

PROGRESS TEST FILES 1–5

Listening 1

Interviewer Next, I'm delighted to welcome to the studio Maxim Philmore, lead violinist with the Yelton Symphony Orchestra. I saw your mixed programme of Mahler concertos last week. It was magnificent.

Maxim Thank you.

Interviewer Have you been rehearsing the pieces for very long?

Maxim Not really. I think that's one of the main differences between professional orchestras and amateurs. Amateurs or students are able to prepare for a concert for several months. On the other hand, professionals might have one or two programmes to prepare each week.

Interviewer That's interesting. So you have less rehearsal time than non-professionals?

Maxim Oh no. We rehearse a great deal. But what we play changes more regularly. And of course, we practise for many hours every day, too. The life of a professional musician is very similar to that of a mountain climber. We work very hard, and there are many struggles, but we have moments of huge success and beauty at the top of the mountain.

Interviewer And, like a mountaineer, you have to be physically fit.

Maxim Absolutely. Some performances are very physically demanding. And remember, sometimes we have to be at our best for an evening performance, and sometimes for a daytime performance, so we also have to be extremely organized. We need to practise at the right time, eat and sleep at the right time, travel at the right time. You have to give 100%.

Interviewer There is, perhaps, a stereotype of the classical musician: full of emotion, very focused, and perhaps quite poor. Do you think that's true?

Maxim Ah yes...the 'struggling' musician. No, I don't think that's true in the twenty-first century. There are many different opportunities for classical musicians: teaching, classical performance, pop music. And, generally speaking, orchestras work hard to employ a wide range of people. So...to give you an example, all professional orchestras have used 'blind auditions' for over 40 years now.

Interviewer So, when someone auditions to join the orchestra the judges hear the audition music, but they can't see the musicians.

Maxim Exactly. Each applicant plays behind a barrier, like a little wall, in the room. He or she even removes their shoes so the judges can't tell from the sound of their walk if they're male or female. Back in the 1980s, when this system was introduced, there was certainly some gender bias in orchestras. Since the introduction of blind auditions, the system is equal for everyone – or at least it should be.

Interviewer What do you mean by that?

Maxim Ah well, the judges can't tell what you look like any more, but they can of course hear the sound you make. And one way to make yourself sound better is to buy an expensive violin, or cello, or flute. The best instruments really do make a better sound. So...some people can afford to influence the audition process in that way.

Interviewer Perhaps in the future all candidates will play the same instrument for auditions.

Maxim I think that's a wonderful idea.

PROGRESS TEST FILES 1–5

Listening 2

1

Iwan This tiny bag of salad is £1.25. That seems very expensive.

Annalise It's much cheaper if you buy separate vegetables and prepare your own salad. But somehow I never manage it.

Iwan We should try harder. How about frozen vegetables? Look, this bag has got frozen sweetcorn, carrot, and broccoli in it, and it's £1 for a really big bag.

Annalise That's a bargain! Hey! The packaging says that frozen broccoli has more vitamin B than fresh broccoli. And frozen sweetcorn has more vitamin C than fresh sweetcorn. That's incredible!

Iwan Yes, I had no idea.

2

Freya How are you getting on with your food challenge, Latif?

Latif Not well, I'm afraid. I thought it would be easy to find food that was grown close to here, but I was wrong. When I started, I only wanted to eat food from 50 miles away or less. I found local milk and eggs easily enough. But that was about it.

Freya Really? No fruit or vegetables?

Latif Not even in the market. And although I like vegetarian food, I really wanted to find some local meat, too. So, I had to expand my challenge and try to find food from this country only. Even that is proving difficult.

Freya I still think it's a really good idea. The distance our food travels is bad for the planet. I know! I'll join your challenge, then we can shop together.

Latif Oh yes! I think that would help a lot.

3

Eve So, I've booked a table for all fifteen of us for seven thirty on Friday.

Ruby Eve, I'm really sorry, but I don't think I can make it.

Eve What? You have to, Ruby! We've won our last five matches. You're our best defender. Come on! We need to celebrate as a team.

Ruby I want to, but I had to pay for some repairs on my car this month. I don't really have any money until I get paid next week.

Eve Don't worry, Ruby. I'll pay for you. It's not a problem and you can pay me back next week.

Ruby OK. Thanks, Eve. But please don't let me spend much.

4

Karen I need to reduce my family's food bill. Any tips, David?

David Oh well, I sympathize with your problem. It's not easy to eat well and spend less.

Karen I'm going to tell the kids we're only having a takeaway once a month instead of once a week. They won't be happy, but that will make a difference straight away. They cost us about £50 every week!

David Bravo. Do you know, I think my family spend a similar amount on bottled water. It's not deliberate. But the kids buy water at college, and I buy water when I eat in this café at lunch time. It's a bad habit and we should change it.

5

Wes How do you save money when you go food shopping, Inge?

Inge Um...I plan. I write a shopping list and I only buy the things on my list. That's the easiest way to save money. How about you?

Wes Oh well, I agree with you, and I use a list, too. But I do sometimes buy other things if I'm in the market and they have a special offer. Sometimes, at the end of the day you can buy things much more cheaply there. I got some interesting vegetables last Thursday and then went online to find a suitable recipe.

Inge I can see how that would be fun. But you've got more time than me. I can't go to the market and the fish shop and the bakery. It would take hours.

