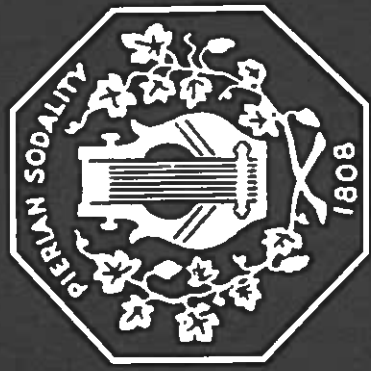



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accompaniment embraces the 12-tone theme, as if Bartók meant to show its compatibility with tonal music. The recapitulation of the first theme recalls the "Verbunkos" of Bartók's "Contrasts," and the cadenza hints at the form pioneered by Mendelssohn in his Violin Concerto.

The first obvious manifestation of the theme and variations comes as the structure of the second movement. Bartók flirts with D major and D minor, the keys that boast the Beethoven and Brahms Violin Concerti in their heritage, but eventually embarks on a journey laden with chromaticism. The movement possesses much less Hungarian flavor, more following the established Romantic lines used by Sibelius shortly beforehand in his Violin Concerto. A reverie with the harp, the violin's constant companion in the concerto, begins in the twenty-fifth bar and sets a transparent texture rarely heard in this densely orchestrated work.

The last movement strikes the tone of a macabre waltz, but its underlying structure reveals Bartók's more subtle integration of the theme and variations. He makes constant use of material from the first movement, disguised by extended note lengths and the infusion of more chromaticism and flourish. The finale, punctuated by Bartók's indomitable sharpness, hearkens back to the piece's original footing; the listener can only be left stunned and invigorated.

DAN ALTMAN

## JEAN SIBELIUS: *Symphony No. 2*



At a time in history when Russia was an ever-present threat to Finnish independence, the music of Jean Sibelius endeared the composer as the quintessence of Finland's national pride. Dubbed "the greatest composer of symphonies since Beethoven" by Cecil Gray, Sibelius composed his Second Symphony much in the classical style of Beethoven. Although much of his work is discernibly influenced by the natural beauty of his Finnish homeland, the sketches for the Second Symphony were actually developed in the more peaceful setting of Italy.

Although the symphony appears to be constructed in the traditional fashion, its inner structure reveals much to the contrary. From the beginning, as Gray notes, "Sibelius inverts the process, introducing thematic fragments in the exposition, building them up in an organic whole in the development section, then dissolving and dispersing the material back into primary constituents." The pastoral component is at the heart of the work; dramatic episodes disrupt its harmony.

The first movement, an *Allergro* written in sonata form, moves with a natural fluidity. Originating from beyond the horizon, the strings begin in 6/4 time with a motive emulating a wavelike motion. A few measures later the oboe and clarinet enter with a motive of exuding happy lightheartedness ended by an Alpenghorn-like call by the French horns. This lightness is presented only to be broken apart by a brief storm episode by the violins, in common time, followed by a calming down and the introduction of the second theme heard in the winds with a return to the flowing 6/4 of before. The clarinet soon enters with a solitary figure; the intensity grows in volume and passion until, at the *poco largamente* section, most of the orchestra is in unison with the clarinet's solitary figure. The brass present a triumphant fanfare, and the winds emerge with their original motive. The journey begins again, introducing new colors. When we finally reach the end, peace reigns.

The second movement, like the first, also seems to begin from nowhere. Signaled by a timpani role, the basses and cellos exchange a mysterious pizzicato conversation whose contents remain indistinguishable until the bassoons arrive with a lamenting plea, which is then taken up by the oboe and clarinet. As the tempo picks up and the dynamics increase in volume, the strings and eventually the entire orchestra take up the cry of the bassoon until a climax when the brass stand alone. Then end of the brass' speech is accompanied by a change in key from d minor to F# Major and a change from the sad passion to a hopeful calm. This calm gives way to a reassuring determination to overcome that which was victorious before.

In contrast to the first two movements, the third is in *lido* form, and there is a distinct impression of improvisation. The movement takes off beginning in the strings with racing eighth notes in a nervous, restless fashion with little time to breathe allowed. The only breath comes in the melodies of the winds which carry the music. The first incidence of relaxation is the 12/4 section in Gb Major with the oboe solo, vaguely reminiscent of the first movement. This peace is soon interrupted by the breathless running eighth notes until the oboe solo emerges again. This transition to the fourth movement is a gradual building up of long-sought energy.

This final movement exudes grandeur with the first theme in D Major. The glorious and passionate opening gives way to the second theme in the winds introduced by rising and falling scales in the cellos and violas. This new area is serene and more introspective. Gradually, the first theme weaves in and is traded among instruments and resumes prominence. Intensity builds until the original triumph of the opening is recaptured, at which point the events up till now are also revisited, now in a new light. The second theme is a loud, D minor sounding of the final conquering. This yields to first theme material in D Major carried in its final victory by the brass.

