



Warren Philharmonic Orchestra
Susan Davenny Wyner, Music Director & Conductor
SCHOOL CONCERTS
Lakeview High School, 300 Hillman Drive, Cortland, Ohio 44410

Friday, OCTOBER 4, 2019, 9:15 and 10:45 a.m.

Magic Spells!

School Concert Notes from Susan Davenny Wyner

Welcome to our School Concerts made just for you!

High jinks, moods, fantastic musical stories: Join the fun as these great composers serve up tricks and treats – a broom that works magic, and some spooky spirits, ghosts and a tale from *Arabian Nights*.

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| A Night on Bald Mountain | Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881) |
| The Sorcerer's Apprentice | Paul Dukas (1865-1935) |
| Abu Hassan Overture | Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826) |
| A surprise from Disney's "The Lion King"! | |

School Concert Notes from Susan Davenny Wyner

Welcome to the Warren Philharmonic's special School Concerts. Our orchestra has over 50 players playing more than 60 different instruments. Each instrument has a personality all its own – some are made of metal, of brass, of wood and ebony. Some use hair from a horse's tail and sheep's gut and all kinds of other interesting materials. You will hear them all together, and then our star players will take turns showing you what each instrument looks like and how it sounds all by itself.

You will meet the amazing *string instruments*, which go from the violin, which is small enough to fit under your chin, to the double bass, which is so monstrously large that the player has to stand up to play it and four small children could fit inside its "belly." You will meet the *woodwinds*, from the little piccolo, which is the size of a fat straw, to the tall, skinny bassoon. You will meet the *brass* family – the trumpets, slide trombones, huge tuba, and the 20-foot-long French Horns, which are all curled up so they can fit into the players' arms. And of course, you will hear from the *percussion* family – cymbals, xylophone, kettledrums, and big bass drum – which are the loudest of all.

Each piece of music has a story to tell. But the fun is that instead of using words, our composers use music to bring these stories to life. They invite us to create pictures in our own minds and imagine their stories in our own imaginations.

Let me take you behind the scenes and give you some clues.

Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881)

A Night on Bald Mountain

This music takes us to Russia for a piece called *A Night on Bald Mountain* by the Russian composer Modest Mussorgsky. It is a ghost story teeming with strange creatures that emerge in the darkness of the night to dance wild dances. Bald Mountain is an imaginary haunted place at the top of a mountain – all barren rocks without any trees, which is why it is called “bald.”

Here’s the story: The music starts quietly. Mist and clouds swirl through the dark, as strange ghosts and spirits and witches begin appearing from underground. (Are those pounding footsteps or heartbeats we hear?) Strange shrieks pierce the night. Lightning flashes, and our orchestra instruments become more and more frenetic as the ghosts arrive and dance more and more wildly. Finally, a church bell sounds quietly in the distance, and dawn begins to spread its light. As peace and calm return, the ghostly creatures slink and slither sadly back into their caves – leaving us to wonder whether this has all been a dream.

Mussorgsky uses lots of musical devices to create pictures in our mind. See if you can hear some of these:

Russian folkdance tunes and rhythms for his ghosts.

Repetition and variation: He repeats the same tunes and rhythms in different ways.

Contrasts to build suspense: loud and soft, fast and slow, stops and starts, solo players and the whole orchestra.

Families of the orchestra instruments against one another: Brass, Strings, Woodwinds and (lots of) Percussion.

Special effect: To create the high shrieks and whistles, he asks the violins to slide their fingers quickly, high up on the strings – it is called a *glissando*, which in Italian means to slip or slide!

Movie facts: The movie *Jaws* uses the opening “footsteps” of this piece for the shark theme. Disney created a cartoon of this piece for *Fantasia*.

Paul Dukas (1865-1935)

The Sorcerer’s Apprentice

We are in France. It is 1897 and our composer, Paul Dukas, tells us a story in music called *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice*, which he based on a Ballade by the famous German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. The story is about a young student, called an apprentice, who tries to use his teacher’s magic to do the work the teacher asked him to do! The teacher was a very old magician called a “sorcerer.”

Here’s the story: One day the old Sorcerer goes away and asks the apprentice to take buckets of water from the well and fill a barrel in the castle. The buckets are heavy and the work is slow, so our apprentice has the brilliant idea to use the magic spell he saw the old Sorcerer use in order to make the broom carry the water. The apprentice says the magic words and sure enough the broom does exactly what he asks. BUT, the broom fills and fills and never stops – the apprentice doesn’t know the magic

words to make it stop! We hear the water getting higher and higher, the broom working faster and faster. Water is everywhere. The apprentice panics, grabs an axe and chops the broom into pieces. BUT, each little piece grows arms, comes to life and carries more water. What a disaster. The apprentice is almost drowning. Finally, the old Sorcerer returns and calls out the magic spell – slowly the waters recede, and everything returns to normal again. I suspect the apprentice learned a lesson and was happy to carry water after all this, don't you?

