

*Firebird*  
**ΦΙΡΕΒΙΡΑ**

**James Yannatos**  
Music Director

**Smetana  
Barber  
Stravinsky**

**Friday, March 2  
8pm Sanders Theatre**

**The Moldau**  
Aaron Kuan '09, Asst. Conductor

**Barber Violin Concerto, Op. 14**  
Ariel Jeong '07, HRO Concerto Competition Winner

**Firebird Suite**

2006-2007 Season  
**Harvard Radcliffe Orchestra**

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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.<sup>34</sup> 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."<sup>35</sup> 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."<sup>36</sup>

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.<sup>37</sup> 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.

<sup>34</sup> Samuel Eliot Morison, *Three Centuries of Harvard: 1636-1936* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2001), p.295.

<sup>35</sup> "News From Harvard," *The New York Times*, Dec. 16 1891.

<sup>36</sup> "Harvard Orchestra on Tour," *The New York Times*, Dec. 19 1921.

# HARVARD-RADCLIFFE ORCHESTRA

199th Season, 2006-2007

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Ariel Jeong '07  
*co-concertmaster*  
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*co-associate concertmaster*  
Michael Viscardi '10  
*co-associate concertmaster*  
Alex Fortes '07  
*assistant concertmaster*  
Madeleine Bäverstam '07  
Catherine Buzney '09  
Helen Cho, '10  
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  
Amy Xu '07

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*co-principal*  
Kathryn Andersen '07  
*co-principal*  
Sorah Seong '09  
*co-associate principal*  
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*co-associate principal*  
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Monica Jun '10  
Yutaro Komuro '08  
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Jennifer Lo '10  
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Michael Moore '08  
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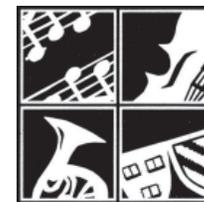
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## HARVARD-RADCLIFFE ORCHESTRA

199th Season, 2006-2007



JAMES YANNATOS, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Friday, 2 March 2007, 8:00 P.M.  
Sanders Theatre, Harvard University

### ~Program~

Bedřich Smetana  
(1813-1901)

Vltava (The Moldau), Symphonic Poem  
No. 2 from *Má Vlast*  
*Aaron Kuan, assistant conductor*

Samuel Barber  
(1910-1981)

Concerto For Violin and Orchestra, Op. 14  
I. Allegro  
II. Andante  
III. Presto in moto  
*Ariel Jeong, violin*

### ~Intermission~

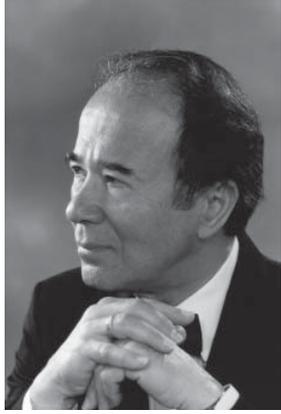
Igor Stravinsky  
(1882-1971)

L'oiseau de feu (The Firebird), Concert  
Suite for Orchestra No. 2  
I. Introduction  
II. The Firebird and Its Dance  
III. Variation of the Firebird  
IV. The Princesses' Round  
V. Infernal Dance Of King Kashchei  
VI. Lullaby  
VII. Finale



## 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 Bezan-son, Nadia

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 Bangkok, 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."*

-Gramophone

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 Sverdllovsk, 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

## AARON KUAN

### assistant conductor



Aaron Kuan is currently enrolled in the Harvard-New England Conservatory 5-year BA/MM Joint Program. He concentrates in Physics and Music at Harvard, and studies violin performance with Donald Weilerstein at New England Conservatory. In addition to assistant conducting the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra, Aaron is conductor and music director of the Harvard Brass Ensemble and the Harvard University Flute Ensemble. Before coming to Harvard, he studied conducting with Adam Glaser at the Juilliard School. In recent years, he has attended Heifetz International Music Festival, New York String Seminar, Summit Music Festival, Boston University Tanglewood Institute, and Interlochen Music Festival. He has appeared as a concerto soloist with the Yonkers Philharmonic, the Schenectady Symphony, and the Empire State Repertory Orchestra.

