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1997-10-28

Boston University Chamber Orchestra

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*Boston University School for the Arts
Music Division*

—presents—

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

MICHALIS ECONOMOU,
KOSTIS PROTOPAPAS,
IAN WHITE,
DANIEL MEYER,
conductors

XX

Tuesday, October 28, 1997 at 8:00 p.m.
The Tsai Performance Center
685 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts

BOSTON UNIVERSITY CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

MICHALIS ECONOMOU,
KOSTIS PROTOPAPAS,
IAN WHITE,
DANIEL MEYER,
conductors

Tuesday, October 28, 1997
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PROGRAM

Pavane, Op. 50

Gabriel Fauré
(1845-1924)

Michalis Economou, *conductor*

Music for the Theater

Aaron Copland
(1900-1990)

Prologue
Dance
Intermezzo
Burlesque
Epilogue

Kostis Protopapas, *conductor*

—*Intermission*—

Pavane pour une infante défunte

Maurice Ravel
(1875-1937)

Ian White, *conductor*

Antiche arie e danze per liuto,
Suite No. 1

Ottorino Respighi
(1879-1936)

Balletto detto "Il Conte Orlando"
Gagliarda
Villanella
Passo mezzo e mascherada

Daniel Meyer, *conductor*

PROGRAM NOTES

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924), *Pavane*, Op. 50 (1887)

Gabriel Fauré, organist, composer, and director of the Paris Conservatoire, was a champion of French music. He founded the National Society for French Music and became the first president of the Independent Musical Society (1909).

Pavane was written for the concert series of Jules Danbé (1840-1905), conductor of the Opéra-Comique. At the suggestion of his patron Countess Élisabeth Greffuhle, to whom he also dedicated it, Fauré transcribed the *Pavane* for chorus and orchestra (1901) with verses by Robert de Montesquiou. In a letter of 1887 he describes his new composition as "elegant, but not particularly important." And in another letter of the same year to Countess Greffuhle, he champions his *Pavane*, now with a vocal setting, as ideally suitable music for her salon. It was precisely in the Parisian salons of the time that *Pavane* gained immense popularity.

The *Pavane's* memorable opening, featuring a seductive melody first introduced by the flute, betrays a reserved melancholy, that turns into an ultra-expressive climax, when it is taken up by the strings. Supported by a delicately orchestrated texture and Fauré's idiosyncratic harmonies, the piece is a fine example of the subtleties that most French composers would draw upon at the beginning of the century.

Aaron Copland (1900-1990), *Music for the Theatre* (1925)

In 1921 Aaron Copland left his native Brooklyn for Paris to continue his studies with the famous Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979), and became the first American composer to study with this exceptionally influential teacher. Under Boulanger's guidance he grew aware of the direction that his music would take. His first composition after his return to the United States in 1924 was *Symphony No. 1 for Organ and Orchestra*, written for Nadia Boulanger's American début as an organist in 1925. In this work he incorporated sharply accented irregular rhythms and jazz influences, features that also characterize his next major composition, the orchestral suite *Music for the Theatre* (1925), commissioned by the League of Composers. Serge Koussevitzky, an ardent supporter of the young composer's music and the work's dedicatee, conducted its first performance with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in November 1925. The Boston critics praised Copland as "a young composer of indisputable talent," but they reacted with skepticism to the novelties of the piece, especially its jazz influences: 'blue' intervals, syncopations, polymeters, and cross-

accented rhythms. This is how Copland defended his conscious attempt to incorporate jazz idioms in a piece for the concert hall: "My aim was to write a work that would be recognizably American within a serious musical idiom. Jazz offered American composers a native product from which to explore rhythm; for whatever the definition of jazz, it must be agreed that it is essentially rhythmic in character." *Music for the Theatre* would soon become a favorite in the repertoires of American chamber orchestras.

Copland himself has described the five sections of the work as follows:

Music for the Theatre was written with no specific play in mind. It had started with musical ideas that might have been combined as incidental music to a play were the right one at hand. The music seemed to suggest a certain theatrical atmosphere, so I chose the title after developing the ideas into five short movements:

I. Prologue (*Molto Moderato*, 2/4). The first theme is announced almost immediately by the solo trumpet. Shortly, this gives way to the entrance of the strings, who gradually form a background for the oboe singing the second theme. A short development follows (*allegro molto*), built upon a transformation of the first trumpet theme. After a quickly attained climax, there is a return to the first part and a quiet close.

II. Dance (*Allegro molto*, 5/8). This is a short, nervous dance, with form and thematic material so simple as to make analysis superfluous.

III. Interlude (*Lento*, 4/4). The interlude is a kind of 'song without words' built on a lyric theme which is repeated three times with slight alterations. The English horn solo plays an introductory phrase, and then to an accompaniment of strings, piano and glockenspiel, the main theme is sung by a clarinet.

IV. Burlesque (*Allegro Vivo*, 3/8). The form of this movement is best expressed by the formula A-B-A-B. For the rest, this Burlesque is best explained by its title.

