

*The sea has been very good to me.
She has shown me all her moods...*
Claude Debussy

The great Impressionist composer Claude Debussy had a special relationship to the sea. He had originally planned on a career as a sailor and possessed an almost spiritual bond with nature, especially the sea. He wrote:

Here I am again with my old friend, the sea; it is always endless and beautiful. It is really the thing in nature which best puts you in your place. But people don't respect the sea sufficiently. To wet in it bodies deformed by daily life should not be allowed. Truly, these arms and legs which move in ridiculous rhythms—it is enough to make the fish weep. In the seas, there should be only sirens, and how do you suppose those estimable persons would consent to return to waters frequented by rather low company?

Those of you who enjoy moving your arms and legs “in ridiculous rhythms” are no doubt grinning at Debussy’s wit. I also wager that if you were to experience his masterful *La Mer (the Sea)*, *Three Symphonic Sketches*, you would conclude that it is the most beautiful and convincing evocation of the sea ever written. Debussy brilliantly captures the soul of the sea and is able to convey her in “all her moods”. With the same immediacy that his compatriot Monet practiced to convey nature, Debussy evokes sensual responses in the listener to the rhythms and motions of the sea—from the lazy wisp of foam to the rainbow colorings in the fountains of spray; the shivers of anticipation to a tempestuous storm; the haunting and seductive sirens’ song.

Debussy’s *La Mer* never fails to give me goose bumps. It will be combined with two other spine-tingling symphonic masterpieces on the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra’s Opening Night concert of the 2007-2008 Season, Saturday, September 29. The event, entitled *Exhilaration*, will explore the dance element in music and also features Rachmaninoff’s colorful *Symphonic Dances* and Liszt’s *Totentanz*. Liszt’s thrilling *Dance of Death* will present pianist Carlos Rodriguez, who is returning by popular demand.

In fact, the entire 2007-2008 season is inspired by dance, or more specifically, the relationship between motion and music. In creating the season I posed the following questions:

Do you sometimes find yourself compelled to tap your feet or even dance when listening to music? Is it the driving rhythm? Is it the lyrical melody? Is it the ebb and swell of a powerful phrase?

The Alexandria Symphony Orchestra will explore these questions this Season in programs conceived to make your feet tap and your spirit dance in a yearlong celebration entitled *The Joy of Music & Motion*. During the course of the Season the ASO will literally make the music unfold before your eyes as featured guests *Bowen McCauley Dance* and *Bosma Dance* choreograph the music of Handel to Faure. Through the poetic genius of Lynn Harrell, the fiery passion of Carlos Rodriguez and the artistry of other featured soloists, the music will move, exhilarate and inspire.

So, how does the music move *you*? Join us this season and find out!
Kim Allen Kluge