

# DU YUN

## THE MYTHOLOGY SERIES

KRAKEN MANTICHORA HUNDRED HEADS

**PEABODY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

**MARIN ALSOP, CONDUCTOR**

*Annual Peabody Symphony Orchestra Concert  
in Memory of Steven Muller*

Friday, May 12, 2023 • 7:30 pm  
Miriam A. Friedberg Concert Hall  
Peabody Institute





Annual Peabody Symphony Orchestra Concert in Memory of Steven Muller

**DU YUN:\* THE MYTHOLOGY SERIES**  
**PEABODY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

Marin Alsop,\* conductor, director of the Graduate Conducting program

Joseph Young (*AD '09, Conducting*),\* Ruth Blaustein Rosenberg Artistic Director of Ensembles

Michael Repper (*DMA '22, Conducting*), assistant conductor

Friday, May 12, 2023 · 7:30 pm  
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Du Yun (b. 1977)

***Mythology I: Kraken***

Du Yun

***Mythology II: Mantichora***

INTERMISSION

Du Yun

***Mythology III: Hundred Heads***

## COMPOSER'S NOTE

The years 2009 to around 2014 saw a five-year splurge of writing orchestral works rooted in the ideas and inspirations from mythologies for me. I began to write operas around then as well. I never thought I could or was particularly interested in that form. I only remembered I liked stories. That was the initial urge. So, these orchestral works were a bit like that too.

During that same period I was wrestling with making the transition from being an international student to obtaining American residency, and later being an immigrant. Like for so many others, it was a long crossing, involving multi-generational efforts.

I felt, and still possibly am, immensely attracted to the animals in these stories. They are half man, half animals, they are at once foreign and at home, and you see them everywhere in many cultures and memories. At that time, I felt this primal energy was a roar towards disruption and reckoning.

Even though my compositional language has since been shifting, something remains constant.

This concert is a culmination of a recording project including three of my orchestral works, the *Mythology* series, and the collaborative piece *Where We Lost Our Shadows*, a work for three soloists, orchestra, and films.

For this undertaking, I would like to thank Melina Gajger and Andrew Kipe, whose gracious planning through this process has been unmeasured.

To Marin Alsop, Joseph Young, and Michael Repper, for your visions and care for my works.

To Dean Fred Bronstein for helping to realize this project.

To Rick Jacobsohn, Lara Villanueva, and the audio production department, for your brilliant audio recording wizardry.

Lastly but not least, to everyone in our amazing Peabody orchestra. I am grateful to you for playing the music. Thank you, too, for listening.

— Du Yun

## PROGRAM NOTES by Du Yun

### **Mythology I: *Kraken* (2009/2011)**

ca. 14'

*Kraken* was commissioned by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

First Performance: May 10, 2012, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Symphony Hall, Detroit, Michigan

**A Kraken is a Sea Dragon, or Sea Serpent, it might have a hump a mile and a half long, and arms that can encircle the largest ship.**

In 2009, I began to use a series of titles that are based on mythology fables for my works.

These half-gods half-demons are at once familiar and foreign, figures alive across many cultures, latitudes, and ages. This sensibility is very close to me at heart: it speaks of the belief I endure; of the lives we live often landing on the edge of the in-between-ness.

We don't know what a Kraken is. And yet we can often see ourselves in these mythological figures. As if, a memory from past of the future, future of the past. We can recognize all these elements in us.

The Kraken, non-narrative, non-programmatic, I borrowed the idea for its intangible spirit. Instead of

movements, the piece incorporates three chapters. The idea is appropriated from the structure of some novels, where narratives can be developed parallel in consecutive chapters, rather than a linear thematic development. To witness a figure that mutates over time and to see how the matter detangles, unfolds and dissipates.