V. Epilogue (*Molto Moderato*, 4/4). No new themes

are introduced here. Material from the first and third parts only is used. The quiet mood of the Prologue is recaptured and the work ends *pianissimo*.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937), *Pavane pour une infante défunte* (*Pavane for a Dead Princess*) (1910)

Maurice Ravel originally composed *Pavane pour une infante défunte* as a short piano piece in 1899. Although it gained him esteem and popularity as a composer of salon music, he could see no virtues but only faults in this composition. His acknowledgment of Chabrier's influence made him extremely critical: "The remarkable interpretations of this inconclusive and conventional work have, I think, in great measure contributed to its success," he wrote in 1912. Ravel transcribed *Pavane* for small orchestra in 1910, and dedicated it to a major patron of the arts, Princess Edmond de Polignac. The mystique that also surrounds the title of this composition may account for its popularity in the salons of the time. Many interpretations have been put forth, but for the composer himself the title had simply to do with his choice of words and the "pleasure of alliteration." This symbolist approach, in a true 'Mallarmean' fashion, exhibits Ravel's fascination with the pure sound of the words that would become evident throughout his career.

Ravel here evokes an older genre, a pavane, originally a slow court dance of the 16th century that was popular in Italy and Spain. It was dignified and stately in character. He does not, however, wish to imitate the dance form. His is a free recreation of the character of the pavane, elegiac in tone, at times mournful, but always with dignified reserve. The work opens with an unforgettable, lush melodic line first introduced by a solo horn, while string pizzicatos support this soaring melody. Ravel's skillful, sumptuous orchestration, and rhythmic and harmonic fluidity contribute to the work's ethereal, even antique quality.

Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936), *Antiche arie e danze per liuto* (1917)

Ottorino Respighi is mostly known for his three popular orchestral works inspired by Rome. In *The Fountains of Rome*, the first of the triptych (1916), he had already revealed his inclination toward a more classicized idiom. Later, in the *Pines of Rome* (1924) and *The Roman Festival* (1929), he firmly established his own individual, lyrical tendencies in style and orchestration.

Respighi studied in his native Bologna, and later in Moscow, where his teacher was none other than Rimsky-Korsakov. In the fashion of the time, and following his contemporaries' interest in early music

(like Francesco Malipiero and Alfredo Casella), he exhibited archaic tendencies in works such as the *Concerto gregoriano* (1921) and the *Quartetto dorico* (1924). With the erudition of a musician well-versed in early music, he arranged music originally written for the lute in the three Suites that comprise the *Ancient Airs and Dances*. Most of the music is derived from a collection of 17th and 18th century Italian and French lute music, edited and transcribed by the Italian musicologist Oscar Chilesotti (1848-1916). Suite No. 1 was written in 1917, No. 2 in 1923-24, and No. 3 in 1931-32. Moreover, having a proficiency for effective orchestration (largely due to his studies with Rimsky-Korsakov), he transferred the elegance of Renaissance and early Baroque music to the vivid colors of a modern orchestra.

I. Balletto detto "Il Conte Orlando"

This music comes from a collection of lute pieces written in 1599 by Simone Molinaro (ca. 1565-1615). Molinaro also edited six books of madrigals by Gesualdo in 1613.

II. Gagliarda

Vincenzo Galilei (ca. 1520-1591), a member of the Florentine Camerata and father of the famous astronomer, was a famous composer and theorist of the time, and a lute player himself. His *Il fronimo* (1568) remains one of the most important treatises on lute-playing. This piece comes from his collection of lute music, published in 1584. The gagliarda is a quick, lively dance in triple time, of Italian origin.

III. Villanella

In contrast to the more sophisticated madrigal, the villanella originated as a form of Neapolitan street song. This Villanella is an anonymous composition of the 16th century.

IV. Passo mezzo e mascherada

The passamezzo was an Italian dance of the 16th and 17th centuries, in the style of a pavan, but faster and lighter in pace. A mascherada was a kind of villanella performed during the Carnival period in a masked ball.

Efthychia Papaniklaou

BOSTON UNIVERSITY CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Violin I

Sarah Asmar, Concertmaster
Nyssa Patten
Gabrielle Kopf
Mary Francis White
Anna Brathwaite
Mary Perkinson
Jessica Amidon

Violin II

Kenji Furukawa
Rachel Lambdin
Ariel Parkington
Alexia Schulz
Anna Kaydanova
Christine LeDoux
Michalis Economou

Viola

Anna Wetherby
Liza Villanueva
Miriam Gephardt
Christina Greene
Andrea Holz

Cello

Alex Ludwig
Kong-Joo Kim
Phaedre Sassano
Pavel Dovgalyuk

Bass

Dwayne Green

Flute

Mana Washlo
Hannah Hintze

Oboe

Gabriela Yagupsky
Margarita Ortiz
Kate Murphy

English Horn

Gabriela Yagupsky
Kate Murphy

Clarinet

Laura Harrison
Kelley Hayes

Bassoon

André Weker
Tracy Rux

Horn

Mary Jo Neher
Oliver de Clerq

Trumpet

Stephen Chapdelaine
Jo Ann Lamolino

Trombone

Sarah Privler

Percussion

Michael Carreira

Harp

Steven Simpson

Piano

Konstantinos Papadakis

Upcoming Events

October 29

8:00 p.m.

ALEA III

Theodore Antoniou, *conductor*
The Tsai Performance Center
685 Commonwealth Avenue

October 30

8:00 p.m.

Boston University Symphony Orchestra

David Hoose, *conductor*
The Tsai Performance Center
685 Commonwealth Avenue

November 3

8:00 p.m.

Faculty Concert

Michelle LaCourse, *viola*
The Tsai Performance Center
685 Commonwealth Avenue

November 8

8:00 p.m.

Boston University Repertory Chorus

John Paulson, *conductor*
Marsh Chapel
735 Commonwealth Avenue

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