



HEROES

of the Orchestra



Atlanta
Symphony
Orchestra

Stephen Mulligan
Assistant Conductor

A close-up photograph of a young Black girl with her hair in small braids, wearing a yellow dress with ruffled shoulders, smiling and resting her head on the shoulder of a man in a military camouflage uniform and cap. The man is also smiling. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a brick wall and some greenery.

Heroes of the Orchestra

Heroes show bravery, character, and determination in the face of a challenge. They overcome obstacles and take a stand. The heroes in our lives might come from history, legends, books, movies, or even real life. Look around! Your hero could be standing nearby! It could be a teacher, a parent, a sister, a brother, a life-guard, or a soldier. We could be our own heroes — to ourselves!

When we honor heroes with music, sometimes we want to hear marches with trumpets and drums. Other times, we honor heroes with more solemn tributes, patriotic anthems, or quiet hymns. Listen for the difference and see what you think.

Bring your hero to this Concert for Young People – and celebrate them with music!

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SIBELIUS: Finlandia



Composer **Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)** was born in Finland, a Nordic country located close to the Arctic Circle. After he lost his father at an early age, Sibelius was raised by his mother and grandmother in a small city. In the summertime, they moved to a small town in the country.

Sibelius lived for those summers. His winters were harsh as a schoolboy in the city. In the summertime, he ran through forests and swam through lakes. Sibelius learned to love nature as much as he loved music.

His uncle had given him a violin when he was 10 and Sibelius dreamed of being a concert violinist. After high school, he realized that his greater talent was as a composer. Sibelius combined his love of nature and music with a sense of patriotism – and became a national hero in Finland!



Sibelius & “Finlandia”

Sibelius composed “Finlandia” as a political protest.

In the 1800’s, Finland was dominated by the Russian Empire to the east. Finnish citizens were forced to serve in the Russian army. Russia censored newspapers to stop any bad news about Russia or good news about Finland. For a century, the people of Finland struggled to keep their identity.

In the late 1890’s, Finland fought back. Sibelius wrote music for a event to raise money for a free press in Finland. He put into his music what the Finnish people had not been able to say with words.

Today, Sibelius’s “Finlandia” is considered Finland’s second national anthem.

You can look at images of Finland on this YouTube video of “Finlandia.”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5zg_af9b8c



What makes a hero?



Heroes come in many types– but people do agree that a hero is brave in the face of a challenge.

“Courage” means the strength to overcome fears or challenges. The word comes from an Old French word for ‘heart’ and is understood as meaning “strength of heart.”

“Music begins where words end.”

COMPOSER JEAN SIBELIUS

Listening to “Finlandia”

- Imagine the deep chords from the brass section as the Russian Empire, distant, dark and threatening.
- The soothing, sweeping section that follows is like the beautiful Finnish countryside.
- A call of trumpets seems to rally the people of Finland to action.
- An inspiring melody from the strings and woodwinds suggests an anthem or a hymn, urging the people of Finland to stay positive and true to their cause.
- In the finale, big drums join the full orchestra for a bold, triumphant finish!

Notice Sibelius gives each instrumental section a chance to shine in his composition. When the full orchestra comes together, Sibelius creates a powerhouse. In a way, Sibelius is saying that people all over Finland have something to contribute – and they must come together for the good of their country.

Handel's National Hero

George Frideric Handel

Handel: The King's Composer

German composer **George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)** was the son of a barber/surgeon. His father did not approve of Handel's interest in music so Handel snuck into the attic to practice on a keyboard he hid there. As a young man, Handel traveled through Italy studying with famous composers. When he was 25, he became court composer for the future King of England. Handel found such success in London that he stayed for the rest of his life.

Handel's great gift was composing music for public events such as theater, parades, and coronations. He wrote music for fireworks and even "water music" to be played by musicians on a floating barge. You might have heard the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's "Messiah" during the winter holidays.



*"Handel was the greatest composer that ever lived.
I would uncover my head, and kneel before his tomb."*

COMPOSER LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN



The Queen of Sheba: The Myth, the Legend

The Queen of Sheba appears in religious books held by Jewish, Christian, and Muslim people. We have little proof she actually lived, but no one seems to doubt she was real in the ancient world. The Queen of Sheba was beautiful, smart, and powerful and she ruled an exotic, distant kingdom, maybe Ethiopia. In her society, women were equal to men in government, religion, business, and family.

