



LETTERS TO SANTA

MESSAGES FROM CHILDREN, APHORISMS ON CHILDHOOD

by LOGAN SKELTON

with
SARA DUCHOVNAY, KEITH PHARES, KATHERINE PRACHT
and LAURA WARD, at the piano



TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2016, 6PM AT THE ACADEMY OF VOCAL ARTS

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PROGRAM NOTES

by Logan Skelton

When children write to Santa Claus, they speak in simple, unpretentious words, writing with absolute candor of their secret hopes, fears, dreams. They tell no lies. In these letters, for a few moments, we see through their crystal eyes. So much is revealed. A tiny world, yes, of magic and impossibility, wonder and innocence. But in that smallness, one finds the full of human nature told.

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LETTERS TO SANTA: Messages from Children, Aphorisms on Childhood consists of song settings to Christmas letters written by children, as well as five aphoristic fragments about childhood taken from the writing of adults. This set was written in 2015 in response to a commission from Lyric Fest of Philadelphia. Only a single song was requested, set to an actual letter, but I found that as I worked I became completely absorbed by this project. Before I knew it, I had a set of seventeen songs. The end result is a cycle that invites listeners into the multi-faceted, often quirky and magical world of children.

Ann Arbor, Michigan
October 2015

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1. APHORISM:

Grown-ups Never Understand (Antoine de Saint-Exupéry)

2. A Box of Paints (from 1915)

3. A Few Questions

4. Everything, but not *Everything*

5. APHORISM:

If You Want Your Child to be Intelligent (Albert Einstein)

6. Three Little Sisters (from 1907)

7. A Guy Named Krampus

8. Make Me a Dragon

9. APHORISM:

One's Real Life (Oscar Wilde)

10. A Small Request

11. A Surprise Attack

12. My Real Wish

13. APHORISM:

Your Clear Eye (Sylvia Plath)

14. I Hope You Understand

15. Here are My Letters

16. I Know a Little Boy and Girl:

The Spirit of Giving (from 1888)

17. APHORISM:

The Soul is Healed (Fyodor Dostoevsky)