

The First Astronomer

For Grade 4.5, or Grade 3,
or Multi-Level String Orchestra (Grades 4.5 • 3 • 2)
by Kevin Sluder (ASCAP)

Instrumentation

Part A

Grade 4.5

5 - Violin A1

5 - Violin A2

3 - Viola A

3 - Cello A

3 - Bass A

Part B

Grade 3

5 - Violin B1

5 - Violin B2

3 - Viola B

3 - Cello B

3 - Bass B

Part C

Grade 2

4 - Violin C1

4 - Violin C2

3 - Viola C

2 - Cello C

2 - Bass C

Note from the Editor:

This composition works as a stand alone piece for Grade 4.5 Sting Orchestra (Part A), or a stand alone piece for Grade 3 String Orchestra (Part B), or you can combine Parts A, B, and/or C as needed.

This work contains rights to copy additional parts as stipulated on the copyright page in this score.

- Katie O'Hara LaBrie

Full Set - \$90.00

Extra Conductor Score - \$15.00

Extra Part - \$5.00



Randall Standridge Music • Jonesboro, Arkansas • 870-558-5035
www.randallstandridge.com • info@randallstandridge.com

The First Astronomer

By Kevin Sluder

for Grade 4.5, Grade 3, or Multi-Level String Orchestra (4.5 • 3 • 2)

Program Notes:

For centuries, humanity has been fascinated by the stars, constantly evolving the technology in order to reach farther into space than ever before. In a time before bright city lights, imagine being the first person to look through a telescope inside a true dark sky area and see our galaxy.

The stars have told us stories since the beginning of time. Triumphant tales, epic battles, and lost loves. The sky speaks to everyone in a different way, and as such, this piece has multiple levels to accommodate students of a wide ability range.

Whether you are staring at the shimmering clouds of the Milky Way, navigating the violent paths of the asteroid belt, wishing on a shooting star, or just basking in the velvety glow of the night sky, we hope you enjoy following in the footsteps of the first astronomers!

About this Piece:

The First Astronomer was written for the orchestras of the Clayton School District in Clayton, MO. It was a joy to compose this adventurous multi-level piece for their 2025 spring concert.

What I love is that the piece can be played as just the grade 4.5 (the A parts), just the grade 3 (the B parts), or any combination of the three levels. Additionally, if you find yourself with a mixed-level ensemble, needing to engage a wide range of abilities, you can differentiate your instruction by passing out any of the parts that you need and it will all work together!

Note that the "Asteroid Belt" section is in C minor, but without officially changing the key signature. Make sure to talk to your students about the accidentals resetting every measure. Careful! Several of those B's are naturally natural!

Try to envision turning the telescope and seeing drastically different constellations and celestial bodies. Our galaxy is a chaotic and beautiful thing to behold. Share this with your audience by leaning into the changing moods of the different sections and exaggerating the dynamics.

I hope you and your students love *The First Astronomer*!

– Kevin Sluder



About the Composer:

Kevin Sluder is a Texas string orchestra director in the DFW area and has been teaching in the public school system since 2007. His middle school program in Frisco, TX was named the 2024 TMEA JH/MS Full Honor Orchestra.

Born and raised in Mansfield, TX, Mr. Sluder obtained his bachelor's degree in music education from the University of North Texas in Denton. A bass player by trade, he also has experience in percussion and guitar, with a deep love of rhythm.

Outside of the classroom, Mr. Sluder spends a great deal of time composing and arranging music. He also runs two podcasts. *Rite of String*, co-hosted with Matthew Moreno, focuses on string education. *SluderMusic* is a showcase of Mr. Sluder's published pieces. In addition to his work in the "classical" world, he has written and recorded several rock/electronic albums that are available on most streaming services.

Mr. Sluder currently resides in McKinney, TX with his wife (and fellow Orchestra director), Bethany Hardwick. In his limited spare time, he enjoys taking naps, camping, and playing video games.