The Queen of Sheba learned that King Solomon of Israel was wise and wealthy so she travelled to Jerusalem to test him with riddles and to do business. She arrived making a huge entrance on a caravan of camels with gifts of gold, spices, and precious jewels. The Queen of Sheba was a strong, powerful woman who changed the ancient world.

When Handel composed a work about King Solomon, he needed music for "The Entrance of the Queen of Sheba" that was stately and dignified — but also true to a strong queen. The music he wrote is still popular today, especially at weddings when the bride walks down the aisle.

Hear the Hero: Compare & Contrast

- What things are the same in Sibelius's "Finlandia" and Handel's "The Entrance of the Queen of Sheba"?

Do the works use the same instruments? Do they both have melody? Do they both suggest something important? Do they both sound heroic?

- What things are different between the two works?

Do they have different tempos? Does one work sound more "modern" than the other? Do they use different musical dynamics? Is one loud and the other soft?

- Does one work sound more "feminine" or "masculine" than the other? How can music sound masculine or feminine anyway?
- Should heroic music for a woman sound different for a man?

BEETHOVEN:



German composer **Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)** was born in a small city. He was playing the piano when he was still so small he had to stand on the bench to reach the keys. His father pushed him to succeed and Beethoven pushed as well. At 11, he quit school to pursue a full-time musical career. In his 20's, he sought the greatest composers of his day to learn from the very best.

Beethoven wrote music for singers, pianists, string quartets, ballet companies, orchestras and more. He changed the orchestra to make a bigger sound. He added instruments to play notes that audiences had not before. Beethoven's bold and exciting vision made everyone want to hear his music.

Beethoven's "The Creatures of Prometheus"

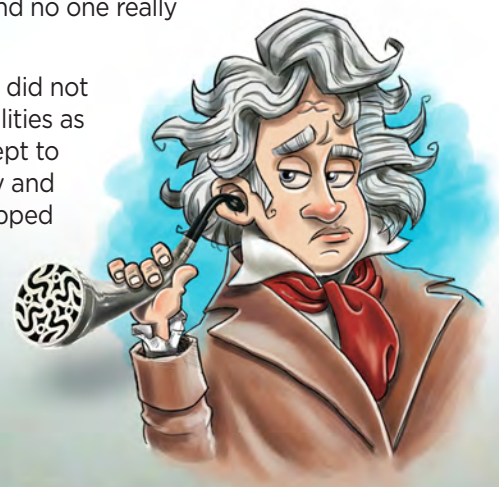
"The Creatures of Prometheus" is the score that Beethoven composed for a ballet based on the Greek mythical god Prometheus.

Prometheus was a young god who was known to "think-ahead." Zeus gave him the task of molding men out of clay but Prometheus insisted on making his creatures better. He gave them music, knowledge, joy, and the idea of progress, to better oneself. When Prometheus stole fire to give to his creatures, he got into huge trouble with Zeus. Prometheus is remembered as a hero who sacrificed himself for the greater good.

Being Deaf: His Own Personal Hero

As a young man, Beethoven noticed he could no longer hear high notes. It took 20 years for Beethoven to become totally deaf - and no one really knows why.

In Beethoven's day, people did not support people with disabilities as we do today. Beethoven kept to himself, and avoided family and friends — but he never stopped writing music. How could he write music when he was going deaf? He used science and math!



"Music should strike fire in the heart of man."

COMPOSER LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Catching Fire

Ludwig Van Beethoven

Good Vibrations: The Science of Sound

Beethoven knew how to write music before he became deaf. He could read a score and “hear” the music “in his head”—the way a builder looks at blueprints and sees the whole project.

Beethoven could also “feel” music with his sense of touch. Sound creates vibrations that travel through the air until they reach our ears and are understood by our brains. You probably feel vibrations in your body. Have you felt a cell phone when it vibrates? Or a car that passes by with booming speakers?

Beethoven used vibrations to help him “hear” music. He sawed the legs off his piano and placed it flat on the floor so that vibrations from piano strings came through the wooden floor. At a performance, he would sit next to the stage and place a hand on floor beneath the musicians.



GOOD VIBRATIONS: AN ACTIVITY

Sound vibrations get faster or slower depending on how high or how low a sound is. Try for yourself! Blow up a balloon — latex-free, if you're allergic! — and hold it close to your mouth. Have someone else touch the balloon as you speak. Switch roles so that you touch the balloon while the other person speaks. Can you feel the vibrations?

