

MOSAIC FOR HEAVEN'S FLOOR

Program Notes

LERA AUERBACH (1973 - present)

A renaissance artist for modern times, Lera Auerbach is a widely recognized conductor, pianist, and composer. She is also an award-winning poet and an exhibited visual artist. All her work is interconnected as part of a cohesive and comprehensive artistic worldview.

Auerbach has become one of today's most sought-after and exciting creative voices. Her performances and music are featured in the world's leading stages – from Vienna's Musikverein and London's Royal Albert Hall to New York's Carnegie Hall and Washington D.C.'s Kennedy Center.

Lera's exquisitely crafted, emotional, and boldly imaginative music reaches global audiences, and her works for orchestra are performed by the world's leading conductors. Her music is championed and recorded by today's most prominent classical performers, and recordings are available on ECM, Deutsche Grammophon, Nonesuch, Alpha Classics, BIS, Cedille, and many other labels.

LERAAUERBACH.COM



Photo: Ramiro Taziri

EVE'S LAMENT “Oh Flowers, That Never Will Grow” (2019)

Lera Auerbach's new 10-minute orchestral work *Eve's Lament* was composed for Marin Alsop's debut concert as conductor of the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra in October, with its US premiere the following month with the Baltimore Symphony. The score bears a subtitle referring to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, 'O flowers, that never will grow', providing a dedication to the many women who cannot fulfill their talents in current society.

FIRST WOMAN CONDUCTOR, LAST NIGHT OF THE PROMS

The BBC Proms have been the highlight of the classical music calendar since 1895. In 2013, more than one hundred years later, Marin Alsop made history being the first woman to conduct its prestigious “Last Night.” Today, 10 years later, she remains the only woman to conduct that event.

Just before Alsop start the rehearsals some Conductors expressed their opinion about women conductors, such as Vasily Petrenko:

“The principal conductor of the National Youth Orchestra and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic has provoked outrage by claiming that orchestras ‘react better when they have a man in front of them’ and that ‘a cute girl on a podium means that musicians think about other things.’”

When conducted by a man, musicians encounter fewer erotic distractions, Vasily Petrenko claimed. *“Musicians have often less sexual energy and can focus more on the music,”* he said, adding that *“when women have families, it becomes difficult to be as dedicated as is demanded in the business.”*

**READ THE COMPLETE
PETRENKO INTERVIEW
IN THE GUARDIAN**



Around the same time Yuri Temirkanov, Marin's predecessor, expressed his opinion against women conductors. In 2016, when approached by the Baltimore Sun, Temirkanov's view remained the same:

"Yes, women can be conductors. I am not against them conducting. But I simply don't like it. There are women boxing and weightlifting; they can do that. But I don't like watching. It is only my taste. We all have different tastes. For example, I don't eat fish."



**READ THE COMPLETE
TEMIRKANOV INTERVIEW
IN THE BALTIMORE SUN**

During her famous speech, Marin addressed the issue saying she was honored to have the "title" of being the first woman to conduct the Last Night of the Proms, but it was a shock to know that it was 2013 and there were still firsts for women.

**WATCH MARIN ALSOP'S SPEECH
FROM LAST NIGHT OF THE PROMS**



"THE CONDUCTOR"

In 2021, a documentary about Marin Alsop's trajectory premiered in Tribeca. Alexandra Arrieche is featured in the documentary as one of Marin's former assistants and TACF Fellows.



**WATCH "THE CONDUCTOR"
DOCUMENTARY TRAILER**

In 1984, after hearing “girls can’t do that” and being rejected from conducting programs, Marin Alsop took her conducting career into her own hands and started a professional orchestra in New York City, the Concordia Orchestra. With the financial support of Tomio Taki, the Concordia Orchestra performed under the baton of Marin Alsop for 18 years.

As Marin’s career took off and she began conducting around the world, Mr. Taki asked, “what about the other women conductors?” With Mr. Taki’s commitment to fostering talented women through active mentorship and Marin’s entrepreneurial spirit, the Taki Concordia Conducting Fellowship was created in 2002. In recognition of the historic achievements of its Founder and President, the Fellowship was renamed the Taki Alsop Conducting Fellowship (TACF) in 2019.

**WATCH ALEXANDRA,
LINA GONZÁLEZ-GRANADOS, AND
MARIN ALSOP TALK ABOUT
CONDUCTING GESTURES**



Over the past 20 years, the fellowship has provided intensive coaching, mentorship, and financial support to aspiring female conductors. Today, all 30 recipients are working to ensure a more equitable future for classical music through their artistry and advocacy, and among them they hold 19 Music Director or chief conductor positions of orchestras around the world. The Taki Fellowship is currently a two-year award that primarily includes intensive coaching and mentoring with Marin Alsop and other music industry professionals. The TACF honorarium for Fellows is \$20,000 over the two years; other awards are distributed on a merit basis. Since 2003, thirty women conductors have been chosen to participate in the program.



**MORE INFORMATION ON
THE TAKI ALSOP
CONDUCTING FELLOWSHIP**

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865 - 1957)

"His music is seeped in the myths and the natural marvels of his homeland and helped articulate the struggle for Finnish independence, but it is his seven symphonies that confirmed his place as one of the most original symphonic composers since Beethoven."

- Arwa Mahdawi, Columnist
The Guardian US

Sibelius was a Finnish composer, whose music style is often placed between late romantic and early modern. He is probably Finland's most important composer, helping his country to develop a national identity and during its process of independence from Russia.

