

# SWITZERLAND: FEEL THE MUSIC

Transcribed by: The SMSIT Accessible Media Department

---

(Cello droning)

**MAN:** Sensing the sound of a drum or the vibrations of a cello with your whole body. That's what the project "Feel the Music" from the Mahler Chamber Orchestra is all about. In some European countries, its musicians visit deaf and hard-of-hearing children in the classroom. In a second step, the MCO invites them into the orchestra's world. This time, three schools from Zurich and around Lucerne in Switzerland are taking part. A life-enhancing project for both children and musicians.

**CHRISTIAN HEUBES:** I think when they sit close to the musicians and see their movements, they realize how energy is transmitted. And this is the reason why it's beautiful when they're with us, what they experience, and we can feel they're happy at a point, for instance when music is getting surprisingly loud or incredibly impulsive.

**MAN:** Children are experiencing the sound of the instruments. They touch them, sit under the piano and conduct the musicians. Reciprocal applause.

**GIRL:** It felt great, because there were lots of violins playing in the orchestra. It was beautiful feeling, the vibrations.

**BOY:** Touching the instrument, I could feel it through my hand and my arm in my whole body. But also, all the other instruments have transmitted vibrations to my body.

**MAN:** Feel the Music is part of the Mahler Chamber Orchestra's Beethoven Journey concert series. It performs with famous conductors and soloists such as the Norwegian pianist Leif Ove Andsnes. The idea for the workshop with deaf and hard-of-hearing children was born because of Beethoven, who himself turned hard-of-hearing in his twenties, and later deaf, which totally influenced his compositions.

**LEIF OVE ANDSNES:** The music because wilder. It breaks boundaries all the time. And then later on, also it becomes more private, and he gets obsessed with trills, for instance, in the piano. This means two repeated notes again and again and again, creating a vibration and creating the feeling that we are flying with the music. And all these things, I wonder... I'm sure they must have some kind of connection to his handicap.

**MAN:** Since May 2012, there have to date been workshops in eight European countries. Around 150 children have taken part. After the experience and surrounded by the orchestra, the schoolchildren are invited to draw their impressions.

**MIRIAM BONGARTZ:** After every project, we chose some pictures which will be framed and presented in our Feel the Music exhibition in the foyer, together with information about the project and stories the children told us about their pictures. That's so we can show the public how the children deal with music and what it can mean to them. It enables us to promote the issue, which is our principal aim.

*(Piano playing)*

**MAN:** The climax is approaching. The Mahler Chamber Orchestra and Leif Ove Andsnes, play Beethoven's 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> piano concert at the Lucerne Festival while the deaf and hard-of-hearing children are sitting in the audience, all their senses wide awake. At the end, deaf applause that speaks volumes.