

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM NOTES FOR FESTIVAL CONCERTS

JULY 23 • ASPEN FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

WHO IS PERFORMING TODAY?

Aspen Festival Orchestra
Andrey Boreyko *conductor*
Jean-Yves Thibaudet *piano*

WHAT IS BEING PLAYED TODAY?

ANDERS HILLBORG: *Cold Heat*
LISZT: *Piano Concerto No. 2 in A major, LW H6*
ZEMLINSKY: *The Mermaid, Symphonic Fantasy*

LEARN ABOUT THE MUSIC!

ANDERS HILLBORG: *Cold Heat*

Anders Hillborg is a Swedish composer who not only writes music for orchestras but has also written popular music and for films. "Any sound can be music," says Hillborg—and, indeed, his own musical works feature a wide variety of styles, structures, and sounds. *Cold Heat* was first performed in 2011 and was given its title because it was dedicated to conductor David Zinman, who thought the strings in the middle section represented a kind of "burning heat" while the woodwinds are cold and mechanical.

- What do you think of the title *Cold Heat*? Does it make more sense to you after hearing the piece? Why?
- What are some everyday sounds—footsteps, cars driving, doorbells, etc.—that you could imagine as music?

LISZT: *Piano Concerto No. 2 in A major, LW H6*

This concerto, by Hungarian composer Franz Liszt, has often been called the "Life and Adventures of a Melody" because the melody (a series of notes that sound nice together) changes as it moves throughout the piece. The notes bounce between instruments, starting with the woodwinds in the first section, then the strings, a solo cello, and eventually the brass section carries the tune.

Liszt was a pianist himself and started performing in concert halls when he was nine years old. He traveled all around Europe with his father to perform for kings and queens, wealthy people, and other musicians. He became a very popular pianist and performed several hundred concerts. He retired from performing at age 35 and started focusing more on composing and teaching.

He is considered the inventor of the symphonic or tone poem, which is a piece of music that is inspired by an idea or story (the next piece you will hear in this program is a tone poem!). Liszt didn't care much for fame or money so

he often donated the money he made to charities. In his later years, he also didn't charge any of his students for their lessons, believing that teaching music to others was more important than being rich. In his lifetime, Liszt wrote hundreds and hundreds of compositions!

- Do you hear the melody changing as it bounces between instruments? Is the "Life and Adventures of a Melody" a good nickname? Why or why not?

ZEMLINSKY: *The Mermaid, Symphonic Fantasy*

This piece, by Austrian composer Alexander Zemlinsky, is a tone poem, which is a piece of music that is inspired by an idea or story. Mermaids have appeared in stories and art all over the world for many centuries. This story, based on "The Little Mermaid" by Hans Christian Andersen, is about a mermaid who becomes human after she falls in love with a prince. You might know the Disney movie version with the mermaid Ariel.

Low notes at the beginning depict the deep ocean where the mermaid lives. The orchestra creates the sound of waves splashing, and a solo violin follows the mermaid as she swims and plays in the water. Then the music changes from happy to terrifying as a storm wrecks the prince's ship and the mermaid rushes to save him. She falls in love with him and wants to become human so they can be together. But unlike the Disney movie, the prince doesn't love the mermaid back. The third movement depicts the heartbreak the mermaid feels as she watches the prince marry someone else.

- Do parts of this piece remind you of the ocean? Which instruments are creating the sounds of the ocean?
- Why do you think mermaids have existed in stories for so long? Do you know of any other depictions of mermaids?

music is what feelings sound like