MONTEREY SYMPHONY

PRESENTS

# SOUND WAVES

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

# SOUND WAVES

## CONCERT PROGRAM 1
## OCTOBER 20–21, 2018

THIS CONCERT IS GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY

**Katharine Comstock**

**Alyce Nunes**

**Anita Dunsay**, in memory of Richard Dunsay

**Max Bragado-Darman**, conductor

### PROGRAM

*Among Waves* — Alex Berko (1995 - )

I. The Tide
II. Flowing Even in Stillness
III. Silver Wall

### INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 9 in C Major, D.944 ("The Great") — Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

I. Andante - Allegro ma non troppo
II. Andante con moto
III. Scherzo. Allegro vivace - Trio
IV. Allegro vivace

KAZU will be rebroadcasting the Saturday, October 20th concert on both Saturday, November 3rd at 4:00 p.m. and Sunday, November 4th at 4:00 p.m.

## PROGRAM NOTES FOR *AMONG WAVES*

In June 2017 I was approached by the Monterey Symphony to compose this work as part of their opening concert celebrating the ocean. In addition, I was told that this work would be paired with Schubert's 9th Symphony. As a composer and pianist, I have always had a fascination with Schubert; particularly in the way he delivers narrative and how he crafts melody. While there aren't any direct musical quotes from Schubert's symphony in *Among Waves*, there are a few elements of the piece that are crafted as a tribute to the great composer and certainly Schubert's concepts of lyricism and storytelling are deeply embedded in the architecture of this work. It was my intention to create a piece of art that pays homage to the past while simultaneously staring boldly into the future.

As part of the commission, I was given the opportunity to stay at the Big Sur Land Trust, graciously hosted by Todd Farrington. The idea of this weeklong residency was to collect inspiration, experience nature, explore, and write. It was during my time in Big Sur that I realized the importance of *nature* as a teacher and it was in Big Sur where *Among Waves* took shape.

Structurally, this work consists of three continuous movements; each capturing a different aspect of the ocean while maintaining the constant theme of *overlap*: overlap of musical elements such as harmony, rhythm, and melody, as well as overlap of history and influence.

*The Tide* focuses on overlapping orchestral color and blocks of harmony. Throughout the movement, string harmonics and the winds are blurred together, creating both a kaleidoscopic wash of color and merging of harmony.

*Flowing Even in Stillness* explores the overlapping of rhythms. Various divisions of the beat on a rather miniscule level topple over one other to create a sort of kinetic energy that permeates this movement and flushes into the final one.

*Silver Wall* overlaps large chunks of motifs. The movement was largely inspired by two phenomena: 1) the beam of light that resonates out of a wave the split moment before it capsizes and 2) the rock formations touching the ocean that to me, resemble waves frozen in time. Themes and fragments from earlier movements make their way into the whirlpool of energy that thrusts heroically to a final crash, simultaneously setting the stage for Schubert's *Great* Symphony.

The narrative arc of the piece takes a journey from land out to sea. *The Tide* begins with the briskness of the ocean at dawn as it churns and yearns, cyclically grooming the shore. As the story continues further out to sea, waves become more active. Melody quickly becomes consumed by the gravity of the ocean and is spat out in the form of bursting rhythmic energy and a melodic contour based on that of the churning theme in the opening movement. It is also here where the entire orchestra finally unites and propels towards one final crash on the other side of the ocean. *Among Waves* is dedicated to Dorothy McIntyre without whom this piece would not be possible. BY ALEX BERKO—BIOGRAPHY ON PAGE 14

## PROGRAM NOTES FOR SCHUBERT'S 9TH SYMPHONY

It was believed to be the summer of 1825 while on a vacation to Austria, one year after the premiere of Beethoven's 9th symphony, that Franz Schubert inked the first notes of his Great Symphony. It wouldn't be, however, until over a decade later that the piece would break through the surface. Robert Schumann, known primarily as a prominent composer but in his time, as a music critic as well, discovered the work upon a visit to Ferdinand Schubert's estate in Vienna in 1838. Schumann brought the symphony to the attention of Felix Mendelssohn, an acclaimed composer and also at that time, a conductor. While there is speculation that Schubert himself heard a rehearsal of the symphony prior to 1838, the first documented performance was in fact with Mendelssohn and the Leipzig Gewandhaus in 1839.

