



BERLINER SYMPHONIKER®

Video stream “OverTiere” - translation of the spoken words

Sabine Völker, director of Berliner Symphoniker:

Welcome to our musical tour through the oldest still existing zoo in Germany, the Berlin Zoo. If we cannot greet you live either, we will bring the music and a visit to the zoo to you at home.

But before it starts, the President of the Parliament of Germany, Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble address a short greeting to you.

Greetings from the President of the Parliament of Germany, Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble:

We live in times of upheaval. In the second year of the pandemic, we already are used to divide our lives into the time before and the time after, and there is an increasing talk of a “new normal”. Does it really exist?

Paralyzing silence in concert halls, orphaned museums and exhibitions, deserted animal parks. Some animals may even like it, others seem to be bored. We humans obviously lack encounters and cultural experiences, and many artists and institutions suffer from financial hardship. Fear of the future and uncertainty - that cannot be normal, we cannot and do not want to get used to it.

We ask for social contacts, conversations and exchanges. This is an important experience from the crisis. It shows us how precious many everyday things are that we may have taken for granted up to now. But we also know: the road to real normalcy will still be long.

We need to organize the transition period until we really can be together again in the zoo or concert hall. We depend on each other for this. The past few months have shown how much creativity there is in our society - that makes us confident. The concert, which you will enjoy right now, even if only online, is a wonderful example of solidarity and social cohesion.

Classical sounds in the Berlin Zoo in the Hippopotamus House - the lightness of the music belies the harshness of the conditions for this musical event. Two actors battered by the pandemic are defying the crisis here. It hit the cultural scene particularly hard, as it did all to institutions that are geared towards direct experience and encounters. This also includes zoos - you can't take a lion into the home office, said a zoo director.

The zoological garden in Berlin missed 90% of the visitors last year. However, the running operating costs remain, and the consequences are bitter. Reserves for important construction projects are melting away, and some employees have lost their jobs due to operational reasons. Artists also have existential worries, especially when they do not receive fixed salaries like the Berliner Symphoniker as a free orchestra. And so I hope that this unusual benefit concert in an unusual location will reach many music lovers as well as animal lovers, who will generously respond to the appeal for donations.

I wish the audience a wonderful musical experience, and I wish to thank the Berliner Symphoniker for this wonderful initiative. Incidentally, it lies entirely in the orchestra's tradition of building bridges, being a mediator and a source of inspiration. And that's what we need on the way out of the crisis, on the way to normality.

Music: Franz Schubert – Overture „The Devil as Hydraulicus“

Sabine Völker:

In music there are many references to animals, to nature and, with them, to myths and magical beings. Today we will present a selection of pieces of music from Haydn to Saint-Saëns.

We started with Franz Schubert's overture "The Devil as Hydraulicus". Schubert wrote this at the age of 15. The comedy with singing itself has never been completed, but there is something magical about its lightness.

And we stay fairytale-like with the famous "Flight of the Bumblebee" by Nikolai Rimski-Korsakow from the opera "The Tale of Tsar Saltan".

The fairy swanbird fulfills the wish of the tsar's son Gwidon to invisibly follow a departing ship by letting him climb into the sea and transform him into a bumblebee.

Music: Nikolai Rimski-Korsakow – "Flight of the Bumblebee"

Sabine Völker:

"Pastorale" is the name of the 6th symphony by Ludwig van Beethoven. This symphony is his only one with 5 movements instead of the usual 4 movements. Each movement is given a programmatic title, from the "merry gathering of country folk" to "thunder and storm". The 2nd movement naturalistically reflects a "scene by the brook". Bird calls are imitated: the nightingale by the flute, the quail by the oboe and the cuckoo by the clarinets. So that the murmuring of the brook comes into its own, all the strings softly play a slight undulating movement.

Music: Ludwig van Beethoven – Symphony No. 6 „Pastorale“, 2nd movement

Sabine Völker:

We have two of Joseph Haydn's symphonies in today's program. Symphony no. 83 is called "La Poule" (The Chicken). Even if the name hasn't been given by himself, the symphony is full of wit and the pecking of chickens in the "hen theme" is humorous. Here is the first sentence for you: "Allegro spiritoso".

Music: Joseph Haydn – Symphony No. 83 „La Poule“, 1st movement

Sabine Völker:

"The Swan of Tuonela" by Jean Sibelius is one of four legends from the "Lemminkäinen Suite". The hero comes from the Finnish national epic Kalevala. The story is about a mystical swan that swims around the isle of the dead of Tuonela. The hero's attempt to kill him fails. The work became famous for a long solo in the English horn.

Music: Jean Sibelius – „The Swan of Tuonela“

Sabine Völker:

Debussy's "prelude to the afternoon of a faun" was inspired by a poem by Stéphane Mallarmés. It tells of the different moods of the magical being in the dream. The flute begins all alone before the horns, oboe and harp condense the ethereal mood. It is considered to be one of the main works of impressionism.

Music: Claude Debussy – "Prelude to the afternoon of a faun"

Sabine Völker:

The "Carnival of the Animals" by Camille Saint-Saëns was not published until after his death. He himself did not want to publish it, since he quoted some of his professional colleagues such as Offenbach, Berlioz, Mendelssohn-Bartholdy and Rossini. The swan is an Andantino Grazioso in 6/4 time.

A magnificent swan glides along a lake. In keeping with the animal's size and beauty, the romance is played by the violoncello in its tenoral register. The movement also became known as music for the dance solo "The dying swan".

Music: Camille Saint Saëns – „The Swan“ from „Carnival of the Animals“

Sabine Völker:

At the end you will hear the final movement from Haydn's Symphony No. 82, named "The Bear".

The drone sounds and the melody in the upper parts create the association of a bagpipe or the heavy steps of a bear. You're probably thinking of a brown bear now, but what would the Berlin Zoo be without its famous Giant Pandas? And so we say goodbye to a musical tour through the Berlin Zoo with the Vivace from the "Bear".

Music: Joseph Haydn – Symphony No. 82 „L'ours“, 4th movement

Sabine Völker:

Thank you for accompanying us on our tour through the Berlin Zoo. You are welcome to support us with our education project "Music without Borders"!

Species protection is particularly important to the Berlin zoo. Therefore I now greet Mr. Benetar, he is the head of fundraising and species protection communication and will tell us a little bit about the project "Gorilla Tilla needs a villa".

Maximilian Benetar, Berlin Zoo:

Thank you, I am of course very happy to do that - not without first welcoming you here again at Zoo Berlin. The Berliner Symphoniker felt very much like the Zoo Berlin as well as the Tierpark Berlin and the Aquarium Berlin in that we had very extraordinary times in the last few months when we had to rely on support without an audience that could visit us here as usual.

Gorilla Tilla is a good example of successful species conservation in our zoo. In February we managed to welcome a baby gorilla for the first time in 16 years. Little Tilla now inspires our visitors and at the same time sensitizes them to species protection and the concerns of Zoo Berlin as a whole and brings us all a lot of joy.

I would be happy if the concert gave you a little pleasure and if you would like to continue supporting us. With your donation for the zoo, you can also contribute to the construction of our new ape house - because "Gorilla Tilla needs a villa"! Thank you very much!