2006-2007 Season

Harvard Radcliffe Orchestra

8PM, FRIDAY NOV 3

@ SANDERS THEATRE

Shen, Hsueh-Yung

"Encounters" (World Premiere)

James Yannatos

Music Director

Prokofiev

Suite from "Romeo and Juliet"

Tchaikovsky

Symphony No.6, "Pathetique"

Est. 18

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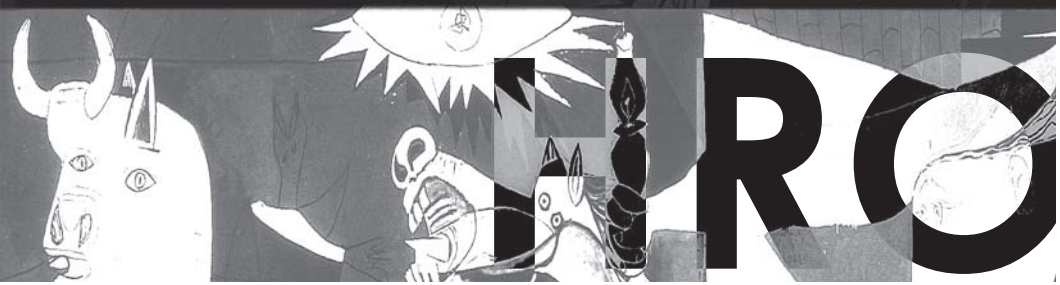

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History of the HRO

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 six Harvard men first formed the Pierian Sodality, an organization dedicated to the consumption of brandy and cigars, as well as to the serenading of young ladies. Its midnight expeditions were not confined to Cambridge, but rather extended to Watertown, Brookline, Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, and Boston – wherever, in short, dwelt celebrated belles. Among the Sodality's other activities included the serenading of then Harvard College President John Kirkland in 1819. 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."

The early Pierians had so much spirit that in the 1830s, the Faculty of Harvard College publicly admonished the Sodality for absenting 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 a March 29, 1943 issue of Time magazine, Gassett 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. It seemed the Sodality was in danger of disappearing. Gradually, however, other members were elected, and the Sodality played on. The Sodality not only played on, but also profoundly influenced the development of music in Cambridge and Boston over the next fifty years. In 1837, Sodality alumni formed the Harvard Musical Association with an aim to foster music at the college. The Harvard Glee Club and the Boston Symphony Orchestra both owe their existence to the early Pierians.

As a musical organization, the Pierians were also interested in performance. 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."[1] Thus began the performing career of the Pierians. They began to give regular concerts, and rehearsed to prepare for them. Eventually, the orchestra's performances garnered enough attention to be reported in the New York Times, which wrote in 1891: "The Pierian Sodality is especially strong this year…containing some of the best musical talent of the university."[2]

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 serious musical organization and had become the largest college orchestra in America. 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 was so successful that other tours quickly followed. In 1921, the Sodality toured New York City, Providence, and even played in Washington's National Theater for First Lady Mrs. Warren Harding and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge.[3] The orchestra gradually built an international reputation and played for many distinguished audiences in the 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 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 benefited 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.

It is said that around 1950, HRO 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). It performed in venues such as Carnegie Hall and, in 1978, placed third in the Fifth Annual International Festival of Student Orchestras. The 1980s and 1990s saw tours of the former Soviet Union (1984), Asia (1985 and 1988), Europe (1992), and Italy (1996). Most recently, HRO conducted successful tours of Brazil in 2000, and Canada in the summer of 2004.

[1] Samuel Eliot Morison, Three Centuries of Harvard: 1636-1936 (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2001), p.295.

[2] "News From Harvard," The New York Times, Dec. 16 1891.

[3] "Harvard Orchestra on Tour," The New York Times, Dec. 19 1921.

Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra

199th Season, 2006-2007

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co-concertmaster
Meghan Sherlock '07
co-associate concertmaster
Michael Viscardi '10
co-associate concertmaster
Alex Fortes '07
co-assistant concertmaster
Christine Ahn '08
co-assistant concertmaster
Madeleine Bäverstam '07
Catherine Buzney '09
Timothy Hsieh '10
Phoebe Johnson-Black '09
Eugene Lee '10
Ling Pan '09
Koning Shen '10
Michelle Siao '09
Nina Slywotzky '08
Foster Wang '10
Max Wong '10
Amy Xu '07