To clear any confusion up front, the official numbering of this symphony has undergone a journey of its own. Because none of Schubert's symphonies were published during his lifetime, musicologists have had to undergo the task of numbering the symphonies according to when they were written. Over the years, while the numbering was being debated and finalized, this symphony has been called the 7th, 8th (not to be confused with his current 8th Symphony: The Unfinished Symphony), 9th, and even in some cases, the 10th. Thankfully, musicologists and theorists like nicknames, so this symphony was decidedly called the "Great Symphony" appropriately named after a letter Schubert had written regarding some chamber music he was working on that would "serve as preparation...for this great symphony."

It is important to note that between the ages of 16 and 21, Schubert composed six symphonies. Being that he died ten years later and wrote only one more complete symphony (numbers 7 and 8 being considered to be less complete and not as grandiose as prior symphonic works), one must wonder why.

Perhaps part of the answer is Ludwig Van Beethoven.

Beethoven's shadow is still being cast today. With the premiere of, arguably the most recognizable music in history, his 5th symphony, ripples of admiration, awe, and fear were sent down contemporary composers' spines. That particular piece, in culmination with the rest of Beethoven's symphonic works, especially the 9th Symphony, forever changed the rules of form, harmony, orchestration, and structure previously conceived at the time. Music would never be the same. Schubert was among one of Beethoven's contemporaries and although the two never "met" (Schubert was a pallbearer at Beethoven's funeral), there was said to have been mutual respect between the prodigies. In particular, Beethoven had been known to appreciate Schubert's songs and Schubert had long been an admirer of everything Beethoven, as seen particularly in his Great Symphony.

While Schubert held Beethoven in high regard, he was not interested in simply mimicking the genius, but rather, asking similar and perhaps deeper questions while also challenging preconceived compositional norms of the time. Schubert wanted to be one of the greats. As conductor Roger Norrington stated:

> "While Beethoven's 9th had shocked with its overt drama, Schubert would show a different way forward. Music would not need to be violent, almost ugly, to say new things...development sections, for instance, would not have to argue, they could tell stories. As Beethoven had dramatized Classical form, Schubert would lyricise it."

The Great Symphony spans four movements and 45 minutes to an hour in length (depending how fast the strings can play). What sets this particular symphony apart from other music being written at that time is its scope. Along with Beethoven's 9th, Schubert's was truly ahead of its time; hailed as having "heavenly length" as Schumann described it. Some critics were less open to the length of the work, feeling that it was simply too much music. Today, it can be perceived that the development of ideas in each movement is actually quite innovative, particularly in the way Schubert squeezes all of the juices out of his thematic building blocks, creating triumphant, lyrical and swirling sounds out of such little, yet powerful musical material.

The first movement opens with an iconic and intrepid french horn line followed by a splendid restatement in the winds and then the cellos. This horn melody will serve as the fundamental building block for the entire movement, undergoing many variations and rhythmic transformations. At first, one may think that this is the

start of a slow movement, but don't be quick to judge the pacing of this masterpiece. Schubert seamlessly transforms his stoic theme, right under the nose of the listener, into a swirling ball of energy punctuated by dotted rhythms and fanfare-like writing in the strings, setting up the rhythmic vitality for the entire work.

Rather than the anticipated slow second movement common in symphonic literature at the time, Schubert instead opens the movement with a jaunty march led heroically by the oboe, contributing to the lively rhythmic profile of the work as a whole. The march is juxtaposed with a heart-warming chorale section in the strings, outlining an ABAB form for the movement. However, the simplicity of this form can be easily overlooked due to Schubert's brilliant decoration of counterpoint of re-orchestration of themes. The two B sections also occur in different keys: first in F Major and lastly in A Major. The most notable part of the movement is the moment in which the music climaxes and halts to a silence, never to return again to that sense of power and anguish for the remainder of the movement.

Continuing with the theme of straying from the conventional nature of the symphonic architecture at the time, Schubert's third movement suggests a different role. What was traditionally thought to be a sort of appetizer for the finale, Schubert transforms his scherzo into a full-fledged sonata form. Development and rhythmic vivacity once again ensue and this sprightly melody, glimpses of which can be found in Schumann's famed Dichterliebe song cycle, serves as a wonderful platform for the glorious final movement.

Racing out of the gate to the finish, the final movement of Schubert's Great Symphony acknowledges the greatness of those before him while simultaneously commanding his own place on the podium. The movement explodes with radiance, comprised of two very active rhythmic motives: a dotted rhythm and a triplet rhythm...both related to the energy of the opening horn theme. Toward the middle, a theme extremely reminiscent of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" theme, written merely a year prior, seeps through in the winds. Rather than making this the moment of the work, Schubert simply winks at Beethoven and drives right along to his own triumphant destination.

BY ALICIA MASTROMONACO—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.