

An aerial photograph of a turbulent ocean with deep blue and white waves. Numerous musical instruments are scattered throughout the water, appearing to float or be tossed by the waves. Visible instruments include several violins, a double bass, a tuba, a trumpet, a trombone, a saxophone, and a harp. The instruments are positioned at various depths and angles, creating a sense of dynamic movement and chaos.

MONTEREY SYMPHONY
PRESENTS

SOUND WAVES

Sunset Center, Carmel 2018-19 Max Bragado-Darman *Music Director*

SOUND WAVES

CONCERT PROGRAM 5 APRIL 13–14, 2019

THIS CONCERT IS GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY
MARTIN R. WOLF FAMILY FUND
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Max Bragado-Darman, conductor
Elmar Oliveira, violin

PROGRAM

Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage, Op. 27 Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

Violin Concerto No.1, Op. 26 Max Bruch (1838–1920)
Elmar Oliveira, violin

- I. *Vorspiel*: Allegro moderato
- II. Adagio
- III. *Finale*: Allegro energico

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 4, Op. 120 Robert Schumann (1810–1856)

- I. Ziemlich langsam–Lebhaft
- II. Romanze: Ziemlich langsam
- III. Scherzo: Lebhaft
- IV. Langsam: Lebhaft

KAZU will be rebroadcasting the Saturday, April 13th concert on both
Saturday, April 27th at 4:00 p.m. and Sunday, April 28th at 4:00 p.m.
on their HD2 classical channel. Tune-in online at www.kazu.org

CONCERT 5

PROGRAM NOTES

BY ALICIA MASTROMONACO

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847)

Felix Mendelssohn was born in Hamburg into a wealthy Jewish banking family. Both Felix and his sister Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel were musical prodigies and accomplished composers at a young age, although the siblings used their musical talents in different ways throughout their equally short lives. Felix Mendelssohn is often credited with being the person to revive Bach in the classical music canon, and was heavily influenced by Bach's use of counterpoint. Ludwig van Beethoven was another important influence for Mendelssohn, and it was Beethoven who inspired Mendelssohn to compose *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*.

Beethoven first set Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's two poems, *Meeresstille* and *Glückliche Fahrt* in a cantata for chorus and orchestra which was premiered in 1815, and Mendelssohn took inspiration to compose an orchestral concert overture with the same name in 1828. The nineteen-year-old composer knew that the audience at the premier in Berlin would likely have been familiar with the poems, and thus think of the words to the poems while listening to the piece. The first poem, *Meeresstille* ("Calm Sea"), is about the terrible stillness of the ocean in the mind of a would-be sailor who cannot set out to sea, and *Glückliche Fahrt* (which could be translated as "Pleasant Journey"), is about the opposite: a bright, windy day, perfect for a sailor who wishes to find his way back to land.

The term “overture” in this case is used not in the operatic sense, as the opening piece of an opera, but rather as a bipartite work that includes both slow and fast sections. It opens with listless strings, with the addition of clarinet and bassoons, to evoke the deep stillness (“Tiefe Stille”) of the water. The flute, a wisp of wind, awakens the breeze, and the entire orchestra follows suit by blowing out the cobwebs of the stillness. The rest of the overture is a blustery ode to sailing on the open sea with a jaunty pirate shanty-like melody, the bubbling of waves on the ocean played by arpeggiated strings and woodwinds, and finally, a rambunctious timpani solo, followed by trumpet and horn fanfare, before the proverbial sailor spies land ahead and sails his ship safely into port. 🌊

MAX BRUCH (1838-1920)

Although it is certainly his most famous and popular of this particular genre of work, German composer Max Bruch’s First Violin Concerto, written in 1866, is only the first of nine concertos he wrote for the instrument, and not the piece that Bruch wished to have associated with his name beyond any of his other works. Bruch was frustrated to be known mostly for this concerto, rather than many of his other compositions, even though the piece is well-loved for good reason. Out of the four most famous German violin concertos at the time (Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Bruch, and Brahms), the soloist Joseph Joachim said that Bruch’s concerto was “the richest and most seductive” of the four. Not small praise in such elite company for a composer who would unfortunately spend most of his career in Brahms’s compositional shadow.

