

SYMPHONIC WAVES: ALMA & LA MER



2022

2021



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SYMPHONIC WAVES: ALMA & LA MER



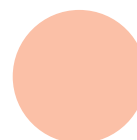
Kensho Watanabe, *conductor*
Karina Gauvin, *soprano*

**Friday,
April 8, 2022
7:30 p.m.**

Maison symphonique
de Montréal



This program was produced by the
Orchestre Métropolitain.



Paola PRESTINI

Barcarola

Performance time: about 15 minutes

Alma MAHLER

Seven Lieder

- I. Die stille Stadt (Richard Dehmel)
- II. Laue Sommernacht (Otto Julius Bierbaum)
- III. Licht in der Nacht (Otto Julius Bierbaum)
- IV. Waldseligkeit (Richard Dehmel)
- V. In meines Vaters Garten (Otto Erich Hartleben)
- VI. Bei dir ist es traut (Rainer Maria Rilke)
- VII. Erntelied (Gustav Falke)

Performance time: about 25 minutes

20-minute intermission

DEBUSSY

La Mer, trois esquisses symphoniques

- I. De l'aube à midi sur la mer
- II. Jeux de vagues
- III. Dialogue du vent et de la mer

Performance time: about 23 minutes



PlacedesArts.com



KENSHO WATANABE

Emerging onto the international stage, Kensho Watanabe is fast becoming one of the most exciting and versatile young conductors to come out of the United States. Recently recognized as a recipient of a Career Assistance Award by the Solti Foundation U.S, Kensho held the position of Assistant Conductor of The Philadelphia Orchestra from 2016 to 2019. During this time, he made his critically acclaimed subscription debut with the Orchestra and pianist, Daniil Trifonov, taking over from his mentor Yannick Nézet-Séguin. He would continue to conduct four subscription concerts with the Philadelphia Orchestra in 2019, in addition to debuts at the Bravo! Vail Festival and numerous concerts at the Mann and Saratoga Performing Arts Centres. Watanabe has previously been an inaugural conducting fellow of the Curtis Institute of Music from 2013 to 2015, under the mentorship of Nézet-Séguin.

Recent highlights include Kensho's debuts with the London Philharmonic and Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestras, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, Rhode Island Philharmonic as well as his Finnish debut with the Jyväskylä Sinfonia. Kensho has also enjoyed collaborations with the Houston Symphony, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Detroit Symphony, Brussels Philharmonic and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the Seiji Ozawa Matsumoto Festival, and the Orchestre Métropolitain de Montréal.

Upcoming highlights include Kensho's returns to the Sarasota Orchestra, San Antonio Symphony as well as the Philadelphia Orchestra for subscription concerts in the 2021-22 season. Notable debuts this season include the Charlotte Symphony, Turku Philharmonic Orchestra, and Sarasota Orchestra, as well as Kensho's Polish debut with the Szczecin Philharmonic, and his Suntory Hall debut with the Tokyo Philharmonic conducting Beethoven's Symphony No. 9.

Equally at home in both symphonic and operatic repertoire, Mr. Watanabe has led numerous operas with the Curtis Opera Theatre, most recently Puccini's *La Rondine* in 2017 and *La Bohème* in 2015. Additionally, he served as assistant conductor to Mr. Nézet-Séguin on a new production of Strauss's *Elektra* at the Opéra de Montréal.

An accomplished violinist, Mr. Watanabe received his Master of Music degree from the Yale School of Music and served as a substitute violinist in The Philadelphia Orchestra from 2012 to 2016. Cognizant of the importance of the training and development of young musicians, he has previously served on the staff of the Greenwood Music Camp, as the Orchestra conductor.

Mr. Watanabe is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, where he studied with distinguished conducting pedagogue Otto-Werner Mueller. Additionally, he holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Yale College, where he studied molecular, cellular, and developmental biology.



KARINA GAUVIN

SOPRANO



Canadian soprano and Grammy nominee Karina Gauvin has impressed audiences and critics the world over from La Scala in Milan to Amsterdam's Concertgebouw to Carnegie Hall in New York with her luscious timbre, profound musicality and wide vocal range. Described by Opera News as "a queen of Baroque opera", Ms. Gauvin has sung with the world's leading orchestras including the San Francisco, Chicago, Montreal and Toronto Symphonies, The Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Venice Baroque Orchestra, Tafelmusik, Les Violons du Roy, Musica Antiqua Köln, Accademia Bizantina and Il Complesso Barocco.

