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The Harvard-Radcliffe
Orchestra
and
Music Director
Federico Cortese
Present:

ELGAR

CELLO CONCERTO
in E Minor, Op. 85

featuring the winner of the 2018
James Yannotos Concerto Competition

BRIAN ZHAO

HARBISON

Remembering Gatsby

RAVEL

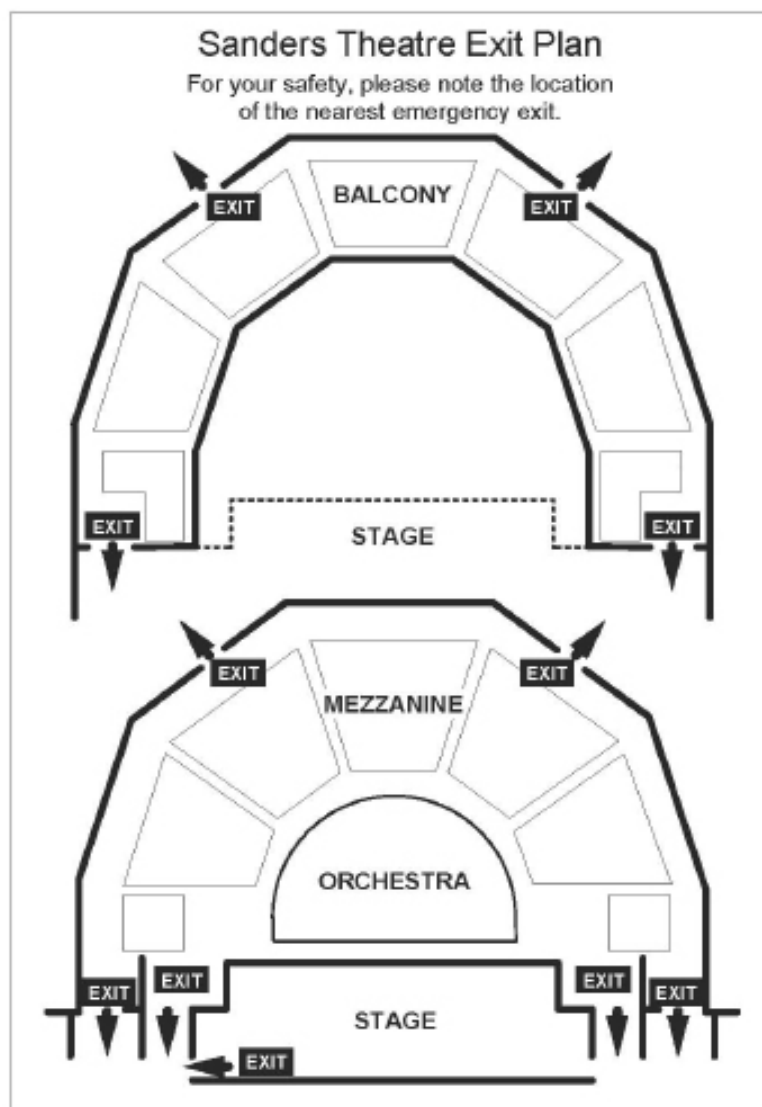
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HISTORY OF THE HRO

The Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra (HRO) is the oldest symphony orchestra in the United States. It traces its history back to the night of March 6, 1808, when Joseph Eaton (class of 1810) and five other Harvard men formed the Pierian Sodality, taking its name from the Pierian Springs, where Greek immortals drank and found musical inspiration. (In contrast, the oldest professional orchestra – the New York Philharmonic – was founded only in 1842.)

In its early years, the Sodality was a student club not only for playing music, but also for consuming brandy and cigars, as well as the “serenading of young ladies.” In the 1830s, the Faculty of Harvard College publicly admonished the Sodality for a whole night serenading away from Cambridge. Administration censure was so great that in 1832 the Pierian Sodality was reduced to one man. Gradually, however, other members were elected, and the Sodality played on. According to a June 29, 1840 entry in the Sodality’s record book, the group’s late-night music-making antics earned them fame that “did wax exceedingly great, and did reach all the places round about Cambridge.”