VIOLIN II
Kathryn Anderson '07
co-principal
Aaron Kuan '09
co-principal
Christine Barron '09
Samuel Bjork '09
Mario Camacho '10
Shawn Liu '07
David Lou '08
Anita Mukherji '09
Charles Nathanson '09
Catherine Powell '08
Sorah Seong '08
Ariel Stoddard '10
Davone Tines '09
Irena Wang '08
Lushen Wu '09
Elisa Zhang '08

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Rachel Lefebvre '08
co-principal
Angela Simmen '07
associate principal
Elizabeth Adams '10
Andrea Flores '10
Meghan Galligan '10
Jesse Geneson '10
Christina Grassi '10
Jackie Havens '09
Alex Johnson '09
Jennifer Kan '07
Clara Kim '09
Vivek Kuncham '08
Sarah Natow '10
Jordan Reddout '10
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Jackie Buchanan '10
co-assistant principal
Shoshanna Fine '10
co-assistant principal
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Yutaro Komuro '08
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Kyle Wiggins '09
James Williamson '10
Vicky Wu '09
Anne-Marie Zapf-Belanger '09

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Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra

199th Season, 2006-2007

James Yannatos, Music Director

Friday, 3 November 2006, 8:00 P.M.
Sanders Theatre, Harvard University

~Program~

Hsueh-Yung Shen '73 (b. 1952)

Encounter (Ballade II) for Orchestra (2005)
Premiere

Sergey Prokofiev (1833-1897)

Suite No. 2 from Romeo and Juliet
1 The Montagues and the Capulets
2 Juliet, Young Woman
3 Dance
4 Dance of the Girls from the Antilles
5 Romeo at Juliet's Grave 6:00

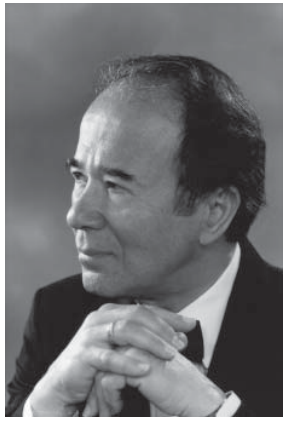
~Intermission~

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Symphony No.6 "Pathétique" in B minor, Op.74
I. Adagio - Allegro Non Troppo
II. Allegro Con Grazia
III. Allegro Molto Vivace
IV. Finale. Adagio Lamentoso-Andante

Dr. James Yannatos

conductor



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 and studies with Philip Bezanson, 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 led that group on tours to Europe, the former Soviet Union, Asia, and South America.

He has appeared as guest conductor-composer at the Aspen, Banff, Tanglewood, Chautauqua, and Saratoga Festivals, and with the Boston Pops, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Baltimore, and San Antonio Symphonies and the Sverdlovsk, Leningrad, Cleveland, and American Symphony Chamber Orchestras. He also has been the co-director of the New England Composers Orchestra.

Yannatos has received numerous commissions for orchestral, vocal, and instrumental works. His compositions range from solo vocal (Sounds of Desolation and Joy) to large choral-orchestral (Trinity Mass) and have been performed in Europe, Canada, and the United States in concert, radio and television. His most ambitious work, Trinity Mass (for soloists, chorus and orchestra), was premiered in Boston and New York in 1986 with the HRO and Harvard choral groups and Jason Robards, narrator, and was aired on National Public Radio. The work has been released on Albany Records. Seven recordings have been released by Albany Records featuring his music and the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra, including the recent performance of his violin concerto, premiered by Joseph Lin '00.

He has been a consultant and conductor for major orchestras in Bankok, Thailand, and a guest composer and conductor in international festivals in Leningrad. The latter led to the premiere of his Symphony No. 3 for Strings in the former USSR by the Lithuanian State Orchestra and Leningrad Symphony.

Yannatos has also published four volumes of Silly and Serious Songs based on the words of children. In addition, he has 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.

"Yannatos has composed a striking musical memorial to the tragic events that took place in Tiananmen Square in 1989. His Symphony No. 4: Tiananmen Square is an uninterrupted six movement arc, both narrative and contemplative as it depicts the gathering of crowds, the idealism, the crushing response, the mourning, the summing up. Yannatos writes brilliantly for orchestra...a compelling sincerity is the ultimate effect of this work. The performance by the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra under the composer's direction was very impressive."
-Boston Globe

Stormy and rhapsodic...a gorgeous main melody of melting tenderness ...Yannatos' blending of quartet writing with the orchestra is masterful ...This is attractive, wonderfully effective music ...He elicits richly committed and virtuosic playing from the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra."
-Gramaphone

