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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.¹ 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."² 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, Canada in 2004, and South Korea in 2008.

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.

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201st Season, 2008-2008

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David Bracher '11
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HARVARD-RADCLIFFE ORCHESTRA

— 201st Season, 2008-2009 —



JAMES YANNATOS, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Friday, 6 March 2009, 8:00 P.M.
Sanders Theatre, Harvard University

~Program~

George Enescu (1881-1955)

Romanian Rhapsody No. 1, Op. 11
Hanjay Wang '11, assistant conductor

Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

Concerto for Clarinet
Andrew Lowy '09, concerto competition winner

~Intermission~

Louis-Hector Berlioz (1803-1869)

Symphonie fantastique, Op. 14

- I. Reveries, Passions (Largo, Allegro agitato)
- II. A Ball (Waltz, Allegro non troppo)
- III. A Scene in the Country (Adagio)
- IV. March to the Scaffold (Allegretto non troppo)
- V. Dream of a Witches' Sabbath (Larghetto, Allegro)



DR. JAMES YANNATOS

conductor and 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 and studies with Philip Bezanon, 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 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

HANJAY WANG

assistant conductor



Hanjay Wang '11, from Naperville, IL, is a concentrator in Molecular and Cellular Biology with a secondary field in Music. As a conducting student of Jonathan Cohler at the Longy School of Music, Hanjay currently serves as Assistant Conductor of the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra, as well as Music Director of the Harvard-Radcliffe Gilbert and Sullivan Players.

Aside from conducting, Hanjay is actively involved in music as a pianist. A pupil of Emilio del Rosario at the Music Institute of Chicago, Hanjay was a frequent competitor both in the Chicago area and

abroad. In February 2007, Hanjay traveled to Hong Kong for the 14th International Hong Kong-Asia Piano Open Competition, winning first prize among 50 competitors for the performance of a Chinese composition, as well as third prize among 82 for the performance of a Beethoven sonata. His numerous other accomplishments as a pianist include prizes from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Youth Auditions, National Arts Recognition and Talent Search, Society of American Musicians, and the Chinese Fine Arts Society. Hanjay is also active as a duo pianist and has had the opportunity to perform in master classes for the internationally renowned duo piano teams of Yaara Tal & Andreas Groethuysen and John & Richard Contiguglia.

At Harvard, Hanjay also enjoys chamber music and plays viola for the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra and Bach Society Orchestra.

ANDREW LOWY

soloist



Andrew Lowy '09, winner of this year's Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra concerto competition, is a senior living in Eliot House. Originally from Hastings-on-Hudson, New York, Andrew received early musical training at the

Manhattan School of Music Pre-College

Division, where he was a student of Larry Guy.

As a soloist, he has previously performed with the Yonkers Philharmonic and the Manhattan School of Music Philharmonic, and as an orchestral musician has performed with the New World Symphony in Florida. In recent summers, Andrew has held fellowships at the Music Academy of the West and the Tanglewood Music Center. He currently studies with Thomas Martin of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

SUPPORT THE ORCHESTRA

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the HRO through the Harvard Pierian Foundation, a non-profit 501©3 organization whose sole mission is to advise and support the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra. Please include your name as you would like it to appear in published listings of contributors and mailing address. We would also love to know if you are an alumnus of the HRO (please share instrument and year) or of Harvard or Radcliffe Colleges (please list graduating year).

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NOTES ON THE MUSIC

enescu - romanian rhapsody no.1

George Enescu (1881-1955) is a household name and national hero in his home country of Romania. For the rest of today's musical world, however, Enescu remains relatively unknown despite his ranking among the most brilliant musicians of his age. Hailed as "the most amazing musician since Mozart" by Spanish cellist Pablo Casals, the young Enescu quickly emerged as a gifted child prodigy, entering the Vienna Conservatory at age 7 as a violinist. He graduated with honors at the age of 11 and continued his musical training at the Paris Conservatory, where he and Maurice Ravel were classmates in composition, studying under Gabriel Faure.