Two decades later, the performing career of the Pierians began. In 1860, shortly after Harvard President James Walker made Harvard the first institution to add music as a regular subject of study in the curriculum, the Pierian Sodality was given permission to “hire a hall and give a public concert, on condition that no tickets be sold.” They began to give regular concerts, and even rehearsed to prepare for them.

Therefore, by the turn of the century, the Pierian Sodality could justly refer to itself as the Harvard University Orchestra. It had developed into a serious musical organization and become the largest college orchestra in America. The late thirties saw joint concerts with the Radcliffe Orches-

tra and in 1942, the Pierians suggested that the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra be formed. Since the Sodality’s membership was depleted during the years of World War II, and since the Radcliffe Orchestra lacked certain instruments, both groups benefitted from the merger. Thus the men and women of Harvard and Radcliffe united in their music-making efforts, and the HRO as it is today was born.

The orchestra was conducted by students until 1926, when the first professional conductor was hired by orchestra members. Most conductors remained for only a few years (with the exception of Malcolm Holmes, conductor from 1933-50), until on a recommendation from Leonard Bernstein, Dr. James Yannatos became conductor in 1964 and served as the music director for 45 years. Under his baton, HRO developed into a high-quality orchestra, and toured all over the country and the world. Following Dr. Yannatos’ retirement, Federico Cortese was appointed music director of HRO in 2009. He has continued its tradition of musical excellence, of performing with other Harvard musical organizations, such as the Holden Choirs, and of performance tours.

It is now over one century ago that HRO deemed itself ready for its first out-of-state tour. Beginning with a successful tour through New York State in 1908, HRO’s travels have featured such highlights such as performing at Washington DC’s National Theatre for First Ladies Mrs. Warren Harding and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge, gracing the stage of Carnegie Hall and, in 1978, placing third in the Fifth Annual International Festival of Student Orchestras. Since the 1980s, HRO has taken tours to the Soviet Union, Asia and Europe, Italy, Brazil, Canada, Cuba, Israel, Jordan, Korea, the Philippines and most recently in 2017, Argentina.

Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra

210th Season, 2017-2018

VIOLIN I

Jeremiah Blacklow '20

Principal

Andrew Lee '21

Assistant Principal

Brandon Duffy '20

Joyce Lu '21

Flora Li '19

Flora Li '19

Rebecca Xi '22

Liya Jin '22

Ju Hye Mun '22

Lucy Frucht '22

Mark Xu '22

Liana Owen '22

Nivi Ravi '21

Emily Spector '21

Sasha Yakub '20

Simeon Radev '22

Sarah King '21

VIOLIN II

Cherin Lee '22

Principal

Eloise Hodges '21

Albert Shin '22

Gordon Ma '19

Diana Wang '20

Claire Tseng '22

Anna Gong '22

Odessa Deng '22

Austin Kwoun '22

Angela Eichhorst '22

Yash Nair '22

Annette Samuels (Alum)

Sarah King '21

Catherine Gallori '22

VIOLA

Sophie Choate '22

Principal

Roger Cawdette '22,

Assistant Principal

Carter Nakamoto '21

Tae Shik Kim

William Lundell '21

Jarod Stone '21

CELLO

Ethan Cobb '21

Principal

Brian Zhao '19

Christopher Kwon '22

Danielle Davis '21

Emily Chung '21

Ila Shon '19

Ju Hyun Lee '18

Michael

Arumainayagam '22

Nate Steele '21

Patrick Barham '21

Ryan Chung '22

Soren Nyhus '22

Spencer Kim '20

BASS

William Swett '22

Principal

Claire Murphy '21

FLUTE

Alyssa Chen '22

Jenny Yu Wang '22

Karissa Huang '21

Peter Bynum '22

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Charles Overton*

*guest performer

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Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra

211th Season, 2018-2019

Federico Cortese, Conductor, Music Director
Adrian Slywotsky, Teaching Fellow

Saturday, November 3, 2018, 8:00 pm
Sanders Theatre, Harvard University

Program

John Harbison (1938- Present)

Remebering Gatsby

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Daphnis et Chloé, Suite No. 2 for Orchestra

Intermission

Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Cello Concerto No.1, Op. 85

I. Adagio-Moderato

II. Lento - Allegro molto

III. Adagio

IV. Allegro- Moderato- Allegro, ma
non troppo- Poco più lento - Adagio

Notes on the Music

Remembering Gatsby

Composer Note:

Remembering Gatsby was composed for the Atlanta Symphony and is dedicated to the orchestra and its Music Director, Robert Shaw. It was completed during the summer of 1985 at Token Creek, Wisconsin.

