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A Tribute to Gaspar Cassadó, April 24, 2001

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*Boston University School for the Arts
Music Division*

—presents—

A Tribute to Gaspar Cassadó
(1897-1966)

GEORGE NEIKRUG, *cello*

xx

Tuesday, April 24, 2001 at 8:00 p.m.
The Tsai Performance Center
685 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts

*Boston University School for the Arts
Music Division*

—presents—

A Tribute to Gaspar Cassadó
(1897-1966)

GEORGE NEIKRUG, *cello*

THEODORE ANTONIOU, *conductor*

BOSTON UNIVERSITY CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

VIRGINIA NEIKRUG, *violin*

KATHLEEN FORGAC, *piano*

BENJAMIN ZANDER, *guest speaker*

Tuesday, April 24, 2001

8:00 p.m.

PROGRAM

Tocatta for Cello

Frescobaldi-Cassadó

Trio in C Major

Gaspar Cassadó

American Premiere

Allegro risoluto
Moderato e pesante
Recitative—Rondo allegro vivace

Requiebros
Lamento di Boabdil
Allegretto grazioso
Danse du Diable vert

G. Cassadó
G. Cassadó
Schubert-Cassadó
G. Cassadó

—Intermission—

Concerto for Cello in D Major

Mozart-Cassadó

Allegro
Romanze—larghetto
Allegro

Concerto in A Minor

Schubert-Cassadó

Allegro moderato
Adagio
Allegretto

PROGRAM NOTES

"I studied with Cassadó in Cologne as a Fulbright scholar 1961 - 62. When he first met me, he knew that I had come from Los Angeles and, although at that point I had not yet studied with Piatigorsky, Cassadó felt somehow that whatever he did with me would be reported back, and that the days of early rivalry (mostly in Berlin during the 1920's, when Piatigorsky and Feuermann were the "young Turks" of the cello world) demanded that he prove he was the best of the lot. Cassadó started out by telling me that as a young man he had been known as the "Kreisler of the cello," but that was only how it used to be. Now, he said, we were in modern times and therefore he had renounced the glissando altogether. He said, "if an oboe can play a beautiful melody without glissandi, we should be able to do so, too."

That is just one example of what proved to be a fascinating year. He was a formidable instrumentalist, by that time playing on a Villaume with a lot of contraptions, but his tone had coarsened. Still, there were moments in his demonstrating that were sublimely beautiful. He seemed to have a boundless imagination, and that shows up in his compositions. His recording of his own version of the Schubert Arpeggione, made into a concerto, is really wonderful. He also spoke of wanting to reorchestrate the Lalo Concerto, which he thought was too heavy in the orchestra and not very interesting; his plan was to use saxophones and maracas!

He taught me mostly by example, and he was a mixture of charm and occasional petulance. He was, I thought, really a big child in a lot of ways, and he demanded total allegiance from all of us. On the other hand, he was very generous and would often treat us to fine meals. In fact, three of us stayed in his studio in Firenze over the Christmas holiday.

I last saw him in Moscow, backstage after the Tchaikovsky competition in which I was a prize winner. The jury was really "heavy duty"— including Rostropovich as chairman, Piatigorsky, Shafran, Cassadó, and Fournier. By that time I had been Piatigorsky's student for three years and Cassadó simply never forgave me for leaving him. He barely said hello when I saw him. He died before the end of the year, and I never had the chance to properly thank him for that wonderful year."

—Laurence Lesser, New England Conservatory

Gaspar Cassadó was born in Barcelona in 1897 and died in Madrid in 1966. Every cellist is indebted to him, not only for his contribution as a great performer but, even more, for the way he has enriched the repertoire with his compositions and transcriptions.

He represented the same role for the cello that Fritz Kreisler did for the violin. Kreisler wrote many short pieces originally for his own use, attributing them to various composers of the Baroque period. It was later revealed that they were actually his own compositions, and he had to admit to this publicly. Cassadó, who was a talented composer (having studied with Manuel de Falla and Maurice Ravel), also wrote many short pieces, attributing them to various old composers. Though unlike Kreisler, he never confessed.