The First Astronomer

For Grade 4.5, Grade 3, or Multi-Level Orchestra (4.5 • 3 • 2)

Score
Duration 3:30

Kevin Sluder

Freely ♩ = 112

The musical score is arranged in three systems, each containing five staves. The instruments are Violin A1, Violin A2, Viola A, Cello A, Bass A in the first system; Violin B1, Violin B2, Viola B, Cello B, Bass B in the second system; and Violin C1, Violin C2, Viola C, Cello C, Bass C in the third system. The time signature is 3/4. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ppp* and *pp*. Performance instructions include *non div.* and *Freely*. A large watermark 'Randall Standridge Music Preview Only' is overlaid on the score.

15 The Milky Way

Vln. A1

Vln. A2

Vla. A

Cello A

Bass A

15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22

Vln. B1

Vln. B2

Vla. B

Cello B

Bass B

15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22

Vln. C1

Vln. C2

Vla. C

Cello C

Bass C

15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22

23

Vln. A1

Vln. A2

Vla. A

Cello A

Bass A

23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

Vln. B1

Vln. B2

Vla. B

Cello B

Bass B

23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

Vln. C1

Vln. C2

Vla. C

Cello C

Bass C

pp

p

p

23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

Detailed description: This page of a musical score for 'The First Astronomer' covers measures 23 to 30. It features three systems of staves for Violins (A1, B1, C1), Violas (A, B, C), Cellos (A, B, C), and Basses (A, B, C). The first system (Vln. A1, Vln. A2, Vla. A, Cello A, Bass A) includes a box with the number '23' at the top left. The second system (Vln. B1, Vln. B2, Vla. B, Cello B, Bass B) and third system (Vln. C1, Vln. C2, Vla. C, Cello C, Bass C) also have measure numbers 23-30 at the bottom. Performance markings include *pp* for Vln. C1, *p* for Vla. C, Cello C, and Bass C, and a '4' marking above measure 24 in Vln. A2. A large diagonal watermark 'Randall Standridge Music' is overlaid across the score.

31 div. arco

Vln. A1 *pp* *p*

Vln. A2 *p* *mp* *mp* *mp*

Vla. A *p* *mp* *mp* *mp*

Cello A *pp* *p*

Bass A *pp* *p*

31 32 33 34 35 36

Vln. B1 *pp* *p* (-2) (-3)

Vln. B2 *pp* *p*

Vla. B *pp* *p*

Cello B *pp* *p*

Bass B *pp* *p*

31 32 33 34 35 36

Vln. C1 *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

Vln. C2 *pp* *p*

Vla. C *pp* *p*

Cello C *pp* *p* 3

Bass C *pp* *p*

31 32 33 34 35 36

39

The score is divided into three systems. The first system includes Violins A1 and A2, Viola A, Cello A, and Bass A. The second system includes Violins B1 and B2, Viola B, Cello B, and Bass B. The third system includes Violins C1 and C2, Viola C, Cello C, and Bass C. Measure numbers 37, 38, 39, 40, and 41 are indicated below the staves. Dynamics include *mf* and *pp*. Performance instructions include *arco* and *div.*. A box containing the number 39 is located above the first staff. A large watermark 'Mandala Preview Only' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

This musical score page covers measures 42 through 46. It features a full orchestral arrangement with the following parts:

- Vln. A1 & B1:** Violin A1 and B1 parts. A1 has a *div.* marking in measure 44. Both parts start at *mp* and include *cresc.* markings.
- Vln. A2 & B2:** Violin A2 and B2 parts. A2 has a *div.* marking in measure 44. Both parts start at *mp* and include *cresc.* markings.
- Vla. A & B:** Viola A and B parts. Both start at *mp* and include *cresc.* markings.
- Cello A & B:** Cello A and B parts. Both start at *mp* and include *cresc.* markings. Cello A has a *pizz.* marking in measure 43 and an *arco* marking in measure 46.
- Bass A & B:** Bass A and B parts. Both start at *mp* and include *cresc.* markings. Bass A has a *pizz.* marking in measure 43.
- Vln. C1 & C2:** Violin C1 and C2 parts. Both start at *mp* and include *cresc.* markings.
- Vla. C:** Viola C part. Starts at *mp* and includes *cresc.* markings.
- Cello C & Bass C:** Cello C and Bass C parts. Both start at *mp* and include *cresc.* markings.