For some years I made sketches for an opera based on Fitzgerald's novel, *The Great Gatsby*: after I abandoned the project I sometimes ran across musical images (in my sketchbooks) and fragrances from the novel (in my senses). A few of these were brought together in this orchestral foxtrot.

The piece, which runs about eight minutes, begins with a cantabile passage for full orchestra, a representation of Gatsby's vision of the green light on Daisy's dock. Then the foxtrot begins, first with a kind of call to order, then a twenties tune I had written for one of the party scenes, played by a concertino led by a soprano saxophone. The tune is then varied and broken into its components, leading to an altered reprise of the call to order, and an intensification of the original cantabile.

A brief coda combines some of the motives, and refers fleetingly to the telephone bell and the automobile horns, instruments of Gatsby's fate.

My father, eventually a Reformation historian, was a young show-tune composer in the twenties, and this piece may also have been a chance to see him in his tuxedo again.

—John Harbison

from *musicsscalesclassical.com*



Daphnis et Chloe, Suite No. 2 for Orchestra

Maurice Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloe*, in the composer's own words, a "choreographic symphony," was initially overshadowed by other tumultuous ballets of the same contemporary five year period: Stravinsky's *Firebird*, and the later raucous and memorable opening of *The Rite of Spring*. Nevertheless, when Sergei Diaghilev, leader of the emerging Russian Ballet Russes so popular in Paris at the time, first asked Ravel to set the classical Greek myth of the two pastoral lovers to dance, the work eventually produced over four years later now stands as a seminal, if not the decidedly superior, work of all French ballet.

Work began on *Daphnis* in 1909, as the phenomenon of Russian dance swept through Paris. Transmitting through the late sixteenth century French poet Amyot's translation of a third century A.D. Longus' idyll on the classical Greek myth, and in conjunction with a Russian choreographer, Michel Fokine, meant that the creative process was time consuming and arduous for Ravel. To put it simply in Ravel's own words, "what complicates things is that Fokine doesn't know a word of French, and I only know how to swear in Russian." Ravel was late, and *Daphnis* wouldn't be completed in time for that first 'Russian season,' nor the next, but rather four years later in 1913.

However, what emerged out of this difficult and time consuming collaboration stands as a monument to Ravel's perfectionism with the score, and exceptional mastery of both orchestration and synergy with the on stage movement and expression. In the second suite performed tonight,

one can hear the plot of the third act of the full ballet. Having introduced the lovers in the first act, both adopted and raised by shepherds on Mytilene, pirates invade and take Chloe prisoner in the second. In reflection of his own passion for his love, Syrinx, the god Pan saves Chloe, allowing the two lovers to reunite and celebrate this sentiment in the final act.

Throughout the second suite, we hear the versatility and lyricism of Ravel's impressionism and textual mastery. The opening of the piece incites the warmth of the rising rays through waves of sound, slowly evincing the sun's daybreak that sets the scene for their return unto one another; and the following virtuosity of the violin and flute solo moments highlights not only the distinct dexterity with which Ravel was capable of handling the tools of the orchestra, but the delicate sculpture by which he formed the portrayal of each stage of the myth.

In the second of the three concurrent, seamless sections, as the lovers reenact Pan's homage to Syrinx, the extended flute exhibition deftly mirrors the same palpable passion which has just saved the two themselves. The suite is concluded with the rapturous *danse generale*, set in the choreographically stymying, yet musically alluring and ebullient 5/4 meter. Having taken years to compose, this maelstrom of a conclusion's dance shows Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloe* in its best state, as that polished, refined, and multifaceted gem of not only the composer's own oeuvre, but of French music and ballet as an entire repertoire.