At the age of nine, he was accepted as a pupil by Pablo Casals. This association was of great importance to Cassadó, and many of his compositions and transcriptions are dedicated to Casals. His original compositions are intensely Spanish. In addition to the trio being played tonight, he also published string quartets and a violin sonata. Cassadó wrote masterly transcriptions of concertos by Weber, Mozart, Schubert, and Tchaikovsky for cello and orchestra. He toured the world as an international celebrity, performing with all the major orchestras and famous conductors of his era.

The Toccata by Frescobaldi-Cassadó performed this evening, has no resemblance to any work by Frescobaldi. It is a brilliant concert piece similar to Kreisler's Praeludium and Allegro, allegedly composed by Pugnani.

Many years ago, I heard a reference to a piano trio by Cassadó. In preparing this program, I searched in vain for listings of published works. I called the music division of the Library of Congress, and to my surprise they had a copy which had been out of print for about forty years. They sent me a xerox of the score and parts. I read that in 1920, Cassadó played privately in Berlin with Albert Einstein who was an accomplished amateur violinist, and that this trio was composed for them. Since I can find no record of a public performance, it can safely be assumed that this is the American premiere of this piece.

The *Requiebro*s is probably the most played of Cassadó's pieces and is very popular with cellists everywhere. The *Lamento di Boabdil* is less known. Boabdil was the last Moorish king of Granada in Spain—a tragic figure defeated by the army of King Ferdinand who died in exile in Africa.

The *Allegretto grazioso*, supposedly by Schubert, is another of Cassadó's clever deceptions since there is nothing by Schubert that resembles this piece. The *Danse du Diable vert* is a virtuous showpiece written for either violin or cello. The concerto by Mozart-Cassadó is based on a horn concerto by Mozart. With this transcription, cellists have received a gift of a Mozart cello concerto. When I was a teenager in New York, playing in the National Training Orchestra, I experienced my first contact with a great cellist when Gregor Piatigorsky performed this concerto with us at a concert in Carnegie Hall.

Cassadó had this to say about the Schubert concerto that he based on the Arpeggione Sonata: "I examined and studied a great number of Schubert's orchestral music, and in this arrangement, I observed the stylistic features of Schubertian instrumentation very scrupulously. In fact, the piano part of the Arpeggione Sonata is rather orchestral in style, and it never takes the initiative nor does it show any brilliant passages. In sum, there are small retouches here and there, so that the intervention of the orchestra should appear plausible and possess a logical function."

When I was a youth in New York in the years preceding World War II, many cellists performed the Cassadó version in recital with piano. In fact, the original Arpeggione version was rarely heard. What instrumentalist would not sacrifice anything to have a Schubert concerto for his or her instrument? Cassadó has presented cellists with such a work.

—George Neikrug

MEET THE ARTISTS

Born in New York, **George Neikrug** was a pupil of the legendary Emanuel Feuermann and is probably the only remaining student who is still concertizing. In 1943, he met the well-known pedagogue D.C. Dounis, whose revolutionary approach to the problems of string playing and teaching influenced him to completely revamp his playing and create the unique style he has retained to this day. Neikrug felt such a debt to Dounis for all the knowledge and skills he had learned that he resolved to devote his life to teaching at schools such as Boston University, and giving master classes all over the world.

Since Neikrug's New York debut in 1947, he has held principal positions with the Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestras. He was also principal cellist of the Paramount Pictures Recording Orchestra, and the

Columbia Recording Orchestra, which recorded the historic series of performances by Igor Stravinsky and Bruno Walter (who called Neikrug a “genuine musician and a real virtuoso of the cello”). In 1960, Leopold Stokowski asked Neikrug to perform Bloch's *Schelomo* with him and the NBC Symphony at Carnegie Hall, with a recording for United Artists to follow. After this performance, Stokowski sent him an autographed photo with the inscription “for George Neikrug's *Schelomo*—unforgettable.” He has concertized in major cities throughout Europe and the United States. In 1979, Neikrug performed all six Bach solo suites in one concert at Lincoln Center. In an enthusiastic review of this concert, John Rockwell of *The New York Times* concluded “there was a beauty that was almost painful. We wish Mr. Neikrug would play all the violin suites for us.”

