

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM NOTES FOR FESTIVAL CONCERTS

AUGUST 14 · ASPEN FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

WHO IS PERFORMING TODAY?

Aspen Festival Orchestra
James Gaffigan *conductor*
Yefim Bronfman *piano*

WHAT IS BEING PLAYED TODAY?

IVES: *Central Park in the Dark*
PROKOFIEV: *Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor, op. 167*
HARRIS: *Symphony No. 3, in One Movement*
BARTÓK: *The Miraculous Mandarin Suite, BB 82, op. 19*

LEARN ABOUT THE MUSIC!

IVES: *Central Park in the Dark*

American composer Charles Ives composed *Central Park in the Dark* in 1906. When Ives wrote this piece, he was inspired by the idea of what an evening in New York's Central Park might have sounded like before this time of industrialization. Industrialization was a time when factories sprang up everywhere and made for a pretty noisy city! It seems Ives just wanted to be in a place with more peace and quiet.

- Do you think Ives would have liked Aspen? Why or why not?
- Charles Ives had a wild sense of humor. Did this piece make you smile sometimes? Did parts of it seem kind of funny?

PROKOFIEV: *Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor, op. 167*

Russian composer Sergei Prokofiev wrote his Second Piano Concerto in 1913 and 1914, when he was just 23 years old. However, the original score was lost, so the piece you're hearing today is slightly different from the piece he originally wrote. He re-wrote the work based on his sketches and his memory.

A piano can sound very gentle and flowing, but it is actually a percussion instrument, like a drum, because inside the piano are 88 hammers hitting strings. Prokofiev wanted to show off the percussive side of the piano!

- Have you ever lost something important? Were you able to re-make it or find something to replace it?
- During the louder parts, can you hear the piano hammering away at the strings?

HARRIS: *Symphony No. 3, in One Movement*

American composer Roy Harris wrote his Third Symphony in 1939. The piece was originally meant to be a violin concerto, meaning it would include a solo violinist playing with an orchestra. But that fell through, so Harris decided to turn the work into a symphony, which means an orchestra plays it with no featured soloist. This symphony is made up of five connected sections: Tragic, Lyrical, Pastoral (or peaceful), Fugue Dramatic, and Dramatic Tragic. This piece was not loved by all at first, but now it is one of the most popular American symphonies.

- Listen closely! Can you tell when each of the five sections begins? How can you tell?

BARTÓK: *The Miraculous Mandarin Suite, BB 82, op. 19*

The Miraculous Mandarin, a ballet by Hungarian composer Béla Bartók, is not exactly what you'll be hearing today. Instead, the orchestra will be playing a suite, or a collection of parts from the full piece. A suite is meant to give the essence of the whole work, but it's much shorter.

The Miraculous Mandarin was the last thing Bartók ever wrote for the stage, and the ballet was extremely unpopular and was banned by Budapest, the capital of Hungary, at one time. To this day, it is rarely performed. So, Bartók decided to make some use of the piece by composing a suite that could be performed by an orchestra.

- If you listen closely, you can hear how the music tells a story. What kind of story do you think it might be? Why?

music is what feelings sound like