—Topher Colby '20

Notes on the Music

Elgar Cello Concerto No. 1

Composed in the wake of World War I, the Cello Concerto was English composer Edward Elgar's last significant composition, even though he lived for another 15 years after its completion in 1919. Having heard the wartime artillery in France across the English Channel and lost many of his dear friends to the Great War, Elgar was also by now keenly aware of his declining popularity, recovering from recent surgery, and . Reflecting these personal, and analogously national, circumstances, gone is the assured confidence of an empire at its height found in Elgar's earlier works—the Pomp and Circumstance marches, Introduction and Allegro for Strings, and Enigma Variations come to mind—the concerto turns instead to the pensive reckoning of this same empire, now exhausted from unprecedented war.

The premiere, in October 1919, at which Elgar was scarcely afforded rehearsal time, was an unmitigated disaster, and though critics sympathized with Elgar to a certain degree, the concerto failed to catch on with confused audiences and was hardly performed in the ensuing decades despite the efforts of Elgar's admirers. In fact, the piece was not revived until the British cellist Jacqueline du Pre, merely 20 at the time, made a landmark recording with Sir John Barbirolli and the London Symphony Orchestra in 1965. The recording instantly catapulted both her and the concerto into stardom, where both have remained since.

Scored for the standard late Romantic lineup of two each of flutes

(second doubling piccolo), oboes, clarinets, and bassoons; four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, and tuba; timpani; and strings on top of the soloist, the concerto is remarkably reserved in its orchestration, with largely smatterings of color to highlight the cello's line apart from the periodic outburst while the soloist does not play. The orchestra never competes with the cello for dominance. In cello concertos, the soloist often struggles to be heard above a full orchestra, but such a problem hardly exists in this masterpiece.

The first movement starts with a recitative by the soloist, an unmistakable, bold declamation of tragedy, bleak and forlorn. The monologue grows tentative and blends into the wandering, almost aimless, first theme introduced by the violas. Repeated but varied statements of this theme become gradually stately and assertive, even impassioned, but fade away to the second theme. Here, the music becomes slightly warmer and more present but never escapes the pervading gloom. The iambic rhythm and compound meter (in which each beat is subdivided into three rather than two) of both themes, on top of the unmistakable melancholy of the music, leaves the impression that one is aboard a ship swaying in the waves under grey skies. In the second half of the movement, the themes are stated in reverse order, creating an arch-like structure.

A mercurial, quick-witted scherzo picks up without pause where the first movement winds down. The soloist opens with the same chords as

the first movement winds down. The soloist opens with the same chords as in the recitative, this time pizzicato. A seed of a theme attempts to assert itself as this scherzo struggles to get off the ground but is repeatedly interrupted, resulting in incessant turns of tempo in the process. Finally, the seed germinates into a *moto perpetuo*, and the movement sprints forward with good humor until a pompous and canonically Elgarian theme takes hold. The cello, here, hardly hesitates from theatricality. The two themes then play out to the end, and lightheartedness prevails.

In the slow movement, fleeting wisps of reverie by the cello float over a dreamy backdrop of strings, clarinets, bassoons, and horns. By turns serene and heartfelt, the movement longs with nostalgia. The soloist bears the melody throughout, taking the uncontested center stage in this emotional core of the piece.

A march-like idea sets off the finale, but the cello interrupts with its own monologues. When the march finally proceeds, it is hardly one to be marched to; even this most rhythmic portion of the piece is subject to the soloist's expressive liberties. The movement unwinds toward the end and almost seems to die off when vanishing glimpses of the heartrending third movement return, followed by the opening summons. The march picks up again to close off the concerto, but in a manner too brief to be convincing, almost obligatory, a marked departure from the signature

rousing cadence of the Elgar of old. One almost wonders if the concerto would have rather faded away into oblivion.

