



Will the Music Play?

By Lois Lewis

NARRATOR 1:

It's just two months until Symphony Land's annual Classical Music Festival. Each year, the Symphony Land Orchestra plays a concert of the music of such classical composers as Mozart and Beethoven.

NARRATOR 2:

This year, however, is the 50th anniversary of the festival. To mark that special celebration, some members of the orchestra want to play a different kind of music -- music that was composed during the last 50 years. Other musicians want to keep the traditional classical program.

NARRATOR 3:

The musicians are meeting in the Grand Music Hall. The concertmaster is trying to control the argument. Let's listen.

CONCERTMASTER: (loudly tapping a baton on a music stand)

Ladies, gentlemen! Please! One at a time!

CELLO PLAYER:

This always has been a classical music festival -- and it should stay that way.

TROMBONE PLAYER:

Here, here! I agree!

FLUTE PLAYER:

Classical music is wonderful, but lots of wonderful music also has been written during the last half century.

CLARINET PLAYER:

That's right! Our 50th anniversary will be the perfect opportunity to feature more modern music.

NARRATOR 1:

The heated discussion continues for another hour. Finally, the concertmaster takes action.

CONCERTMASTER: (tapping a baton again)

This meeting has gone on long enough. It's time to vote. Mark on your ballots your choice for our music program.

NARRATOR 2:

The musicians fill out their ballots and put them in a box. The concertmaster counts each sheet of paper. The results are a surprise to everyone.

CONCERTMASTER:

It's a tie! We're split exactly 50-50.

NARRATOR 3:

Some of the musicians sigh, while others grumble, as they leave the hall. Sandra Scoop, Symphony Land's popular television reporter, is waiting outside for an update. She stops the concertmaster.

SANDRA SCOOP:

Have the musicians decided what kind of music they'll play?

CONCERTMASTER:

I'm sorry to report that we're hopelessly deadlocked.

SANDRA SCOOP:

Does that mean the concert is off?

CONCERTMASTER:

Right now, I just don't know. We're too divided to reach a decision.

NARRATOR 1:

News of the disagreement spreads quickly. That evening, Sandra Scoop interviews some of the people who have gathered in the main square to discuss the issue. Their reactions are as divided as the musicians' votes.

SANDRA SCOOP:

What are your thoughts about the upcoming music concert?

WOMAN IN CROWD:

It should be a celebration of classical music, not popular music!

MAN IN CROWD:

This is important anniversary for the festival. Why not add a little rock and roll to the program?

NARRATOR 2:

At that moment, Maestro Alfred Allegro, Symphony Land's world-famous conductor, composer, and arranger, is watching the news. Allegro, who has just returned from a brief trip, was not aware of the controversy.

NARRATOR 3:

Upset by the news report, Maestro Allegro calls his assistant, Tim, for an update.

TIM:

Maestro, it's awful. No one will budge on this one.

MAESTRO ALLEGRO:

Not to worry. Tell all the musicians to be at the music hall tomorrow afternoon at 2 o'clock for an emergency rehearsal. I've just completed some new arrangements that I think will solve the problem.

TIM:

Will do, Maestro.

NARRATOR 1:

The next day, the musicians take their seats in the orchestra. Maestro Allegro greets the group and describes his plan.

MAESTRO ALLEGRO:

I know that you've had some disagreements about what music we should play for the festival this year. I propose that we play both classical *and* popular music for this special performance.

CONCERTMASTER:

But Maestro, how will we fit so much music into the program?

MAESTRO ALLEGRO:

The first half of the concert will feature classical music. The second half of the program will highlight selections of popular music. Take a look at the arrangements I've created.

NARRATOR 2:

Maestro Allegro passes out sheets of music to the musicians. Their puzzled faces change to smiles as they carefully study the pages.

CELLO PLAYER:

This is wonderful!

FLUTE PLAYER:

There's something here for everyone.

MAESTRO ALLEGRO:

Great! Do you all agree with this program?

ALL MUSICIANS:

Yes, Maestro!

MAESTRO ALLEGRO:

Splendid! Let's begin. We've got a lot of rehearsing to do!

NARRATOR 3:

For the next few weeks, the musicians practice long hours to prepare for their performance.

NARRATOR 1:

On the evening of the festival, the musicians take the stage of the Grand Music Hall in front of the largest crowd in the history of the festival. Maestro Allegro addresses the audience.

MAESTRO ALLEGRO:

Good evening, everyone. Tonight, we honor the 50th anniversary of this wonderful festival with selections of various kinds of music from across the years. If the music makes you feel like singing or dancing, please do so! Enjoy the program.

NARRATOR 2:

The Maestro was true to his word. The orchestra played selections ranging from Beethoven to the Beatles to Beyoncé.

NARRATOR 3:

The audience was so thrilled that the orchestra gave three encores! After the show, reporter Sandra Scoop interviewed the concertgoers.

SANDRA SCOOP:

So, what did you think of the program?

TEEN BOY:

It was awesome!

TEEN BOY'S MOTHER:

Outstanding! I hope they keep this format for next year's festival.

NARRATOR 1:

In fact, the concert was so successful that Maestro Allegro and the musicians decided to rename the celebration. From now on, they decided, the Symphony Land Music Festival will feature many different kinds of music.

NARRATOR 2:

The townspeople unanimously approved the change, making Symphony Land *the* place to hear the best music from around the world for years to come.