Notes on the Music

hsueh-yung shen- encounter (ballade II) for orchestra

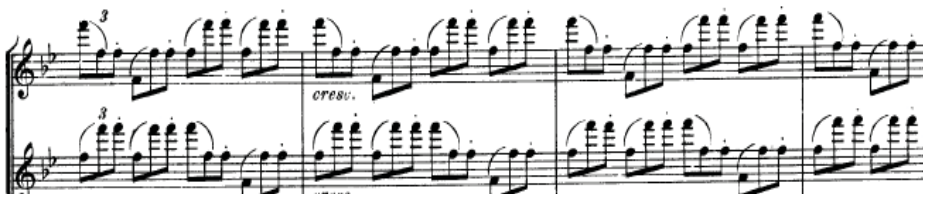
Hsueh-Yung Shen, born in 1952 near Washington, DC, had an early start in music, beginning composition at eight. He received most of his musical training with Nadia Boulanger in France, between 1962 and 1966, and also studied with Darius Milhaud in 1967 at Aspen, Colorado, and Leon Kirchner and Lukas Foss at Harvard University between 1969 and 1973. He received his DMA in composition from Stanford University in 1980, and taught at Stanford for two years, and at Harvard for four years. Since 1987 he has lived in the Austin area in Texas, where he is timpanist with the Austin Lyric Opera, and taught at Southwestern University for 16 years in music theory. His works have been featured nationally in groups such as the Brooklyn Philharmonic, Concord String Quartet, Grand Teton Music Festival, and the "Suzuki and Friends" chamber ensemble in Indianapolis. In 1998 he made his Scandinavian debut with three works performed at the Summartónar Festival in the Færoe Islands. His Concertino, written for the Aldubáran Ensemble, was performed and recorded on TUTL in the Færoes in 2002. Three Poems of Herman Melville, first performed at U. Mass./ Amherst in 1998, is now available on Gasparo Records. Recent performances include the Met Orchestra with Legend in October 2002, and the American Composers Orchestra in March 2003 in New York with Autumn Fall. He made his London debut in 2005 with the eight-violin Prelude and Scherzo performed by the Menuhin School at Wigmore Hall.

* * * * *

This work was written at the request of James Yannatos for the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra, and is related to the earlier *Ballade* for orchestra (1995), with both works featuring a strong dramatic content. In this work, the drama deals with a rather universal story of human frailties pitted against larger natural forces. Obvious precursors in the repertoire include the familiar *Sorcerer's Apprentice* of Paul Dukas, as well as Charles Koechlin's *Bandar-Log*, with its fantastical depiction of the fashionable monkeys in the jungle.

The musical argument of the work is made clear by the clear opposition of the major orchestral groups; the initial chattering woodwinds and the slow-moving brass chords set up the initial dramatic conflict rather quickly. As the piece goes on, the chattering instruments, which also includes a solo violin at one point, get more and more virtuosic. Also in opposition to the woodwinds is the quieter form of the natural forces, represented by muted strings filled with trills and broken-chord figures. The latter part of the piece indeed has all of these elements reach a crisis point; the outcome of the conflict is never in doubt.

--Hsueh-yung Shen



Notes on the Music
prokofiev - romeo and juliet

Sergei Sergeyevich Prokofiev (27 April 1891-5 March 1953)

Scored for Piccolo, 2 Flutes, 2 Oboes, English Horn, 2 Clarinets, Bass Clarinet, Tenor Saxophone, 2 Bassoons, Contrabassoon, 4 Horns, Cornet, 2 Trumpets, 3 Trombones, Tuba, Timpani, 3 Percussion (Snare-Drum, Bells, Tambourine, Cymbals, Triangle, Bass Drum, Maracas), Harp, Piano, Celesta, Strings, Viola d'amore (ad lib.)

Entire ballet first performed 30 December 1938 in Brno Czechoslovakia. Suite No. 2 first performed 1937 in Leningrad, first performed in America 25 March 1938 by the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

For all the immense popularity we now associate with Prokofiev's best loved and most performed ballet Romeo and Juliet, the ballet's early life was uneasy and fraught with difficulty. Romeo and Juliet was composed at a critical point in Prokofiev's career: due to political unrest in Russia during World War I, Prokofiev saw no room for the experimental artist, and lived abroad as a self-imposed exile (mainly in San Francisco and Paris) for 9 years, returning to his homeland permanently again in 1934. It was in these first years after his repatriation that he was approached by the Director of the Kirov Theater, Sergey Radlov, with a proposal for a new ballet based on Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. Prokofiev was eager to begin work, but from the start there were production problems. Prokofiev's own Autobiography provides a detailed account:

In the latter part of 1934 there was talk of the Kirov Theatre of Leningrad staging a ballet of mine. I was interested in a lyrical subject. Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet was suggested. But the Kirov Theatre backed out and I signed a contract with the Moscow Bolshoi Theatre instead… The music was written in the course of the summer [of 1935], but the Bolshoi Theatre declared it impossible to dance to and the contract was broken... The ballet itself was rather unlucky. In 1937 the Leningrad Ballet School signed an agreement undertaking to produce it on the occasion of its 200th anniversary, and in 1938 the Brno Opera agreed to stage it, too. The Ballet school violated the agreement and so the premiere took place in Brno in December 1938. The Kirov Theatre produced the ballet in January 1940 with all the mastery for which its dancers are famed.