In his prime, Enescu worked tirelessly as a conductor, concert violinist, virtuoso pianist, composer, and teacher, gaining international prestige in all departments. He was favored by many to serve as Music Director of the New York Philharmonic after Toscanini, and his pupils included Yehudi Menuhin and Dinu Lipatti. However, Enescu is certainly best remembered for his two Romanian Rhapsodies, Op.11, of which No.1 (in A major) instantly became Enescu's most successful and popular work. Written in 1901 at the age of 19 and premiered in 1903 with Enescu himself at the podium, the *Romanian Rhapsody No.1* displays a variety of catchy folk tunes ranging in the emotional spectrum from the deepest sorrow to the most powerful bravura displays of energy. Gypsy-style techniques are frequently incorporated, particularly in the violins, to recreate scenes of traditional country life in Romania.

The rhapsody opens with improvisa-

tion-like solos for the clarinet and oboe, immediately setting a simple, cheerful atmosphere associated with rural life. The tune traded among the soloists is based on the song "Am un leu?" ("I want to spend my money on drink"), which Enescu likely learned in his early violin lessons. The harp and violins are next to enter, imitating the sound of a plucked string instrument called the cobza, which is used in traditional Romanian folk music. At last, the full orchestra joins in merry manner and gradually leads the listener from the countryside into an urban setting. Café music pervades the scene with sweeping flourishes in the strings contrasted by falling chromatic thirds in the winds. A beautiful viola solo establishes a nostalgic mood and is answered by the full orchestra in tearful lament.

After a suspenseful series of trills, the listener returns to the countryside in upbeat anticipation for the Ciocârlia, a famous Romanian folk tune in which the musicians imitate birdcalls, particularly that of the skylark. Two flutes begin the chatty conversation and are soon joined by vivacious clarinets, oboes, and piccolo. Before long, all of the winds arrive on the scene, representing a frenetic gathering of noisy birds fighting for individual attention. Finally, a large band of gypsy fiddlers joins the competition. From this point on, the music perpetually accelerates in both speed and intensity. The dance melodies become increasingly frantic, always demanding more power to fuel the ascent to the final explosion of energy that leaves the listener's heart racing and spirit demanding more.

--Hanjay Wang



NOTES ON THE MUSIC

copland - concerto for clarinet

The hopes and dreams of immigrants to America are encapsulated in the lives of two great native-born sons brought together through the Concerto for Clarinet and String Orchestra with Harp and Piano (Clarinet Concerto). Benny Goodman (1901-1986), the Chicago-born son of poor Russian-Jewish immigrants who rose to be one of the greatest of all jazz clarinetists, termed the "King of Swing," commissioned Aaron Copland (1900-1990) in 1947 to write the Clarinet Concerto. Aaron Copland, born in Brooklyn of immigrant Lithuanian/Russian-Jewish parents, rose to be one of the greatest of all American composers of the twentieth century, an interpreter of the American landscape and soul through his innovative compositions.

Copland was on his second trip to Latin America, a four-month tour to Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay, as a goodwill ambassador for the US State Department. He arrived in Rio

de Janeiro on August 19, 1947. During this tour he completed the first movement of the Clarinet Concerto. Copland wrote to Leonard Bernstein from Rio de Janeiro on September 24, 1947, about the Clarinet Concerto: "I've just about begun work on the B. Goodman piece." On September 6, 1947, Copland had also written from Rio to his friends, Irving and Verna Fine, about a house he had rented for three years at Sneden's landing, New York: "Wait until you see it, he wrote in this letter. At last - a home." The Clarinet Concerto was completed in October 1948 in this rented house at Sneden's Landing. Copland, in a letter to Leonard Bernstein on October 18, 1948, described that he had "stayed home a lot and finished my Clarinet Concerto - endlich [finally]! Tried it over for Benny [Goodman] the other day... Seems I wrote the last page too high 'for normal purposes.' So it'll have to come down a step." On the manuscript page of the original coda of the

NOTES ON THE MUSIC

copland - concerto for clarinet



Clarinet Concerto, changes suggested by Goodman are written in pencil. The memo at the top of the page reads: "1st version - later revised - of Coda of Clarinet Concerto (too difficult for Benny Goodman)."