Wes But supermarkets are expensive and boring.

Inge Well, I don't think so. The supermarket has bargains at the end of each day too, *and* I spend less on petrol.

PROGRESS TEST FILES 6–10

Listening 1

- Megan** What are you up to with the kids this weekend, Asha?
- Asha** Well, if the weather stays bad, I think we'll watch a film tomorrow afternoon. I've bought a few old films – things the kids probably haven't even heard of. I'd like them to try a new film each weekend if we have nothing else to do.
- Megan** That's a good idea. What are you going to watch this week?
- Asha** Well, I thought we'd start with *My Neighbor Totoro*. It's Japanese, but it's been dubbed into English.
- Megan** That's brave. Some of those Japanese animations can be scary for little ones, can't they? Are you sure it's suitable?
- Asha** I think so. There are some imaginary creatures, but not monsters or anything like that. I read some reviews on Mumsnet and they said it was fine.
- Megan** Oh well, I'm sure that's OK, then. I always think you can trust Mumsnet reviews. People usually give good advice.
- Asha** Yes. I use their product reviews all the time...films, kids' toys, loads of things, actually. If I want other parents' opinions, I'll generally look on Mumsnet first.
- Megan** Have you ever posted a comment yourself?
- Asha** No. How about you?
- Megan** Yes, quite often actually. I'll join in with a discussion if I'm interested in the topic or I have relevant experience that might help. I like the health advice section...It's very detailed, and I've seen quite a few doctors writing in the chat rooms who correct anything that's inaccurate. I've joined in with discussions about allergies, and having twins of course.
- Asha** I read an interview with the Mumsnet boss recently. She has four children of her own, including twins, like you. Oh, what's her name?
- Megan** It's Justine, isn't it?
- Asha** Of course, yes, Justine Roberts. She started Mumsnet after her first international holiday when the twins were babies. Apparently it was a total disaster and she wished someone had told her what to expect. If she hadn't had such a bad time, she would never have started the site. That was back in 2000, so it's really quite an old website.
- Megan** It was lucky she had a good idea and good technical knowledge!
- Asha** Actually, I learned that her background wasn't in computer programming. She just realized she'd had a good idea and an opportunity to set up the first parenting forum. Luckily, she had a friend with good technical knowledge who could write computer code, and they worked together to make the site.
- Megan** Well, thank goodness they did. I am definitely a Mumsnetter.
- Asha** Me too.

PROGRESS TEST FILES 6–10

Listening 2

1

Heather Have you read this article about chatting and creativity?

Liam No. Does it say it's a waste of time?

Heather No, the opposite. Researchers looked at thousands of science papers. They found that scientists whose offices were in the same building or, even better, on the same floor of the same building, wrote more papers than scientists who worked far apart. They concluded that having a regular opportunity to chat face-to-face helped the scientists to solve problems creatively.

Liam That's interesting. But perhaps scientists are particularly good at sharing ideas. In my office, people just stand around the water cooler and talk about TV.

2

Isobel I'm starting a new routine at work tomorrow.

Lewis What are you going to do? Are you taking up meditation?

Isobel No! I'm trying a technique for getting things done. You pick a morning and start work early. I'm aiming to be at the office at 6 a.m. Then you close your office door, switch off your phone, and focus on getting one task done. You ignore everything else: no colleagues, no coffee break, no emails.

Lewis Ah...yes, but all my work tasks are on a computer, so I can't turn that off.

Isobel No, the problem isn't the technology, it's the constant distraction. The aim is to be more focused.

Lewis I see. Let me know how you get on.

3

Fiona So, I was in our big Thursday meeting with the Creative Director, Julie, and suddenly she divided us all up into groups of four and asked us to think of ideas for a new company logo.

Toby Oh dear.

Fiona It was totally crazy. Everyone was talking at the same time. There were lots of ideas, but I don't think any of them were good ideas. Honestly, I know all about the business, but I can't be creative like that without time to prepare.

Toby I think you should tell Julie your concerns. There are other, better ways to organize creative meetings.

Fiona You're right! If she could have told us about the creative tasks in advance, that would have helped. And I'd be far more comfortable if we could email ideas to her.

4

Romesh The company on the floor above mine has just bought a table tennis table for their office.

Alba That's nice. They have lots of games at the Google offices in America, don't they? It's to make workers more creative – you know, happy workers have good ideas.

Romesh Hmm. I'm not so sure. I mean, it's nice to have fun with colleagues. But I think it's just a way of getting people to work longer hours. The best way to get creative workers is to actually listen to their ideas. If I thought my company would *use* my ideas, I'd definitely give them more ideas.

Alba I wish you were my boss, Romesh!

5

Alan OK, Patrick and Cora, please stop there. The scene looks good, but I want us to rehearse it in different ways so we can really explore your characters. So, I'm going to turn over a card from this pack and ask you the question written on it. I'll give you ten minutes to continue the scene from this point following the directions on the card. Are you ready? OK. 'What if there was no talking?' I repeat: 'What if there was no talking?' OK, carry on.

Cora Right, no talking. That's fine, I think. It's a very emotional moment in the story, so we can use our faces and hands.

Patrick It didn't say we can't use noise, just no words. So we can make sounds, too. OK, my character is very upset right now.

Cora And I'm furious with you. Let's just improvise and see what happens.