



2023-2024 SEASON

JAYCE OGREN, MUSIC DIRECTOR



PALO CORONA

FEBRUARY 17-18, 2024

SUNSET CENTER, CARMEL

Jayce Ogren, Music Director and Conductor

Lara Downes, piano

Yamaha CFX concert grand piano provided by Yamaha Corporation of America

Overture to *Der Freischutz*
[running time 9']

Carl Maria von Weber
(1786-1826)

The Great Migration: Concerto
for Piano and Orchestra [20']

John Wineglass
(b. 1972)

- I: *Strange Winds to Alien Shores*
- II: *Planes, Trains and Automobiles*
- III: *Resilience of a People*

INTERMISSION [20']

Blue Cathedral [12']

Jennifer Higdon
(b. 1962)

Symphony No. 7 in A Major,
Op. 92 [30']

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

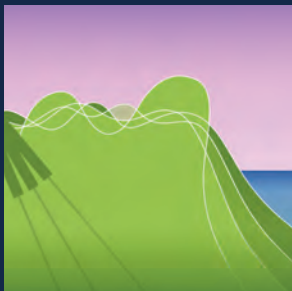
- I: Poco sostenuto—Vivace
- II: Allegretto
- III: Presto—Assai meno presto
- IV: Allegro con brio

*The February concert will be rebroadcast on KAZU's HD2 Classical station on
March 9, 2024, and March 10, 2024, both at 4 PM.*

PROGRAM NOTES

By Dr. Alicia Mastromonaco
FEBRUARY 17 & 18, 2024

PALO CORONA (Crown Tree)



Palo Corona is a concert about transformation, transcendence, salvation, and overcoming personal setbacks. *Der Freischütz* is a story about the redeeming power of love. Higdon's *Blue Cathedral* represents one's travels over a lifetime and toward the afterlife. Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 embodies bacchic dance qualities, to the extent that Richard Wagner called it "The Apotheosis of Dance." All of these pieces reveal the deep and sometimes mystical connections between the natural and supernatural worlds.

Overture to *Der Freischütz*

Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826)



At its core, the opera *Der Freischütz* is a story about the lengths one will go to for the sake of love. German composer Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826) wrote the work with the goal of creating a uniquely German opera from both a musical and dramatic perspective.

The plot centers around two main characters, Max and Agathe, who are held apart from marrying each other only by one obstacle; a marksmanship competition. Fearing what will happen if he loses the competition for her hand, Max makes a deal with a nefarious marksman, Kaspar, and by proxy, an evil spirit, Samiel. After forging magical bullets, nearly killing Agathe in the process, and being found out for his deceit, Max promises to stay on the straight and narrow for a year if he and Agathe can marry at the end of that time period. All's well that ends well in this sylvan opera that ushered in an era of German romantic opera.

The Great Migration Concerto for Piano and Orchestra

John Wineglass (b. 1972)



Commissioned by the Monterey Symphony for my dear friend, American classical pianist and cultural activist Lara Downes. This work is dedicated to those who survived and

escaped the severe Jim Crow Era laws of oppression of the Post-Civil War segregated farm-country South and their descendants.

The Great Migration was the movement of some 6 million African Americans out of the rural Southern United States to the urban Northeast, Midwest and West between 1910-1970. Cities impacted by this migration were some of the then-largest cities in the United States (New York City, Newark, NJ, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Cleveland and Washington, D.C.). Poor economic conditions for African American people due to prevalent racial segregation and discrimination in the Southern states were the primary causes. And even though many like my very own parents who migrated to Washington, DC faced social and economic inequities along with segregated water fountains and firehose assaults during the Civil Rights Movement, it was a far cry from the severely imposed Jim Crow laws which upheld physical lynching, beatings and constant social oppression at every turn. This chain of migrations eventually changed the course of American history by collective agency causing a 'declaration of independence' by their very own actions.

The first movement entitled, *Strange Winds to Alien Shores* is another musical homage by the composer to the original

displacement of Africans through the Middle Passage where they were uprooted from their homelands and brought into slavery onto the shores and plantations of the Americas. From the cascading *forte* arpeggios of the piano to the rolling instances of the winds and strings against the bombastic brass countermelodies, the opening of this movement is a stark reminder of those 'white ships with black cargo' that led to horrible life conditions that provided free labor for centuries.

The second movement, *Planes, Trains and Automobiles* is largely a celebratory jazz score marking a more optimistic free pursuit of a better life in the North by various modes of Post-Civil War transportation unlike the secret migration collectively known as the *Underground Railroad* some 100 years prior, guided by an icon of courage and freedom – Harriet Tubman.

Finally, the third movement, *Resilience of a People* develops into a very large anthem celebrating the continued resilience and vigilance that has built and permeated the very core, culture and fabric of American society like no other. These migrations have produced the likes of Oprah Winfrey, Dr. Martin Luther King, Condoleezza Rice, Michael Jordan, Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas and finally set precedence for the historic election of America's first Black leader of the free world – the 44th President of The United States of America – President Barack Hussein Obama. Representation matters.

May we continue to charge towards one nation, indivisible, with liberty, freedom, justice and equality for ALL mankind.

