

MONTEREY SYMPHONY

PRESENTS

SOUND WAVES

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



SOUND WAVES

CONCERT PROGRAM 2 NOVEMBER 17–18, 2018

This concert is generously sponsored by

WILLIAM H. SMITH

Max Bragado-Darman, conductor

Carol Wincenc, flute

PROGRAM

Overture, *Le corsaire*, H. 101 (Op. 21) Hector Berlioz (1803-1869)
with musicians of the Honors Orchestra of Youth Music Monterey County

Flute Concerto, FS 119 Carl Nielsen (1865-1931)

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Allegretto

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36 Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

- I. Andante sostenuto — Moderato con anima
- II. Andantino in modo di canzona
- III. Scherzo: Pizzicato ostinato — Allegro
- IV. Finale: Allegro con fuoco

KAZU will be rebroadcasting the Saturday, November 17th concert on both
Saturday, December 1st at 4:00 p.m. and Sunday, December 2nd at 4:00 p.m.

Louis-Hector Berlioz, was, despite his father's exhortations, not a doctor. Obvious though this statement might be, Hector Berlioz's fate as one of the most important French composers of the nineteenth century came about only after the young Berlioz dropped out of medical school while studying in Paris. In the famous passage from his *Mémoires*, Berlioz laments:

"Become a doctor! Study anatomy! Dissect! Take part in horrible operations – instead of giving myself body and soul to music—a sublime art whose grandeur I was beginning to perceive! No, no! It seemed to me the reversal of the whole natural order of my existence. It was monstrous. It could not happen. Yet it did."

During his brief studies at the *Ecole de Médecine* in Paris, Berlioz spent more and more time attending concerts, operas, and above all, Shakespeare plays. Instead of following in his father's footsteps, the budding young composer decided to depart the Ecole in favor of the Paris Conservatoire. Shakespeare exercised an enormous influence on Berlioz. Several of his compositions were heavily influenced by not only his Parisian musical education but also on the drama and excitement of a Shakespeare play, which, incidentally, the non-English speaker heard in English during his time in Paris.

Although Berlioz is today most famous for his programmatic *Symphonie fantastique*, subtitled "An Episode in the Life of an Artist," he also composed several concert overtures, following in the footsteps of Beethoven and Mendelssohn's use of the form as a stand-alone piece. Some of these works are indeed the opening number of an opera, but others are individual pieces, taken from Shakespeare plays (*Le roi Lear* and *Béatrice et Bénédicte*), based on stories of famous characters in history (*Benvenuto Cellini*, *Le carnaval romain*, which borrows musical elements from the opera *Benvenuto Cellini*, and *Rob Roy*), or perhaps based on poetry and literature.

Le Corsaire Overture was composed in Nice in 1844, originally under the title *La tour de Nice* (The Tower of Nice). Perhaps this was an homage to the work he did there during the *Grand Festival de l'Industrie*, which offered over 1000 performances. More than likely it is referring to the tower he stayed in to recover from jaundice and heal from the breakup of his marriage to the British Shakespearean actress Harriet Smithson. The title's origin is not as important as its implication: swashbuckling pirate music. The musical evocation of pirate antics on the high seas is evidenced by the daredevil runs in the strings and winds, the braggadocio of the low brass, and the jaunty, carefree drinking tunes played by all the instruments together. Although this overture is not performed as often today as it was in the past, it is still just as catchy and thrilling as when it was premiered in 1845. 🎻

Carl Nielsen was a beloved Danish composer, and an important contributor to the generation of composers from the late-nineteenth to early-twentieth centuries. His works range from the late romantic style to tonal modernism and neo-classicism in his later years. Though he is famous primarily for his six symphonies, his works for wind instruments have steadily become more popular in the canonical repertoire.

Nielsen heard the Danish Wind Quintet (also known as the Wind Quintet of the Royal Orchestra) perform in 1921 and was so inspired by their playing that he wrote a quintet of his own for the group in 1922. The quintet has become a staple in woodwind literature, and the first of Nielsen's works to be released as a 78-rpm record outside of Denmark. Shortly after writing the quintet, Nielsen decided to write a concerto for each of the members of the quintet, but he was only able to complete the flute and clarinet concertos before he died in 1931. Nielsen worked closely with the flutist in the quintet, Holger Gilbert-Jespersen (who had replaced original member Paul Hagemann), on the concerto, and Gilbert-Jespersen premiered the work in Paris on October 21, 1926.

Nielsen writes, "The Flute cannot deny its own nature, its home is in Arcadia and it prefers pastoral moods. Hence, the composer has to obey its gentle nature, unless he wants to be branded a barbarian." The concerto appeals to the sensitive, elegant nature of the flute, but also to the instrument's ability to flit wildly across the entire range, vacillating between virtuosic exuberance and panicked anxiety. Nielsen scholar David Fanning writes, "the Flute Concerto (1926) and Clarinet Concerto (1928) are studies in empathy, recalling the temperaments of the Second Symphony, but in more modernistic terms. They deal respectively in well-mannered elegance in the face of brute opposition, and in irascibility alternating with regret." This is exemplified in the concerto through the oppositional characters of the Flute (who could be considered the "hero") and the bass trombone, whose noisy interjections throughout the concerto may make the instrument the *persona non grata* of the work. The concerto exemplifies in many ways the transition from romanticism to twentieth-century modernism, through the liberal use of dissonance that still somehow manages to remain tonally comprehensible. 🌿

