



## NOTES ON THE MUSIC *the firebird*

Stravinsky was an unknown in the musical world when he was approached in 1909 by Sergei Diaghilev, the impresario of the *Ballets Russes*. Diaghilev had seen the young composer's *Scherzo Fantastique* in concert and decided that he was just the man to compose music for a ballet based on Russian folk tales for company's 1910 season. The resulting *Firebird* marked the beginning of a great career for both Stravinsky and the *Ballets Russes*.

The scenario for the ballet was adapted by choreographer Mikhail Fokine from various Russian fairy tales, and has the fairy tale plot of a heroic prince who rescues an enchanted princess. Stravinsky reduced the full ballet score to a suite in 1910. This suite contained the major themes from the ballet and ended after the "Infernal Dance." The version performed tonight is a second version of the suite, created in 1919, with the addition of the Firebird's berceuse and the final apotheosis.

### **Introduction and Dance of the Firebird:**

The baller opens with our hero, Ivan Tsarevich (represented, like the other mortals, in diatonic themes, while the magical creatures are presented in chromatics), wandering in the garden of the evil magician Katchei at night, to the accompaniment of ominous arpeggios in the lower strings. The Firebird appears and dances amid fluttering winds and pizzicato strings. Ivan catches the bird, who pleads with him to let her go. He does so in return for one of her magic feathers.

**Princesses' Round Dance:** Thirteen princesses whom Katchei holds under an enchantment appear and dance a *khorovod* (a traditional girls' dance) to the melody of a Russian folk song, sensuously played by a

solo oboe and the violins. Ivan falls in love with one of them and tries to follow them into Katchei's castle at sunrise, but is captured by the castle's guardian monsters. All seems lost until Ivan remembers the magic feather, and waves it to summon the Firebird — this takes place in a scene not included in the suite.

**Infernal Dance:** The Firebird casts a spell on the monsters and they dance the "Infernal Dance", amid a growling syncopated theme interrupted by exploding A minor chords, and a fiery, swirling triplet figure. The dance builds to a violent, bursting whole-tone chord.

**Berceuse:** Katchei and his minions are lulled to sleep as the Firebird sings a Berceuse (lullaby), consisting of sinuous bassoon and oboe solos over a gently swaying E flat minor accompaniment punctuated by tender chromatics in the harp.

**Finale:** Katchei's spell is lifted when Ivan breaks the egg containing the secret to Katchei's immortality, and the princesses and Ivan join in a hymn of thanksgiving, based on another folk song. This folk theme is introduced over string tremolos by a solo horn, which is gradually joined by the other instruments into a joyous and triumphant hymn.

There is much in *The Firebird* that is entirely innovative and refreshing, and which anticipates the great artist Stravinsky would become.

Jennifer Little

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# NOTES ON THE MUSIC

## Prisms: symphony no. 3

**P**risms: *Symphony No. 3 for Strings* was commissioned by Joel Spiegelman in 1989 for concerts he was to conduct in the former Soviet Union with the Lithuanian State Symphony. Subsequently, the piece was performed and broadcast on Russian television with the Sverdlovsk Chamber Orchestra under the baton of the composer himself, James Yannatos. It was also performed by the American Symphony Chamber Orchestra. Tonight's performance of the work marks the Boston premiere of *Prisms*.

The resulting work in four contrasting movements played without pause is based on the notion of the prism. I wanted to translate light to sound, the prism's refraction of light into music that was transparent with a wide spectrum of sound, tonally organized, but delineated spacially and temporally by the refraction of tonality into poly-tonal and poly-harmonic units. As light shifts and changes, so would the sound shift within and between specific tonal areas.

**Movement I** [C Major] is through composed. In the opening measures there is movement by the 5th (C, G, D, A), while in the closing measures the same 5ths are superimposed as sustained pedals:

- [A]
- [D]
- [G]
- [C]

**Movement II** [E Major/C Major] is in three parts: [A] [B] [A] coda.

[A] The movement opens with a variant of the Prelude from Bach's *E Major Partita* for violin. Each instrumental group (violin,

viola, etc.) gravitates around a different central tone, in a specific and separate register, creating poly-harmonic lines.

[B] A choral (*Praise God from whom All the Blessings Flow*) is introduced and developed with interjections of [A]. The coda quickly dissolves from high (B, E, A, D) to low (G, C).

