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Boston University Concert Programs

2011-03-10

Boston University Symphony Orchestra, March 10, 2011

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Boston University College of Fine Arts
School of Music
presents

Boston University Symphony Orchestra

John Page, conductor

with Les Percussions de Strasbourg

Thursday

March 10, 2011

8:00pm

Tsai Performance Center

Founded in 1872, the **School of Music** combines the intimacy and intensity of conservatory training with a broadly based, traditional liberal arts education at the undergraduate level and intense coursework at the graduate level. The school offers degrees in performance, composition and theory, musicology, music education, collaborative piano, historical performance, as well as a certificate program in its Opera Institute, and artist and performance diplomas.

Founded in 1839, **Boston University** is an internationally recognized private research university with 32,557 students participating in undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. BU consists of 17 colleges and schools along with a number of multi-disciplinary centers and institutes which are central to the school's research and teaching mission. The Boston University **College of Fine Arts** was created in 1954 to bring together the School of Music, the School of Theatre, and the School of Visual Arts. The University's vision was to create a community of artists in a conservatory-style school offering professional training in the arts to both undergraduate and graduate students, complemented by a liberal arts curriculum for undergraduate students. Since those early days, education at the College of Fine Arts has begun on the BU campus and extended into the city of Boston, a rich center of cultural, artistic and intellectual activity.

Boston University College of Fine Arts
School of Music

Boston University Symphony Orchestra
with Les Percussions de Strasbourg
John Page, conductor
The 161st concert in the 2010–11 season

March 10, 2011
Tsai Performance Center

Paul Dukas
(1865–1935)

Fanfare pour précéder La Péri

Joshua Fineberg
(b. 1969)

Speaking in Tongues for Percussion and Orchestra
World Premiere

~Intermission~

Sergei Prokofiev
(1891–1953)

Symphony No. 5 in B-flat Major, op. 100

Andante
Allegro marcato
Adagio
Allegro giocoso

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Boston University Humanities Foundation
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John Page, conductor



John Page's conducting career began as a finalist in the Dublin Conducting Masterclasses with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland in 2000. Prior to this he studied at King's College London, University College Dublin, Trinity College Dublin, and Harvard University. His formative conducting studies were with Gerhard Markson, principal conductor of the NSOI, and with world-renowned conducting pedagogue, George Hurst. In Ireland, his 2002 performances of Viktor Ullmann's *The Emperor of Atlantis* with Opera Theatre Company garnered the prestigious Irish Times Opera of the Year award and he was subsequently invited to give a Lyric FM broadcast

concert with the NSOI. As a recording artist, he returns frequently to Ireland to record with the Irish Film Orchestra; among his most recent recordings is the platinum disk winning PBS show, *Celtic Woman*.

In 2003 John Page moved to Boston as Zander Fellow to the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, an honor that was extended to the following year. He became Music Director of the NEC Youth Chorale in 2004 and subsequently developed close links with Walnut Hill School as Director of the WHS chorus and conductor of the WHS Gala orchestra. He was appointed to the newly created position of Assistant Conductor to the Boston Philharmonic in 2005 and the following year was invited to join the Faculty of New England Conservatory as Resident Conductor and Music Director of the NEC Sinfonietta and, later, NEC Symphony.

Whilst living in England John Page worked with Modern Band at the Royal Opera House and Surrey Opera. He also assisted Benjamin Zander in his Philharmonia recordings of Mahler's First, Third and Sixth Symphonies and most recently the Grammy-nominated recording of Bruckner's Fifth Symphony, all released under the Telarc label.

More recently, John Page was Director of Large Ensembles for the New York City based Mimesis Ensemble, a group dedicated to the performance of music by living composers. He performed with them at the Kennedy Center (DC) and in Symphony Space (NYC) as well as conducting numerous studio recordings. In 2009 he began his continuing role as cover conductor for the Portland Symphony Orchestra, Maine, and travelled home to his native Northern Ireland to conduct the BBC Ulster Orchestra.

In spring of 2011, John Page will be Visiting Associate Professor of Instrumental Conducting at Boston University.