— Michael Cheng '19

FEDERICO CORTESE

Conductor and Music Director, Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra



From the moment of his debut in September 1998, stepping in at short notice to conduct Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 in place of an ailing Seiji Ozawa, Federico Cortese's work as Assistant Conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra was widely praised. Serving in that position from 1998-2003, Mr. Cortese led the BSO several times in Symphony Hall and at Tanglewood. His conducting of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* at Symphony Hall was particularly heralded. Additionally, he has served as Music Director of the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras since 1999 and is currently Music Director of the New England String Ensemble and Associate Conductor of the Asian Youth Orchestra. Other appointments have included Music Coordinator (in lieu of Music Director) and Associate Conductor of the Spoleto Festival in Italy, Assistant Conductor to Daniele Gatti at the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, and Assistant Conductor to Robert Spano at the Brooklyn Philharmonic.

Mr. Cortese has conducted operatic and symphonic engagements throughout the United States, Australia, and Europe. Recent engagements in the US include, among many others,

conducting the Dallas and Atlanta Symphony Orchestras, San Antonio and New World Symphonies, and the Louisville Orchestra; as well as many operatic productions including Mozart's *Don Giovanni* with the Boston Lyric Opera, Puccini's *La bohème* with Opera Theater of Saint Louis and at the Yale Opera program, and Andre Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire* with the Washington National Opera. In Europe, his opera experience includes conducting productions of Verdi's *Il trovatore* in Parma, Italy as part of the Verdi Centennial Festival; Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at the Spoleto Festival in Italy; Niccolò Piccinni's *La bella verità* at the Teatro Comunale, Firenze, with the Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino; and a new production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* with the Finnish National Opera in Helsinki. Recent successes include guest conducting Britain's Opera North, BBC-Scottish Symphony, Slovenian Philharmonic, Oslo and Zagreb Philharmonics, and Gottingen Symphony Orchestra, to name just a few.

In Australia, he has conducted the Sydney and Tasmanian Symphonies; Australian Youth, West Australia Symphony, and Queensland Orchestras; and a production of *Madama Butterfly* for Opera Australia in Melbourne.

Mr. Cortese studied composition and conducting at the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia in Rome and at the Hochschule für Musik in Vienna. In addition, he has been a conducting fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center. In 2009, he was appointed Senior Lecturer in the Harvard music department. In addition to music, Mr. Cortese studied literature, humanities, and law, earning a law degree from La Sapienza University in Rome.

BRIAN ZHAO

Soloist



Cellist Brian Zhao, 21 from Plano, TX, is currently a senior in the Harvard/NEC Dual Degree Program studying with Laurence Lesser.

Brian started learning cello at age 9 with Jungshin Lewis. He won grand prizes in various competitions including the Fort Worth Symphony's Young Artist Competition, Dallas Symphonic Festival Senior String Concerto Competition, Collin County Young Artist Competition, Vernell Gregg Young Artist Competition, and the Greater Dallas Youth Orchestra Concerto Competition. He was also awarded first place in both the solo and chamber music categories of the First Annual Chamber Music International Young Artist Competition. Brian won third place in the 13th Annual Lynn Harrell Concerto Competition and was a finalist in the 11th Annual Lynn Harrell Concerto Competition in 2012 and Lennox International Young Artists Competition for Strings in 2014. In addition to winning numerous competitions, he has performed as a soloist with multiple professional and youth symphonies including the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, Richardson Symphony Orchestra, Plano Symphony Orchestra, Lewisville Lake Symphony Orchestra, Greater Dallas Youth Orchestra, and

Shepton High School Orchestra.

Brian also has a passion for chamber music, with performances in the Lewisville Lake Symphony's International Chamber Music Series Concert and The Institute For Strings. He has had chamber music coachings with members of the Parker Quartet, Orion Quartet, Cleveland Quartet, Vermeer Quartet, Rubens Quartet, and Kaplan-Weiss-Newman Trio. He has also participated in summer festivals such as the Heifetz International Music Institute, Montecito International Music Festival and the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music Summer String Academy.

At Harvard, Brian is an economics concentrator. Since his sophomore year, Brian has been a member of Brattle Street Chamber Players, a student-led conductor-less string ensemble. Brian also is a cellist for Citylife Presbyterian Church. In the summer of 2019, Brian will be a returning intern in Microsoft's Finance Rotation Program.

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211th Season, 2018-2019

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