**Movement III** [E/A/D Major] *Aria* is in three parts: [A] [B] [A] coda.

- [A] Aria
- [B] Fantasia Section
- [C] Short recapitulation.

**Movement IV** *Toccata* is in two parts: [A] [B] [A] coda.

- [A] Pedals:
- [E]
- [B]
- [F#]
- [C#] in the violins contrast with the rhythmic ostinato in the lower strings.

[B] A choral-fragment (*Ode to Joy*) in the lower strings is set against *Praise God* etc.

In the coda, a fragment of the *Aria* (Movement III) is set against various *ostinati* to conclude the work:

- [B] -----
- [E] -----
- [A] -----
- [D] -----
- [G] --
- [C] -

James Yannatos



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— Bishop Mandell Creighton

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# DR. JAMES YANNATOS conductor/composer

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 led that group on tours to Europe, the Soviet Union, and Asia.

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 and Leningrad Chamber Orchestras. He is also the co-music director of the New England Composer's Orchestra.

In March-April 1991, Dr. Yannatos conducted the Leningrad Chamber Orchestra in the premiere of his Symphony No. 5 "Sons et Lumière" and the Sverdlovsk Chamber Orchestra in his Symphony No. 3, which was also produced on Soviet television. More recently, he conducted the Cleveland Chamber Orchestra in his Concerto for Contrabass

and the American Symphony Chamber Orchestra in his Symphony No. 3.

Dr. Yannatos has received numerous 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, and 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. The work will soon be released on Compact Disc.

He has been the consultant and conductor for major orchestras in Bangkok, Thailand and a guest composer and conductor in international festivals in Leningrad. His Symphony No. 3 "Prisms" for strings was premiered in the USSR by the Lithuanian State Orchestra in 1989.

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 Novas "City of Coral" and Metromedias "Assassins Among Us". He has received innumerable awards as a composer, including the Artists Foundation Award of 1988 for his Trinity Mass.



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*The Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra uses a system of rotated seating between concerts.*



# HARVARD-RADCLIFFE ORCHESTRA

## 191st Season, 1998-1999

JAMES YANNATOS, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Saturday, 31 October 1998, 8:00 P.M.  
Sanders Theatre, Harvard University

Pre-Concert Lecture, 7:00 P.M.

Dr. Mark Risinger

Wolfgang A. Mozart  
(1756-1791)

*Magic Flute* Overture

Robert Schumann  
(1810-1856)

Symphony No. 3 "Rhenish"

I. Lebhaft

II. Sehr mässig

III. Nicht schnell

IV. Feierlich

V. Lebhaft - Schneller

— *Intermission* —

James Yannatos  
(b. 1929)

*Prisms: Symphony No. 3 for Strings*

I. Andante

II. Allegro vivo

III. Aria

IV. Toccata

Igor Stravinsky  
(1882-1971)

*Firebird* Suite (1919 Version)

Introduction

Ronde des Princesses

Danse Infernale du Roi Katschei

Berceuse et Finale



# 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." The June 29, 1840 entry in the Sodality's record book 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 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 *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 many distinguished audiences 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. The '80s saw tours of the Soviet Union (1984) and Asia (1985 and 1988). In 1992, the HRO continued its tradition of cultural exchange on its European Tour, and in 1996 the HRO went on a two week tour of Italy.

*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, Music Building, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 02138*



# NOTES ON THE MUSIC Symphony no. 3, rhenish

Much of Schumann's early life was spent in pursuit of a career as a pianist; ignoring his parents' wish for him to study law, Schumann went on to study with Friedrich Wieck. He suffered an injury in an attempt to acquire independence of the fourth finger on his right hand. This forced him to put it in a sling which crippled it permanently. Fortunately his ambition to be a musician was not thwarted and he went on to be one of the foremost composers of the Romantic Era in music, although he would never be the great pianist he wished to be. In 1940, he married Wieck's daughter Clara in one of the finest matches in musical history. It was for her that Schumann wrote some of his greatest piano pieces, and her marvelous ability at the piano did these pieces justice when she premiered them.

Schumann's orchestral output was small compared to the great number of piano pieces and songs he wrote. Other than the four symphonies, there are only a few cantatas and a handful of short orchestral works. Schumann has often been accused of not knowing how to orchestrate properly and knowing the piano better than the orchestra. Rather than searching for distinctive tone-colors, the listener should appreciate the dramatic form which fore-shadows the later success of Brahms.

