

MONTEREY SYMPHONY

75

2022

Program Notes

by Dr. Alicia Mastromonaco

February 19-20, 2022

John Christopher
Wineglass

Alone Together

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As I sequestered 'alone'—quite literally—to finish writing this work, while walking to a market store near my beachfront quarters, I was verbally accosted by two laughing white males who thought it would be funny to go around with a bullhorn on top of their sporty Audi SUV in this pristine neighborhood and spew out the expletive 'nigger' in of ALL places where I normally do a lot of writing—Shell Beach, CA. A beautiful central coastline between LA and San Francisco.

What world are we living in? Let me rephrase that—what world are some of us living in and others (millions in fact) choose to turn a blind eye to?

As I again dwelled heavily into this work on this particular week, there were parts of America that I had recognized and parts that I knew were always there but certainly did not recognize. Apparently, they don't wear ghostly bed sheets anymore in this extremely politically-divided time while in the midst of a global pandemic. Was I still in the times of my recently deceased parents of the 60's and the era of riots during MLK or was this 2020?

Have we NOT grown as a nation... at all? Were we going backwards to private and now public, George Floyd-esque lynchings of the past? Indeed 'Strange Pandemic Times'... my working title of the first movement. This is just what was personally happening to me while

composing this work—outside of my own disposition was a world constantly shifting particularly here in America with an unbalanced demagogue at the helm and daily major unstable shifts in the temperature of this country. This present-day world of 2020 is reflected in this new composition by the constant shifts in tonal centers or atonality if you will—without tonality... without centeredness... swelling major-minor chords in the strings without any sense of stability or normalness. Give me normal please. There would be a glimmer of hope—times of possible brilliance—yet brought back to a current ten intense months (for now) dismal reality. A longing for common ground but finding no footing... no continuity. Abrupt silences... alone... many intubated. No foundation... lost in a midst of unbelief of what I was witnessing with my very own eyes in this land of 'equality'. The universe repeatedly brings it up... again... and again before our very own eyes - until we learn.

But... I still believe in hope... A Ray of Hope (working title for the 2nd movement)...a hope deferred at the moment but a hope, nonetheless. A hope that, in this struggle together, we will come out TOGETHER stronger, wiser and vigilant—somehow and some way. 

John Christopher Wineglass

has written scores for MSNBC, CNN, NBC, CBS and ABC as well as scoring the documentaries on Kathy Lee Gifford and Farah Fawcett, *Headliners and Legends*, and *The Brady Bunch*. Several of his commercials include music for the United States Army, American Red Cross and Texaco. As a recipient of three Daytime EMMY® Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Music Direction and Composition for a Drama Series, and three ASCAP Film and Television Music Awards, Mr. Wineglass holds seven EMMY® nominations.

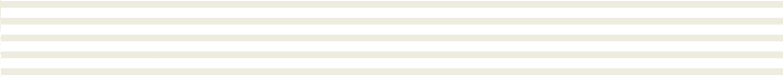
In classical music he has garnered commissions from the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music to the Kennedy Center Concert Hall, as well as The National Endowment for the Arts, The Pittsburgh Foundation, The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, The Benjamin Harris Memorial Fund, The Heinz Foundation and the Opportunity Fund.

His symphonic work *Unburied, Unmourned, Unmarked: Requiem for Rice* is dedicated to the lives of millions of African and African-American forced laborers who cultivated the immense rice economy in the Lowcountry. With a libretto and extensive research by Dr. Edda Fields-Black of Carnegie-Mellon University, this work has taken them and their team from the shores of South Carolina to the inner villages of Senegal, Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia.

Currently, Mr. Wineglass is spending time at Glen Deven Ranch in Big Sur, CA. The property is provided by the Big Sur Land Trust where Mr. Wineglass continues to maintain a arts-in-nature relationship dating back to his 2016 *Big Sur: The Night Sun* premiere with the Monterey Symphony.

John received his Bachelor of Music in Music Composition, with a minor in Viola Performance, from The American University. He received his Master of Arts in Music Composition, with an emphasis in Film Scoring for Motion Pictures, Television and Multi-Media, from New York University, studying with Justin Dello-Joio of The Juilliard School.





Dmitri Shostakovich

Cello Concerto No. 1 in E-flat Major, Op. 107

Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich wrote his first cello concerto for his good friend and world-renowned cellist Mstislav Rostropovich in 1959. Rostropovich had been a student of Shostakovich's at the Moscow Conservatory and the two maintained a friendship and musical relationship, eventually performing and recording the composer's cello sonata together. Rostropovich dearly wanted Shostakovich to compose a concerto for him, but when he asked Nina Vasilyevna, Shostakovich's wife, how to broach the subject to the composer, she replied "Slava, if you want Dmitri Dmitriyevich to write something for you, the only recipe I can give you is this—never ask him or talk to him about it." So, Rostropovich waited patiently, hinting to his friend how much he would love the opportunity to perform a concerto someday.