Les Percussions de Strasbourg

In 1962, six classically trained musicians founded the ensemble Les Percussions de Strasbourg to explore the wide range of percussion instruments available in Western, Asian and African traditions and the rich possibilities they suggested for use in contemporary music.

Works were soon being dedicated to them by Messiaen, Serocki, Kabelac, Xenakis, Mâche, Dufourt and other leading-edge composers. An early coup for the group was its virtuosic performance with only six performers of Varèse's 13-player work, *Ionisation*. The performance—pre-approved by the composer—was a huge success.

Nearly fifty years later, the group has changed personnel, but Jean-Paul Bernard (artistic director), Claude Ferrier, Bernard Lesage, Keiko Nakamura, François Papirer and Olaf Tzschoppe remain committed to exciting performances of contemporary masterworks, especially through long term, interactive partnerships with young composers, the exploration of theatrical and dance collaborations, youth training programs through residencies and masterclasses, the development of new technologies and to continually re-thinking the form of percussion recitals and contemporary music concerts in order to keep the spirit and style of presentation fresh.

Les Percussions de Strasbourg command a repertory of more than 250 works by such 20th century luminaries as Harrison Birtwistle, John Cage, André Jolivet, Ed Campion, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Karl Heinz Stockhausen, Philippe Manoury, Iannis Xenakis and Georges Aperghis as well as by today's emerging composers, and presents them in a variety of recitals, multi-media shows and theatrical spectacles. Their discography includes more than 16 recordings including solo performances, collaborations with Ju Percussion Group of Taiwan, film scores, performances with orchestra, and an homage to Olivier Messiaen with Yvonne Loriod, conducted by Pierre Boulez.

To celebrate their first fifty years, Les Percussions de Strasbourg are embarking on an ambitious three year anniversary project to include theater pieces (Michaël Jarrell's *Le Père*, with video), dance (Xénakis' *Pléiades*), operetta (Rapheël Cendo's *Pippo Delbono*) an orchestral commission, a trypthich of works by Hugues Dufourt, Luca Francesconi & Jonathan Harvey (*an electronic piece*) and Salvatore Sciarrino, a concert of works by young composers, and Ahmed Essyad's *La passion de Mirrida*, a multi-cultural collaboration with eighteen Moroccan singers and percussionists and an ensemble of twelve voices, as well as a 50th anniversary festival in the city of Strasbourg.

During their 50th anniversary tour of North America in February and March 2011, Les Percussions de Strasbourg will present performances and workshops

at Lincoln Center, (New York City), EMPAC (Troy, NY), the State University of New York at Buffalo, Soundstreams Canada (Toronto), Place des Arts (Montréal), Boston University, The French Embassy (Washington D.C.), Cal Performances (Berkeley) and the University of Washington (Seattle). The group is planning a tour of Asia to take place before 2013.

The North American tour will feature Gérard Grisey's *Le Noir de l'Étoile* (1991), full length work which Les Percussions de Strasbourg have performed regularly around the world, including a recent performance in Mexico 'under the stars' for an audience of 5,000.

Program Notes

Fanfare pour précéder La Péri (1912)

Paul Dukas

Written almost 100 years ago, the *Fanfare pour précéder La Péri* strikes me as the perfect way to announce and celebrate the birth of a new work and to welcome our illustrious friends from Strasbourg. Paul Dukas was one of the most serious French musicians and teachers of his day and was hyper critical of his own work, destroying many pieces and leaving only a handful of published works, of which *La Péri* is the last.

La Péri, otherwise known as *The Flower of Immortality*, is a one act ballet based on the exotic legend of the *Péri*, a fairy seeking redemption and return to Paradise. The story itself is quite straightforward: Iskender, a young Magi, is searching for the Flower of Immortality and, upon reaching the Ends of the Earth, discovers a beautiful *Péri* clutching the bejeweled flower in her hands. While she sleeps, Iskender silently steals the flower and waits as the *Péri* awakes. The *Péri* quickly realizes that, having lost the flower, all hope of re-entering Paradise is lost. Iskender is so entranced by her beauty however that he returns the flower in exchange for a kiss. As expected, the fairy disappears into the light of Paradise and Iskender is left having lost both *Péri* and immortality.

