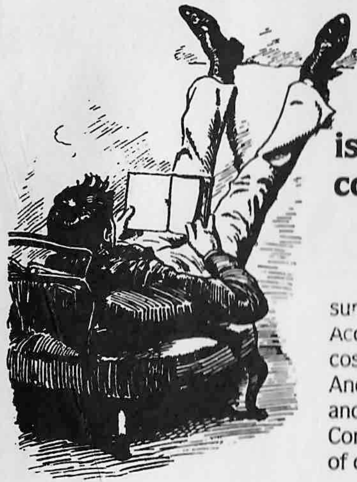
Harvard-Radcliffe
Orchestra

James Yannatos, Music Director

186th Season

1993-1994



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Harvard-Radcliffe *Orchestra*
186th Season, 1993-1994

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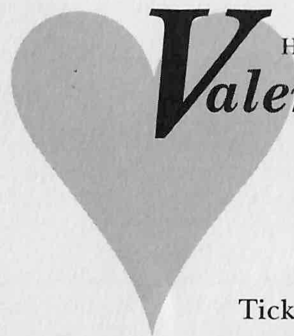

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Program

Harvard-Radcliffe *Orchestra*
186th Season
James Yannatos, Music Director
Friday, 3 December 1993, 8 pm
Sanders Theatre, Harvard University

Charles Ives (1874-1954)
Orchestral Set no. 1
(*Three Places in New England*)
I. The "St. Gaudens" in Boston Common (Colonel Shaw and his Colored Regiment)
II. Putnam's Camp, Redding, Connecticut
III. The Housatonic at Stockbridge

Joel Bard, conductor

Béla Bartók (1881-1945)
Piano Concerto no. 3
I. Allegretto
II. Adagio religioso
III. Allegro vivace

Sally Pinkas, piano

-Intermission-

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
Symphony no. 4 in e minor
I. Allegro non troppo
II. Andante moderato
III. Allegro giocoso–Poco meno presto
IV. Allegro energico passionato–Più allegro

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James Yannatos — Music Director

James Yannatos was born and educated in New York City. After attending the High School of Music and Art and the Manhattan School of Music, he pursued composition studies with Nadia Boulanger, Luigi Dallapiccola, Darius Milhaud, and Paul Hindemith, as well as conducting studies with William Steinberg and Leonard Bernstein which took Yannatos to Yale University (B.M., M.M.), the University of Iowa (Ph.D.), Aspen and Tanglewood Music Festivals, and Paris.

He has been music director of the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra since 1964, and has appeared as guest conductor-composer at the Baltimore Symphony, the San Antonio Symphony, the Boston Pops, the Winnipeg and Edmonton Symphonies, and the Sverdlovsk and Leningrad Chamber Orchestras, as well as at the Aspen, Banff, Tanglewood, Chautauqua, and Saratoga Festivals. He is also the music director of the New England Composer's Orchestra.

Dr. Yannatos has received commissions for orchestral, vocal, and instrumental works which include *Cycles* (recorded by Collage), *An Overture for the Uncommon Man* (Phi Beta Kappa), *Sounds of Desolation and Joy* (Lucy Shelton), and the *Concerto for Bass and Orchestra* (Alea III and Edward Barker, principal bassist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra). His most ambitious work, *Trinity Mass* (for soloists, choir, and orchestra) was premiered in Boston and New York in 1986 (Jason Robards, narrator), and was aired on National Public Radio.

In March-April 1991, Dr. Yannatos conducted the Leningrad Chamber Orchestra in his Symphony no. 5 (*Son et Lumière*) and the Sverdlovsk Chamber Orchestra in his Symphony no. 3, which was also produced on Soviet television. His 4th Symphony, *Tiananmen Square,* was performed by the touring Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra in Prague, Czechoslovakia. Mr. Yannatos returned to Russia in May of 1993 to record three of his works with the Moscow Symphony. His piano concerto will be premiered by the Florida West Coast Symphony in February, 1994.

