

CONDUCTOR'S NOTE

By this point in our season-long exploration of memory and lineage, I have become convinced that memory is really about the future and not the past. We remember so that we can know which strands of our lives we wish to perpetuate and which are better forgotten. Thomas of Aquinas, whose prodigious memory is still the focus of fascination, maintained that memory was central to an ethical life, in no small part because remembering helps us avoid repeating our mistakes. And, when we try to remember the great joke we just heard or the great meal we just ate, it's less about reliving the past and more about how we'll use it in the future. The memorist in all of us lives in a future-oriented past. And that is the theme of this weekend's concerts.

We anchor our concerts with Bruckner's *Third Symphony*, which among its many charms is one of the composer's most revised works. The various versions, of which there are at least five and all quite different from each other, seem to imply that he considered the piece as an ongoing process rather than a fixed entity. Perhaps this reflected his evolving friendship with Richard Wagner, to whom the work is dedicated. And, he perhaps he thought, as many of us do, that a piece of music, no matter what its date of composition, should be fluid and evolving not fossilized and unreachable.

Whatever his motivations for revising may have been, Bruckner included in every version all the hefty textures and grand musical statements that we associate with his music. This is especially evident in the first movement, with its majestic trombone-powered melodies. Like so much music written at the end of the 19th century—you'll hear the fifth revision of the piece, finalized in 1890—the piece feels like it has one foot in the old and the other in the new. On one hand there is the slowly unrolling of thematic material using rich harmonies and burnished textures, an approach akin to Wagner or early Mahler. On the other hand, sudden jump-cuts, occasionally producing dizzying changes of direction and texture, seem more aligned with the mercurial modern pieces of the 20th century.

I have often wondered where the Bruckner historical line led. Where in the 20th and 21st centuries do we find a similar combination of tectonic harmonic movement and sizzling localized textures? My, (quite personal) answer to that is the late music of Philip Glass. There something about Philip's fearlessness when it comes to repetition and to the poignant emotional moments both composers achieve when the small- and large-scale aspects of the music suddenly align that begged for pairing Bruckner with Glass.

An additional aspect is my friendship with our extraordinary soloist, Katinka Kleijn. Katinka and I have worked together often over the years in concerts of the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE.) Her other band is the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, with which she has played Bruckner under many of the greatest Bruckner conductors of our time. As a dedicated Bruckner-phile, her interest was piqued by my Bruckner/Glass theories and she quickly accepted our invitation to perform Philip Glass's *Second Cello Concerto* on the same program as the Bruckner *Third*.

Affinities of harmony and texture link the two pieces, but the dramatic narrative of Philip's concerto is very different from the late 19th century world view of Bruckner. Essentially a composite of themes from his film score for "Naqoyqatsi" (the title is the Hopi word for "life as war"), the concerto paints a vivid account of early 21st century chaos and fear. As the final

installment of Glass's "Qatsi Trilogy," created with film-maker Godfrey Reggio, Naqoyqatsi extends the notions of life-out-of-balance that was launched by "Koyaanisqatsi," the film's famous older brother. The 2001 attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon added an unsettling and dramatic postscript to the film's 2002 premiere.

We round out our concert with LJ White's new work *Community Acoustics*, a work that unpacks the complex sonic relationships embedded in every local ecology, and the ways our changing noise-scape affects the overall function of an eco-system. The sounds of everyday life consist of complex overlaid patterns of human-caused and natural sounds. The imperative for us is to listen to both, and LJ in his piece reproduces that sonic co-existence by means of floating strata of harmonic materials and orchestral imitations of natural sounds through the faint clicks of Prayer Stones and the sounds of breathing through instruments.

With this concert we are pleased to announce a new commissioning program for the La Jolla Symphony, funded privately by my wife Brenda and me, for a new piece every year that embraces values of social and environmental optimism. As the two of us talked about this—programming meetings were held over drinks in our living room!—we realized that an emerging repertoire of adventurous new music directed explicitly at the future was a critical counterweight to the largely backward gaze of most traditional orchestral music. For us, like you, that future is a world where we take care of each other and of our one and only planet. Like you, we imagine a world of diversity, inclusivity and mutual respect, just as we imagine future generations of loving stewards of the natural world. This is a bright and achievable future, and with the support of the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus, we are investing in music that can help make it happen. Brenda and I are very grateful to LJ White for his wholehearted embrace of our proposal. And we are grateful to the musicians and audience of the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus for recognizing that if your goal is to make important memories, you should start by thinking of the future!

Steven Schick