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NOTES ON THE MUSIC

**RICHARD STRAUSS: Don Juan**

The genre Liszt first called the symphonic poem began with the large overtures of Berlioz, and Mendelssohn and by the 1880's was a truly established musical form. Smetana, Saint-Saëns, Tchaikovsky, Dvorak, and Franck had all written such works. Richard Strauss joined this group, changed the name of the symphonic poem to the tone poem, and left his definitive mark on the genre. He became the master of the tone poem, and preeminent among his great works is the majestic Don Juan.

The premiere performance of Don Juan on November 1, 1889, was a tremendous success; indeed, the audience recalled Strauss five times, vainly imploring him to repeat the performance. A critic of Strauss, who had previously said that Strauss had "a great talent for false music, for the musically ugly," now wrote to the composer, "Your most grandiose Don Juan has taken me captive."

The music is based not on the same legend as Mozart's Don Giovanni (in spite of Strauss's love of and dedication to Mozart), but it is based on the epic poem of the Hungarian-German poet Nikolaus Lenau. Don Juan is a man consumed with, as Lenau puts it, "the longing in him to find a woman who is to him incarnate womanhood, and to enjoy, in the one, all the women on earth, whom he cannot as individuals possess." However, Don Juan's search proves futile, and he goes from woman to woman, never satisfying his true desire.

Strauss, perhaps because similar passions concerning a young woman were present in his own life, captures Don Juan's hot-blooded ardor brilliantly. The work opens with a flurry of violins, topped with a ringing note in the brass—a perfect transformation of passion into music. It continues in the extremely fast opening section with unbelievable orchestral virtuosity. Don Juan's love interest presents herself with a distinctly seductive theme. The same theme reappears throughout the music, beginning with the oboe, moving to the horns and then repeatedly returning to the oboe. The middle section is perhaps the most memorable, with one of Strauss' most recognizable themes played monumentally by the horns. The passage is so powerful that it swayed even the composer when rehearsing the music for the opening night:

The sound was wonderful, immensely glowing and exuberant . . . One of the horn players sat there out of breath, sweat pouring from his brow, asking, "Good God, in what way have we sinned that you should have sent us this scourge!" . . . Certainly the horns blew without fear of death.

The music soon grows frenzied. After a recapitulation, and with the lover's theme echoing occasionally, Strauss ruthlessly uses a sword-thrust of a chord in the trumpets to send Don Juan to his death.

DAVID MARCUS

**BÉLA BARTÓK: Violin Concerto No. 2**



Bartók completed his Second Violin Concerto 30 years after his First, which he had withdrawn in the intervening period. The violinist Zoltán Székely commissioned the Second Violin Concerto with hopes that his compatriot would create a vast, momentous piece to add to the likes of Beethoven and Brahms in the violin repertoire, working towards a grand set of variations since his early piano works "For Children," and he offered Székely a concerto written in that form. Székely, however, had envisioned a standard three-movement concerto. Bartók outwardly yielded, and the resultant concerto—a three-movement work based on variations at two different levels—met with great satisfaction from the virtuoso.

The first movement does not contain any genuine Hungarian folk themes, but Bartók does employ many general elements of traditional songs. The first three notes of the violin solo—a pickup of two sixteenth slurred to a dotted quarter-note—immediately signal Hungarian syllabism with the large accent on the dotted quarter, a B natural. The B becomes the foundation for a series of syncopated patterns using two eighth-notes in the middle of the 4/4 bar, another common feature of modern Hungarian music. At the *allegretto* in the twenty-second measure, the violin begins from B again and launches into a series of runs. For the second theme in the solo part, Bartók uses a 12-tone modulation in the space of three measures. Incredibly, the overwhelming tonal

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David Commanday's innovative and exciting performances have earned him a growing national and international reputation as one of the most talented conductors of his generation.

Mr. Commanday studied piano and cello at an early age, and attended Harvard College. At Harvard he achieved significant musical successes, playing as principal cellist of the HRO, later winning that orchestra's concerto competition and conducting many concerts and opera performances. Among other accomplishments, he founded the Lowell House Waltz and conducted the Lowell House Opera's performances of *Der Freischütz* in 1976.

Following his college years, Mr. Commanday's work at the Vienna Hochschule für Musik earned him the Austrian Staatsdiplom in conducting. Mr.



## DAVID COMMANDAY guest conductor

Commanday then returned to the U.S. and a post as Music Director of the Boston Ballet. Mr. Commanday has since appeared as guest conductor with groups including the American Symphony Orchestra, Belgian Radio Symphony, Vienna Pro Arte Orchestra, London Festival Ballet, Atlanta Symphony, Seattle Symphony and for two seasons as Assistant Conductor of the San Diego Symphony.

Mr. Commanday resumed his performing and teaching career as a cellist in 1987 as Associate Professor of Music at Virginia Commonwealth University. He returned full circle when the Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras called him back to Boston in 1989; their 1992 performance of Mahler's Second Symphony was named the "year's best non-BSO orchestral performance" by Boston Globe critic Richard Dyer.



## JANET SUNG violin soloist

The 1995 HRO Concerto Competition winner is violinist Janet Sung '95, who hails from Pittsburgh. She is a senior in Winthrop House concentrating in Music and Anthropology.