Of Kraken, Alfred, Lord Tennyson wrote in 1830:

Below the thunders of the upper deep;  
Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,  
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep  
The Kraken sleepeth: faintest sunlights flee  
About his shadowy sides: above him swell  
Huge sponges of millennial growth and height;  
And far away into the sickly light,  
From many a wondrous grot and secret cell  
Unnumber'd and enormous polypi  
Winnow with giant arms the slumbering green.  
There hath he lain for ages, and will lie  
Battening upon huge sea worms in his sleep,  
Until the latter fire shall heat the deep;  
Then once by man and angels to be seen,  
In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die.

## Mythology II: *Mantichora* (2010)

ca. 19'

*Mantichora*, for large string orchestra, was commissioned by the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra.

First Performance: January 20, 2011, Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, Joana Caneiro, conductor, Zellerbach Concert Hall, Berkeley, California.

He looks like a part of us and yet he is never one of us.

The Mantichora, the *Man-eater*, devours his prey whole.

Sounds of besieged, a realm unveils. The edge of the body imperceptibly crosses over into the world of predators. A turf of immanence.

**A Manticore is a gigantic red lion, with human face, and three rows of teeth.**

## Mythology III: *Hundred Heads* (2014)

ca. 16'

*Hundred Heads* was commissioned by the Seattle Symphony Orchestra and Ludovic Morlot for its Sonic Evolution Project that celebrates the past and future of Seattle's music scene.

First Performance: June 4, 2014, Seattle Symphony Orchestra, Ludovic Morlot, conductor

The Hundred-Heads is a fish created out of a few words' karma by posthumous repercussions down through time. One of the Chinese biographies of the Buddha says that one day the Buddha encountered some fisherman pulling in their nets. After endless effort, they dragged up on shore an enormous fish, with one head a monkey's, another a dog's, another a horse's, another a fox's, another a pig's, another a tiger's, and so on, to the number of one hundred.

"Are you not Kapila?" the Buddha asked the fish.

"I am Kapila," the Hundred-Heads answered, and then died.

The Buddha explained to his disciples that in a previous incarnation, Kapila had been a Brahmin who had become a monk and surpassed all men in his knowledge of the sacred texts. Sometimes his companions would make mistakes, at which Kapila would call them 'monkey-head,' 'dog-head,' etc. When he died, the karma of that accumulated invective made him come back to life as a sea monster, floundering under the weight of all the heads he had wished upon his companions.

— Jorge Luis Borges, *The Book of Imaginary Beings*

When I was asked by the Seattle Symphony to choose an artist who was a part of the local cultural map as my inspiration for a new piece, very quickly I chose Ray Charles. I'm captivated by this creature. In a way, I think Ray Charles has his own incarnations, his breaks, his many before-lives. He wouldn't not take the enlightenment once the monster dies with him.

To me, Ray Charles is the echo of the spirit of the Hundred-Heads.

In my piece, traces of Charles' most known tune, "Georgia on My Mind," are faintly suggested, as well as his "Hard Times (No One Knows Better Than I)." Traces of his trademark brass rhythm are only hinted, often in breaks.

I often wonder about our own musical language. What constitutes others, when does such becomes our own. When an assimilation evolves to an assault. When the boundary of the divide stops.

To Ray's spirit.

## BIOGRAPHIES

### **Marin Alsop**, conductor

Her outstanding success as music director of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra (BSO) since 2007 has been recognized by two extensions in her tenure, now confirmed until 2021. As part of her artistic leadership in Baltimore, Alsop has created bold initiatives that have contributed to the wider community and reached new audiences. In 2008 she launched OrchKids, which provides music education, instruments, meals, and mentorship of the city's neediest young people. Alsop serves as principal conductor of the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra (OSESP).

Alsop now conducts the world's major orchestras including the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra (LSO), and London Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO). Her extensive discography has led to Grammy and Gramophone awards and includes highly praised Naxos cycles of Brahms with the LPO and MDR Leipzig, Dvořák with the BSO, Prokofiev with OSESP, and further recordings for Decca Classics, Harmonia Mundi, and Sony Classical. She is dedicated to new music, borne out in her 25-year tenure as music director of California's Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music.