Try holding the balloon while you play Beethoven's music really loud in the room! Can you feel sound vibrations on the surface of the balloon? What do the vibrations feel like?



COPLAND: A New



American composer **Aaron Copland (1900-1990)** was born in Brooklyn, New York to Jewish parents. The youngest of five children, he learned to play the piano alongside his older sister. Growing up near New York City, he attended many classical music performances while he was young. When he was in college, he decided to travel overseas to study with European composers.

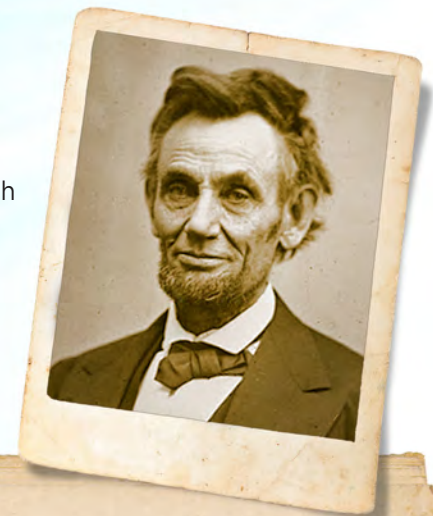
When he returned, Copland was determined to create a new “American music.” He didn’t want to repeat the cheerful, patriotic songs played at fireworks shows. Copland wanted music that sounded as great and grand as a national monument — but also as down-to-earth as pioneers in covered wagons.

Sitting Down with Lincoln

Copland was asked to write a musical portrait of a great American hero. He chose Abraham Lincoln, our 16th President.

Lincoln rose from poor beginnings to the highest office in the land. He led the nation through a Civil War. As President, he championed the end of slavery, the emancipation of African-Americans, and helped to secure equality.

To create his “Lincoln Portrait,” Copland combined music with spoken statements Lincoln made during his lifetime, plus facts about his life. He wanted his “Lincoln Portrait” to sound like we’re sitting down with the man himself. Copland placed his music between the words on purpose — because he wanted Lincoln to be heard.



WORDS FOR HEROES

See if these words fit the hero in your life!
Add your own words to the picture!



g American Music

The Hero in Your Life

All students attending this concert are invited to submit a short paragraph — three to five sentences — describing a hero in your life! Think of the different types of heroes in this guide. Some took on a big challenge. Others quietly did the right thing. Some set an example for others. Others never gave up.

Heroes show up everywhere. “The hero in your life” might be in a movie or a comic book – but he or she could also exist in real life! They might come from a textbook or a newspaper — or maybe they live in your school or your house!

Once you have that hero in mind, look at the words in the word-collage. Do any describe your hero? Remember: heroes don’t have to be big, bold, and strong. They can also be reserved and patient but full of purpose.

What music goes with your hero? Write a sentence about that! Is it a triumphant march or a quiet anthem? Which musical instrument plays your hero’s theme song? Is it a trumpet or a drum? Or a violin or a flute?

Identify the values that your hero has inspired in you. You may already be a hero to somebody else!

DESCRIBE YOUR HERO



YOUR HERO'S MUSIC

HERE'S THE DEAL

The best essays will win an opportunity to read your essay out loud on the Atlanta Symphony Hall stage during your Concert for Young People field trip date.

More details to come!





JOHNSON:

American songwriter **James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938)** was born in Jacksonville, FL. His father was a headwaiter in a restaurant and his mother was a school teacher and a musician. Johnson was home-schooled by his mother who gave him a love of language and music. After graduating college, Johnson taught in a public school for blacks in Jacksonville where many students were the children of former slaves.

When Johnson became the school principal, he was invited to speak at a local event in honor of Abraham Lincoln's birthday. At that time, African Americans still faced terrible violence in the South. Instead of a speech, Johnson chose to write a hymn that imagined a hopeful future for his people. His brother composed the music. At the event, their song, "Lift Every Voice and Sing," was performed by 500 school children.

Johnson went on to become an attorney, an educator, a writer, and a diplomat. His song, however, took on a life of its own. People sang it in churches, at graduation ceremonies and in school assemblies. It was named the "Negro national anthem" by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1919. It was still being sung during the civil rights protests and marches of the 1960s and 1970s. Even in 2018, Beyonce sang the "black national anthem" in her concert at Coachella.

"Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing"

Lift ev'ry voice and sing,
'Til earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on 'til victory is won.



A Hymn to His People



Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

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With Deepest Gratitude



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