## ARIEL JEONG

### soloist

Ariel J. Jeong, a 22-year old native of Korea, began her violin studies at age four. At age eight, she was accepted into the Juilliard School's Pre-College division under the tutelage of Masao Kawasaki, and served as concertmistress of the Pre-College Symphony. During her enrollment at Juilliard, she performed in numerous chamber music and solo recitals at Paul Hall and Morse Hall. As a student at Hunter College High School, her chamber music group went on to win the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's Young Musicians Competition five years in a row. In the spring of 2000, Ms. Jeong was chosen to participate in the Yehudi Menuhin International Competition in Folkstone, England, where she was one of two violinists chosen from the United States. A member of the ISO Symphony since 1998, Ms. Jeong served as concertmistress of the symphony for three years,





## ARIEL JEONG *soloist*

performing with them in such venues as Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall and Carnegie Hall. As first violinist of the ISO string quartet, she performed at Bargemusic and attended several master classes with renowned performers such as Lawrence Dutton of the Emerson String Quartet. In 2001 and 2003, she won the Constance Mensch Concerto Competition and subsequently performed with the ISO Symphony at Alice Tully Hall. In 2002, she won the Lawyers' Orchestra Young Artists'

Competition in New York and soloed at Lincoln Center. As a result, she was featured on WQXR's Young Artists' Showcase with Bob Sherman.

Last year, she was the winner of the Bach Society Orchestra's concerto competition, and performed the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto at Paine Hall. Currently a senior government concentrator at Eliot House, Ms. Jeong is concertmaster of the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra, and a member of the Brattle Street Chamber Players.



## NOTES ON THE MUSIC

ing off of the water. Underneath the melody lies an undulating rhythm in the flutes and clarinets, the water yearning to flow freely once more.

As the first rays of sunlight pierce the misted banks, patriotic horn calls can be heard from far away. The river narrows again, and the Moldau flows onward, accompanied again by its theme. Suddenly, the waters become violent, crashing through St. John's Rapids. Water races through perilous twists and turns, and the extreme volume and speed merits the entrance of the full orchestra for the first time, from piccolo to bass drum. After a final turn, the river opens to its greatest breadth as it passes through the midday gran-

deur of Prague. The Moldau theme is repeated, this time emphatically in major, faster and more densely orchestrated. The great Vyséhrad castle comes into view, and its motive from the first symphonic poem bursts forth in the winds and brass, as the strings continue the constant flow of the water. Patriotic enthusiasm culminates in climactic swells that represent the pride of the Czech people as well as the river to which their identity is so closely tied. Finally, the river flows onwards, fading away in the distance to meet with the Elbe and eventually the sea.

--Aaron Kuan

## NOTES ON THE MUSIC *smetana - vltava (the moldau)*

Known as the "father of Czech nationalist music," Bedřich Smetana (1824-1884) was the kernel around which Czech nationalist music emerged. His personality and style became a rallying point for late 19th century activists and an inspiration for generations of Czech nationalists. In the last decade of his life, Smetana returned to orchestral music, having been occupied with operatic work for some time. He envisioned a cycle of symphonic poems depicting his homeland, beginning with the Vyséhrad castle in Prague and river Vlatava. By the time these two movements were completed, Smetana was completely deaf. Yet he continued unperturbed, completing the remaining four movements by 1882, when the complete cycle was performed to great acclaim by the Czech musical public.

The river Vlatava (Moldau in German) is the longest river flowing through what is today the Czech Republic, extending 270 miles from its source in Šumava to Mělník, where it joins the Elbe. Smetana had a well-defined programmatic image for this symphonic poem and writes numerous contextual explanations in the

score. The music traces the river's path, vividly depicting scenes from the banks of the river as it flows towards Prague.

Water from a fresh spring trickles from the initial flute solo, steadily gaining momentum. Soon it is joined by the clarinet, which at first blazes its own trail, but inevitably blends with the flute, creating the vigorous flow of water in the strings. The Moldau theme emerges in the violins and winds, probably Smetana's most well-known melody. As the river continues downstream, horn calls emerge from the forest, evidence of a hunt in progress. All the while, the continuous ebb and flow of the water is maintained in the strings.

