



Piano

TCHAIKOVSKY / OGREN / RESPIGHI
CONCERTO NO. 2 RACHMANINOFF

May 17 & 18, 2025

SUNSET CENTER, CARMEL

Sponsored by Sherrie McCullough
with additional support from the Martin R. Wolf Family Fund

Jayce Ogren, Music Director and Conductor

Joyce Yang, piano

Nicola Shangrow Reilly, violin

Mélodie

[running time 4']

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
(1840–1893)

Intertidal [10']

Intertidal sponsored by the
MONTEREY AUDUBON SOCIETY

Jayce Ogren
(b. 1979)

The Fountains of Rome [15']

- I. The Valle Giulia Fountain at Dawn
- II. The Triton Fountain in the Morning
- III. The Trevi Fountain at Midday
- IV. The Villa Medici Fountain at Sunset

Ottorino Respighi
(1879–1936)

The Pines of Rome [23']

- I. The Pines of Villa Borghese
- II. The Pines Near a Catacombe
- III. The Pines of the Janiculum
- IV. The Pines of the Appian Way

Ottorino Respighi

INTERMISSION [20']

**Concerto for Piano and Orchestra
No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18** [33']

- I. Moderato
- II. Adagio sostenuto
- III. Allegro scherzando

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873–1943)

*The May concert will be rebroadcast on KAZU's HD2 Classical station
on June 7th and 8th, 2025, both at 4 PM.*

Program Notes

By Christopher Anderson-Bazzoli

MAY 17-18, 2025

Concert Synopsis

This program resonates with the forces of nature and embraces a deep sense of place. Tchaikovsky's haunting violin showpiece *Mélodie*, performed by Monterey Symphony's own President and CEO Nicola Shangrow Reilly, comes from a suite fondly titled "Memories of a Dear Place." Conductor Jayce Ogren conducts his own composition: *Intertidal*—an evocation of the wildlife and majesty of his native Pacific Northwest. Ottorino Respighi depicts the culture and landscape of Italy's capital city with a pair of powerful tone poems for an enormous orchestra. *Fountains of Rome* awakens at dawn at the Valle Giulia fountain and conjures the mythical stories of the city's famous wellsprings. *Pines of Rome* travels through the city's outskirts with children playing in the forest, monks chanting in the catacombs, and ranks of soldiers marching along the Appian Way. Sergei Rachmaninoff became Tchaikovsky's heir with his voluptuous Piano Concerto No. 2, a Late Romantic favorite anchored by its unforgettable "big tune."

Mélodie (1878)

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)



"I am living in a palace in the literal sense of the word," wrote Tchaikovsky on his first visit to the Ukrainian town of Brailov in 1878. "The furnishings are luxurious...and at my disposal I have carriages, horses, a library, several pianos...

What could be better?" The composer visited Brailov at the invitation of Nadezhda von Meck, Tchaikovsky's benefactress and owner of the country estate where he retreated from bustling Moscow to compose and find inspiration. During his stay Tchaikovsky produced a suite for violin and piano fondly titled *Souvenir d'un lieu cher* ("Memories of a Dear Place"). He dedicated it to Brailov.

Mélodie, the suite's final movement arranged here for orchestra, has become a favorite showpiece for violinists. Tchaikovsky referred to the violin's yearning, nostalgic main theme as a "song without words." Each new phrase displays the composer's unique ability to generate anticipation with rapid successions of notes that suddenly slow in tempo and pause on a single sustained note. A delicate, fragile version of the main theme returns to the solo violin guiding the piece to a hushed conclusion.

Intertidal (2021)

Jayce Ogren (b. 1979)



Jayce Ogren provided the following program notes: "I grew up in Hoquiam, Washington, along the Pacific coast of the Olympic Peninsula. At the edge of town is Bowerman Basin, a vast intertidal zone of mud flats, reeds, alders, and at certain times of year, hundreds of thousands of birds. The area has now been designated the Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge, protecting one of the few spots south of Alaska where shorebirds stop during their migration. Every spring, people come from around the country and the world to see staggering numbers of sandpipers and dunlins against moody skies and distant old-growth evergreen trees. Their murmuration—the changing shapes and colors of flocks in flight, with the contrast of dull brown backs and shining white bellies as they catch the sun—is a wondrous and exhilarating sight to behold, and functions as the starting point of *Intertidal*.