Dr. Yannatos has published four volumes of *Silly and Serious Songs,* based on the words of children. He has also written music for television including Nova's *City of Coral,* and Metromedia's *Assassins Among Us.*

He has received innumerable awards as a composer including the Artists Foundation Award of 1988 for his *Trinity Mass.*

Assistant Conductor — Joel Bard

Joel Bard is a fourth-year graduate student in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. Before coming to Harvard, he did his undergraduate studies in oboe at the Cleveland Institute of Music where he was a student of John Mack. He then went on to receive a Master of Music degree in Orchestral Conducting from The Juilliard School, where he studied with Jorge Mester and Sixten Ehrling. His conducting studies have also included work with Otto Werner Muller, Herbert Blomstedt, Charles Bruck, Gunther Schuller, and Leonard Bernstein. In addition to his work with the HRO, he is currently assistant conductor of the Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras. The branch he conducts is mainly for fourteen- to fifteen-year-olds. Mr. Bard will also be music director for the Lowell House Opera's production of Verdi's *La Traviata* this March.

Mr. Bard's current non-musical vocation, the study of biochemistry and molecular biology, arose originally from a Publishers Clearing House subscription to *Scientific American.* His other interests include skiing, cycling, ice hockey, the function of the muscarinic acetylcholine receptors in neuronal signaling, and, most importantly, his wife, pianist Sayuri Miyamoto, and their daughter Linda Mayumi Bard (class of 2015).

Following her 1983 recital debut at London's Wigmore Hall, pianist Sally Pinkas has been concertizing across the United States, Europe and her native Israel. Among her credits are solo recitals in Washington, Boston, Rome, and Jerusalem, as well as concerto appearances with major orchestras, most recently the Jupiter Symphony. An avid chamber musician, she has collaborated with the Concord, Lydian, and Franciscan String Quartets, and is currently active in a Piano Duo with her husband, Evan Hirsch. Summer residencies include the Marlboro Music Festival, the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood, and the Colly Solleri Music Center at Arcosanti, Arizona.

Described by *The Boston Globe* as "...admirable–technically fluent, emotionally commited and full of fantasy...", Ms. Pinkas' extensive repertoire ranges from the traditional to the contemporary, and features many works written for her. In 1993, she presented world premieres of works by Robert Kyr and David Evan Jones in Seattle, Eugene and Santa Cruz. Upcoming engagements include recitals in Missouri, New Jersey, and Vermont, and concerto appearances with the Harvard Radcliffe Orchestra and the Wheeling Symphony Orchestra in West Virginia. Her first solo compact disk, an all-Debussy album, will be released this fall on the Centaur label.

Ms. Pinkas holds performance degrees from Indiana University and the New England Conservatory of Music, and a PhD in Composition and Theory from Brandeis University. Since 1985 she has been Artist-in-Residence at Dartmouth College's Hopkins Center for the Performing Arts.

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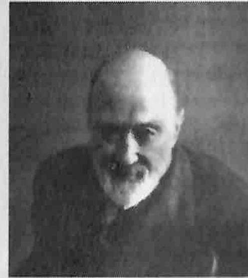
Charles Ives: *Three Places in New England*



The son of a noted civil war band leader, Charles Ives was born in Danbury, Connecticut in 1874. After graduating from an obscure university in New Haven, he went into the insurance industry in New York City and composed in the evening and on Saturdays. It is sad that, although he was very successful in his business and seems to have been pleased with much of his musical output, he lost confidence in his compositional skill and stopped writing in 1930, 24 years before his death.

When Ives's *Three Places in New England* was performed in Paris in 1931 a critic remarked, "There is no doubt that he knows his Schoenberg," and went on to chide him for not having "assimilated the lessons of the Viennese master as well as he might have." It is remarkable, then, to realize that all of the music in this work existed in one form or another by 1911. Schoenberg at that time was still writing in his early, post-romantic idiom and Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* was in the planning stages.

The first piece from *Three Places in New England* refers to Augustus St.-Gaudens's sculpture commemorating the Massachusetts 54th Infantry, the first all-black regiment to fight in the civil war. The music portrays the state of mind of a person viewing the statue and feeling ever-increasing empathy for the poor souls marching into a hopeless battle. At first he sees cold stone. As he contemplates the story of the regiment (told in the movie *Glory*) the faces come to life. They march towards their fate grimly at first and them with enthusiasm. They encounter the enemy, are halted, and return to stone.

Putnam's Camp, the second piece, tells the story of a boy enjoying a picnic at a park which had been a Revolutionary War campsite. As the band (not a very good one) plays, he wanders into the woods hoping to see the old soldiers. He falls asleep and dreams of a group of disheartened militiamen (depicted by several instruments playing at a tempo different from that of the rest of the orchestra) trying to leave camp to find food and warmth. Lady Liberty tries to cajole them into returning but they only decide to turn around when reinforcements arrive over the hill. When the boy awakens he hears children's songs, sees people dancing, and goes to listen to the band...all at the same time.