Measure numbers 42, 43, 44, 45, and 46 are indicated at the bottom of each system. A large watermark 'Randall Standridge Music' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

This musical score page covers measures 47 through 54. It is divided into three systems of staves. The first system includes Violins A1 and A2, Viola A, Cello A, and Bass A. The second system includes Violins B1 and B2, Viola B, Cello B, and Bass B. The third system includes Violins C1 and C2, Viola C, Cello C, and Bass C. The score features various musical notations such as dynamics (f, non div., div., sim.), articulation (accents, slurs), and performance instructions (divisi markings). Measure numbers 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, and 54 are clearly marked at the beginning of each measure. A box containing the number '47' is located at the top left of the first staff. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'Randall Standridge Music Preview Only' is overlaid across the center of the page.

55

Vln. A1

Vln. A2

Vla. A

Cello A

Bass A

55 56 rit. 58 59 60 61

Vln. B1

Vln. B2

Vla. B

Cello B

Bass B

55 56 57 rit. 58 59 60 61

Vln. C1

Vln. C2

Vla. C

Cello C

Bass C

55 56 57 58 59 60 61

62 Asteroid Belt ♩ = 160

Vln. A1

Vln. A2

Vla. A

Cello A

Bass A

62 63 64 65 66 67

Vln. B1

Vln. B2

Vla. B

Cello B

Bass B

62 63 64 65 66 67

Vln. C1

Vln. C2

Vla. C

Cello C

Bass C

62 63 64 65 66 67

70

This musical score page covers measures 68 through 73. It features a full orchestral arrangement with the following parts:

- Vln. A1:** Violin 1, starting in measure 70 with a *pizz.* (pizzicato) and *mp* (mezzo-piano) dynamic.
- Vln. A2:** Violin 2, starting in measure 68 with a *pizz.* and *mp* dynamic.
- Vla. A:** Viola 1, starting in measure 68.
- Cello A:** Cello 1, starting in measure 68.
- Bass A:** Bass 1, starting in measure 68 with a *pizz.* and *mp* dynamic, including fingering numbers like -3, 3, 0, 0, -1, b-1, -3, -4, 4, -1, 1.
- Vln. B1:** Violin 3, starting in measure 68 with a *pizz.* and *mp* dynamic, including fingering numbers like -4, 4.
- Vln. B2:** Violin 4, starting in measure 68.
- Vla. B:** Viola 2, starting in measure 68.
- Cello B:** Cello 2, starting in measure 68.
- Bass B:** Bass 2, starting in measure 69 with a *pizz.* and *mp* dynamic.
- Vln. C1:** Violin 5, starting in measure 69 with a *pizz.* and *mp* dynamic.
- Vln. C2:** Violin 6, starting in measure 69 with a *pizz.* and *mp* dynamic.
- Vla. C:** Viola 3, starting in measure 69 with a *pizz.* and *mp* dynamic.
- Cello C:** Cello 3, starting in measure 69 with a *pizz.* and *mp* dynamic.
- Bass C:** Bass 3, starting in measure 69 with a *pizz.* and *mp* dynamic.

The score includes various musical notations such as *pizz.*, *mp*, and dynamic markings. Measure numbers 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, and 73 are clearly indicated at the bottom of each system.