Copland wrote that he "knew Benny could reach that high because I had listened to his recordings. He explained that although he could comfortably reach that high when playing jazz for an audience, he might not be able to if he had to read it from a score or for a recording. Therefore, we changed it." Branford Marsalis has said, in sympathy with Goodman, that in the days when Benny Goodman had to record the piece there could be no stopping and replaying, that the composition had to be played through without interruption. That would have been the reason for Goodman's nervousness about recording the piece.

The Clarinet Concerto is formed of two movements, the first slow, the second fast with jazz inspired elements (marked on the score "Rather Fast"), connected by a lively solo cadenza in which the jazz elements are introduced. As Copland inscribed on the score, the first movement is to be played "slowly and expressively" and is a movingly song-like melody. Copland wrote in a letter of October 4, 1947: "I badly need a fast theme for part 2...I used the 'pas de deux' theme for part 1, and I think it will make everyone weep."

Copland described the Clarinet Concerto in his own words in the 1945-1949 segment of his autobiography: "The first movement of the Clarinet Concerto is a languid song form composed in $\frac{3}{4}$ time, rather unusual for me, but the theme seemed to call for it. The second

movement, a free rondo form, is a contrast in style - stark, severe, and jazzy. The movements are connected by a cadenza, which gives the soloist considerable opportunity to demonstrate his prowess, while at the same time introduces fragments of the melodic material to be heard in the second movement. The cadenza is written fairly close to the way I wanted it, but is free within reason - after all, it and the movement that follows are in the jazz idiom. It is not ad lib as in cadenzas of many traditional concertos; I always felt that there was enough room for interpretation even when everything is written out. Some of the second movement material represents an unconscious fusion of elements obviously related to North and South American popular music: Charleston rhythms, boogie woogie, and Brazilian folk tunes. The instrumentation being clarinet with strings, harp, and piano, I did not have a large battery of percussion to achieve jazzy effects, so I used slapping basses and whacking harp sounds to simulate them. The Clarinet Concerto ends with a fairly elaborate coda in C major that finishes off with a clarinet glissando - or 'smear' in jazz lingo."

In the Clarinet Concerto Aaron Copland captured the spirit and soul of America, in its sweetness of folk song, in its fusion of cultures, in the originality of the African-American creation of jazz, with its improvisation and distinctive rhythms that Copland interpreted and immortalized in his own American vernacular through his legendary compositions. In the Clarinet Concerto we hear the sounds of America through the imagination of Aaron Copland, which we relive as we listen, as Copland hoped we would.

-Victoria Aschheim

NOTES ON THE MUSIC

berlioz - symphonie fantastique



Louis-Hector Berlioz was born in La Côte-St-André near Grenoble, France, in 1803. Educated primarily by his father, a physician of some distinction, Berlioz particularly enjoyed French and Latin literature and geography. His earliest exposure to music, to which he was immediately attracted, was through attending Mass. His father taught him to play the flageolet and he also learned the guitar. As a teenager, he found a copy of Rameau's *Traité de l'harmonie*. His study of that provided his only early instruction in composition. His father wanted him to become a physician, so at age 17, he was sent to Paris to study at the Ecole de Médecine. Even before he arrived in Paris, his feelings about this were clear: "Become a Doctor! Study anatomy! Dissect! Take part in horrible operations - instead of giving myself body and soul to music, sublime

art whose grandeur I was beginning to perceive!" Although he did study medicine for two years, he also began to attend the many performances, especially of operas, available to him in Paris, expanded his limited knowledge of music. He greatly admired the operas of Gluck and began to study composition with LeSueur who taught at the Paris Conservatory of Music. When he finally abandoned his study of medicine, his father reduced his allowance, beginning several years of severe financial hardship.