Ms. Gauvin has worked with conductors such as Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Ivor Bolton, Teodor Currentzis, Bernard Labadie, Sir Roger Norrington, Kent Nagano, Fabien Gabel, Semyon Bychkov, Michael Tilson Thomas, Christopher Hogwood, Andrea Marcon, Helmuth Rilling and Christophe Rousset. Also active as a recitalist, Gauvin has collaborated with pianists Marc-André Hamelin, Michael McMahon and Roger Vignoles.

During the pandemic, Karina Gauvin was privileged to participate in a recording project, the complete songs of late 19th century composer Jules Massenet. Her extensive discography – over 50 titles – has won her numerous awards, including a "Chamber Music America Award" for her "Fête Galante" disc with pianist Marc-André Hamelin, 3 Grammy nominations for her recordings with the Boston Early Music Orchestra and several Opus Prizes. Recent projects have included Merab in Handel's *Saul* at the Glyndebourne Festival Opera and Paris Théâtre du Châtelet, Giunone in Cavalli's *La Calisto* at the Staatsoper München and at the Teatro Real in Madrid.

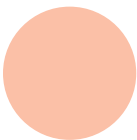
Among the numerous distinctions she received in her early career, Ms. Gauvin was named soloist of the year for the International French Radio Community, won first prize for the CBC Radio National Competition for Young Performers, the Virginia Parker prize as well as the Maggie Teyte Memorial Prize in London and the Lieder and Public's Prize at the 's-Hertogenbosch International Competition





PAOLA PRESTINI

(BORN 1975)



Barcarola

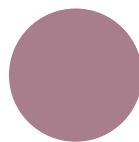
“*Barcarola* is a one movement work for orchestra that I wrote when I was still a student at Juilliard. It was never professionally premiered but was done at Alice Tully Hall by the Juilliard Orchestra. The work has been revised substantially for this premiere, and is dedicated to Speranza Scappucci, a lifelong friend who I attended school with at Juilliard and is a fellow Italian!”

“The work is one movement and 15 minutes long. It is in the form of a wave inspired by the Venetian form and rocking rhythms of a barcarole. The work takes its poetic inspiration from Neruda’s *Barcarola*, which likens longing to the ocean and its tempests. The poem evokes noise: from the sound of wind, to a foghorn, to a beating heart. The image is ghostly and sensual. The sections of the poem highlight structural shifts, and once it rises to its highest peak of longing it resolves into a simple steady heartbeat.”

“I’m beyond thrilled to premiere *Barcarola* with the Orchestre Métropolitain. My work has long been influenced by the world of poetry, and this piece is no exception. It evokes the natural songs of a tempestuous ocean, resplendent with winds, foghorns, and beating hearts. The sensitivity of the Orchestre Métropolitain is an excellent match for this work, which was written during my formative years and edited for this premiere and, as such, holds a special place in my heart.”



Paola Prestini, 2022
Photo © Caroline Tompkins



ALMA SCHINDLER-MAHLER

(1879-1964)

Seven Lieder

Published in Vienna in 1910 and 1915; orchestration by Colin and David Matthews

Alma Schindler was born in Vienna in 1879 into a family that, with a painter father and a singer mother, held the arts in high esteem. She began learning the piano at a young age. Her father, whom she would lose when she was 13, encouraged her to “play to seduce the gods,” guidance she would take to heart. At age 18, she studied composition with Alexander von Zemlinsky, an avant-garde musician and outstanding pedagogue who also became her first lover. From that early age onward, Alma Schindler had many love affairs and was a very active socialite, keeping company with all the imperial capital’s leading poets, writers and artists of the day. She also began to compose.

At a soirée in 1901, she met Gustav Mahler, then director of the Vienna Court Opera and 19 years her senior. They would marry a year later, though not without Mahler gravely warning her in a letter that he would not tolerate having two composers under the same roof and that a wife’s duty was to be fully committed to her husband. He wrote: “But how can you imagine both husband and wife being composers? Have you any idea how ridiculous and degrading such a rivalry would become? . . . From now on you have only one job: to make me happy!” She obligingly abandoned her artistic aspirations, put away her compositions and gave birth to two girls. The couple’s relationship was not without its ups and downs. In the summer of 1910, Alma was introduced to architect Walter Gropius, future founder of the Bauhaus, and became his mistress. In an attempt at reconciliation, Mahler arranged for five of Alma’s lieder to be published before dying the next year at age 51. But her creative impulse was broken, and she never returned to composition.

However, four additional lieder were published in 1915, the year she married Gropius, with five more to follow in 1924.

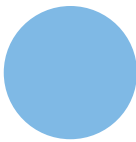
In the ensuing years, Alma Mahler remarried yet again, in 1929, this time to novelist Franz Werfel after 10 years of living together. Fleeing Nazism in 1938, the couple reached France before settling in Los Angeles. After Werfel’s death, she moved to New York, where she died in 1964 after playing an active role in the city’s cultural life.