As the production progressed there was talk among the ballet company about substituting Shakespeare's tragic ending with a miracle in which Romeo arrives minutes early, finds Juliet alive, and all ends well—the rationale being simply that "the living can dance, the dead cannot". Curiously enough, when the idea was presented to the British it was received calmly, but Russian Shakespeare scholars "proved more Catholic than the Pope and rushed to the playwright's defense". A compromise was eventually reached, and Prokofiev found "that the tragic ending could be expressed in dance after all".

Mention should be made of the original Juliet, Galina Ulanova, now considered one of the role's greatest interpreters. She and Prokofiev did not get along, and she described him as "a tall, somewhat stern-looking man who seemed to disapprove heartily of everything he saw and especially of us artists". Prokofiev's tyrannical irritation with the dancers led to the company's own couplet for the end of the play, "Never was a story of more woe/Than Prokofiev's score to Romeo".

Notes on the Music

Prokofiev prepared three suites from the ballet; the first two in 1936 and the third ten years later. Chronology is less important in these suites than contrast, each is arranged to include an interesting set of scenes that stands alone as an engaging concert piece. While conductors have taken to creating their own suites from the ballet, Prokofiev's are still performed quite often, as the Second is tonight.

The Second Suite includes some of the best known scenes from *Romeo and Juliet:*

I. *The Montagues and the Capulets* The two warring tribes wreak havoc in Verona through dense chords in the introduction, swaggering melodies in the main *Allegro pesante* and an uneasy middle section characterized by a solo flute, plucked strings and viola glissandi.

II. *Juliet, Young Woman* The many faces of Juliet are presented: the skittish and gay "lamb", the graceful and elegant woman, the happy and wistful lover, and finally the tragically sad heroine.

III. *Friar Laurence* Like the introduction to Tchaikovsky's own *Romeo and Juliet*, Friar Laurence is "painted in oils" and presented in a religious, chorale-like way. Bassoon, bass drum, harp and divided cellos are in the fore.

IV. *Dance* Prokofiev's orchestration genius is readily apparent in this fast paced dance—we hear solo oboe and prominent parts for snare-drum, bass clarinet, contrabassoon, and a satiric cornet.

V. *Romeo and Juliet before Parting* An exceptionally beautiful scene between the two lovers. At the end of the movement we hear for the first time Juliet's Death Theme, here in the tuba and divided contrabasses.

VI. *Dance of the Maids from the Antilles* This Dance is a failed attempt to wake the dying Juliet; it is altogether too melancholy to accomplish that goal.

VII. *Romeo at Juliet's Grave* Severely tragic music, full of Juliet's Death Theme and other themes we've heard throughout the piece, which ends with quiet acceptance.

Choreographer Leonid Lavrovsky, involved in the first production, offers these words: "Prokofiev carried on where Tchaikovsky left off. He developed and elaborated the principals of symphonism in ballet music. He was one of the first Soviet composers to bring to the ballet stage genuine human emotions and full-blooded musical images. The boldness of his musical treatment, the clear-cut characterizations, the diversity and intricacy of the rhythms, the unorthodoxy of the harmonies—all these elements of Prokofiev's music, particularly in *Romeo*, serve to turn a performance into a dramatic entity."

Friar Laurence and *Romeo and Juliet Before Parting* will not be performed tonight.

--Doug Balliett

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. The David Chang Memorial Fund c/o Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra, Paine Music Building, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Notes on the Music

tchaikovsky - symphony no.6 "pathétique"

While composing his Sixth Symphony (1893), Piotr Ilych Tchaikovsky wrote to his nephew Vladimir "Bob" Davidov, to whom the piece is dedicated: "I definitely consider it the best and, in particular, the most sincere of all my works. I love it as I have never loved any other of my musical offspring." The symphony, Tchaikovsky said, was to be explicitly programmatic and autobiographical. The specifics of the program, however, "would remain an enigma to all—let them guess, but the symphony will just be called *Program Symphony (No. 6), Symphonie à Programme (No. 6), Eine Programm Symphonie (No. 6)...*" The work bore this title at its premiere, but the 'enigma' of the symphony may have been too disconcerting for audience members expecting an explicit program: the following day, Tchaikovsky decided (perhaps at the suggestion of his brother Modest) to change the title to the *"Pathétique" Symphony*.