A composer famous today for not only his music, but also a personal life plagued by depression and inner torment, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony has been deemed the embodiment of how Tchaikovsky felt about his own fate. Tchaikovsky is often framed as a depressed outcast; he was notably *not* a member of the "Mighty Handful," a group of five composers (Mily Balakirev, César Cui, Modest

Mussorgsky, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, and Alexander Borodin) who famously eschewed conservatory training in favor of composing folk-like music in their own national style. Tchaikovsky was trained at The Saint Petersburg Conservatory, and although his music contains more than a subtle nod to his Russian heritage, his style often fits within a more Austro-Germanic post-Beethovenian symphonic lineage.

The Fourth Symphony was premiered by the Russian Musical Society in Moscow on February 22, 1878, supported largely by Nadezhda von Meck, Tchaikovsky's new confidante and patroness from 1877-1890. On her insistence, Tchaikovsky wrote a narrative program to accompany the work, which has had lasting effects on the reception of the symphony, both positive and negative. Tchaikovsky writes, "that fateful force which prevents the impulse to happiness from attaining its goal, which jealously ensures that peace and happiness shall not be complete and unclouded, which hangs above the head like the sword of Damocles, unwaveringly, constantly poisoning the soul. It is an invincible force that can never be overcome—merely endured, hopelessly." It is with this spirit that the fourth symphony is composed, and the listener may hear the constant vacillation between exuberant joy and depressive lugubriousness, between hope and despair.

The symphony opens with a melancholy fanfare played by the horns and bassoons, the famous "fate motive." The opening fanfare fades to nothing, and is followed by a melancholy theme in 12/8 meter. Tchaikovsky's fanfare fades to almost nothing and the melody is cradled into a soft and unassuming melody. However, as with many of the topics in Tchaikovsky's symphonies, one mood does not last for long. The shuffling, listless melody seems to suddenly right itself, perhaps Tchaikovsky's attempt to convince the listener there is no haven, but one must "drift upon that sea until it engulfs and submerges you in its depths." Though this symphony does not deal specifically with the waves of an ocean, it is hard to argue against this dramatic allusion to the waves of emotion each of us feels over the course of our lifetimes.

A lone oboe begins the second movement, evoking what Tchaikovsky called "that melancholy feeling which comes in the evening when, weary from one's toil, one sits alone with a book—but it falls from the hand. There comes a whole host of memories." Although the movement cheers up in the middle with a balletic climax, the bassoon returns to the oboe's first plaintive melody at the end.

The third movement strikes out with tempestuous pizzicatos, the strings plucking away at a light and airy melody, a sharp contrast to the loneliness of the previous movement. In the middle section, the piccolo festoons a quiet militaristic brass motive.

The fourth movement catapults out of the blocks at a virtuosic pace. It is celebratory music, wild and free. Like any good Russian composer worth his vodka at the time, Tchaikovsky incorporates a Russian folk tune, “In the Field a Birch Tree Stood,” into the movement. But lest the listener think that this is a movement created out of pure joy, Tchaikovsky writes, “Hardly have you managed to forget yourself and to be carried away by the spectacle of the joys of others, than irrepressible fate appears again and reminds you of yourself.” The original fanfare, the famous “Fate” motive, crashes suddenly, almost incongruously, into the movement. This time, however, instead of slinking into the shuffling main theme of the first movement, not even fate can taint the exuberance of the fourth movement, and the pervasive joyfulness of the beginning of the movement returns, and like a train, chugs steadily to a brass-laden, cymbal-fueled end.

It is worth mentioning that the programmatic narrative that Tchaikovsky wrote about this symphony has been a source of contention among both music scholars and critics. In mid-to-late nineteenth century debate about programmatic music (that which tells an explicit story through the music) and absolute music (often described as “music for music’s sake”), proponents of the latter camp were quick to dismiss any program music as less worthy of study and praise. Therefore, even though Tchaikovsky’s fourth symphony has plenty of musical merits without paying attention to the story he wrote for his patroness, Nadezhda von Meck, this symphony did not receive the attention it perhaps deserved during the early years of its existence. Nonetheless, the Fourth Symphony is today one of the most beloved and canonical of the romantic Russian symphonists’ outputs. This piece is open to interpretation, and hopefully each listener will experience the music in their own way, based on their individual experiences. Perhaps this was Tchaikovsky’s mode of expressing his frustration as a closeted gay man in nineteenth-century Russia, or perhaps it was his way of coping with the pervasive depression from which he suffered over the course of his lifetime. Perhaps it was simply a piece that he composed at the behest of his deep-pocketed patroness. What is most important is that it is a piece that orchestral musicians still love to play and audiences still enjoy hearing. 

READ ALICIA MASTROMONACO’S BIOGRAPHY ON PAGE 39

ALICIA MASTROMONACO

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 the daily lives of orchestral musicians and the organizations in which they play, and is using her dissertation to explore the relationships between regional orchestras and their communities. Alicia is an avid outdoorsperson and animal lover.

