

A wascally wabbit at Symphony Hall



CHRIS LEE/FILE

A performance of “Bugs Bunny at the Symphony” from the New York Philharmonic at Avery Fisher Hall in 2015.

By Zoë Madonna

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Unlike the New York Philharmonic and its Young People’s Concerts, composer Carl Stalling probably didn’t intend to give a generation of Americans an education in classical music. But his scores for Warner Bros. cartoons, which sample and reference music from all over the classical and popular song repertoires, have introduced countless children and adults alike to the music of Wagner, Rossini, Liszt, and more.

Chameleonic voice actor Mel Blanc's larger-than-life comic tics defined characters: Daffy Duck's unhinged lisp, Sylvester the Cat's spluttering, Bugs Bunny's insouciant and nasal "What's up, Doc?" But watch one of the seven-minute cartoons in the vast catalog of Looney Tunes or Merrie Melodies, and you may notice how little dialogue there is. Blanc's voices were punctuation on top of the cartoons' whiz-bang orchestral music and sound effects, which followed the onscreen misadventures with every note. Put the music on mute, and you've got a first-class snoozer.

ADVERTISING



"Bugs Bunny at the Symphony II," a program being performed by the Boston Pops this weekend, accompanies screenings of cartoons with their original music performed live. The show is the co-creation of American conductor George Daugherty, who grew up watching

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