The fanfare is full of rich sonorities that sparkle like the jewels of the Immortal Flower itself. The progressions of major triads, combined with more exotic harmonic spice, are clearly inspired by the fantastical subject matter and the lyrically contrasting middle section, with its irregular phrasing, adds to the wandering and yearning that are so much a part of the tale. As a fanfare, it is not a typical attention grabber. It's more complex than you might expect, although perhaps not from the sophisticated pen of Dukas. The sounds are softer, warmer and unusually it is in a triple meter. Clearly the magical qualities of the *Péri* are being heralded here just as much as the bold endeavors of our protagonist, Iskender. Magical vs. human, masculine vs. feminine, yearning vs. calm—all simple dualities that Dukas delightfully plays with in this two minute work.

—John Page

Speaking in Tongues (2011)

Joshua Fineberg

Speaking in Tongues was written for the 50th anniversary of Les Percussions de Strasbourg. The piece features the 6 soloists of Les Percussions de Strasbourg with a full orchestra. Four of the percussionists are placed in the Hall, surrounding the audience, while the other two are placed in front of the orchestra on opposite sides. Each of the offstage percussionists is joined by one instrument from the orchestra, creating washes of sustained tones from all directions. The broad palette of the orchestra combined with the virtuosity and flexibility of the percussion soloists allows the creation of a complex sonic environment in which the constantly re-contextualized foreground is deployed.

The music grows out of this configuration like the breath and voice of a virtual body, but a body of vast proportions and a voice speaking in something not quite like any language ever heard. The audience is plunged into the middle of this body where sounds ebb and flow and move, patterns gradually emerge, then start to shape memory and expectation and ultimately begin to evoke sense and meaning.

— Joshua Fineberg

American Composer Joshua Fineberg began his musical studies at the age of five; they have included—in addition to composition—violin, guitar, piano, harpsichord and conducting. He completed his undergraduate studies at the Peabody Conservatory with Morris Moshe Cotel where he won first prize in the bi-annual Virginia Carty de Lillo Composition Competition. In 1991, he moved to Paris and studied with Tristan Murail. The following year he was selected by the IRCAM/Ensemble InterContemporain reading panel for the course in composition and musical technologies. In the Fall of 1997, he returned to the US to pursue a doctorate in musical composition at Columbia University, which he completed in May 1999. After teaching at Columbia for a year, he went to Harvard University where he taught for seven years and was the John L. Loeb Associate Professor for the Humanities. In September 2007, Fineberg left Harvard to assume a professorship in composition and the directorship of the electronic music studios at Boston University. He has won numerous national and international prizes and scholarships and is published by Editions Max Eschig and Gérard Billaudot Editeur. In 2011, Fineberg was named an Artist Fellow of the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Fineberg's works are widely performed in the US, Europe and Asia. A monographic CD of his music recorded by the Ensemble Court-Circuit was released in 2002 as a part of Universal France's Accord/Una Corda collection and another CD recorded by the Ensemble FA was released by Mode Records in June 2009. Major recent projects include an 'imaginary opera' based on Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* for actor, dancers, video ensemble and electronics realized in collaboration with JOJI; *Speaking in Tongues*, a concerto written for Les Percussions de Strasbourg's 50th anniversary tour and *Objets trouvés* written for the ensemble Court-circuit.

Besides his compositional and pedagogical activities, Joshua Fineberg actively collaborates with music psychologists and computer scientists in music perception research and helps develop tools for computer assisted composition, acoustic analysis and sound modification. He has been involved in working with performing ensembles and as Artistic Director for recordings of many ensemble and soloists. Joshua Fineberg is also the issue editor for two recently published issues of *The Contemporary Music Review* on "Spectral Music" (Vol. 19 pt. 2 & 3) and for a double-issue featuring the collected writings of Tristan Murail in English (Vol. 24 pt. 2&3). From 2003-2009, he served as the US Editor for *The Contemporary Music Review*, where he still serves on the editorial board. His book *Classical Music, Why Bother?* was published by Routledge Press in 2006.