Along with his friendship with Joseph Joachim, Bruch was also friends with several famous violinists at the time, including David, Sarasate and Willy Hess, and they advised him in his compositions. The violin concerto was written during Bruch's tenure as a composer for the court at Koblenz, a position he held from 1865-1867, although he started sketches for the work as early as 1864. He conferred with several violinists on the piece, and revised it several times, including after the first performance of an earlier version by the concertmaster of the Gürzenich Orchestra, Otto von Königlöw in 1866, before it was officially premiered by Joachim in 1868. The concerto quickly became a hit, as violinists started to incorporate the piece into their repertoire. Unfortunately, Bruch never received commensurate financial remuneration

Bruch was an outspoken critic of Wagner, Liszt, and the New German School, and preferred to write in an early romantic style reminiscent of his predecessors Mendelssohn and Schumann. Like Mendelssohn, Bruch was a Jewish composer, and one of his other famous works is *Kol Nidrei*, for cello and orchestra. The second movement of the violin concerto in G minor, op. 26 is a good example of Bruch's ability to craft a beautiful melody, for as he said, "melody is the soul of music." 

ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810-1856)

German composer Robert Schumann first sketched out the music for what became his fourth symphony in 1841, to commemorate a happy first year of marriage with his

wife, pianist and composer Clara Wieck Schumann. Originally calling it the “Clara Symphony,” Robert Schumann told his wife, “I will portray you with flutes, oboes, and harps.” The piece, then known as his second symphony, received lukewarm praise at its premiere in 1841, and Schumann refused to publish the score. Ten years later, in 1851, Schumann revised the entire symphony in one week in December, making the symphony into a heavier, statelier version, which he wanted to call a “Symphonic Fantasy,” asserts Schumann scholar Peter Ostwald. It was the 1851 version that Schumann eventually published in 1853, with the opus number 120, and which his widow Clara thought of as the superior version of the work.

However, the Schumanns’ good friend and fellow composer Johannes Brahms disagreed, and despite Clara Schumann’s strong protestations, decided to publish the original 1841 version in 1891. Brahms wrote about this version, “It is a real pleasure to see anything so bright and spontaneous expressed with corresponding ease and grace. Everything is so absolutely natural that you cannot imagine it in any other way—there are not harsh colors, no forced effects.” This exemplifies the debate that had arisen over what some considered Robert Schumann’s heavy-handed orchestration techniques, particularly his desire to create a “symphonic fantasy” in the Fourth symphony by binding all the movements together into one continuous piece, rather than four standalone movements, as was the symphonic standard at the time.

The compositional decision to write a symphony that flows from one movement to another was not only aesthetic; Schumann incorporates the first theme of the first movement throughout the work to tie the movements together even more. He inverts the opening theme, played in the strings and bassoons, in the scherzo, and this inverted theme returns in the finale. Schumann refers to the main theme in several subtle ways throughout the work, which contributes to the cohesiveness of the symphony. The gravitas and sincerity of the later version of the Fourth symphony (which is the version that most orchestras perform today) reflects the changes that Schumann experienced during his lifetime as a composer, and the audience is left with a powerful symphonic work that exemplifies the creative possibilities one composer can derive from a theme and creating endless variations out of it. 🎻

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Alicia has played with the Monterey Symphony since 2007. She is also a member of the Carmel Bach Festival and Marin Symphony. A San Francisco native, she began her music studies at age seven on the piano, and took up the horn after switching from the trumpet in her middle school band program. She earned Bachelors of Music degrees in Horn Performance and Musicology from Boston University, and did graduate work at the Universität der Künste Berlin before returning to California to continue her studies. She earned a Masters of Music degree at UCLA in Horn Performance, a Masters of Arts degree in Musicology at UCSB, and is currently working on her PhD at UCSB. Alicia's dissertation is focused on the daily lives of orchestral musicians and the organizations in which they play, and she is using her dissertation to explore the relationships between regional orchestras and their communities. Alicia is an avid outdoorsperson and animal lover.