Near a clearing, the water slows momentarily, a peaceful setting to a peasant wedding. Celebratory dance rhythms erupt, intensifying as the wedding grows nearer. Timpani and triangle become audible, articulating the dance beat late into the night. Further down, the wedding fades away, leaving only the slowly drifting water under the clear moonlight. An ethereal melody in the strings frames this peaceful setting. Rising arpeggios in the harp suggest moonlight shimmer-

## *barber - violin concerto*

Although Barber had sketched a piano concerto as early as 1930, the present work was the first concerto for any instrument that he completed and offered to the public. It was also the first work in any form that he composed and completed under a commission. (Of the two works introduced by Arturo Toscanini in November 1938—the first of the three Essays for Orchestra and the extraordinarily successful Adagio for Strings—the former was merely "requested," not formally commissioned, and the latter was simply offered together with it.) The source for this commission was the Philadelphia businessman Samuel Fels; the young violinist for whom he requested the work never performed it in public, and quite a tangled version of the work's background circulated for many years. The record was set straight in an article by George K. Diehl in the November 1995 issue of *The Strad*, the respected British magazine devoted to music for strings and the artists and instruments involved in its performance.

The violinist in question, Iso Briselli, two years younger than Barber, had

begun his serious study of the violin at age seven with one of the instrument's legendary teachers, Pyotr Stolyarsky, in Odessa, and continued in Berlin with another celebrated pedagogue, Carl Flesch. He was in fact the only pupil Flesch brought with him when he left Berlin in 1924 to teach at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where the 14-year-old Barber enrolled in the same year. Some fourteen years later Briselli, who had lived with the Fels family since his arrival in Philadelphia and was by then a veteran of numerous professional appearances documented by laudatory reviews, asked Barber for a concerto; when Barber agreed Fels provided the commission, advancing half of the \$1,000 fee, with the understanding that the other half would be paid upon completion of the score.

Barber composed the first two movements of the work in Switzerland during the summer of 1939 and sent them to Briselli, who received them with "enthusiasm and admiration," according to George Diehl. When the violinist received the finale, the following summer, his "initial reaction was that as a *moto perpetuo* it did not match in qual-



## NOTES ON THE MUSIC

ity or substance the first two movements." Barber rejected Briselli's suggestion that the finale be expanded and given "more clearly defined structural parameters," and he returned the advance he had received from Samuel Fels. The young Herbert Baumel, the Curtis student who had played portions of the finale for a select committee at the Institute (with neither Briselli nor Fels present) shortly before Barber vacated the commission, gave a performance of the entire Concerto, also for a very small invited audience, with the school orchestra conducted by Fritz Reiner, and the public premiere, as noted above, was given by Albert Spalding. Briselli eventually played the work privately, with piano accompaniment, but never performed it in public.

The Concerto was slow in catching on. Louis Kaufman, a violinist who rescued works of Vivaldi and others from oblivion in the early years of LP, made the first recording of the Barber Concerto, for the Concert Hall subscription label, in the early 1950s. The Baltimore-based Robert Gerle made the first stereophonic recording about a dozen years later, and in 1965 a recording by Isaac Stern and Leonard Bernstein brought the work into the mainstream; since then it has been one of Barber's most frequently performed works, and one of the most admired of 20th-century concertos. (With the composer's approval, the work was transcribed as a flute concerto in 1980 by James Galway, who introduced his version with the same conductor and orchestra that had given the premiere with Albert Spalding, but the adaptation has yet to challenge the popularity of the Concerto with the instrument for which the composer designed it.)

The Violin Concerto is frequently cited as a sort of turning point in Barber's output, a work whose first two movements reflect the ingratiating melodic-romantic style of his earlier compositions and whose finale repre-

sents the first intimations of a new and tightened approach—leaner and somewhat more austere. Subsequent works were to show, however, that the "turning point" was a stylistic expansion in terms of variety of expression, rather than a rejection or wholesale modification of the outlook that remained basic to Barber's work.

The Concerto opens expansively, with a full-blown lyric theme, stated by soloist and orchestra together. The revered critic Irving Kolodin noted that "the violin and orchestra are partners in a discussion rather than contestants in a battle of musical wills." Their discussion is not without agitated sections, but the conclusion is quiet and serene.

The second movement is introduced by a songful oboe solo which is allowed to run its course unhurried before the violin takes over, at first with a new theme and then with the one sung by the oboe, which returns in more or less its original form at the end of the movement.

A stunning contrast is provided by the "perpetual motion" finale—which would almost seem to be not entirely related to the two preceding movements. It is concise rather than expansive, mercurially energetic rather than smoothly paced, and spiked with a humor that is not without a sardonic undercurrent.

sardonic undercurrent.