Joshua Fineberg's music has been described as a music of paradoxes: at once turbulent and contemplative, simultaneously active and reflective. The sound world is colorful and seemingly decorative, yet rigorously constructed and the consequence of careful acoustic observation and research. Fineberg belongs to the second generation of composers influenced by the so-called 'spectral' school of Frenchmen Gerard Grisey and Tristan Murail. In his music, however, the relationship between acoustical models and the resultant music is more elusive and sophisticated. Fineberg considers the use of models fundamental to his entire compositional approach. They may be poetic models as much as concrete technical ones—indeed the two may be directly related to each other.

Symphony No. 5 in B-flat Major, op. 100 (1944)
Sergei Prokofiev

Born April 23, 1891, in Sontsova, Bakhmutsk region, Yekaterinoslav district, Ukraine; died March 5, 1953, in Moscow.

Composed in 1944, Symphony No. 5 was first performed on January 13, 1945, in Moscow. It received its Carnegie Hall premiere on November 14, 1945, with the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Serge Koussevitzky.

Scoring: piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, piccolo clarinet in C, 2 clarinets in C, bass clarinet in C, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 3 trumpets in C, four horns in C, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, cymbals, legno, snare drum, tamburino, bass drum, tam-tam, piano, harp, and strings.

The Fifth Symphony is the largest of Prokofiev's symphonies, and nearly three times as long as his first, the terse "Classical." Where the "Classical" took its inspiration from Haydn and the 18th century, the Fifth turns to the late Romantic tradition (Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Sibelius) and to the heritage of the Soviet symphonic masters—especially Prokofiev's colleague and sometimes rival Shostakovich. It provides a graphic illustration, in fact, of the sea change that had occurred in Prokofiev's thinking about symphonic form and language since

1917, when, in the midst of the Russian Revolution, he dashed off the jocular "Classical." Later, Prokofiev would say that he considered his work on the Fifth

"very important not only for the musical material that went into it, but also because I was returning to the symphonic form after a break of 16 years.

The Fifth Symphony is the culmination of an entire period in my work. I conceived of it as a symphony on the greatness of the human soul."

Most striking about this symphony is its epic scale and character. Here, for the first time, Prokofiev uses the massive patriotic style that had proven so successful in his vocal and dramatic music of the late 1930s and early 1940s (*Alexander Nevsky*, *Zdravitsa*, *War and Peace*, *Ivan the Terrible*) in a purely symphonic context. The themes, orchestration, and mood are broad and strong; the irony and grotesque that permeate the "Classical" Symphony and so many other works of Prokofiev's youth play a greatly reduced, though still essential, role.

Like the Eighth Piano Sonata, completed just before it, the Fifth Symphony demonstrates an unusual preference for slow tempos. Both the first (Andante) and third (Adagio) movements—which together make up more than half of the symphony—are predominantly slow. The long first movement, in sonata-allegro form, opens with a heroic but supple theme, free of chromatic alteration and ironic leaps, in the tonic key of B-flat major. Few themes in Prokofiev's entire *oeuvre* can match it for power and expansiveness. (Its return in the opening bars of the fourth movement is a bold, dramatic gesture that gives the symphony emotional and structural unity.) The second theme of the first movement, announced by oboes and flutes, is more chromatic, but in the optimistic neo-classical idiom of the recently completed Flute Sonata. In this and in the following three movements, the piano plays an unusually prominent role, used for both percussive and melodic effect. In contrast to the epic expanse of the first movement, the second is light and jocular, contrasting a gently tongue-in-cheek martial theme with a free-falling one in A-B-A form. Constructed over an insistent ostinato in eighth-notes, the music creates a strong sense of dance. (Prokofiev had completed his ballet *Cinderella* not long before writing the Fifth Symphony).

The dominant quality of the Symphony is epic rather than tragic, but the long, slow third movement does express feelings of grief and pathos that seem directly related to the terrible events of World War II—especially in the funeral march section in 3/4 meter. Rhythmically, this section stands in marked contrast to the unusual, flowing 9/8 meter of the rest of the movement, in which Prokofiev juxtaposes triplets against quarter notes and eighth notes to produce a rocking, unsettling effect, while spinning out a beautiful lyrical melody whose phrases are initially given to different woodwind instruments in turn. This reflective, nostalgic mood is broken by the playful, jaunty main theme of the compact, action-packed last movement (in sonata-allegro form), full of optimism and joy; the second theme is similarly bright and cheerful. But Prokofiev saves the very best for last—the finale and coda are startling and original: a rambunctious, galloping romp propelled by wood block, triangle, cymbals, and piano, recalling

the scene of the striking of the clock at midnight in *Cinderella*.