Besides a few chamber music works and a scene from an opera, all now lost, Alma Mahler left 17 lieder, 14 of which were published during her lifetime. All were composed in the early 1900s, when she was in her early 20s. They demonstrate a sure melodic talent, with more than a whiff of Brahms, one that embraces a harmonic language inherited from Zemlinsky and flirts with the radically new one of Alban Berg and Arnold Schoenberg. Taking from Richard Dehmel, Rainer Maria Rilke and Gustav Falke poems written in a melancholic mood or evoking an idealized and empathetic nature, her musical imagery or word painting, as it was also known, is delicate, never overly emphatic, even in the accompaniment, with its sometimes daring and unexpected turns of phrase. As mezzo-soprano Sarah Connolly puts it, “The music is in part voluptuous, coquettish, Wagnerian in intensity and harmony, yet intimate, sensual, charming and surprising.”



CLAUDE DEBUSSY

(1862-1918)



La Mer, trois esquisses symphoniques

Premiered at the Concerts Lamoureux in Paris on October 15, 1905, conducted by Camille Chevillard

“The sea is like a child; it plays around without knowing exactly what it is doing . . . and it has a soul; it comes and goes, constantly changing.”

— Claude Debussy

Cleaving to the ancient notion that art should, above all, imitate nature, composers have often attempted to depict in music not only creatures and the elements but also human activity. In the 18th century, a number of concertos, symphonies and opera arias evoked the sea and its storms – reflecting the turmoil of the heart – through rapidly rising and descending scales over a rumbling bass, musical clichés that composers deployed with greater or lesser skill. Though program music and symphonic poems would have their heyday in the following century, Claude Debussy’s *La Mer* is far more than its simple title would seem to indicate.

Debussy began composing the work in 1903 during a stay in Burgundy, giving it the subtitle *Trois esquisses symphoniques* (Three symphonic sketches). He confided to André Messager that “While the ocean doesn’t exactly lap the hills of Burgundy... I have innumerable memories. They are worth more than a reality that in general weighs too heavily on one’s thoughts.” However, it was from Dieppe on the English Channel that Debussy wrote his publisher Jacques Durand, whom he had kept waiting due to a bad case of the flu, that “I still have to complete the orchestration, which is as tumultuous and varied as... the sea!”

The work’s premiere, in October 1905 at the Concerts Lamoureux, was far from a success. Not only was it poorly conducted but critics tore it apart. Incomprehension was a common reaction, with Pierre Lalo of *Le Temps* writing “I have the impression of standing, not in front of nature but of a reproduction of nature... I do not hear, I do not see, I do not smell the sea.” The reception was somewhat less chilly when Debussy, though considered a mediocre conductor, led a performance in January 1908 at the Concerts Colonne.

What was Lalo expecting? An evocation with a

few recognizable clichés? A Romantic vision of the unleashed forces of nature? As Vladimir Jankélévitch notes, “Debussy’s music is not characterized by a descriptive function but rather by a suggestive energy, and this power of suggestion he achieved has an irresistible magical force... There is a harmonic sensuality and especially a fondness for sonorities that make his the complete opposite... of any introverted subjectivity.” Using unprecedented means, going beyond imitation, Debussy seeks to arouse in the listener the same emotions, the same effects, as would contemplating the sea over the course of a day.

In a completely original musical language, the work materializes “without needless repetition or a true thematic unity... yet following a finely drawn and balanced plan,” remarks François-René Tranchefort. Far from formal constraints, there are developments that are more commentary than elaboration, seemingly cyclical themes that actually aren’t, a harmonic sense and series of tonalities that blur the paths, while woodwinds, brass (sometimes muted), harps, various percussion instruments and strings appear in constantly changing combinations. As Jean Barraqué notes: “The music becomes a mysterious and secret work that reinvents and destroys itself in an uninterrupted outpouring that allows the work somehow to self-propel, without relying on a pre-established model.”

The first movement, *De l’aube à midi sur la mer* (From dawn to midday on the sea), begins with a slow introduction evoking the coiled power of the ocean at rest. The waves then come to life “*dans un rythme très souple*” (in a very supple rhythm), building “*un peu plus mouvementé*” (with somewhat more movement) until the final burst of day at its zenith. In the second movement, *Jeux de vagues* (Play of the waves), time is suspended to make room for the glittering of the sun’s rays on the quivering liquid surface. In the finale, *Dialogue du vent et de la mer* (Dialogue between the wind and the waves), the wind rises, its din in opposition to the ocean’s constant, tormented swells, interspersed with occasional moments of calm, until its final triumph, bringing to a close a work that remains “a pillar of the entire symphonic repertoire.”