Ives married Harmony Twitchell in June of 1908. They spent part of their honeymoon in Stockbridge, Massachusetts where, Ives wrote, "We walked in the meadows along the river, and heard the distant singing from the church across the river. The mist had not entirely left the river bed, and the colors, the running water, the banks and elm trees were something that one would always remember." All of this is audible as the final piece, *The Housatonic at Stockbridge*, progresses from quiet contemplation to rapture.

Joel Bard

Béla Bartók: *Piano Concerto no. 3*

Béla Bartók was born into a family of musicians on March 25th, 1881 in Nagyszentmiklós (in present-day Romania). At the age of five he began piano lessons with his mother. (With the death of Bartók's father in 1888, his mother began supporting the family as a teacher.) At nine Bartók wrote his first compositions, a set of dances for solo piano, and eventually he continued his studies in music at the Academy of Music in Budapest with István Thomán. In partnership with the composer Zoltán Kodály, Bartók discovered the vast wealth of folk music in his land. Thereafter an ardent champion of ethnic music, he traveled, collected, and catalogued thousands of melodies and songs from the Magyar, Romanian and Slovakian people and thereby saved them from extinction. Even after emigrating to the United States in 1940 to escape the ravages of World War II and protest the Axis government, Bartók turned down a prestigious teaching position at the Curtis Institute in order to notate and catalogue Wallachian folksongs on a commission from Columbia University.

continued on next page

Béla Bartók died on September 26th, 1945 in West Side Hospital in New York City. He is remembered today not only for his compositions, but also as one of the foremost virtuoso pianists of his time and as a nationalist who fought for the freedom of his native Hungary, first from the Austrians, then the Nazis.

Bartók was an active composer to the very end of his life. In his last year, he was commissioned to write a seventh quartet, a viola concerto for William Primrose and the Third Piano Concerto. Though in a period of convalescence when he began the concerto at the end of August 1944, Bartók was still in poor health and knew he had not much longer to live. It was in this state of mind that he placed his other efforts aside and concentrated on the Third Piano Concerto, intending to ensure concert bookings for his wife Ditta, a pianist. He was unable to complete the work before his death in September 1945, and the orchestration of the last seventeen bars was completed by the violist and composer Tibor Serly. The premiere of the work was given in February 1946 not by Bartók's widow, but by another Hungarian immigrant, György Sándor, with the Philadelphia Orchestra under the direction of Eugene Ormandy.

The Third Piano Concerto is in E, like the First, but differs completely in character from that work. The serenity of the work as a whole contrasts with many of Bartók's other major works, such as the Concerto for Orchestra and the preceding piano concertos. Though Bartók had been progressing toward greater structural and tonal lucidity in his compositions, the textural simplicity in the first movement, complemented by the unusual writing for the solo piano (which is treated almost as a single-line instrument, the two hands often in parallel motion), is a great surprise. The percussive quality of the First Concerto is entirely absent, and the intense vitality of the Second has been so refined as nearly to vanish. Clearly, Bartók had composed this piece not for his own forceful hands, but for the more delicate hands of his wife.

The marking for the second movement, *Adagio religioso*, is entirely without precedent in Bartók's music. (The fact that Bartók was a devout atheist is here of particular interest.) The opening hymn-like dialogue between the piano and the strings is unique as well; some have interpreted it as a reference to the "Heiliger Dankgesang" of Beethoven's A minor Quartet opus 132. This is followed by a scherzo section, in which bird-like nature sounds are combined with Bartók's famous, elusive "night music." The movement ends with a variation of the first section, the chorale now taken over by the woodwinds, leaving the solo piano free to embellish.

Though the Third Piano Concerto may lack the harshness and force of the First and the bravura of the Second, this should not be interpreted as the declining creativity of an aging composer. Some have condemned this penultimate work of Bartók's as a "sell-out" to public taste and "a frail work by a frail composer." Nowhere is this more strongly refuted than in the third movement, a 3/8 rondo, not unlike the first movement of the Concerto for Orchestra. The driving rhythm and wonderfully spontaneous fugal episodes show a composer in complete command of his skill. Thus the relative calm and composure expressed in this work is not the result of any frailty in Bartók's creative drive, but is a stately farewell from one of the greatest composers of the twentieth century.

