

NEWS

Kids feel the magic of music at BSO concert

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It doesn't happen often, but Keith Lockhart was upstaged yesterday.

Before the maestro lifted his baton, the Symphony Hall stage belonged to Zachary Boch and his peers.

Zachary, 2, slid behind a cello as children were introduced to a range of orchestral instruments up close and personal.

"Mozart finished his first symphony when he was 8," Lockhart reminded the audience at the Boston Symphony Orchestra family concert.

The concert itself was part of a McGill University study which, through the use of electronic sensors attached to Lockhart, five members of the orchestra and 50 audience members, sought to gauge emotional responses to music.

"We're hoping to see distinctive physiological signatures of the emotions that maestro Lockhart is feeling as he conducts, and then see the transmission of them to the musicians and the audience," said Dr. Daniel Levitan, a musician and cognitive neuroscientist at McGill.

"We're all separate performers who bring our own emotional life and response to the music in front of us," Lockhart said. "A good part of that would still exist without the conductor, only with less cohesion."

Caption: STRING THING: Zachary Boch, 2, gets a leg up on the musical competition, testing his talent on the cello during an instrument 'petting zoo' at Symphony Hall yesterday morning. Staff photo by Tara Carvalho

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