Throughout my life, Bowerman Basin has also been a target for industrial development. The shoreline and estuary are protected, but the land is not. The local airport lies just next to the refuge, threatening the safety and migratory patterns of the shorebirds.

Steel mills, coal plants and other massively polluting projects have long sought to build on the site. This tension between development and conservation—locally, globally—also shapes *Intertidal*. Following an introduction filled with fog, mist, gentle breezes, bird song, murmuration and bursts of sunlight, more jagged sounds start to compete. Things metal and mechanical grate against the beauty, disturbing the peace, with the potential to destroy.

The raucous dissonance of the first climax of *Intertidal* represents the 'bottleneck,' a moment of extreme discord with our planet.

Edward O. Wilson's seminal book *The Future of Life* had a tremendous influence on me, especially his comparison of the environmental crisis to a 'bottleneck.' The path to balance and sustainability is exceedingly narrow. But we have a chance to make it through. The raucous dissonance of the first climax of *Intertidal* represents the 'bottleneck,' a moment of extreme discord with our planet. A small flame of nature and humanity remains, and builds—not without tension and missteps—to a state of harmony and balance in the bright shining sun.

Intertidal was commissioned by the St. Olaf Band and conductor Timothy Mahr, and was premiered in November 2021. The premiere of the orchestral version was performed by the University of Michigan Philharmonia in January 2024."

The Fountains of Rome (1916) **Ottorino Respighi** (1879–1936)



I believe in the search for a new common language of European music,” wrote composer Ottorino Respighi, “In this quest, Italy can lead the way as she did four hundred years ago.” Born in 1879 and raised in the Italian city of Bologna, Respighi rejected the modernism of his contemporaries and forged a path that honored Italy’s heritage of melody and song. That path led the composer to Gregorian chant, the medieval liturgical melodies whose organic rhythms contained, in his words, “the indestructible germ of real human values.” These ancient chants served as the raw material of romantic and expressive works exemplified by his 1921 violin concerto, *Concerto Gregoriano*.

In 1913 Respighi left his beloved home in Bologna to take a teaching position at the Santa Cecilia Music Academy in Rome. Initially, he felt overwhelmed by the capital city and, for two years, produced no new works. An idea finally came to light: an orchestral tone poem based on Rome’s famous fountains. Respighi’s wife, Elsa, described the new piece as “a deliberate attempt to overcome his anxieties by celebrating the city in music.” Premiered in 1916, *The Fountains of Rome* was a

tremendous success, and two sequels followed: *The Pines of Rome* and *Roman Festivals*. All the works in Respighi’s “Roman Trilogy” have become audience favorites for their evocative moods, colorful orchestrations, and epic scale.

The Fountains of Rome consists of four movements played without pause. *The Valle Giulia Fountain at Dawn* paints an impressionistic picture of daybreak in the Villa Borghese park, one of the quiet suburbs where Respighi often took respite. French horns provide the wake-up call to open *The Triton Fountain in the Morning* where mythical water nymphs play. A majestic ascending woodwind theme opens *The Trevi Fountain at Midday* depicting Neptune, God of the sea, riding a chariot at a rapid vivace tempo. The energy subsides to reveal *The Villa Medici Fountain at Sunset*, returning the listener to Rome’s outskirts as daylight dims and church bells toll.

The Pines of Rome (1924) **Ottorino Respighi**

After *The Fountains of Rome* enjoyed international success, Respighi sought to create a companion work. Rome’s historic pine trees, in Respighi’s words, “bear witness to the principal events in Roman life” and proved a perfect subject. In an inverse of *Fountains*, *The Pines of Rome* begins in the daytime, continues through the night, and concludes at dawn. Respighi makes a surprisingly progressive move by requesting that a field recording of a nightingale’s song be amplified into the theater at the end of the third movement, a request not easily granted in 1916. The four movements of *Pines of Rome* are, like *Fountains*, played without pause.

Respighi provided the following descriptions of each movement:

“The Pines of the Villa Borghese: Children are at play in the pine groves of the Villa Borghese, dancing the Italian equivalent of ‘Ring around a Rosy.’ They mimic marching soldiers and >>>

battles. They twitter and shriek like swallows at evening, coming and going in swarms. Suddenly the scene changes.

The Pines Near a Catacomb: We see the shadows of the pines, which overhang the entrance of a catacomb. From the depths rises a chant, which echoes solemnly, like a hymn, and is then mysteriously silenced.

The Pines of the Janiculum: There is a thrill in the air. The full moon reveals the profile of the pines of Janiculum's Hill. A nightingale sings.