The Third Symphony ("Rhenish"), was

written during Schumann's most creative period at Dresden from 1844 to 1850. Shortly after, insanity forced him to retire and he threw himself into the Rhine at the age of 46. The symphony, unique for its five movements, was inspired by Rhineland scenes. Although born in Zwickau, far to the east, Schumann was as avid a worshiper of this German river as any of his colleagues. The beauty and majesty of this river caught the imagination of composers as diverse as Wagner, Brahms and Mahler, not to mention the number of poets who used the Rhineland as the subject or setting for their poems.

According to Schumann's letters, the second movement depicts scenes from a country inn, including peasants dancing a Leander, ancestor of the waltz. The fourth movement, with ceremonious brass, recreates a scene at Cologne Cathedral as seen by Robert and Clara — the installation of the Archbishop of Cologne as Cardinal. The final movement catches all the charm and essence of a distant time and place.



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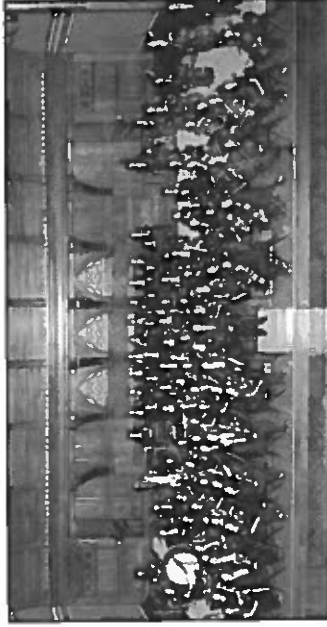
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# HARVARD-RADCLIFFE ORCHESTRA

— 191st Season, 1998-1999 —

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*asst. concertmaster*  
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 June Spector  
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 Paul Erickson  
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 Owen Allen  
*assistant principal*  
 Joanna Chan

## VIOLIN II

Julie Park  
*principal*



# NOTES ON THE MUSIC

## magic flute overture

In May, 1791, Mozart received a commission from Emanuel Schikaneder, an old friend and fellow Freemason, to compose the music for a fairy-tale themed singspiel with a libretto by Schikaneder himself. The opera was to be performed in Schikaneder's Freihaustheater auf der Wieden, a popular theater located outside of Vienna. This collaboration produced one of Mozart's best-loved operas, *Die Zauberflöte*, (*The Magic Flute*).

The opera's plot is complicated: set in ancient Egypt, it centers around the trials of its protagonist Tamino, a prince sent to rescue the daughter of the Queen of the Night from an evil sorcerer, Sarastro. He travels to the sorcerer's temple, only to find that Sarastro is actually a kindly high priest, who stole the princess Pamina to protect her from her mother, who, it turns out, is really the evil one. Tamino and Pamina then go through trials of fire and water, aided by Tamino's magic flute, in order to be initiated into Sarastro's brotherhood.

Many have interpreted Tamino's initiation as a representation of the ideals and secret rites of Freemasonry. The brotherhood's values of Wisdom, Reason, and Nature, the initiation trials of fire and water, even the many occurrences of the mystic number three — three ladies of the Queen, three youths who aid the hero, three temples, three knocks at the temple door — are all considered references to, if not complete disclosures of, secret rites of the Freemasons.

The overture to *The Magic Flute* was composed, like all of Mozart's overtures, after the rest of the opera had been completed. It opens with the winds, playing an E flat Major chord three times — the "Threefold Chord" of Sarastro's brother-

hood. After this somber introduction, the strings launch into a lively fugue, which is soon picked up by the entire orchestra. This light-hearted fugue, alternating with lyrical flute solos — the magic flute of the title — bubbles merrily along, until it is interrupted by a repetition of the Threefold Chord, this time played in the short-long rhythm which is said to be a motto of the Freemasons, and which appears later in Act II of the opera. Once again, the strings' ebullience cannot be restrained, and the fugue begins anew, gaining in excitement until it arrives at a joyful conclusion.

This delightful overture contains, in the space of a few minutes, musical evidence of the duality of *The Magic Flute*. It is at once a serious story about the battle of good and evil, staged within the enlightened temple of a sagacious High Priest, and a silly fantasy complete with giant snakes, fairy helpers, bird-like clowns, and enchanted instruments. In the overture, the sober wind chords and the irrepressible fugue demonstrate these two aspects of the opera perfectly.

Jennifer Little



## BASS

Latham Boyle  
 Shailesh Sahay  
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