

## **FRANKENSTEIN**

**(2024)**

**CLARICE ASSAD** N BORN IN 1978

Composer, pianist, vocalist and educator Clarice Assad, daughter of renowned guitarist Sérgio Assad, was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1978 and has performed professionally since the age of seven. She studied piano, jazz and traditional Brazilian styles with Sheila Zagury and Leandro Braga, and continued her education with Natalie Fortin in Paris and at Boston's Berklee School of Music, Roosevelt University in Chicago, and University of Michigan; her composition teachers include Ilya Levinson, Stacy Garrop, Osvaldo Golijov, Michael Daugherty, Evan Chambers and Claude Baker. Among Assad's many honors are residencies with the Albany Symphony, Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, Boston Landmarks Orchestra, MacDowell Colony and Moab Music Festival, Aaron Copland Award, Gould Young Composer Award, Samuel Ostrowsky Humanities Award, several ASCAP awards in composition, Meet the Composer's Van Lier Fellowship and McKnight Visiting Composer Fellowship. In 2009, her *Danças Nativas* for guitar quartet was nominated for the Latin Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Composition, and her album *Archetypes*, performed with her father and Chicago-based Third Coast Percussion, received 2022 Grammy nominations for the Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance and Best Contemporary Classical Composition.

Clarice Assad's music, which blends classical and jazz elements subtly infused with the Latin rhythms of her native Brazil, has been commissioned and performed internationally by leading artists and ensembles and recorded on the Sony Classical, Universal Music, NSS Music, Nonesuch, Chandos, Telarc and Rob Digital labels. As a pianist and vocalist, Clarice Assad has received acclaim for her performances of both her original compositions and her arrangements and performances of popular Brazilian songs and jazz standards. She has appeared throughout her native Brazil, the United States and Europe at such distinguished venues as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Pick-Staiger Concert Hall in Chicago, Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts in California, Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Le Casino de Paris and Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels. Clarice Assad has also developed a pioneering music workshop called VOXplorations, which explores new ways to create, teach and understand music for both musicians and non-musicians.

Assad wrote, "*FRANKENSTEIN*, the third installment of *The Mosaic Project*, is an orchestral work that reimagines Mary Shelley's classic tale through a giant collaborative effort. Commissioned by the Allentown Symphony Orchestra, this piece brings together over 50 composers from diverse backgrounds, ages and musical traditions to create a haunting musical tapestry. Following the success of *Mosaic Variations* with Austin Classical Guitar and *Tapestry* at the Mainly Mozart Festival, I hope this new work pushes the boundaries of collaborative composition even further.

"The three-movement *FRANKENSTEIN* — *Overture*, *Foreboding* and *It's Alive!* — weaves musical fragments contributed by each composer into a cohesive orchestral narrative that explores themes of creation, ambition and the consequences of pushing beyond natural boundaries. The piece differs from traditional compositional hierarchies by bringing together professional composers, students and community musicians in an artistic democracy. In our contemporary world, where artificial intelligence raises similar questions about creation, consciousness and ethical boundaries, *Frankenstein's* themes resonate with striking relevance. Just as Dr. Frankenstein grappled with the implications of creating artificial life, today's society faces parallel challenges with AI's expanding capabilities and the responsibility that comes with such power. The piece is co-orchestrated by Clarice Assad, Sergio Assad and Keith Donahue."

## **Cello Concerto, Op. 44 (1977)**

**AULIS SALLINEN** N BORN IN 1935

Aulis Sallinen, born in 1935 in Salmi, Karelia (now in Russia), is among Finland's most distinguished composers and music educators. From 1955 to 1960, he studied at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki under Aarre Merikanto and Joonas Kokkonen, and then served for ten years as Managing Director of the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra. From 1971 to 1974, Sallinen was Chairman of the Society of Finnish Composers. He was appointed to the faculty of the Sibelius Academy as teacher of theory and composition in 1963, and was named as an Arts Professor by the Finnish government in 1976, allowing him to devote himself to composition; in 1981, that position was granted to Sallinen for life, the first person to receive that distinction. Sallinen's works include eight symphonies; concertos for violin, cello, flute, horn and English horn; two dozen independent orchestral scores, several with vocalists or featured solo instruments; six string quartets and other chamber works; original compositions and arrangements of traditional Finnish songs for chorus; and seven operas, most notably *The Horseman* (1974), *The Red Line* (1978) and *The King Goes Forth To France* (1984).