The Pines of the Appian Way: Misty dawn on the Appian Way. The tragic country is guarded by solitary pines. Indistinctly, incessantly, the rhythm of unending steps. The poet has a fantastic vision of past glories. Trumpets blare, and the army of the Consul bursts forth in the grandeur of a newly risen sun toward the Sacred Way, mounting in triumph the Capitoline Hill."

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18 (1901) **Sergei Rachmaninoff** (1873–1943)



"I feel like a ghost in a world grown alien," Sergei Rachmaninoff once said. "I cannot cast out the old way of [composing], and I cannot acquire the new." In Rachmaninoff we find, like Respighi, a composer rejecting modernism and adhering to the heritage of his homeland. Rachmaninoff's refusal to evolve past Russia's great Romantic tradition made him almost an anachronism, but he wore it as a badge of honor. Sergei Rachmaninoff's works stand the test of time and he remains one of the great composers and piano virtuosos of his generation.

Rachmaninoff entered the Moscow Conservatory to study piano at age twelve.

His interest moved quickly to composition, and his student works received praise from another Russian Romantic master, Tchaikovsky. The embarrassing failure of his ambitious Symphony No. 1 in 1897 sent Rachmaninoff into a depression, one so severe that he stopped composing. Out of desperation he agreed to see Dr. Nikolai Dahl, a psychiatrist pioneering the experimental new technique of hypnotherapy. As the composer recounts, Dr. Dahl recited continuous, constant affirmations: "You will begin to write your concerto ... The concerto will be of excellent quality..." To Rachmaninoff's astonishment the therapy worked and, in his words, "new musical ideas began to stir within me." Dahl's affirmations proved accurate: Rachmaninoff finished his concerto and audiences loved it. The Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor premiered in April of 1901. On the score's first page, the dedication reads "To Monsieur N. Dahl."

Memories of the giant bells of the Russian Orthodox Church seem to ring in the introductory chords of the concerto. After reaching maximum intensity, the piano launches into a furious Allegro of virtuosic arpeggios that serves as a bed for a tragic, voluptuous theme in violins and violas marked in the score *con passione* ("with passion"). The common practice in a concerto is to pit soloist and orchestra in opposition to one another. In this concerto they augment and support each other as partners. The *Adagio sostenuto* ("slow and sustained") movement features an enchanting theme in clarinet and that is later transformed by the piano and emerges again in the violins. The piano dazzles with flickering textures and arresting virtuosity in the finale *Allegro scherzando* ("fast and playful"). Solo oboe and violas play a slower, lyrical *Moderato* theme that provides a brief respite before Rachmaninoff finishes the work with a swift *presto* tempo of rhapsodic interplay among the various themes.

Christopher Anderson-Bazzoli

PROGRAM NOTES AUTHOR



Christopher Anderson-Bazzoli's innovative compositions for the concert stage, his deeply-felt scores for the studio and indie film worlds, and his skilled musical direction for artists from across the pop music spectrum earned him a reputation as a musician with a collaborative spirit and a broad vision.

His current release, *Continent's End*, received "Critic's Choice" from *Opera News*. The nine-song concert work for mezzo-soprano and piano on poems by California iconoclast Robinson Jeffers (1887-1962) "perfectly embodies with its unpredictable harmonic twists and turns and its multi-tonality Jeffers' hyper-masculine, pantheistic, often erotic poetry" (*Raphael's Music Notes*). Nominated for an Emmy Award at age twenty-one, Anderson-Bazzoli composed scores for twenty feature and short films including the Venezuelan thriller *Ellipsis* (Fox) and the technology documentary *Revolution OS* (7th Art), among others. He received a Sundance Composer Fellowship and served as copyist, music librarian, or orchestrator on over three hundred films and TV shows including *Disney's Encanto*, *The Lion King* (2019), and *Top Gun Maverick*. As a conductor he worked with top recording artists Michael Bublé, Dr. Dre, Christina Aguilera, and She & Him (Zooey Deschanel and M. Ward) and served as editor and copyist for eminent composer-conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen.

While growing up in Pacific Grove, California, Christopher Anderson-Bazzoli learned tuba at age eleven, graduated from Stevenson School, and later earned a B.A. in Tuba and an M.A. in Music Composition from UCLA. In 2022 he relocated from Los Angeles to Carmel with his wife Donna Eshelman, a neuromuscular therapist and choreographer.