Among her many awards and academic positions, Alsop is the only conductor to receive the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship, is an honorary member of the Royal Academy of Music and Royal Philharmonic Society, and is the director of graduate conducting at the Peabody Conservatory. She attended the Juilliard School and Yale University, who awarded her an honorary doctorate in 2017. Her conducting career was launched in 1989, when she won the Leopold Stokowski International Conducting Competition and was the first woman to be awarded the Koussevitzky Conducting Prize from the Tanglewood Music Center.

### **Du Yun**, composer

Du Yun, born and raised in Shanghai, China, currently based in New York City, is a composer, performer, and advocate, working at the intersection of orchestral, opera, theatre, chamber music, cabaret, oral tradition, public performances, sound installation, electronics and noise. She has been hailed by the *New York Times* as a groundbreaking artist, listed by the *Washington Post* as one of their Top 35 female composers, and selected by *Rolling Stone Italia* in its decade review as one of the composers who defined the 2010s. Her body of work is championed by some of today's finest performing groups and organizations around the world. Known for her "relentless originality and unflinching social conscience" (*The New Yorker*), Du Yun's second opera, *Angel's Bone* won the 2017 Pulitzer Prize (libretto by Royce Vavrek). Her collaborative opera with Raven Chacon *Sweet Land* won the 2020 Best New Opera by the Music Critics Association of North America. Other notable recognitions include Guggenheim, American Academy Berlin Prize, Creative Capital, Foundation Contemporary Arts, Grammys nomination in Best Classical Music Composition (for *Air Glow*), Moscow's BraVo Award (best classical composition, *The Veronica*), shortlist for UK's Royal Philharmonic Society's 2021 Best Small Chamber Works (*Every Grass a Spring*), and Audience Award at The Dharkah Biennial Pakistan (a collaborative installation work with the visual artist Shahzia Sikander). Her four studio albums were *The New Yorker* Notable Recordings of Year in 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2021 respectively. Her latest monodrama opera *In Our Daughter's Eyes* was named a Notable Performance of the Year in 2022 by *The New Yorker*.

Du Yun is professor of composition at the Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University. As a curator and advocate for new music and art, she was a founding member of the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), artistic director of MATA festival (2014–18), founded a FutureTradition initiative championing collaborations in oral tradition practices from the ground up, and served as a curator-advisor for European's Festival Alliances. She was Artist of the Year at the Beijing Music Festival in 2019, and the Asia Society in Hong Kong has honored her for her continued contributions to performing arts. The Carnegie Foundation and the Vilcek Prize in Music have honored her as an immigrant who has made lasting contributions to American society. This year the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of Harvard University is honoring her as one of six centennial medalists, the highest recognition for its alumni. Du Yun is also very proud of her own band, Ok Miss. Some of the most rewarding projects included a multi-year initiative with the First Generation School Children in Yushu, Tibetan Prefecture, where collaborations with the local musicians see the fruitions of education, reimagination, and the publications of the local oral traditions.

Du Yun has attended Shanghai Conservatory, Oberlin Conservatory, and Harvard, and studied composition under Deng Erbo, Randolph Coleman, Bernard Rands, Joshua Fineberg, and Mario Davidovsky.

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Joseph Young, Ruth Blaustein Rosenberg Artistic Director of Ensembles  
Michael Repper, assistant conductor  
Ryo Hasegawa, student conducting assistant

### KRAKEN AND MANTICHORA

#### Violin

Nya Angel  
Nicolle Avila  
Olivia Chen †  
Endi Chen  
Ann Ching  
Heeyun Cho ‡  
Sang-Ah Choi  
Hanyu Feng  
Sophia Freed  
Elaina Gable  
Kuan Hao Yen  
Dayoung Hyun  
Josephine Kim  
Sumin Lee  
Charmaine Lee  
Anna Pavlou  
Angela Ramirez  
Felix Shen  
Lyu Song Tseng  
Yu-Chu Teng  
Yu Yu Hsiao  
KaiLai Zhang