The image displays a musical score for 'The First Astronomer', specifically page 12. The score is arranged in three systems, each containing five staves. The instruments are: Vln. A1, Vln. A2, Vla. A, Cello A, Bass A (System 1); Vln. B1, Vln. B2, Vla. B, Cello B, Bass B (System 2); and Vln. C1, Vln. C2, Vla. C, Cello C, Bass C (System 3). The score covers measures 74 through 79. Performance instructions include 'div.' (divisi) for the first violins in measures 74-76, 'arco' (arco) for the second violins in measures 77-79, and 'p' (piano) for the second violins in measures 77-79. Fingerings and bowings are indicated throughout the score.

88

The musical score is arranged in three systems. The first system includes Violins A1 and A2, Viola A, Cello A, and Bass A. The second system includes Violins B1 and B2, Viola B, Cello B, and Bass B. The third system includes Violins C1 and C2, Viola C, Cello C, and Bass C. Measure numbers 85, 86, 87, 88, and 89 are printed below each staff. A box containing the number '88' is located at the top of the first system. A large watermark 'Randall Standridge Music Preview Only' is overlaid diagonally across the score.

The image displays a page of a musical score for 'The First Astronomer', page 15. The score is arranged in three systems, each containing five staves for different instruments: Violin A1 and A2, Viola A, Cello A, and Bass A in the first system; Violin B1 and B2, Viola B, Cello B, and Bass B in the second system; and Violin C1 and C2, Viola C, Cello C, and Bass C in the third system. The music is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and a 2/4 time signature. The first system includes measures 89-94, with measure 89 marked '2 1/2 pos.' and measures 91-94 marked 'div.'. The second system includes measures 91-94, with measure 91 marked 'div.'. The third system includes measures 91-94. Various musical notations are present, including triplets (marked '3'), divisi markings ('div.'), and specific fingerings (e.g., '1', '2', '4'). A large, semi-transparent watermark reading 'Randall Standridge Music' is overlaid diagonally across the score.

90

91

92

93

94

Violin A1, Violin A2, Viola A, Cello A, Bass A, Violin B1, Violin B2, Viola B, Cello B, Bass B, Violin C1, Violin C2, Viola C, Cello C, Bass C

opt. 8^{va} div.

sub. p

non div.

1st pos. 96

95 96 97 98 99

sfz p f mf pizz. ϕ f

100

Vln. A1
Vln. A2
Vla. A
Cello A
Bass A
Vln. B1
Vln. B2
Vla. B
Cello B
Bass B
Vln. C1
Vln. C2
Vla. C
Cello C
Bass C

100 101 102 103 104 105

100 101 102 103 104 105

100 101 102 103 104 105

ff ff ff

arco arco arco

non div. non div.

108

Vln. A1

Vln. A2

Vla. A

Cello A

Bass A

106 107 108 109

Vln. B1

Vln. B2

Vla. B

Cello B

Bass B

106 107 108 109 110 111

Vln. C1

Vln. C2

Vla. C

Cello C

Bass C

f

106 107 108 109 110 111

119 Shooting Stars

The musical score is arranged in three systems. The first system includes Vln. A1, Vln. A2, Vla. A, Cello A, and Bass A. The second system includes Vln. B1, Vln. B2, Vla. B, Cello B, and Bass B. The third system includes Vln. C1, Vln. C2, Vla. C, Cello C, and Bass C. The score is for measures 119 to 124. Vln. A1 and Vln. B1 have dynamic markings of *mp* and *pp*. Vln. A2 and Vla. B have *pp* markings. Vla. A, Cello A, Bass A, Cello B, and Bass B have *p* markings. Vln. C1 and Vln. C2 have *pp* markings. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like *pizz.* and *div.*.