First violins

Marcelle Mallette
Concertmaster
Johanne Morin
Associate Concertmaster
Alain Giguère
Assistant Concertmaster
Monica Duschênes
Carolyn Klause
Alexandre Lozowski
Florence Mallette
Amélie Benoit-Bastien
Ariane Bresse
Mary-Elizabeth Brown
Marie-Claire Cousineau
Julien Oberson

Seconds violins

Nancy Ricard
Principal
Lyne Allard
Associate Principal
Dominic Guilbault
Assistant Principal
Lizann Gervais
Sylvie Harvey
Claudio Ricignuolo
Céline Arcand
Helga Dathe
Amélie Lamontagne
Jean-Aī Seow

Violas

Elvira Misbakhova
Alto solo
Pierre Tourville
Associate Principal
Brian Bacon
Gérald Daigle
Julie Dupras
Élisa Boudreau
Suzanne Careau
Jean René



Cellos

Christopher Best
Principal
Caroline Milot
Associate Principal
Thérèse Ryan
Assistant Principal
Louise Trudel
Vincent Bergeron
Sheila Hannigan
Christine Harvey
Veronika Ronkos

Double basses

René Gosselin
Principal
Marc Denis
Associate Principal
Gilbert Fleury
Réal Montminy
Yannick Chênevert

Flutes

Caroline Séguin
Principal & Principal Piccolo
Jocelyne Roy
Principal & Principal Piccolo
Ariane Brisson

Oboes

Marjorie Tremblay
Principal
Mélanie Harel
Principal English Horn
Kirsten Zander

Clarinets

Simon Aldrich
Principal
François Martel
Principal Bass Clarinet
Martin Carpentier

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Principal
Henri Ferland

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Angelo Munoz
Trevor Dix
Principal Bass Trombone

Tuba

Alain Cazes
Principal

Timpani

Julien Bélanger
Principal

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Alexandre Lavoie
Principal
Mathieu Pouliot
Corinne René
Vincent Séguin

Harps

Robin Best
Principal
Matthieu Dupont

Celesta

Jennifer Bourdages
Principal

Lizann Gervais plays on a Michele Deconet 1754 violin with a Claude Thomassin bow, generously made available to her by Canimex Inc., Drummondville.



One of Quebec's key cultural ambassadors, the Orchestre Métropolitain de Montréal (OM) is celebrating its 40th anniversary this season. At its inception in 1981, the OM set the bar high: to build a unique relationship with the community through high-impact initiatives. Over the last 20 years, the Orchestre has grown alongside its artistic director and principal conductor, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, whose career continues to reach new heights. In September 2019, the OM announced that Nézet-Séguin had signed on for an exceptional lifetime contract.

This special relationship resonates throughout the community, with 50 concerts performed annually at the Maison symphonique and across the city, thanks to the Conseil des arts de Montréal Touring Program. The OM also puts on webcast and open-air concerts. Driven by excellence, the ensemble is known for its bold presence, authenticity and community engagement.

Proud to have expanded its educational initiatives, including The OM for Schools and The OM for Future Talent, the Orchestre strives to cultivate a passion for music among young people.

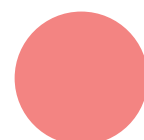
The OM also regularly collaborates with other high-calibre cultural organizations in Quebec, serving as the Opéra de Montréal's orchestra. Following the success of its 2017 European tour, the OM and Yannick Nézet-Séguin travelled to the US in November 2019 with soprano Joyce DiDonato, winning over audiences in Chicago, Ann Arbor, New York and Philadelphia.

