

An abstract graphic featuring a dark teal background. At the top, a series of vertical black bars of varying heights represent piano keys. From the base of these keys, thin black vertical lines extend downwards, resembling rain. Some of these lines terminate in small black dots, while others have three dots above them, suggesting a rhythmic or musical pattern. The text 'MONTGOMERY BEETHOVEN MOZART' is centered in the lower half of the image in a white, sans-serif font.

MONTGOMERY
BEETHOVEN
MOZART

ENLIGHTEN

FEBRUARY 18 & 19, 2023

SUNSET CENTER, CARMEL

Enlighten is sponsored by Bill and Kathy Sharpe
and The Martin R. Wolf Family Fund

Jayce Ogren, Music Director and Conductor
Ran Dank, piano

Banner

[running time 10']

Jessie Montgomery
(b. 1981)

Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major,
Op. 19 [28']

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

- I: Allegro con brio
- II: Adagio
- III: Rondo – molto allegro

INTERMISSION [20']

Strum [8']

Jessie Montgomery
(b. 1981)

Symphony No. 40 in G minor,
K. 550 [30']

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

- I: Molto allegro
- II: Andante
- III: Menuetto - Allegretto
- IV: Finale - Allegro assai

The February concert will be rebroadcast on KAZU's HD2 Classical station
on March 4, 2023, and March 5, 2023, both at 4PM.

PROGRAM NOTES

By Dr. Alicia Mastromonaco

FEBRUARY 18-19, 2023

Banner

JESSIE MONTGOMERY (b. 1981)



This program is one of juxtapositions: the most traditional figures of the Western Art Music canon, Beethoven and Mozart, and contemporary American composer, Jessie Montgomery.

Jessie Montgomery was commissioned in 2014 by the Sphinx Organization and the Joyce Foundation to compose *Banner*. It is a commemoration of the 200th anniversary of Francis Scott Key's setting of the lyrics to the "Star Spangled Banner." Montgomery writes that in this piece she attempts to answer the question, "what does an anthem for the 21st century sound like in today's multi-cultural environment?" Her answer incorporates portions of the melody of the "Star Spangled Banner" within a variety of musical styles that evoke a range of American musical vocabularies. Montgomery juxtaposes a

solo string quartet against the rest of the orchestra, evoking a contrast between the individual and the larger community of the orchestra.

"The Star Spangled Banner" has become an integral part of our national identity as the national anthem, but interestingly, it has been the official anthem of the United States for less than a century. Francis Scott Key set the lyrics to the melody in 1814, to the tune of a 1776 British drinking song. The song was adopted in various military settings as early as the late nineteenth century but was repeatedly voted down in Congress as a candidate for the national anthem. It was not until 1931 that President Herbert Hoover signed a bill naming the piece as the U.S. national anthem. The piece is not without its complications. "The Star Spangled Banner," writes Montgomery, "is an ideal subject for exploration in contradictions. For most Americans, the song represents a paradigm of liberty and solidarity against fierce odds, and for others it implies a contradiction between the ideals of freedom and the realities of injustice and oppression." In her work, Montgomery reshapes that familiar melody into a new, evocative work that encourages the listener to reconsider their relationship to the national anthem, American music, and the multicultural landscape of the United States. Montgomery's work uses this most familiar melody to ask the listener to possibly question their firmly entrenched beliefs.

Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major, Op. 19

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)



Beethoven moved from his hometown of Bonn to the musical mecca of Vienna in 1792 and lived there until his death. He completed the first three of his five piano concertos in his early years in Vienna, including his second, the B-flat Major concerto, Op. 19. Beethoven had begun sketches for this concerto years earlier, while still living in Bonn, perhaps when he was as young as 15, but he did not publish the work until 1801. However, it is possible that he premiered the work as early as 1795, when he was a composer and performer at a benefit concert put on by the Vienna Composers Society, an organization that supported the widows and orphans of musicians in Vienna.

Beethoven's second piano concerto was undoubtedly influenced by another former denizen of Vienna, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Although Mozart died shortly before Beethoven moved to Vienna, the two had met in 1787 when Beethoven visited the city. Rather than the more conventional flashy virtuoso playing from the soloist with the orchestra serving as accompanist, Beethoven's music uses the orchestra as more of a conversational partner with the soloist. His latter three concertos are large-scale orchestral works, but the second piano concerto is more intimate, evocative of chamber music. In a possible nod to Mozart's influence on him, Beethoven's second concerto is also almost classical in style, while the keyboard playing is very much in the style of Beethoven's own playing. This is corroborated by the fact that Beethoven improvised much of the concerto during its premiere. It is also possible that he was influenced by his studies with Georg Albrechtstberger in Vienna, who had put Beethoven on a steady diet of contrapuntal exercises, giving him a more formal music composition training than his other famous teacher, Haydn.