- John Wineglass

Blue Cathedral

Jennifer Higdon (b. 1962)



Jennifer Higdon (b. 1962) is one of the most often-performed American composers today. She has won numerous awards for her compositions, including three Grammy awards,

the Guggenheim Foundation Award, and the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2010 for her Violin Concerto. *Blue Cathedral*, in particular, is one of her most famous pieces. It was commissioned and premiered by the Curtis Institute of Music in 2000 to commemorate their 75th anniversary.

Higdon writes, "I wanted to create the sensation of contemplation and quiet peace at the beginning, moving towards the feeling of celebration and ecstatic expansion of the soul, all the while singing along with that heavenly music." The piece is written not only in commemoration of Curtis's anniversary but also a musical memorial for her late brother, Andrew Blue. Higdon is a flute player, and her brother was a clarinetist, so she interweaves the two instruments in dialogue with each other, the older sibling (Jennifer Higdon) beginning the solo. The two instruments overlap toward "a glass cathedral in the sky," until the flute eventually drops out and the clarinet continues on its journey upward. Higdon wanted to represent the "expression of the individual and the group... our inner travels and the places our souls carry us, the lessons we learn, and the growth we experience." The piece is a celebration, a loving eulogy and reminder that the passing of a soul from this world to the next can be seen as an ascension and expansion into all that is around us.

Symphony No.7 in A Major, Op. 92

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)



In the wake of Ludwig van Beethoven's (1770-1827) death, his musical oeuvre began to take on a more symbolic status. Among musical connoisseurs and regular listeners alike, he was seen not simply as a prodigiously talented composer, but as a Symphonist, having composed the Platonic ideal of what a symphony can and should be. Although Beethoven wrote only nine symphonies, each of them has been studied and analyzed continuously since they were composed. Each symphony occupies its own historical significance. The seventh symphony has been linked to a festive celebratory mood, with Berlioz calling the first movement a "*ronde des paysan*," and Wagner famously calling the symphony the "apotheosis of the dance." Beethoven scholar Maynard Solomon writes that the symphony can be distilled to the evocation of a single subject and image: "the carnival or festival, which from time immemorial has temporarily lifted the burden of perpetual subjugation to the prevailing social and natural order by periodically suspending all customary privileges, norms, and imperatives." The symphony is imbued with joyousness, and even the more somber slow movement is hardly a slow movement at all, with the tempo marking *allegretto*.

In today's programming, the symphony usually occupies the place of privilege on the program. However, the premiere performance of Beethoven's 7th symphony was at a benefit concert for Austrian and Bavarian soldiers who had been wounded at the battle of Hanau. The *piece de resistance* at that concert, in honor of the attendees, was Beethoven's work, *Wellingtons Sieg* (Wellington's Siege). All the leading musicians of the day in Vienna participated in the *Sieg* performance, including famous violinists Schuppanzigh

"Today the piece is just as popular as it was at its premiere. Movements of the 7th Symphony have been part of the soundtracks of several famous films."

(who was concertmaster), Spohr, and Mayseder, and composers Hummel and Salieri, who played the drums and cannonades. Thayer, Beethoven's first biographer, wrote that the musicians viewed *Wellingtons Sieg* similarly to how it is viewed today: "as a stupendous musical joke, and engaged in... *con amore* as a gigantic professional frolic." (Beethoven, for his part, thought the same—the entire piece starts with two antiphonal drum corps "fighting" against each other.) However, this was likely yet another reason why the 7th symphony was so beloved

from the beginning; not only was there a contrast in the quality of the work (the *Sieg* is commonly viewed as one of Beethoven's worst pieces), but there could not have been a higher quality of musicians performing the symphony.

The audience loved the symphony so much at the premiere that they demanded an encore of the second movement on the spot. This wasn't unheard of at the time, but it was certainly not very common. The symphony became so popular that it was transcribed for several configurations: winds, septet, string quintet, piano quartet, piano trio, piano four hands, and solo piano. Today the piece is just as popular as it was at its premiere. Movements of the 7th Symphony have been part of the soundtracks of several famous films: *The King's Speech*, *Mr. Holland's Opus*, *The Darjeeling Limited*, and even the *X-Men: Apocalypse* film.

DR. ALICIA MASTROMONACO

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL HORN

Program Notes Author



Alicia has played with the Monterey Symphony since 2007. She is also a member of the Carmel Bach Festival, Marin and California Symphonies and plays with orchestras across the Bay Area, including the San Francisco Symphony, San Francisco Opera, Berkeley Symphony, Oakland Symphony, Santa Rosa Symphony, New Century Chamber orchestra, and other regional orchestras. She is Lecturer of Horn at Sonoma State University.

A San Francisco native, Alicia began her music studies at age seven on the piano and sang in the San Francisco Girls Chorus before taking up the

horn. 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 in horn performance at University of California, Los Angeles, and a Master of Arts and PhD in Musicology from University of California, Santa Barbara.

Alicia lives with her husband, daughter, and two cats in El Cerrito where she enjoys the many beautiful hiking trails just outside their door, baking sourdough bread, and gardening.