

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM NOTES FOR FESTIVAL CONCERTS

JULY 10 · ASPEN FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

WHO IS PERFORMING TODAY?

Aspen Festival Orchestra
Ludovic Morlot *conductor*
Augustin Hadelich *violin*

WHAT IS BEING PLAYED TODAY?

BERLIOZ: *Le corsair* Overture, op. 21
DVOŘÁK: Violin Concerto in A minor, B. 96/108, op. 53
STRAVINSKY: Symphony in C
RAVEL: *La valse*

LEARN ABOUT THE MUSIC!

BERLIOZ: *Le corsair* Overture, op. 21

Hector Berlioz composed his *Le corsair* Overture in 1844, but at the time he was calling it *La tour de Nice* (The Tower of Nice). He wrote the piece while he was vacationing in Nice, France, a resort city near the Mediterranean Sea. With quick changes in mood and moments of loud outburst, the piece sounds like it came straight from the beautiful but challenging sea. "Corsair" means pirate, and Berlioz captures the spirit of a pirate perfectly here.

- Which parts of this music remind you of big ocean waves crashing around?
- Can you hear the melodies being "tossed around" from instrument to instrument?

DVOŘÁK: Violin Concerto in A minor

This is Antonín Dvořák's only violin concerto. A concerto is a piece of music written for a solo instrument playing with an orchestra. In Dvořák's violin concerto, the orchestra's opening is very short before the soloist begins. The final section of this concerto is inspired by several Czech folk dances, making this piece a perfect fit for the Aspen Music Festival and School's summer theme, "Invitation to Dance."

- Did you notice the moment when the solo violinist started playing with the orchestra?
- Did the last movement of this concerto make you want to dance? Why or why not?

STRAVINSKY: Symphony in C

This piece by Igor Stravinsky was written during a difficult period in the Russian composer's life. He was diagnosed with tuberculosis, and his mother, wife, and two daughters died. Shortly after, Stravinsky was forced to leave Europe because of World War II. He wrote the first two movements of this symphony in France and Switzerland, but he wrote the third and fourth movements in America.

You might expect that Stravinsky's many trials during this time would have influenced the music he was writing, but he said his personal life did not have anything to do with the music, and this work does not sound sad. Bach and Mozart also wrote happy music during sad times of their lives.

- Why do you think Stravinsky decided not to write a sad song, even though so many sad things were happening in his life?

RAVEL: *La valse*

Joseph Maurice Ravel composed *La valse* ("The waltz") with the intention of a ballet being choreographed to the music. The ballet is set in 1855 in Vienna, a time and place where the waltz, a kind of dance known for being carefree and fun, was taking over the social dancing scene. You would recognize it as the whirling dance of Cinderella and the prince at the ball! But at the same time, Vienna and Austria as a whole were becoming politically unstable. This influence can be heard in *La valse*, as Ravel's music gradually becomes more wild.

- Waltzes are very popular at fancy balls like the kind Cinderella went to. Does this style of music sound familiar to you? Where else have you heard something similar?

music is what feelings sound like