

# CHILDREN'S PROGRAM NOTES FOR FESTIVAL CONCERTS

JULY 31 • ASPEN FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

## WHO IS PERFORMING TODAY?

Aspen Festival Orchestra  
Tomáš Netopil *conductor*  
Noah Bendix-Balgley *violin*  
Alisa Weilerstein *cello*

## WHAT IS BEING PLAYED TODAY?

J. STRAUSS Jr: An der schönen blauen Donau (On the Beautiful Blue Danube), op. 314  
R. STRAUSS: Suite from *Der Rosenkavalier*, op. 59  
BRAHMS: Concerto for Violin and Cello in A minor, op. 102  
R. STRAUSS: Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks, op. 28

## LEARN ABOUT THE MUSIC!

### J. STRAUSS Jr: An der schönen blauen Donau (On the Beautiful Blue Danube), op. 314

Johann Strauss Jr.'s beloved waltz is still one of the most popular pieces in classical music. A waltz was a type of dance music popular in the 1800s and 1900s. It might sound a little different than most of the music you're used to hearing because it has three beats rather than four (ONE two three, ONE two three!). Try to dance along, and you'll probably feel the difference!

- Do you think this song is easy to dance to? Why or why not?
- Does this waltz make you feel happy?

### R. STRAUSS: Suite from *Der Rosenkavalier*, op. 59

Richard Strauss composed his opera *Der Rosenkavalier* (The Knight of the Rose) in 1911, but you won't be hearing all the opera's music in this concert. Instead, you'll hear the Suite from *Der Rosenkavalier*. In this case, a suite is a series of excerpts from a larger work mashed together to sound like one big piece. It's kind of like a preview for a movie; you still get the story of the whole movie, but it's much shorter.

If you listen hard, you might hear waltzes, like in The Blue Danube, within this suite. Listen for the three-beat rhythms to spot them.

- There's a lot happening in this music. Do you like the waltzes the most, or the beautiful melodies, or the big orchestral sounds?

### BRAHMS: Concerto for Violin and Cello in A minor, op. 102

Johannes Brahms composed this concerto—a piece written for a solo instrument playing with an orchestra—in 1887 after about a decade of not writing any orchestral music. In fact, this was Brahms's last work composed for orchestra before he passed away. It features both a violin and cello soloist, and both have to be very strong and well-matched players. Partly because of this, it's one of his least-played concertos, so you're witnessing something pretty rare today!

Brahms loved Hungarian folk dances, and the rhythms of Hungarian dance can be heard in the fast parts of this concerto!

- Can you hear the difference between the violin and the cello? How do they sound different? How do they look different? Which do you like more and why?

### R. STRAUSS: Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks, op. 28

This piece by Richard Strauss is a tone poem, or a piece of music that tells a story. You'll hear a musical story about Till Eulenspiegel, a trickster who goes on a little adventure. The piece begins with a solo horn blasting a "Till Eulenspiegel" theme. This theme will return throughout the work, always representing mischievous Till. Try to listen for it. That way, you'll always know when Till Eulenspiegel is doing something in the story.

- Till is a grownup who has a playful, childish spirit. Do you know grownups who act like kids, pulling pranks and telling jokes all the time?

*music is what feelings sound like*