Sung began playing the violin at age 7, when she was given a quarter-size Suzuki violin by her music-loving but non-instrumentalist parents. By age 9, she was practicing on her own initiative for four to five hours a day. She began studying with Josef Gingold at age 11, and he remained a strong and beloved influence. Sung took through high school. After graduation, Sung took a year off to study intensely with him in his hometown of Bloomington, Indiana. Gingold provided the impetus for Sung to come to Harvard, because he believed that she should "see the world" and "not have such a narrow focus."



After arriving at Harvard, Sung has carried forth her musicianship, performing in solo recitals and providing music lessons as part of Philips Brooks House's HARMONY program. Most recently, she entered the Indianapolis International Violin Competition using a Magini violin from circa 1600, which she found after a three-year search for an instrument.

Although music is her first priority, Sung has been able to keep academics and music separate. There is, she says, "me as a student and me as a musician." The two fuse, however, in her thesis, which considers Barrok's methods of ethnographical research, his motivations, and his methods of composition.

After graduating from Harvard, Janet plans to go to a conservatory—either in the United States or abroad—to prepare for a solo career.





# HISTORY OF THE HRO

The Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra traces its history back to the night of March 6, 1808, when six Harvard men first formed the Pierian Sodality, an organization dedicated to the consumption of brandy and cigars as well as the serenading of young ladies. Its midnight expeditions "were not confined to Cambridge, but extended to Watertown, Brookline, Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, Boston, etc . . . wherever, in short, dwelt celebrated belles." An entry in the Sodality's record book for June 29, 1840 reads:

*It came to pass in the reign of Simon the King, that the Pierians did meet in the tabernacle. And lo! a voice was heard saying, Let us go serenading—and they lifted up their voice as one man and they said, Let us go. And behold we went to the city of the Philistines, and did serenade their daughters, and came home about the third hour. And the fame of the Pierians did wax exceedingly great, and did reach all the places round about Cambridge.*

The early Pierians had so much spirit that in the 1830s the Faculty of Harvard College publicly admonished the Sodality "for absencing themselves from Cambridge for a whole night, serenading." Administration censure was so great, in fact, that in 1832 the Pierian Sodality was reduced to one man: Henry Gassett '34. According to *Time* magazine (March 29, 1943), "He held meetings with himself in his chair, paid himself dues regularly, played his flute in solitude . . . and finally persuaded another flautist to join in duets. Gradually they elected other members. The Sodality played on."

The Sodality not only played on, but profoundly influenced the development of music in Cambridge and Boston over the next fifty years. The Harvard Glee Club and the Boston Symphony, for instance, both owe their existence to the early Pierians.

By the turn of the century, the Pierian Sodality could at last justly refer to itself as the Harvard

University Orchestra. It had grown into a more serious musical organization and had become the largest college orchestra in America. Soon it deemed itself ready for its first out-of-state tour, the Centennial Tour of 1908, which took the orchestra through New York state, and which was so successful that other tours quickly followed. The orchestra gradually built an international reputation and played for some of the most respected people in this country.

It was not until November of 1936 that members of the Pierian Sodality finally condescended to assist the Radcliffe Orchestra in some of its larger concerts. Joint concerts became more frequent in the late Thirties and in 1942 the Pierian suggested that the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra be formed. Since during the war years the Sodality's membership was depleted, and since the Radcliffe Orchestra lacked certain instruments, both groups benefited from the merger.

It is said that around 1950 the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra stopped making history and started making music with a degree of seriousness never before seen at the University. The orchestra continued to improve in quality and reputation as it took tours to Mexico (1962), Washington, D.C. (1966), and Canada (1972). In 1978, the HRO placed third in the Fifth Annual International Festival of Student Orchestras, held in Berlin and sponsored by Herbert von Karajan. The Eighties saw tours to the Soviet Union (1984) and Asia (1985 and 1988), the latter including a cultural exchange with universities in Shanghai and Beijing. In 1992, the HRO continued its tradition of cultural exchange by visiting Vienna, Budapest, Prague, Olomouc, Hamburg, and Copenhagen on its 1992 European Tour.

This year the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra will be joined by several guest conductors as Music Director James Yannatos departs on sabbatical leave in the spring.

*The Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra gratefully acknowledges the David Chang Memorial Fund. This fund was established in 1991 by the Chang Family to support the rental and purchase of music.*

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# Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra

## 187th Season, 1994-1995

JAMES YANNATOS, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Saturday, 4 March 1995, 8:00 p.m.  
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Richard Strauss  
 (1864-1949)

*Don Juan, Op. 20*

Béla Bartók  
 (1881-1945)

Violin Concerto No. 2, Sz. 112

- I. Allegro non troppo
- II. Andante tranquillo
- III. Allegro molto

*Janet Sung '95, Violin*

—Intermission—

Jean Sibelius  
 (1865-1957)

Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 43

- I. Allegretto
- II. Tempo andante ma rubato
- III. Vivacissimo
- IV. Allegro moderato



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