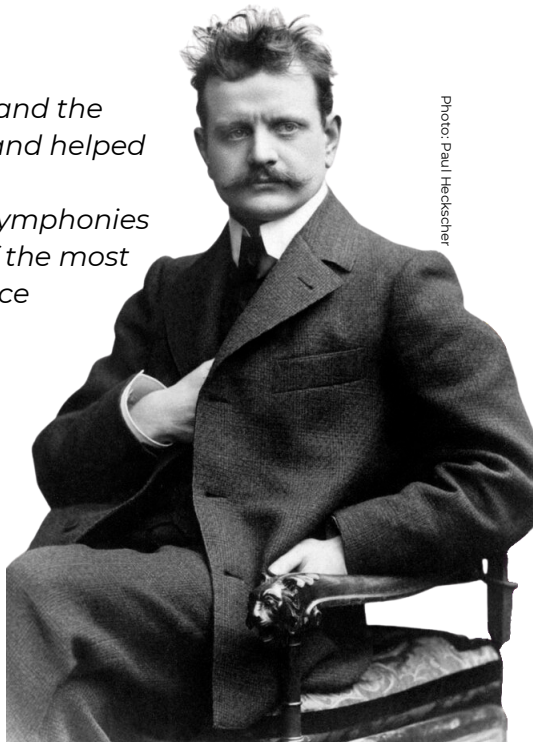


Photo: Paul Hecksher

SYMPHONY NO. 5 in E-flat major, Op. 82 (1914-15, revised 1916 and 1919)

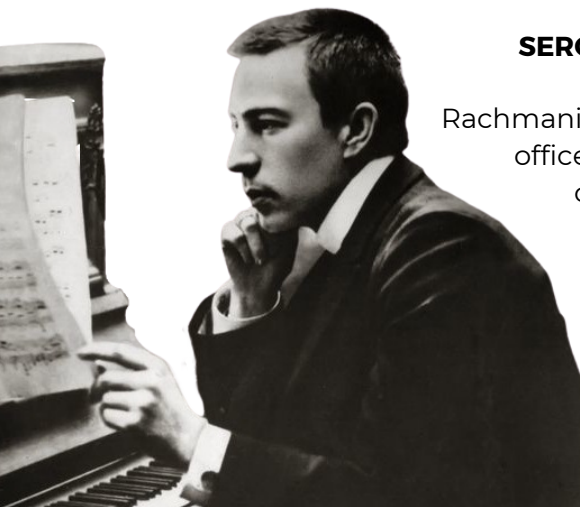
Sibelius referred to his 5th Symphony, probably the most famous them all, as a "Mosaic from Heaven's Floor." He wrote in his diary:

"It was as if God the Father was throwing pieces of mosaic from the edge of heaven and asking me to figure out what the pattern was."

The image of small pieces being put together and becoming a bigger picture is clear in the last movement, when the horn section is divided and begins playing separate notes, transforming into the counter melody of the main theme.

This Symphony is placed in the middle of our concert, uniting Auerbach's plead for a better and more equal world and

Rachmaninoff's braveness by sharing his struggles with mental health, showing we are not alone, we all have our struggles and we are all broken pieces that together build this beautiful and perfect Mosaic.



SERGEI RACHMANINOFF, 1873-1943

Rachmaninoff's father was a retired army officer and his mother the daughter of a general. He was supposed to follow his family tradition and join the military. On the other hand, his cousin, Aleksandr Siloti, a well-known concert pianist and conductor, believed in his talents and suggested sending him to Moscow for his piano studies.

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2 in C minor, Op. 18 (1900-1901)

From a very young age, Rachmaninoff struggled with his mental health regarding his work as well as his private life. He suffered from depression, and one of his most severe bouts was after the debut performance of his Symphony No. 1, which was poorly performed and destroyed by the critics.

During this time, he was taken to a psychiatrist, Nikolay Dahl. He helped Rachmaninoff overcome his writer's block by encouraging him to compose music, resulting in Piano Concerto No. 2, which is dedicated to Dahl. This experience makes Rachmaninoff one of the first artists to talk openly about mental health and its importance.

There is often a misconception that art is the result of struggle, which often romanticizes depression. Richard Kogan, pianist and psychiatrist says:

"it is important not to over-romanticize mental illness and its impact on the creative process...most depressed individuals are too paralyzed to compose a symphony and most psychotic individuals are too disorganized to create anything that is coherent."



**READ THE COMPLETE
KOGAN ARTICLE
IN THE PSYCHIATRIC TIMES**

Over a century has passed since Rachmaninoff wrote this Concerto and laid bare his struggles, but still, mental health remains a taboo. It's treated as a weakness, or part of an artistic process, and is not addressed as often as it should be.

By performing this iconic piece of music, we hope to bring awareness to the importance of mental health and well-being, and invite our community to start a conversation and a space where we can be kind to each other and to ourselves.

Program notes written by Alexandra Arrieche, edited by Renée Zimmerman



NAMI Thurston-Mason's goals are to advocate at the county, state and national levels for non-discriminatory access to quality healthcare, housing, education and employment for people with mental illness, to educate the public about mental illness, to work to eliminate the stigma of mental illness and to advocate for increased funding for research into the causes and treatment of mental illness. NAMI Thurston-Mason envisions a community where all persons affected by mental illness, including substance abuse, receive timely services they need and deserve, empowering them to enjoy a healthy and meaningful life.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT
NAMI PROGRAMS, DONATING, OR
VOLUNTEERING**