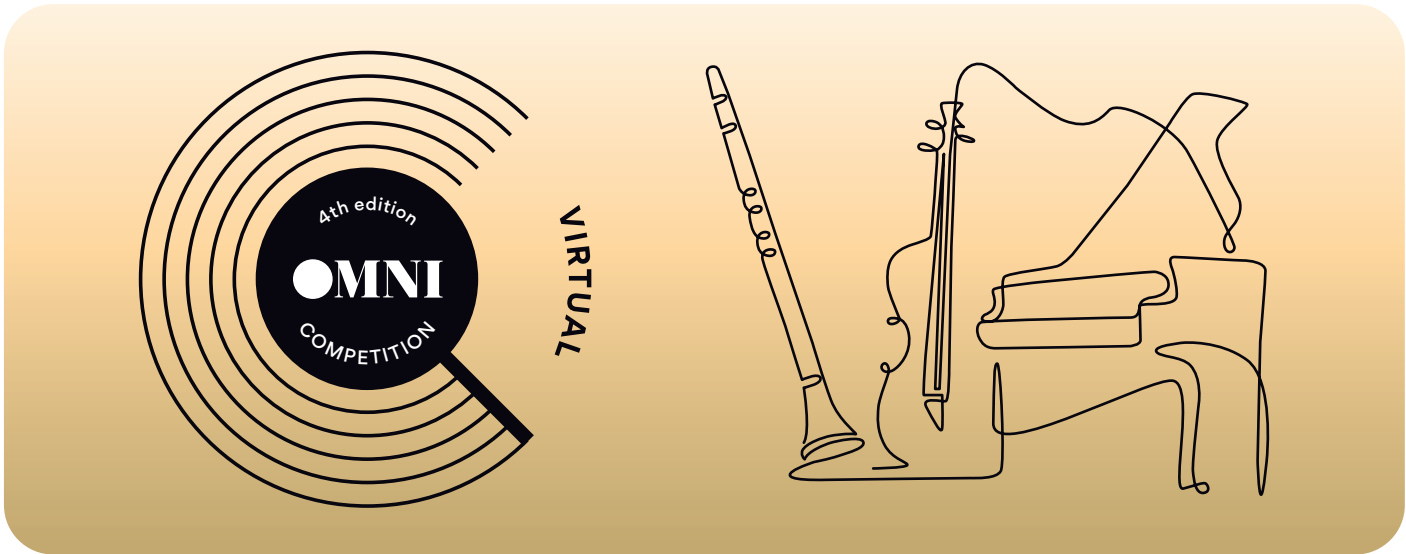


The winner of multiple national awards, the OM has recorded some 20 performances with the Canadian ATMA Classique label, including Bruckner's symphonies, which were released in spring 2018. The Orchestre has also collaborated with Deutsche Grammophon to release two albums with renowned singers Rolando Villazón and Ildar Abdrazakov (*Duets* in 2017 and *Verdi* in 2019).

More recently, the Orchestre performed all nine Beethoven symphonies for its *Summer of Beethoven* webcast series available exclusively on DG Stage. This initiative made the OM one of the first orchestras to come together again after the COVID-19 crisis forced ensembles across the globe to go on hiatus.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Orchestre Métropolitain has rolled out numerous digital initiatives, which has helped it stay connected with audience members during this unprecedented time.





IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR THE 4th EDITION OF THE OMNI MUSIC COMPETITION!

**Webcast on the OM YouTube channel
from April 22 to 24**

Free — No registration required



The Orchestre Métropolitain can't wait to introduce the young musicians taking part in the 4th edition of the virtual OMNI Competition! Performances will be webcast from April 22 to 24 on the OM's YouTube channel.

Audience Choice prize: Vote for your top competitor!

Don't forget to encourage young talent by commenting on their performances and voting for your favourite musician! An Audience Favourite prize will be awarded to one competitor in each instrument category. More details on the voting process will be announced at the webcast.

Performance schedule



• Friday, April 22	Starting at 5:30 p.m.	Category: WIND (ages 7 to 17)
• Saturday, April 23	Starting at 9:30 a.m. Starting at 1:30 p.m.	Category: STRINGS (ages 7 to 14) Category: STRINGS (ages 15 to 17)
• Sunday, April 24	Starting at 9:30 a.m. Starting at 1:30 p.m. 7 p.m.	Category: PIANO (ages 7 to 14) Category: PIANO (ages 15 to 17) 30 finalists announced on the OM's social media accounts



We warmly thank all who have chosen to support the
Orchestre Métropolitain during these unprecedented times.

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April 4, 2022. Donations
in descending order.

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^A Multi-year gift. Through their donation of \$2.5 million over ten years, Mmes. Desmarais are contributing to the artistic development of the OM and its conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin.
^P Gift dedicated to a specific projet.



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Evelyne Rheault
Marketing and Communications Director (interim)

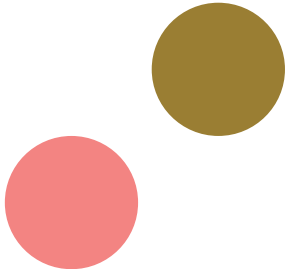
Geneviève Lalonde
Marketing and Communications Director (on maternity leave)

Isabelle Brien
Public Relations Manager

Olivia St-Pierre
Marketing Manager

Ariane Carpentier
Web and Social Media Coordinator

Philippe Desjardins
Box Office and Customer Service Manager



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Jane Glover, *conductor*
Paul Lewis, *piano*





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