#### Viola

Asha Baylor  
Gabriella Coon  
Michael Halbrook  
Nathan Hillman  
Margaret Kluczniak  
Brett Petrykowski  
Rachel Riese  
Justin Williams  
Rui Yang  
Calvin Yoon

#### Cello

Tim Beccue  
Pia Carrasco-Isachsen  
Jiayi Cheng  
Jonathan Colon  
Gloria Lee  
Paul Lee  
Alexander Wu  
**Double Bass**  
Katelynn Baker  
Owen Boyd  
Abigail Koehler  
Sebastian Salazar  
Alfonso Sanchez Herrera Lasso

#### Flute

Andrea Velasquez  
Zelin Wang  
Zishu Xie

#### Kazoo

Lauren Patton-Hearne  
Zishu Xie

#### Oboe

Mengying Han  
Lauren Patton-Hearne  
Elizabeth Perez-Hickman

#### Clarinet

Ashley Pratz  
Dylan Rosenthal  
Zoe Underwood

#### Bassoon

Logan Jawgiel  
A Ra Kim  
Edric Vivoni

#### Horn

Bryan Bennett  
Samantha Hartsfield  
Hyejin Lee  
Anna Lorenzen

#### Trumpet

Robert Greaney  
Julia Richardson  
Weifeng Zhao

#### Trombone

Taylor Esbenshade  
Matthew Moran  
Spencer Smith

#### Tuba

Kevin Freeman

#### Timpani

Akira Hudson

#### Percussion

Hyunwoo Kim  
Naizhi Zhang

#### Harp

Alyson Kanne

### HUNDRED HEADS

#### Violin

Sophie Chan  
Yoojin Hong  
Yanxiong Huang  
Junxue Huang  
Amir Kadamani Gonzalez  
Erin Kim  
Yin-Chi Lee  
Yu-Ling Lin  
Eashwar Mahadevan †  
Ann Marie Nolan  
Hsiang-Yu Meng  
Rachel Niu  
Lily Rivers  
Ji Soo Lee  
Che-Yu Su  
Angeline Wang  
Chih-Chun Wang  
Pei Wu Chen ‡  
Xiaoquian Zhu

#### Viola

William Gu  
Wesley Hamilton  
Yu-Ting Huang  
Hannah Jung  
Olive Loentz  
Jeffrey McArthur  
Heather Park  
Nikki Ponticelli  
Nicholas Wynn

#### Cello

Jihyeuk Choi  
Marlon Florez  
Shawn Hsu  
George Jennings  
Anita-Mae Kahan  
Lindsay McKenna  
Yi-Chen Wu

#### Double Bass

Boyang Kang  
Eteban Lindo  
Mark McNulty  
Xinyi Ruan  
Manyi Zhang

#### Flute

Su Bin Cho  
Isabelle Jamois  
Tara Rozanski

#### Oboe

Ju Yeon Shin  
Parker Tremaine  
Santo Villatoro

#### Clarinet

Sophia Bracken  
Olivia Harrison  
Alexandra Kropp

#### Bassoon

Logan Jawgiel  
A Ra Kim

#### Contrabassoon

Edric Vivoni

#### Horn

Sean Brennan  
Jaxson Padgett  
Ashton Sady  
Daniel Wu

#### Trumpet

Samantha Obara  
Yuval Tessman-Bar-On  
Tyrone Williamson

#### Trombone

Dylan Heid  
Hayden Lovinfosse  
Spencer Smith

#### Tuba

Wiley Bair

#### Percussion

Benjamin Giroux  
Ganguk Lee  
Yutian Ma

#### Piano

Arin Shahjahanian

#### Celeste

Chi-Yuan Lin

† Concertmaster  
‡ Principal