“...Beethoven’s music uses the orchestra as more of a conversational partner with the soloist.”



PROGRAM NOTES *continued*

Strum

JESSIE MONTGOMERY (b. 1981)

Jessie Montgomery was commissioned by Community MusicWorks to compose *Strum*, which was premiered by the Providence String Quartet and guests of the Community MusicWorks Players in 2006. Montgomery eventually arranged it for her string quartet, the Catalyst Quartet, which performed it at a concert celebrating the 15th annual Sphinx Competition. The Sphinx Organization is a social justice group that is dedicated to improving diversity in the arts and is focused on increasing representation of Black and Latinx artists in classical music.

Strum, in its string orchestra form, begins with a solo quartet, with the viola and second violin juxtaposing pizzicato rhythmic ostinatos against more lyrical bowed playing in the cello and first violin. As the rest of the strings join in, the piece grows also in rhythmic intensity, with the strumming pizzicati serving as a rhythmic ostinato. Montgomery writes, “drawing on American folk idioms and the spirit of dance and movement, the piece has a kind of narrative that begins with fleeting nostalgia and transforms into ecstatic celebration.” *Strum* utilizes the full range of the strings from both a tessitura, timbral, and technical standpoint. Montgomery uses repeated motives, layers of rhythmic ostinato that “string together to form a bed of sound for melodies to weave in and out.” She uses this foundation of rhythmic string playing to drive the piece forward, as she uses American folk idioms and dance-like patterns to evoke a feeling of “fleeting nostalgia” that eventually evolves into “ecstatic celebration.”

“drawing on American folk idioms and the spirit of dance and movement, the piece has a kind of narrative that begins with fleeting nostalgia and transforms into ecstatic celebration.”

Symphony No. 40 in G minor, K. 550

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)



The opening to Mozart's penultimate symphony is highly unusual with the strings playing piano, almost *misterioso*, and *agitato*. When the melody does enter, it never quite settles. The entire movement, and in some ways, the entire symphony, is characterized by its urgency, constantly hurtling forward. Written within nine short weeks of each other, the last three symphonies are vastly different from each other, but this symphony seems to potentially be the most autobiographical of the three.

Although there is no evidence that Mozart ever heard the last three symphonies performed live, we do know that the 40th symphony was performed during his lifetime.

In April of 1791, Antonio Salieri conducted the work at a benefit concert he organized along with Anton Stadler, a clarinetist and good friend of Mozart's. Originally, the symphony did not even include clarinets, but it is likely that Stadler commissioned Mozart to make a new arrangement with clarinets. Rather than rewrite the score, Mozart rearranged the oboe parts and added clarinet, supplying his publisher with a nine-page insert that complicated and delayed publication of the symphony until 1930, when German musicologist Theodor Kroyer edited an Eulenberg miniature score.

Symphony No. 40 in G minor embodies the effect of *Sturm und Drang*, or storm and stress, a highly emotional compositional style that was popular at the end of the eighteenth-into the nineteenth-century. The symphony, particularly the finale, is an exercise in dramatic contrasts, vacillating between the quietest, most breathless *pianissimos*, and explosive *fortissimo* interjections. Despite his works falling out of popularity at the end of his lifetime, this symphony remained one of Mozart's large-scale works that lived within the canon throughout the nineteenth century. Today it is one of his most beloved and most famous symphonies.

DR. ALICIA MASTROMONACO

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL HORN
EDUCATION COORDINATOR



Alicia has played with the Monterey Symphony since 2007. She is also a member of the Carmel Bach Festival and Marin Symphony and plays in orchestras across the Bay Area. A San Francisco native, she began her music studies at age seven on the piano, sang in the San Francisco Girls Chorus, and took up the horn in middle school when she was given her uncle's old single B-flat Conn to try out (and fell in love with the instrument). Alicia earned Bachelor of Music degrees in

Horn Performance and Musicology from Boston University, then did graduate work at the Universität der Künste Berlin before returning to California to continue her studies. She earned a Master of Music degree at University of California, Los Angeles in Horn performance, and a Master of Arts and PhD in Musicology from University of California, Santa Barbara. Her dissertation, "Breakdown on the Freeway Philharmonic: Understanding the Causes and Effects of Regional Orchestra Bankruptcies in the San Francisco Bay Area," traces the history of the Oakland and San José Symphonies from their inception through their bankruptcies in 1988 and 2002, respectively, and provides sociocultural analysis of the many factors facing the groups that led to their demise. She lives with her husband and two cats in El Cerrito and enjoys the many beautiful hiking trails just outside their door.