Mr. Neikrug has appeared as a soloist with conductors such as Leonard Bernstein, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Bruno Walter, Leopold Stokowski, and Yehudi Menuhin, who stated: “George Neikrug is one of the most brilliant exponents of cello playing. I was most impressed with his profound and accurate understanding of his instrument, as well as string playing in general. He is a first-rate musician, and I cannot recommend him too highly.” His recording of Bloch's *Schelomo* with Leopold Stokowski and the Symphony of the Air was recently re-released on the EMI label. In addition, Sony has recently released his recording of a duet by Mozart for cello, baritone, and orchestra with George London and the Columbia Symphony, conducted by Bruno Walter.

Mr. Neikrug held teaching positions at the Detmold Hochschule in Germany as a Fulbright Professor sponsored by Ernst Toch and Bruno Walter, Oberlin College, and the University of Texas at Austin before joining the faculty at Boston University School for the Arts in 1971. He received the 1995 “Artist Teacher Award” from the American String Teachers Association. In 1996, he was invited by Janos Starker and Indiana University to receive the “Chevalier du Violoncelle” award for outstanding lifetime achievement on the cello. Many of his students are in major symphony orchestras all over the world including some in principal positions and teaching at major universities.

“George Neikrug has been, for many years, a respected colleague and musician, as well as a good friend. I regard him as a great artist—a term not lightly used by a fellow professional.

“His superb, absolute command of the instrument, the probing depth of his musical perception, his contagious joy in communicating his affection for music; all combine in bringing to life whatever music he plays.”

—Isaac Stern

Virginia Neikrug received her Bachelor and Master of Music degrees in violin performance from the Boston University School for the Arts where she studied violin with Roman Totenberg. Her other teachers include Mischa Mischakoff, George Neikrug, and Joseph Silverstein. She was a first-prize winner of the National Federation of Women's Clubs scholarship contest at Jordan Hall while in high school and performed at the John Hancock Hall as the recipient of their advanced scholarship. She has taught at various colleges and music schools in the area and given master classes at the Longy School of Music; the International American String Teachers Association Festival in Graz, Austria; the Vamos summer festival in Wethersfield, Vermont; and the Colburn School for the Arts in Los Angeles. She has performed in solo and chamber music concerts at Boston University, the Longy School, and with regional orchestras, in works such as the Brahms Double Concerto with her husband, George Neikrug.

Guest pianist **Kathleen Forgac** earned a Master of Music degree in piano performance from the New England Conservatory of Music where she studied with Jacob Maxin. She is a member of the Egmont Trio and is on the faculty of the Waring School in Beverly. Mrs. Forgac is organist and choir director of Christ Church in Somerville and had been the recipient of several awards, including second place in the International Piano Recording Competition and the Blossom Festival Music School Accompanist Award.

Benjamin Zander is the founding conductor of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra. He has been on the faculty of the New England Conservatory since 1966 and has conducted its Youth Philharmonic Orchestra since 1971. He is also the Artistic Director of the music program at Walnut Hill School. Mr. Zander is a regular guest conductor of the Philharmonia Orchestra in London, and is recording with them the complete symphonies of Beethoven and Mahler for the Telarc label.

At the World Economic Forum in Davos, where he was a keynote speaker, Mr. Zander was presented with the Crystal Award in recognition of his "contribution through culture and the arts, to global understanding and peace." He is the subject of a full length BBC documentary and has been featured on 60 Minutes. He has co-authored a book on leadership, published by Harvard Business School Press.

Born in England, Mr. Zander started to compose at the age of nine, and amongst his teachers were Benjamin Britten and his close associate, Imogen Holst. He left school when he was 15, moving to Italy and Germany where he studied cello for five years with the great Spanish cello virtuoso, Gaspar Cassadó. He returned to England to take his degree at University College London, where he was awarded a Harkness Fellowship to do post-graduate work at Harvard and in New York. Boston has been his home for over thirty years.