On September 11, 1827, Berlioz attended a performance of *Hamlet* with the English actress Harriet Smithson playing Ophelia. "the impression made on my heart and mind by her extraordinary talent, nay her dramatic genius, was equaled only by the havoc wrought in me by the poet she so nobly interpreted." Although



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the performance was in English and Berlioz knew little of the language, Shakespeare immediately became for him the pinnacle of poetic utterance. In addition, Berlioz idealized and pursued Miss Smithson with no clear distinction between her and the heroine she portrayed. Yet another revelation occurred in March 1828 when Berlioz heard Beethoven's Third and Fifth Symphonies for the first time, which "opened before me a new world of music, as Shakespeare had revealed a new universe of poetry."

These transformative events opened Berlioz' imagination to new possibilities in instrumental music and led to the composition of *Symphonie fantastique* early in 1830 at a time when any real relationship with Miss Smithson seemed hopeless. The work's recurring theme (*idée fixe*) represents his obsession with the woman he adores. The orchestration is bold and innovative, using instruments that were previously associated only with opera: harps, bells, English horn, E-flat clarinet, multiple timpani. (Berlioz' interest and skill in orchestration led him to write the first textbook on orchestration in 1843: *Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes*.)

Although the five-movement symphony uses instrumental forms clearly derived from those used by Beethoven, Berlioz wrote for the audience a descriptive program:

Episode in An Artist's Life

"A young musician of morbidly sensitive temperament and fiery imagination poisons himself with opium in a fit of lovesick despair. The narcotic, too weak to kill him, plunges him into a deep slumber accompanied by the strangest visions, during which his sensations, his emotions, his memories, are transformed in his sick mind into musical thoughts and images. The loved one herself has become a melody to him, an *idée fixe* as it were, that he encounters and hears everywhere.

I. Reveries, Passions (Largo, Allegro agitato)

"He recalls first that soul-sickness, that *vague des passions*, those depressions, those groundless joys, that he experienced before he first saw his loved one; then the volcanic suffering, his jealous rages, his returns to tenderness, his religious consolations.

II. A Ball (Waltz, Allegro non troppo)

"He encounters his beloved at a dance in the midst

of the tumult of a brilliant party.

III. A Scene in the Country (Adagio)

"One summer evening in the country, he hears two shepherds piping a *ranz des vaches* (alpine shepherd song) in dialogue; the pastoral duet, the scenery, the quiet rustling of the trees brushed by the wind, the hopes he has recently found some reason to entertain – all concur in affording his heard an unaccustomed calm, and in giving a more cheerful color to his ideas. But she appears again, he feels a tightening in his heart, painful forebodings disturb him – what if she was deceiving him? – One of the shepherds takes up his simple tune again, the other no longer answers. The sun sets – distant sound of thunder – loneliness – silence.

IV. March to the Scaffold (Allegretto non troppo)

"He dreams he has killed his beloved, that he is condemned to death and led to the scaffold. The procession moves forward to the sound of a march that is now somber and fierce, now brilliant and solemn, in which the muffled sound of heavy steps gives way without transition to the noisiest clamor. At the end, the *idée fixe* returns for a moment, like the last thought of love interrupted by the fatal blow.

V. Dream of a Witches' Sabbath (Larghetto, Allegro)

"He sees himself at a witches' sabbath, in the midst of a frightful troop of ghosts, sorcerers, monsters of every kind, who have gathered for his funeral. Strange noises, groans, bursts of laughter, distant cries which other cries seem to answer. The beloved melody appears again, but it has lost its character of nobility and shyness; it is no more than a dance tune, mean, trivial, and grotesque; it is she, coming to join the sabbath. A shout of joy greets her arrival. She joins the infernal orgy. The funeral knell, burlesque of the [Gregorian funeral hymn] *Dies Irae*. Dance of the witches. The dance and the *Dies Irae* combined."

In Berlioz' hands, the symphony had become a new dramatic medium, an opera without words.

–LeAnn House

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