



John Williams

Composer of the Week





Born in New York City, USA, in
1932.

John Williams was born on February 8, 1932.

How old is he today?

90 years old

John Williams is a composer, conductor and pianist who has composed some of the most well-known film music ever written. He has composed the music for over 100 films.

He has won:

**36
Grammy
Awards**



**7 British
Academy
Awards**



4 Golden Globe Awards



5 Oscars



Born in New York, John Williams moved to Los Angeles with his family at the age of 15. He attended the University of California where he studied Music.

He joined the US Airforce as a musician, where he played piano and brass in the Airforce Band and also composed some pieces of music for them.

In 1955 he moved back to New York to study piano at the Juilliard School.

He began composing for television shows and playing the piano for various film scores – one of them being the film version of **West Side Story**.

Can you remember who wrote **West Side Story**?

Leonard Bernstein

John Williams' first Oscar was for the film **Jaws**. This began a collaboration with the film director Stephen Spielberg which was to produce many unforgettable moments.

Listen to the opening of the film, Williams uses only two notes to create an atmosphere of suspense and fear.

Williams himself described the theme as “grinding away at you, just as a shark would do”.

Do you recognise the instrument playing?



Tuba

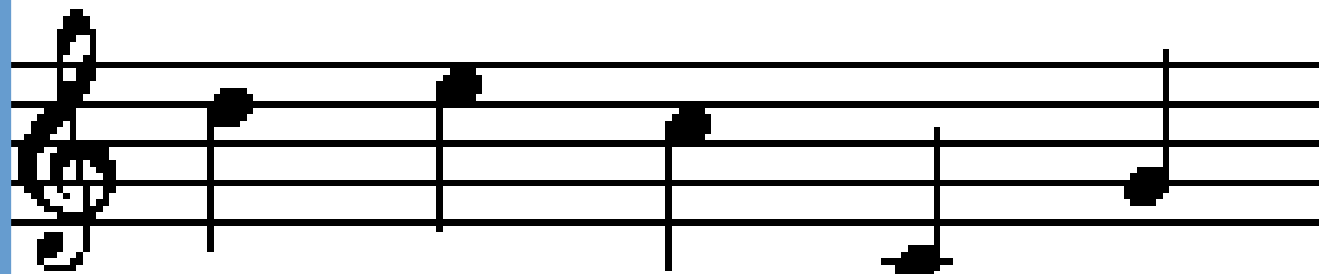


Another early success, again with Stephen Spielberg, was the film **Close Encounters of the Third Kind**. It is a film about Aliens who visit earth. John Williams came up with a, now famous, 5 note **theme** which he used for the aliens. In the film, the aliens use hand-signs with this theme, based on the same signs we use for singing.

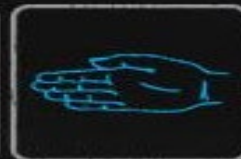
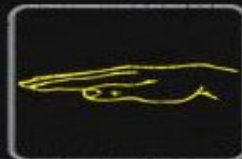
r', m', d', d, s

Do you remember the signs?





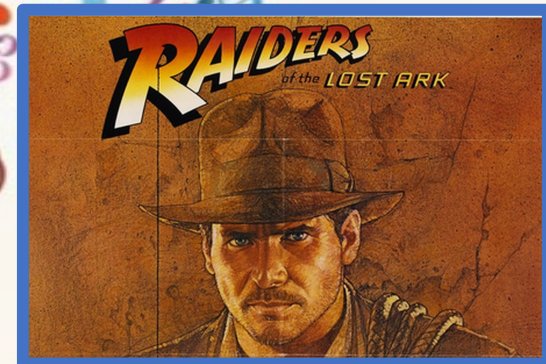
Re Mi Do Do So



Some of his most famous films are:



