

Recently named the most-performed composer of his generation and the 2018 Composer of the Year by Musical America, **Mason Bates** serves as the first composer-in-residence of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Championed by legendary conductors such as Riccardo Muti, Michael Tilson Thomas, and Leonard Slatkin, his symphonic music is the first to receive widespread acceptance for its unique integration of electronic sounds, and his opera *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* was hailed as one of the best-selling productions in the history of Santa Fe Opera. As both a DJ and a curator, he has become a visible advocate for bringing new music to new spaces, whether through institutional partnerships such as his former residency with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, or through his club/classical project Mercury Soul, which transforms commercial clubs into exciting hybrid musical events. He has also composed for films, including Gus Van Sant's *The Sea of Trees* starring Matthew McConaughey and Naomi Watts.

This season's variety of appearances at the nation's performing arts center begins with the National Symphony Orchestra's performance of *Auditorium*, a Baroque thriller. Premiered by the San Francisco Symphony, the piece haunts the modern orchestra with original neo-baroque music composed for period instruments. This spring, Bates returns to his hometown of Richmond, Virginia with a new work celebrating the Richmond Symphony's 60th anniversary. His first work for chorus and orchestra, *Children of Adam* is an exuberant setting of American poems about creation, with a special focus on secular poets exploring sacred themes. The work also includes creation texts from Native Americans of the Virginia area, as well as completely novel celebrations of the creative power of the Industrial Age from Carl Sandburg.

Elsewhere, the legendary Joffrey Ballet premieres a new ballet on *The B-Sides* by Nicholas Blanc, who first choreographed his modern classic *Mothership* for New York City Ballet, and the English National Ballet reprises his *Anthology of Fantastic Zoology* with choreography by Aszure Barton. The superstar chorus Chanticleer tours the newly-composed *Drum-Taps* around the country on a program responding to armed conflict.

Bringing classical music to new audiences is a central part of Bates' activities as a curator, whether as a composer or DJ. With composer Anna Clyne, he transformed the Chicago Symphony's MusicNOW series into an imaginative concert experience drawing huge crowds, with cinematic program notes and immersive stagecraft. Now serving as the first composer-in-residence of the Kennedy Center, Bates works with the Center's broad range of artistic constituents, from performances with the National Symphony to appearances with Jason Moran on Kennedy Center Jazz, often integrating DJs into the Center's unique spaces. His *KC Jukebox* series presents new music in new formats, featuring immersive production and ambient information to educate the audience, as well as post-parties with DJs to allow people to debrief in a casual setting. This season includes appearances by famed German electronica duo Mouse on Mars and the spoken word artist Saul Williams. The Jukebox series includes two shows on the inaugural Direct Current festival and closes with a tribute to JFK featuring music in response to civil rights challenges.

Working in clubs under the name DJ Masonic, Bates has developed a post-classical rave that has integrated classical music and electronica to packed crowds in collaborations with clubs and orchestras around the country. *Mercury Soul* embeds sets of classical music into a fluid evening of DJing and immersive stagecraft. Sold-out performances from San Francisco's famed Mezzanine club to Miami's New World Symphony have brought a new

vision of the listening experience to widespread audiences, and the project has been invited by the Chicago Symphony and Pittsburgh Symphony for events at local clubs. In addition to a show this season on the Kennedy Center's Direct Current festival, Mercury Soul presents three shows at San Francisco's DNA Lounge. Elsewhere around SF, Bates DJs on this year's LoveBoat party after a performance by Moby. A diverse artist exploring the ways classical music integrates into contemporary cultures, Bates was awarded the Heinz Medal by Teresa Heinz, who wrote that "his music has moved the orchestra into the digital age and dissolved the boundaries of classical music."

Jan 2018