Hirohisa Tanaka

Johannes Brahms: Symphony No. 4

In 1872, Brahms had written in desperation, "I shall never write a symphony! You can't have a notion what it's like always to hear such a giant marching behind you." Nevertheless, his first symphony burst forth triumphantly in 1876, illuminating the future and finally dispelling the specter of Beethoven. The rest of Brahms's symphonies followed in relatively short order, the inner pair completed in 1877 and 1883. In his early fifties, buoyed by his impassioned youth and a musically fertile middle age, Brahms composed his fourth symphony during the summers of 1884 and 1885 at Mürzzuschlag, his holiday residence. The work has every indication of the full maturity of his "autumnal" years, but did not lose emotional charge with its tempering.

The first indication of the work in progress was a mysterious request to his publisher for paper with more staves. Later, in his typical self-deprecating manner, he off-handedly mentioned to a caller that he had again "chucked together one of those sets of waltzes and polkas." In 1885, he noted to Hans von Bülow that

> Unfortuniately, nothing came of the piano concerto that I should have liked to write. I don't know, the earlier ones are too good or maybe too bad, but at any rate they are obstructive to me. But I do have a couple of entr'actes; put together they make what is commonly called a symphony.

In contrast, von Bülow referred to the Fourth Symphony as the Thirteenth Symphony, starting the computation with Beethoven's cycle and appending Brahms's four, adding that the work was "colossal, altogether a law unto itself...breathes inexhaustible energy from first note to last."

While the public took immediately to the Fourth upon its premiere in October 1885, the musical professionals of Brahms's inner circle had misgivings. Even Eduard Hanslick, the influential critic and Brahms's close friend, after listening to a two-piano rendition, remarked that "it was like being beaten up by two tremendously intelligent and witty people." Michael Steinberg suggests that though the public would have been won over by the whole, the professionals "with their special kind of connoisseurship and perception of detail, would have been more struck by what was—and is—genuinely difficult in the score."

The opening introduces an alternating sequence of falling thirds and rising sixths in E minor, leading to a rich thematic dialogue between the two violin sections in broken octaves. Brahms's contemporaries were disturbed by the apparent classical reiteration of the exposition, which ends with a novel chord, ushering in a lush development replete with densely interwoven thematic ideas. His peers had much less difficulty with the exquisite transition into the recapitulation, where the woodwinds greatly augment the notes of the opening motif into whole measures of gentle throbbing—this one of the only four orchestral settings where Brahms thought it appropriate to use the dynamic marking *ppp*.

Very uncharacteristically, the second movement begins with the tonic pitch of the first, in a unison horn call. At first the melody seems to incline towards C major, but soon the harmonic outline of the old Gregorian Phrygian mode becomes clear, which allows the woodwinds with the aid of *pizzicati* in the strings just enough freedom to bend the tonal structure to an intersection with E major. Returning to *l'arco*, the strings reaffirm E major with a sensuous melodic line, eventually leading to a tender ballad introduced by the 'celli.

Though the third movement's relative placement and tempo marking, *Allegro giocoso*, immediately suggest a classical scherzo, Brahms eschews the traditional 6/8 time signature and opts for a more driving 2/4. Even more remarkably, the theme intermittently fuses with its mirror image, generating singular harmonic and melodic relationships. Although the movement does not contain a single whimsical theme or motif, Edwin Evans notes that it does have "all the requisite sparkle, [though] the sparkle does not, as in most cases, form the entire or even the principal interest." Accordingly, even the addition of a triangle, unique among his orchestral compositions, does not budge the movement's steadfast devotion to its serious component.

For the fourth movement, Brahms borrows the key of E minor from the first movement, but starts with an A, thus linking the finale to both the beginning of the symphony and the just-completed scherzo. For his structural unit, Brahms uses a disarmingly simple theme of eight bars, based on the last movement of Bach's Cantata No. 150, *Nach dir, Herr, verlanget mich.* However, in repeating this sequence thirty-one times without a single modulation or transitional passage, he makes of it a framework on which to base a *passacaglia* of profound complexity. Indeed, Edwin Evans has proposed that the entire symphony, not just the finale, reflects the *passacaglia* structure. The movement unfolds as an unbroken series of variations, perhaps the most resplendent being the lyrical, almost insistent horn solo, followed by the woodwinds, the entirety wrapped in poignant garlands of sounds from the strings. The final set of variations includes a brilliant coda, in which the music takes on an organic intensity and momentum of its own, compelling us, as well as Malcolm MacDonald, to perceive "the theme still defiantly growing and reshaping itself even as it is terminated by the iron punctuality of the final cadence."

Brian Koh