Raiders of the Lost Ark





Jurassic Park





Star Wars

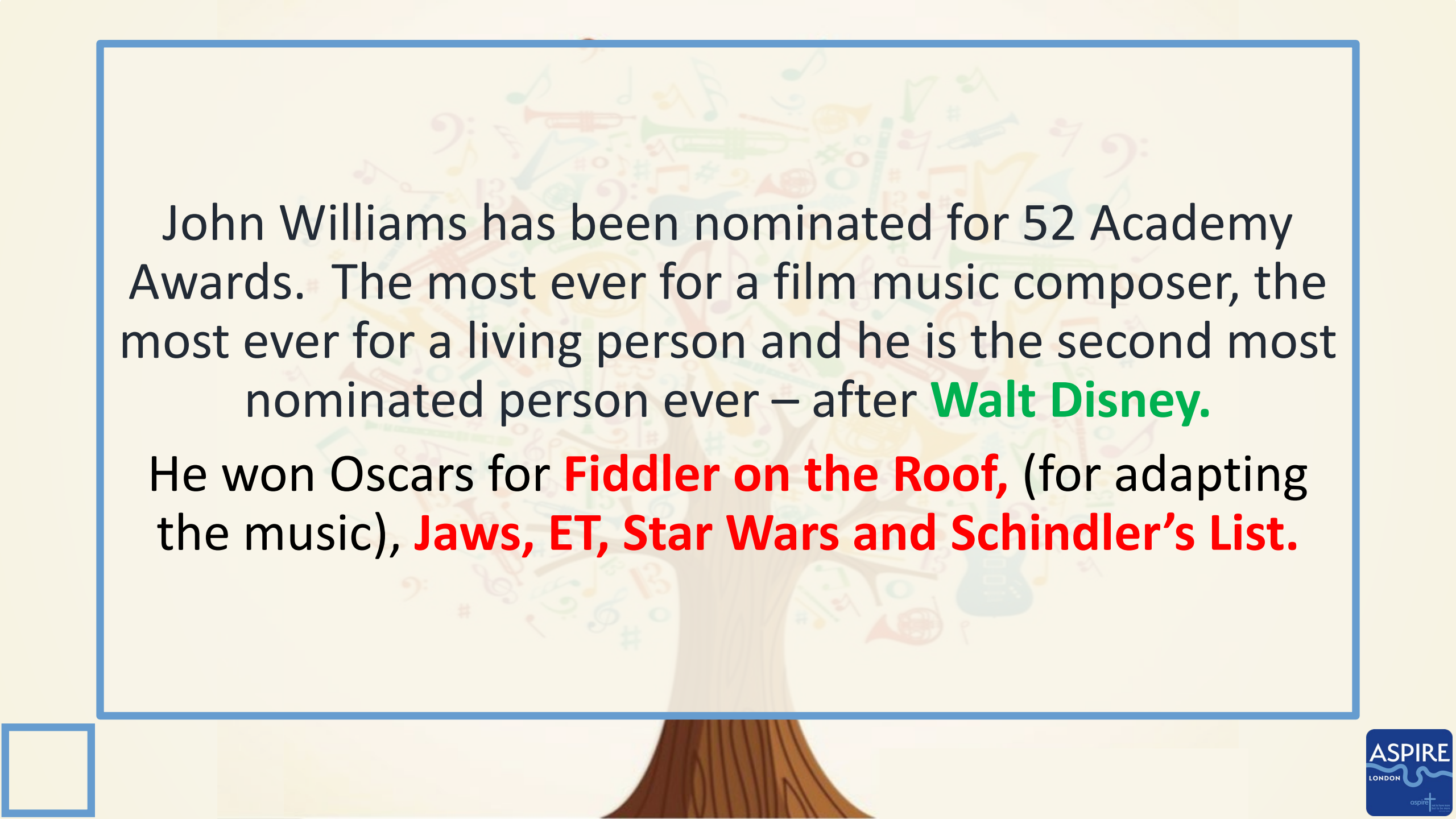
**STAR
WARS**

In 1993 Spielberg asked John Williams to write the music for a film based on the plight of the Jewish People during WW2. It was called **Schindler's List** and when John first saw the film he was so moved by it that he thought he was not worthy to write the music. He said "I really think you need a better composer than I am for this film"

Spielberg replied, "I know, but they're all dead."

This is a haunting piece of music. Williams persuaded the world-famous violinist, **Itzhak Perlman**, to play the main theme for the film.





John Williams has been nominated for 52 Academy Awards. The most ever for a film music composer, the most ever for a living person and he is the second most nominated person ever – after **Walt Disney**.


He won Oscars for **Fiddler on the Roof**, (for adapting the music), **Jaws**, **ET**, **Star Wars** and **Schindler's List**.



Can you guess the title of this film?

