

COMPOSER'S NOTE

The French novelist Jules Verne (1828-1905) created a unique blend of science and adventure in his series of novels known as “Voyages Extraordinaires”. Written in 1864, **Journey to the Centre of the Earth** is on the surface an adventure story but as the commentator Diana Mitchell has observed on a deeper level can be seen as “man’s journey into himself, always probing deeper for what lies at the centre”.

The novel takes the form of a sequence of diary entries by Axel, nephew of Professor Otto Lidenbrock. The pair follow coded instructions in a old document guiding them to Iceland where, together with their guide Hans, they enter the open crater of an extinct volcano Snæfells and pursue a trail to the centre of the earth. There follows “hair-breadth ‘scapes and ventures perilous” as the intrepid explorers encounter a vast interior world.

This music presents scenes from the novel in a rough chronological order. The work opens on the dark and brooding *Summit of Snæfells* and follows the adventurers as they descend into the bowels of the earth. En route they encounter the *Wonders of the Terrestrial Depths* (an electrically illuminated sky), a dream sequence during which Axel witnesses a *Battle of Antediluvian Creatures* before the final *Ascent and Homecoming*. The key scene of the book (and the music) reflects on Axel’s despair as he becomes separated from his companions and is *Lost in the Labyrinth*. His subsequent rescue is due to an acoustic phenomenon whereby he hears the voices of his friends in *The Whispering Gallery*.

Journey to the Centre of the Earth is dedicated to Ryan and Megan, who love the story!

Peter Graham
Cheshire
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PERFORMANCE NOTE

All passages similar to the following should be played *quasi glissando*:

