it was written? Why or why not?