CSO SCHOOL CONCERTS
February 10, 2017 • 10:15 & 12:00

CSO FAMILY MATINEE SERIES
February 11, 2017 • 11:00 & 12:45
“One man scorned and covered with scars still strove with his last ounce of courage to reach the unreachable stars and the world will be better for this.” MIGUEL DE CERVANTES

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

When Richard Strauss wrote the music for Don Quixote, he used the instruments of the orchestra to tell a very specific story. We call this “programmatic music.” The sounds and textures that Strauss composed dramatically depict the characters and scenes from the novel by Miguel de Cervantes.

“Welcome”

How far would you go for the sake of honor and valor? Richard Strauss’ symphonic tone poem uses the full force of the orchestra to tell the hilarious story of a knight errant with the unshakable courage to pursue his dreams. Listen as the amazing musicians of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra depict the courageous acts of Don Quixote.

WHO IS DON QUIXOTE?

Don Quixote is a middle-aged gentleman from the region of La Mancha in central Spain. Obsessed with the idea of chivalry, which he’s read about in his books, Don Quixote takes up his lance and sword to defend the helpless and destroy the wicked.

“His First Adventure”

In the distance, Don Quixote spies giants and gallops toward them with his sword drawn! What’s actually there is a giant windmill. One of the blades hits Don Quixote when he attacks the mill, causing him to slide off his horse and land with a thud on the ground! Listen as the instruments tell the story of this battle: the brass instruments snort, the harp plays a downward glissando and the timpani thumps. Finally, we hear the cello solo again as Don Quixote heads down the road in search of more adventures, continuing to believe that his dreams are real.

“Program Includes Selections from R. Strauss Don Quixote”

Strauss introduces us to Don Quixote with a tune featuring the flute, violins and clarinet. The oboe plays the gentle melody depicting Don Quixote’s imagined ladylove, Dulcinea. Trumpets sound when Don Quixote imagines he is defending Dulcinea, but the music quickly turns confusing as Don Quixote loses himself in his wild dreams.

Our hero is now portrayed by a solo cello and his chattering sidekick Sancho Panza is portrayed by a solo viola. Sancho Panza understands that Don Quixote’s mind is racing with fantasies, but he’s devoted to his friend because he’s been promised an island at the end of their journey!
AN ARMY OF SHEEP?

In the next adventure, Strauss uses brass instruments to sound like bleating sheep, which Don Quixote believes are an approaching army. The fast and frantic music played by the basses portrays Don Quixote defeating the “army” in battle. Frustrated with their silly escapades, Sancho Panza (solo viola) begins to chatter away about the pointlessness of their quest. Sancho Panza tries to restore reason, but alas, Don Quixote gets carried away by another dream of chivalry.

TO RESCUE... A STATUE

Don Quixote comes upon a group of chanting pilgrims, as portrayed by the woodwinds, holding a statue of the Madonna. Unfortunately, our hero thinks the statue is a girl needing to be rescued. While trying to save her, he gets knocked to the ground by the pilgrims who continue on their procession. Can you hear the moment in the music when Don Quixote falls to the ground?

ADVENTURES IN THE AIR AND ON THE WATER

Although our heroes typically ride real horses into their exploits, they now find themselves on a toy wooden horse, and they believe they are flying through the air. (Notice the sound of the powerful wind machine.) Following this adventure, they get into a boat near the edge of a dangerous river. Listen as the dynamics get louder, portraying the increasing danger. When the boat capsizes, they are spit out onto the shore, drenched and dripping.

NIGHT FALLS

Sancho Panza sleeps while Don Quixote gets lost in his ideas of knighthood and the fair maiden Dulcinea. His dreams get interrupted when a common girl from the village appears, playing her tambourine. Don Quixote is outraged, believing wizards have turned his love into this other girl!

THE FINAL BATTLE

In his final adventure, Don Quixote fights one last battle with the Knight of the White Moon, who is really a townsman in disguise. Next, he mistakes two monks for evil musicians. The monks can be heard in the duet for two bassoons. Can you hear the conversation the instruments are having as they play together?

THE QUEST IS OVER

Sad that his quest is over, Don Quixote bids farewell to his adventures and heads home. The bittersweet melody of the cello perfectly captures his sorrow. Don Quixote climbs into bed and ponders his foolishness. Hear him wave goodbye in the final two chords of the piece.
What inspired this approach? In live theatre, we create visual images to tell a story. In music, sound inspires us to imagine pictures in our mind. I wanted to allow Strauss’ music to work its magic on the audience’s ears but also provide some theatrical imagery to help ignite imagination. By having a visual artist and storyteller create a musical journey along with Strauss’ music to work its magic on the audience’s ears but also provide some theatrical imagery to help ignite imagination. By having a visual artist and storyteller create a musical journey along with Strauss’ music to work its magic on the audience’s ears but also provide some theatrical imagery to...
INSTRUMENTS OF THE ORCHESTRA

THE STRING FAMILY includes violin, viola, cello, bass and harp. These instruments are made of wood and strings, and are played by vibrating the strings using a bow or plucking or striking the strings with a finger.

THE WOODWIND FAMILY includes flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and saxophone. These instruments all have the same basic shape: a long tube with a mouthpiece at one end. The flute is played by blowing across a mouthpiece to create a vibration. Oboe, clarinet, bassoon and saxophone are all played by blowing air into a single or double reed attached to the mouthpiece, creating a vibration that results in sound.

THE BRASS FAMILY includes horn, trumpet, trombone, euphonium and tuba. Brass instruments make a sound when the players vibrate their lips inside a mouthpiece, which is fitted into the instrument. The players can change pitch on a trumpet, horn or tuba by pressing on valves. Trombone players change pitch by moving the slide back and forth.

THE PERCUSSION FAMILY includes snare drum, bass drum, gong, triangle, xylophone, timpani and piano, among many others. Percussion instruments are struck, scraped or shaken.

RESOURCES:
The Parent’s Guide for this concert can be found at csosoundsandstories.org/DQParentsGuide.
The Teachers’ Guide for this concert can be found at csosoundsandstories.org/DQTeachersGuide.

Content for Kidibook was created by Katy Clusen with graphic design by Shawn Sheehy.