—Richard Freed

*Program note originally written for the following performance: National Symphony Orchestra: Leonard Slatkin, conductor/Iltzhak Perlman, violin. Sep 21 - 23, 2005*

## NOTES ON THE MUSIC



### *stravinsky - firebird suite*

While working to produce Igor Stravinsky's first ballet in 1910, Serge Diaghilev, one of Russia's most preeminent ballet company leaders, remarked to the show's lead ballerina that its young composer was "a man on the eve of celebrity." Indeed, Diaghilev's prediction proved true, and *The Firebird* became the first of the three major ballets (along with *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring*) for which Stravinsky would be most remembered.

The *Firebird* presents a unique blending of the old and new. First composed in 1910, the ballet focuses on a traditional Russian folktale even as the cloud of Russian social change loomed overhead. The suite also blends the deeply impressionistic and romantic ideas of the original ballet score with the beginnings of the neoclassicism and modernism that developed after the outbreak of the First World War.

In his 1919 suite from *The Firebird*, Stravinsky isolated several of the major plot points and musical ideas from the original ballet. The suite begins with the ballet's Introduction. Prince Ivan, the ballet's hero, enters the magical land of the evil Kashchei. Stravinsky uses moving lines through the low strings and dark coloring from the brass and woodwinds to create a thoroughly foreboding picture of Prince Ivan's upcoming adventure. We also hear, first from the harp and later from the strings and woodwinds, a quick chromatic motif; Stravinsky constantly uses this to represent the components of the magical world. The mood ultimately lightens as Stravinsky transfers the moving line from the low strings to the woodwinds; amidst this lighter tone, Prince Ivan begins his exploration of

this magical land.

As he explores Kashchei's realm, Prince Ivan comes across the firebird, a mythical creature with magical powers. Stravinsky represents the firebird in the next two portions of his suite, *The Dance of the Firebird* and *The Variation of the Firebird's Dance*. Stravinsky paints a musical picture of a quick, fluttering bird through his use of rapid, dazzling figures in the woodwinds, upper strings, and harp. The repeated use of the chromatic motif reminds us that the firebird is a magical creature, and the high, fluttering chromatic lines become representative of the firebird.

Prince Ivan chases down and captures the firebird, who pleads with Prince Ivan for its life. The firebird makes a deal with the prince: in exchange for his ultimate freedom, the firebird will help Prince Ivan during his travel through the magical realm. As they continue on, they come across a group of enchanted princesses. In *The Princesses' Round Dance*, the enchanted princesses dance as Prince Ivan watches. Strings and upper woodwinds represent the beauty and delicacy of the princesses' dance. At this point in the ballet, Prince Ivan falls in love with one of the princesses, and decides to ask Kashchei if he may marry her; the two begin to quarrel, and Kashchei sends his minions to attack Prince Ivan. In the suite, however, Stravinsky creates a striking contrast by juxtaposing the round dance with *The Infernal Dance*. When Kashchei sends his subjects to attack, the firebird intervenes and bewitches them, forcing them to dance a quick and energetic dance. Syncopated figures in the brass display at once the difficulty and perhaps clumsiness with which



the dance progresses. The pace of the dance continually quickens, and, as the driving music suggests, ultimately proves too much for Kashchei's subjects, who fall asleep in exhaustion.

The music now changes greatly again, and Stravinsky presents the next movement, the Berceuse. Under trembling, expectant chords in the strings, the woodwinds carry forth a slow, somber melody – Stravinsky uses this both to represent the death of Kashchei, killed by the firebird, and Prince Ivan's hope and uncertainty of finding and reviving his princess.

From the background of the hovering strings, a lone horn enters

to begin the Finale. With Kashchei dead, his magic becomes undone, and all of his non-magical prisoners, including the princesses and several knights, gradually return to life. The horn's triumphal theme is repeated through increasingly more instruments as more of the prisoners revive. Then, with a final farewell from the firebird, represented as a chromatic run through the strings, the brass take up the exuberant call at a much faster tempo. The general rejoicing continues through the whole orchestra, and finally, with a series of seven dramatic chords, the orchestra crescendos to a glorious close.

--Brad Oppenheimer

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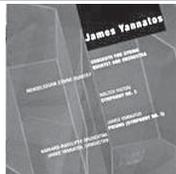
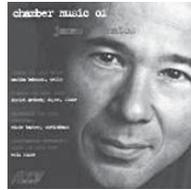
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