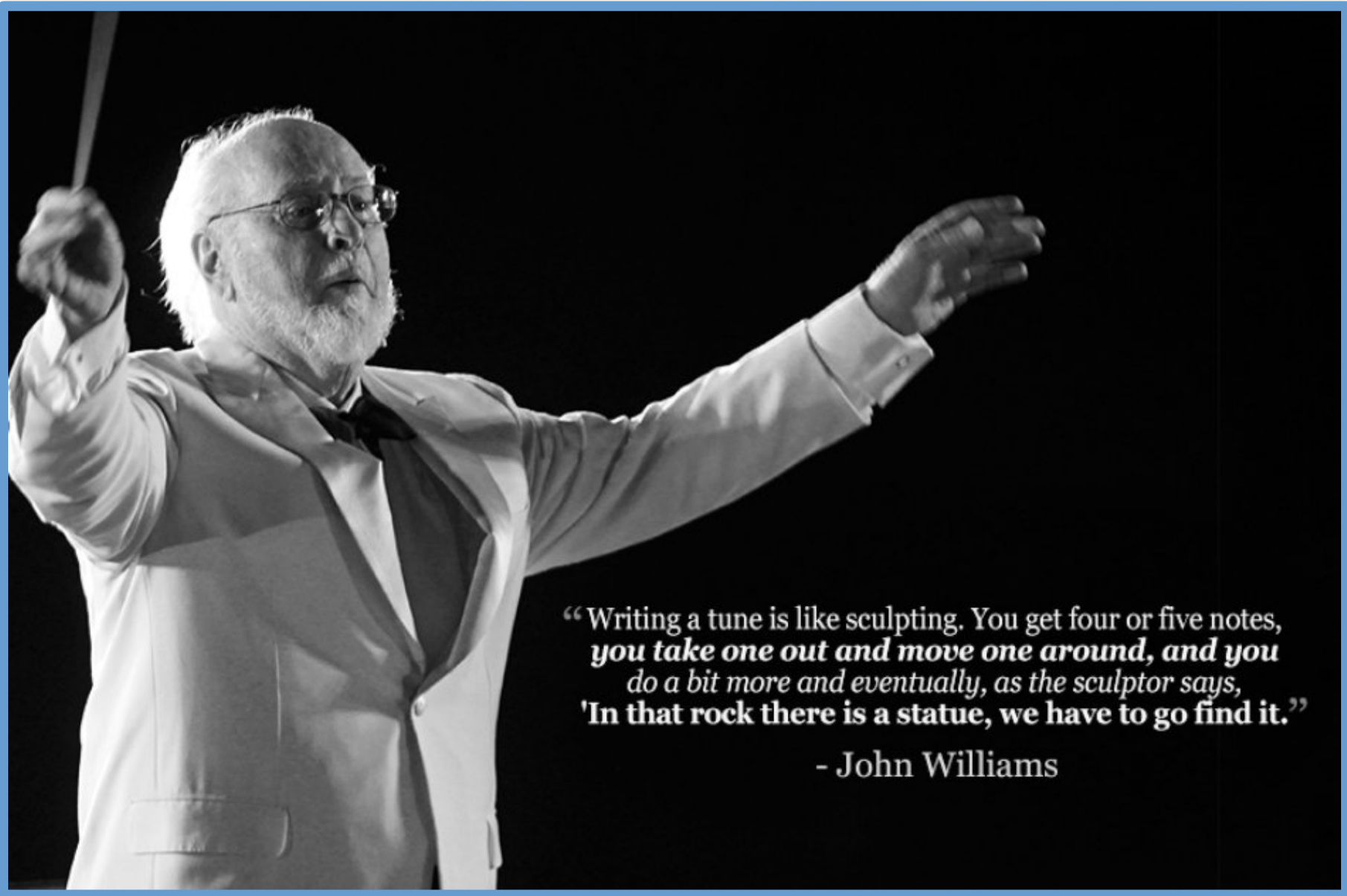






John Williams composed the music for the first three Harry Potter films and he continues to write music today.

His next film, **The Fablemans**, is to be released in November 2022 and the next **Indiana Jones** film in 2023.



“Writing a tune is like sculpting. You get four or five notes, ***you take one out and move one around, and you do a bit more and eventually, as the sculptor says, 'In that rock there is a statue, we have to go find it.'***”

- John Williams