127

Vln. A1 *div.*

Vln. A2 *mp* *cresc.* *arco*

Vla. A *cresc.*

Cello A *mp* *p* *cresc.*

Bass A *cresc.* -1 -2 -4 1

125 126 127 128 129 130

Vln. B1 *div.* *cresc.* -1

Vln. B2 *cresc.*

Vla. B *p* *cresc.*

Cello B *cresc.*

Bass B *cresc.*

125 126 127 128 129 130

Vln. C1 *pizz.* *cresc.*

Vln. C2 *cresc.*

Vla. C *cresc.*

Cello C *cresc.*

Bass C *cresc.*

125 126 127 128 129 130

134 Taking It All In

The musical score is arranged in three systems. The first system includes Vln. A1, Vln. A2, Vla. A, Cello A, and Bass A. The second system includes Vln. B1, Vln. B2, Vla. B, Cello B, and Bass B. The third system includes Vln. C1, Vln. C2, Vla. C, Cello C, and Bass C. Dynamics range from *mf* to *ff*. Performance instructions include *arco*, *div.*, *non div.*, and *opt. div. 8^{va}*. Measure numbers 131, 132, 133, 134, and 135 are marked at the bottom of the staves.

This page of the musical score covers measures 136 through 141. It is organized into three systems, each representing a different section of strings: A, B, and C. Each system contains staves for Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Cello (Cello), and Bass (Bass). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings like 'div.' and 'V'. Measure numbers are printed below each system. A large, semi-transparent watermark reading 'Randall Starbridge Music Preview Only' is overlaid diagonally across the entire page.

System	Instrument	Measure 136	Measure 137	Measure 138	Measure 139	Measure 140	Measure 141
A	Vln. A1	Quarter note, quarter note	Quarter note, quarter note	Quarter note, quarter note	Quarter note, quarter note	Quarter note, quarter note	Quarter note, quarter note
	Vln. A2	Quarter note, quarter note	Quarter note, quarter note	Quarter note, quarter note	Quarter note, quarter note	Quarter note, quarter note	Quarter note, quarter note
	Vla. A	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note
	Cello A	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note
B	Vln. B1	Quarter note, quarter note	Quarter note, quarter note	Quarter note, quarter note	Quarter note, quarter note	Quarter note, quarter note	Quarter note, quarter note
	Vln. B2	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note
	Vla. B	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note
	Cello B	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note
C	Vln. C1	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note
	Vln. C2	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note
	Vla. C	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note
	Cello C	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note	Half note

142

Vln. A1

Vln. A2

Vla. A

Cello A

Bass A

Vln. B1

Vln. B2

Vla. B

Cello B

Bass B

Vln. C1

Vln. C2

Vla. C

Cello C

Bass C

div.

norm.

142 (-4)

143 (-2)

144

145 unis.

146

142 1/2 pos.

143 1st pos.

144

145

146

1

-4

2

1/2 pos.

1st pos.

142

143

144

145

146

152

meno mosso

The image displays a page of a musical score for 'The First Astronomer', page 25. The score is arranged in three systems of staves. The first system includes Violins A1 and A2, Viola A, Cello A, and Bass A. The second system includes Violins B1 and B2, Viola B, Cello B, and Bass B. The third system includes Violins C1 and C2, Viola C, Cello C, and Bass C. The score covers measures 147 through 152. Measure 147 includes a 'div.' marking. Measures 150, 151, and 152 feature a 'ff' (fortissimo) dynamic marking. The tempo is indicated as 'meno mosso'. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'Randall Standridge Music Preview Only' is overlaid across the score.

molto rit.

Vln. A1
ff

Vln. A2
div. non div. div. non div.

Vla. A
div.

Cello A
ff

Bass A
ff

153 154 155 156 *molto rit.* 158 159 160

Vln. B1
ff

Vln. B2
div. non div. div. non div.

Vla. B
div.

Cello B
ff

Bass B
ff

153 154 1/2 pos. 155 1st pos. 156 *molto rit.* 158 159 160

Vln. C1
ff

Vln. C2
ff

Vla. C
ff

Cello C
ff

Bass C
ff

153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160