

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM NOTES FOR FESTIVAL CONCERTS

JULY 24 • ASPEN FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

WHO IS PERFORMING TODAY?

Aspen Festival Orchestra
Hugh Wolff *conductor*
Behzod Abduraimov *piano*

WHAT IS BEING PLAYED TODAY?

DOMINICK ARGENTO: Tango from *The Dream of Valentino*
RACHMANINOFF: Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor, op. 30
WAGNER: Orchestral Selections from *Götterdämmerung*

LEARN ABOUT THE MUSIC!

DOMINICK ARGENTO: Tango from *The Dream of Valentino*

Composer Dominick Argento's opera *The Dream of Valentino*, inspired by the life of 1920s film star Rudolph Valentino, premiered at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., in 1993. Tango is a very popular kind of dance music.

- Does the rhythm of this music sound danceable to you? Can you dance to it with your fingers?

RACHMANINOFF: Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor, op. 30

Sergei Rachmaninoff was a well-known Russian composer and was also an excellent pianist. It ran in the family: his mother, father, and grandfather also played piano!

His Third Piano Concerto is known as one of the most difficult piano concertos ever written, and at the time it was written, some critics expressed concern about pianists being able to play the piece at all. However, the piece continues to be performed and loved by audiences more than 100 years after its premiere in 1909.

- Have you ever played the piano? Do you think it is hard? Why or why not?
- Do you think this piece would be hard for the pianist to play? Why or why not?

WAGNER: Orchestral Selections from *Götterdämmerung*

German composer Richard Wagner spent twenty-two years writing the story and music for *The Ring of the Nibelung*, a group of four operas, or musical stories, based loosely on characters from Icelandic, Viking, and other ancient histories.

You're hearing only bits and pieces of one of the operas, *Götterdämmerung*, because *The Ring of the Nibelung* lasts for fifteen hours! The story tells of gods, heroes, and mythical creatures struggling over a magical ring that gives its owner control of the whole world.

Wagner wrote for huge orchestras with many players and many different instruments on stage. This gives the music a rich and thick sound.

- Do you like the sound of the big orchestra? How would you describe it? How many French horns (the brass instruments in the back left with the curly shape) do you count?
- When you hear the orchestra playing these selections from *Götterdämmerung*, can you imagine parts of the story that go along with the music? Do you hear anything that reminds you of Vikings or mythical creatures? If so, why does it remind you of these things?

music is what feelings sound like