Sallinen's earliest compositions, from the late 1950s, show a brief flirtation with then-fashionable serialism, but during the 1960s, his music embraced a wider variety of both traditional and contemporary idioms, ranging from tonality to tone

clusters, from motivic atomism to soaring lyrical arches. His works exhibit the sort of brooding but hopeful intensity of expression, dark sonority and harmonic acerbity associated with Finnish music since the later compositions of Sibelius, qualities that are especially evident in Sallinen's operas.

Sallinen composed his Cello Concerto in 1977 for Arto Noras, one of Finland's leading cellists, a virtuoso of international stature and a faculty colleague of the composer at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki; Noras gave the premiere at the Lucerne International Music Festival in September 1977 with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra and conductor Jorma Panula. The Concerto is in two movements that inhabit different expressive worlds. The opening movement, dark in instrumental color and solemn in mood, is a free fantasia in several varied sections on a group of motives presented at the outset, the most easily recognizable being a short-long gesture and a flowing phrase of small chromatic intervals. A somber *Marcia funebre* ("Funeral March") provides the movement's postlude. The starkly contrasting closing movement is a virtuoso scherzo that accelerates from fast to faster to fastest (*Allegro-Presto-Prestissimo*) with the elan of a Lamborghini shifting gears.

## **Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64 (1888)** **PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY N 1840-1893**

Tchaikovsky, like most creative artists, often suffered episodes of self-doubt. More than once, his opinion of a work fluctuated between the extremes of satisfaction and denigration. The unjustly neglected *Manfred Symphony* of 1885, for example, left his pen as "the best I have ever written," but the work failed to make a good impression at its premiere and Tchaikovsky's estimation of it tumbled. The lack of success of *Manfred* was particularly painful, because he had not produced a major orchestral work since the Violin Concerto of 1878, and the score's failure left him with the gnawing worry that he might be "written out." The three years after *Manfred* were devoid of creative work. It was not until May 1888 that Tchaikovsky again took up the challenge of the blank page, collecting "little by little, material for a symphony," he wrote to his brother Modeste. Tchaikovsky worked doggedly on the new symphony, ignoring illness, the premature encroachment of old age (he was only 48, but suffered from continual exhaustion and loss of vision), and his doubts about himself. He pressed on, and when the Fifth Symphony was completed, at the end of August, he assessed, "I have not blundered; it has turned out well."

Tchaikovsky never gave any indication that the Symphony No. 5, unlike the Fourth Symphony, had a program, though he may well have had one in mind. In their biography of the composer, Lawrence and Elisabeth Hanson reckoned Tchaikovsky's view of fate as the motivating force in the Symphony No. 5, though they distinguished its interpretation from that in the Fourth Symphony. "In the Fourth Symphony," the Hansons wrote, "the Fate theme is earthy and militant, as if the composer visualizes the implacable enemy in the form, say, of a Greek god. In the Fifth, the majestic Fate theme has been elevated far above earth, and man is seen, not as fighting a force that thinks on its own terms, of revenge, hate, or spite, but a wholly spiritual power that subjects him to checks and agonies for the betterment of his soul."

The structure of the Fifth Symphony progresses from minor to major, from darkness to light, from melancholy to joy — or at least to acceptance and stoic resignation. Its four movements are linked by a recurring "Fate" motto theme, given by clarinets as the brooding introduction to the first movement. The sonata form starts with a melancholy melody intoned by bassoon and clarinet. A romantic tune for the strings, an aggressive strain given in dialogue between winds and strings, and a languorous string melody round out the exposition. All of the materials from the exposition are used in the development. The solo bassoon ushers in the recapitulation. The *Andante* calls to mind an operatic love scene. Twice, the imperious Fate motto intrudes upon the starlit mood of this *Romanza*. A flowing waltz melody dominates much of the third movement; the central trio exhibits a scurrying figure in the strings. Quietly and briefly, the Fate motto returns in the movement's closing pages. The finale begins with a long introduction based on the Fate theme in a heroic mood. A vigorous exposition, a concentrated development, and an intense recapitulation follow. The long coda uses the motto in a major-key, victory-won setting.