Here are some “clues and cues” as you listen to how wonderfully the music tells the story.

- *Beginning:* Apprentice casts a spell while the Sorcerer is away. The music is soft and mysterious. We hear fragments of tunes as the apprentice tries out his magic.
- *About 2 minutes in:* Silence, then the Broomstick comes to life. We hear its jaunty tune played by the bassoon. We hear the flowing water theme in the strings. The themes continue – passing from instrument to instrument, as the broomstick does its work and the water gets higher and higher.
- *About 5 minutes in:* The water is pouring everywhere and starting to gush out of the barrel.
- *About 6 minutes in:* Apprentice calls out magic words (the brass instruments “shout” them)
- *About 6 and a half minutes in:* Apprentice chops broomstick with an axe. Silence. Then the pieces turn into more magic broomsticks. We hear bassoons joining together in *rounds* and *counterpoint* (imitating one another).
- *8-9 minutes:* Frightened boy almost drowning in the overflowing water.
- *Just after 9 minutes:* Sorcerer returns and calls out the magic words to stop the spell (Brass play, then sudden silence).
- *9 and a half minutes to end:* Calm returns and the waters recede as things return to normal. Music is soft and peaceful (we hear a solo viola).

Interesting fact: Dukas' piece was always popular but was made famous in America by Walt Disney in his 1940 film *Fantasia*, which stars Mickey Mouse as the unlucky apprentice battling his mishap with brooms and water!

Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826)
Abu Hassan Overture (1811) (3:30)

In 1811 the German composer Carl Maria von Weber got excited by a story from *Tales from The Arabian Nights - A Thousand and One Nights* and wrote a comic opera called ***Abu Hassan***. In the early 1800s there was a great fashion for “Turkish” music – folks loved the costumes, baggy pants, turbans, veils, beards – composers would use cymbals, triangles, bass drum, jangling bells, and feature the woodwinds to make the orchestra sound more “Eastern.” This is Weber's curtain raiser, or overture, which introduces the characters and gets us in the mood for the story.

First, the story: Abu Hassan is a favorite servant of the Caliph of Baghdad. Abu is very poor. He borrows money from an evil man who threatens to steal Abu's wife if he doesn't get the money. Desperate, Abu makes a plan. He and his wife will pretend to die. When the kind Caliph leaves money for them to be buried, they will use it to pay back whatever they owe. Well the Caliph arrives at their home and sees both of his servants lying “dead.” But instead of just leaving some money, he says that he must know which of them died first. This is too much for poor Abu, who suddenly leaps up from under his burial sheet and shouts: “I died first, dear Caliph. It was I who

died first!” Imagine! Happily, all gets sorted out – the servants are rewarded and the cruel man is sent away in disgrace.

Listen to how Weber sets up all this silliness in the Overture. The music starts softly – scurrying, scuttling, and sneaking about. Instead of announcing his story strongly, Weber sneaks it in and catches us by surprise. The orchestra strings play quietly and fast, as if they are running around nervously and trying to enter without anyone noticing. Suddenly with a great crash, bang of cymbals, the whole orchestra comes rushing in and we are off. Listen to all the contrasts between soft and loud. Everything happens quickly. There’s a little oboe solo in the middle, and sometimes the low brass instruments interrupt like the villain attacking. How would you draw a picture of these characters and all this excitement and rushing around?

The Lion King – Walt Disney's movies have had enormous success – starting with the 1994 cartoon version and the 2019 remake. The music was created by Hans Zimmer in collaboration with artists Pharrell Williams, Elton John, Beyoncé and Tim Rice.

A SPECIAL INVITATION:

Please also bring your family and friends to our regular concert ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON, OCTOBER 6, AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH so they can also share these musical adventures. **They can come FREE if they are with you.** Just tell the people at the door that Susan said you could come!

Warren Philharmonic Orchestra
Susan Davenny Wyner, Music Director & Conductor
www.warrenphilharmonic.org
at
First Presbyterian Church
256 Mahoning Avenue, NW
Warren, Ohio

Sunday OCTOBER 6, 2019, 3 p.m.

MAGIC SPELLS!

Art in Music Contest Prizewinners • Special Guest Soloists

A magic spell gone awry, a tale from Arabian Nights, singing witches, an upbeat American and a surprise from the son of J.S. Bach.

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| Weber | <i>Abu Hassan Overture</i> |
| C.P.E. Bach | <i>Symphony in D Major</i> |
| Dukas | <i>The Sorcerer's Apprentice</i> |
| Verdi | <i>Witches Music from Macbeth</i> |
| Mussorgsky | <i>Night on Bald Mountain</i> |
| Ellen Taaffe Zwilich | <i>Upbeat!</i> (1998) |