Nine days after the premiere, Tchaikovsky was dead. Since then, it has been a matter of intense debate whether he drank unboiled water intentionally to contract cholera as an act of suicide or whether his death from cholera was simply a poetic twist of fate. Subscribers to the belief that Tchaikovsky committed suicide see the Sixth Symphony (sometimes called the "Suicide Symphony" in the U.K.) as a suicide note that musically details the struggle that led the composer to end his life. This struggle, which forms the programmatic core of the symphony, revolves around Tchaikovsky's homosexuality, universally considered a perversion among his contemporaries. Tchaikovsky's lifelong attempts to reconcile his homosexuality with his surrounding society resulted in a failed marriage to a young female admirer, the suicide of one of his male lovers, and most relevantly, a brewing scandal surrounding his doubly forbidden relationship with his nephew Bob Davidov at the end of his life. The fact that the Sixth Symphony is dedicated to Davidov suggests that this relationship may have provided the specific emotional material motivating its composition, if not Tchaikovsky's suicide.

The beginning and end of the piece itself could not be more morose. The first movement begins with a slow, mournful adagio in E minor. The bare drone of basses descending chromatically are the only accompaniment to a bassoon introducing the first theme in its lowest register. This theme is then passed to the violas, who transform it into an ominous allegro in the principal key of B minor. Quick interactions of descending scales in the winds and a spritelike melody with springing bows in the strings lighten the music briefly until a brass fanfare brusquely recalls the inescapability of fate that formed the primary thematic material of his Fourth Symphony. The descending scales heard throughout the allegro in the winds are converted into a lush love song in D major played by the strings. This moment of romance and respite culminates in an impassioned climax before fading away dreamily. The calm is abruptly broken by gruff chords suggesting the rhythms of the brass fate fanfare that preface an aggressive fugato on the first theme in the winds and strings. As these instruments get stuck repeating a figure from the fugato, the brass pierce through with a fortissimo descending scale that some scholars believe represent the clarion calls of Judgment Day itself as Tchaikovsky imagines the punishment for his sins. The intensity continues to build until its climax in three long death chords that fade away into nothing. Out of this void reemerges the love song followed by a short coda to end the movement.

Notes on the Music

The second movement, marked Allegro con grazia (literally, "joyful, with grace") evokes the character of a waltz, but instead of the 3/4 time typical of the dance, the piece is written in an irregular 5/4 time. This gives the waltz a 'stuttering' or 'limping' quality of 2+3 motion that leaves the listener slightly ill at ease even as the melody itself, a lilting tune in D major that hovers to and from winds and strings, has no trace of the violence that preceded it. The structure of the movement is that of a typical minuet: the initial theme is followed by a trio section in B minor that is somewhat more foreboding while still remaining light. A coda consisting of little more than a descending D major scale in the winds juxtaposed against an ascending D major scale in the strings ends with short quotes from the two figures that make up the movement. Its brevity and simplicity acts as a foil to the movements that surround it.

The third movement begins softly, with the concentrated energy of a Mendelssohnian scherzo. What appears at first to be light ballet music with a vague march-like quality develops into a full-fledged triumphal march. The march ends bombastically enough to suggest how the Sixth Symphony might have concluded had Tchaikovsky chosen to follow the model of his previous symphonies. Instead, the third movement's ephemeral triumph is instantly torn apart by the heart-rending chords beginning the fourth movement. The first theme of this movement is itself structurally torn apart: the notes of the melody (built on a descending B minor scale) alternating between the first and second violins, neither able to express alone its pervading sense of despair. A second theme of redemption in D major is sung softly in the strings, over a heartbeat rhythm in the horns and clarinets that does not stop until a descending scale (this time in C major) accelerates into a chord that knocks the piece back to its despairing first theme. This time, the theme gains urgency and reaches a paroxysm of grief before dissolving into a requiem-like brass chorale. What then follows is a perversion of the earlier song of redemption: the heartbeat rhythm appears this time not in the French horns, but among the solitary basses, reprising their role at the bleak beginning of the first movement. Instead of a soulful statement in D major, the violins play the theme fortissimo but with mutes on, in the anguished key of B minor. All hopes are dashed and the orchestra dies away until nothing remains save a near-inaudible chord of utter desolation.

--Alex Fortes

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