In 1959, Shostakovich finally told his friend that he had started to write a cello concerto and wanted Rostropovich to premiere it. Elated, Rostropovich took the score and devoured the music. "I practiced ten hours a day the first day and had the score memorized within three days. It was the most wonderful pleasure for me," Rostropovich recalled. Shostakovich invited Rostropovich and pianist Alexander Dedyukhin to his dacha in Komarovo, outside Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) for a first reading a few days later. Shostakovich was overjoyed with the reading and wrote to his friend shortly thereafter, "Slava, I am completely intoxicated by what you have done to me, by the sheer delight you have given to me."

The concerto was premiered by the Leningrad Symphony in 1959 under the baton of Shostakovich's longtime collaborator Yevgeny Mravinsky. The orchestration is the smallest of any of Shostakovich's major symphonic works. Shostakovich's piece is sprinkled throughout with musical quotations. Shostakovich opens with his musical signature, DSCH, albeit warped and inverted throughout the concerto. Beyond his signature, Shostakovich includes folk melodies and lullabies, a quote from fellow Russian composer Mussorgsky's *Songs and Dances of Death*, and more than a passing nod to Prokofiev's *Sinfonia concertante*, which had been premiered by Rostropovich in Moscow. Rostropovich recalled how Shostakovich was enthralled by the timpani part, even more so with the one-legged timpanist, and exclaimed how "he called a halt to everything with that final blow!" Shostakovich also included Stalin's favorite song, "Suliko," albeit in such a disguised manner that not even Rostropovich noticed at first. 

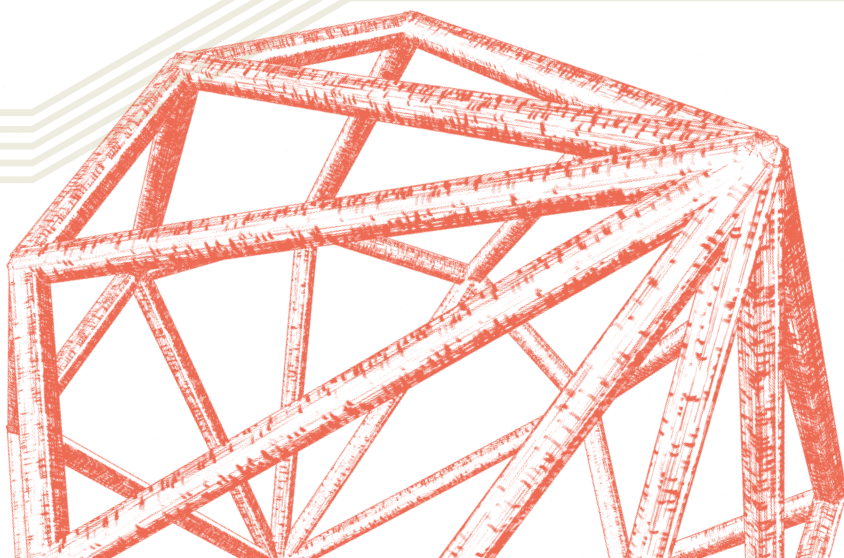
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64



Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's six symphonies, particularly the latter three, embody the Russian composer's highly emotional, romantic sound world. In the summer of 1888, Tchaikovsky embarked on a new symphonic work. Very hypercritical of himself and full of intense self-doubt, he decided to escape to the idyllic countryside to write. Over the course of the next four months, the Fifth Symphony was completed. In his letters to his patroness and frequent correspondent Nadezhda von Meck, Tchaikovsky wrote of his resignation to fate, and dark thoughts of doubt.

The composer decided to conduct at the premiere of the Fifth Symphony, which likely contributed to the lukewarm critical reception. Although the audience liked the piece, Tchaikovsky was concerned only with the critics. He wrote to von Meck, "having played my Symphony twice in Petersburg and once in Prague, I have come to the conclusion that it is a failure...It was clear to me that the applause and ovations referred not to this but to other works of mine, and the Symphony itself will never please the public."



Critics quickly drew connections between Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony and Beethoven's, writing, "If Beethoven's Fifth is fate knocking at the door, Tchaikovsky's Fifth is fate trying to get out." The music does indeed bear significant similarities to the earlier composer's famous work. Both symphonies carry a musical motto throughout the work and are both what is known as a "catharsis symphony," meaning that they start darkly in minor keys and end triumphantly in major keys.

Tchaikovsky's musical motto begins at the opening of the work, with clarinet soli. The melody is tenuous but insistent, with a sparse accompaniment of the strings. Tchaikovsky inserts the motto in the middle two movements as well. The strings introduce the famous horn solo of the second movement, which emerges, as Tchaikovsky wrote, "like a voice of consolation

in the desolate wilderness." After a leisurely stroll through the first theme, the brass section hammers out the motto, then the strings carry the movement back to its first theme. The third movement sounds like ballet music, with its waltz-like melody, which came from a song Tchaikovsky heard sung by a young boy in Florence when he visited Italy years earlier. Lest the listener forget that the piece is about one's resignation to fate, the clarinets, in a low tessitura, play the musical motto to close the movement. In sharp contrast to the beginning of the symphony, the musical motto opens the fourth movement in a more hopeful manner. The melody is now a warm and gracious march, which is taken up later by the winds and brass. As with his ballet music, the finale marches toward an extended coda, perhaps representative of Tchaikovsky's triumph over fate. 

Dr. Alicia Mastromonaco

Assistant Principal horn



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 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 socio-cultural 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.