MEET THE CONDUCTOR

Theodore Antoniou, one of the most eminent and prolific contemporary music artists, leads a distinguished career as composer, conductor, and Professor of Music. He studied violin, voice, and composition at the National Conservatory in Athens, with further studies in conducting and composition at the Hochschule für Musik in Munich, and the International Music Center in Darmstadt. After holding teaching positions at Stanford University, the University of Utah, and the Philadelphia Musical Academy, he was appointed professor of composition at Boston University in 1978.

As a conductor, Professor Antoniou has been engaged by several major orchestras and ensembles, such as the Boston Symphony Orchestra Chamber Players, the Radio Orchestras of Berlin and Paris, the Bavarian Radio Orchestra, the Tonhalle Orchestra (Zurich), the National Opera of Greece, the State Orchestra of Athens, the State Orchestra of Northern Greece, the American Composers Orchestra, and the Berkshire Music Center Orchestra.

In 1974 he became Assistant Director of Contemporary Music Activities at Tanglewood, a position he held until 1985. An ardent proponent of new music, Professor Antoniou has founded various contemporary music ensembles, including ALEA II at Stanford University; ALEA III, in residence at Boston University; the Philadelphia New Music Group; and the Hellenic Group of Contemporary Music. He is also director of the ALEA III International Composition Competition, and since 1989 the President of the National Greek Composers Association.

Major orchestras around the world have commissioned many of Professor Antoniou's compositions, and Bärenreiter Verlag (Germany), G. Schirmer (USA),

have published more than a hundred and fifty of his works. He has received many awards and prizes including the National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship grants and the Richard Strauss Prize, as well as commissions from the Fromm, Guggenheim, and Koussevitzky Foundations, and from the city of Munich for the 1972 Olympic Games. He has been recognized with ASCAP Awards for several years, and in 1991 he was awarded Boston University's Metcalf Award for Excellence in Teaching. In December 1997 he was presented with the Music Award from the Greek Academy of Arts and Letters, one of the most prestigious awards and the highest academic distinction in music. On January 9, 2000, the Greek National Radio Broadcast Corporation awarded him the Dimitri Mitropoulos Award for his lifelong contribution to music.

Theodore Antoniou's works are numerous and varied in nature, ranging from operas and choral works to chamber music, from film and theater music to solo instrumental pieces—his scores for theater and film music alone number more than a hundred and fifty compositions. The opera *Bacchae* was given its first fully staged production for the Athens Festival in Greece. His newest opera, *Oedipus at Colonus*, commissioned by the Süd-West Funk, Baden-Baden, in Germany, to be paired in programs with Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*, was premiered in Athens on May 9, 1998; in August of the same year the work received the prestigious Music Award presented annually by the Hellenic Union of Music and Theater Critics. On November 26, 2000, Boston University School for the Arts faculty member and Boston Symphony Orchestra principal bass, Edwin Barker, premiered Antoniou's Concertino for Contrabass, with the Pro Arte Orchestra conducted by Gunther Schuller.

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 #Principal in Mozart

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 26
8:00 p.m.

Honors Chamber Music Recital

Barber: *Summer Music*
Hindemith: *Morgenmusik*
The Tsai Performance Center
685 Commonwealth Avenue

April 26
8:00 p.m.

Boston University Wind Ensemble

David Martins, *conductor*
Ewazen: *Celtic Hymn and Dance*
Husa: *Music for Prague*
Dvorák: *Serenade*
The Tsai Performance Center
685 Commonwealth Avenue

April 28
7:00 p.m.

ALEA III

Fundraising Event
Theodore Antoniou, *music director*
The Tsai Performance Center
685 Commonwealth Avenue

May 1
8:00 p.m.

Winners of the Concerto-Aria Competition and the Boston University Symphony Orchestra

David Hoose, *conductor*
Akiko Fujimoto, *conductor*
Michalis Economou, *conductor*
Hyejung Nam, *flute*
Yu-Hsin Huang, *harp*
Adrian Jojatu, *bassoon*
Vanessa Conlin, *soprano*
The Tsai Performance Center
685 Commonwealth Avenue

May 1 – 2
7:00 p.m.

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