Prokofiev wrote the Fifth Symphony very quickly, while staying at a composers' retreat outside Moscow during the summer and early fall of 1944. Although he did not give the symphony a descriptive title or a program, or even a dedication, he clearly thought of it as his "war symphony." By the time of its premiere, on January 13, 1945, the Red Army was advancing on Berlin and the defeat of Nazi Germany was in sight. So important did Prokofiev (who did not much enjoy conducting) consider this occasion that he conducted the first performance himself, on the legendary stage of the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory. All of the prominent figures in Moscow musical life were present. Among them was Prokofiev's friend and collaborator pianist Sviatoslav Richter, who later described the event:

"The Great Hall was illuminated, no doubt, the same way it always was," he wrote later, "but when Prokofiev stood up, the light seemed to pour straight down on him from somewhere up above. He stood like a monument on a pedestal. And then, when Prokofiev had taken his place on the podium and silence reigned in the hall, artillery salvos suddenly thundered forth. His baton was raised. He waited, and began only after the cannons had stopped. There was something very significant in this, something symbolic. It was as if all of us—including Prokofiev—had reached some kind of shared turning point."

The salvos came from Soviet cannons, paying tribute to the Red Army soldiers who had just crossed the Vistula on their victory march towards Berlin. The end of the Second World War, which caused more suffering and casualties in the USSR than for any other participant, was now clearly in sight. When the orchestra finally began to play, it seemed to continue the music begun by the cannons.

—Harlow Robins

Harlow Robinson is Matthews Distinguished University Professor at Northeastern University, and author of *Sergei Prokofiev: A Biography* and the recently published *Russians in Hollywood, Hollywood's Russians: Biography of an Image*.

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Ralph Vaughan Williams Season

David Hoose, Music Director

October 3, 2:30 pm – Longy School of Music

Cantata Singers Chamber Series presents
Vocal Chamber Music of Vaughan Williams and Friends

November 5 and 6, 8:00 pm – Jordan Hall

Vaughan Williams: *Flos campi*, with William Frampton, viola

Vaughan Williams: *Oboe Concerto*, with Peggy Pearson, oboe

Wyner: *Give Thanks for All Things*
(World Premiere of CS Commission)
additional works by Imbrie · Fine

January 14, 8:00 pm – Jordan Hall

Vaughan Williams: *Riders to the Sea*, one-act opera (semi-staged)

Vaughan Williams: *Three Shakespeare Songs*

Vaughan Williams: *Loch Lomond*
additional works by Elgar · Holst · Finzi

March 18, 8:00 pm and March 20, 3:00 pm – Jordan Hall

J.S. Bach: *Mass in B Minor*

May 13, 8:00 pm – First Church Cambridge

Vaughan Williams: *Mass in G Minor*
additional works by Bernstein · Ives · Howells



Ralph Vaughan Williams

Photo: Frank Chappelow

For more information call 617-868-5885 or visit www.cantatasingers.org

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Tuesday, March 22, 8:00pm

Faculty Recital Series
Peter Zazofsky, violin
David Kopp, piano
Concert Hall

Thursday, March 24, 8:00pm

Collaborative Composition Project
Martin Amlin and Shiela Kibbe, directors
Tsai Performance Center

Friday, March 25, 6:00pm

Richmond Piano Competition Finals
Concert Hall

Saturday, March 26, 8:00pm

Sound Icon
Jeffrey Means, conductor
Joshua Fineberg *Recueil de pierre et de sable*
Gerard Grisey *Selections from Les Espaces Acoustique*
Works by winners of the BU Composition Competition
Concert Hall

Monday, March 28, 8:00pm

ALEA III: Workshop International
Theodore Antoniou, conductor
Tsai Performance Center

Tuesday, March 29, 8:00pm

Muir String Quartet
In Residence at Boston University
Metcalf Trustee Center

Friday, April 1, 8:00pm

The Fiddler and the Old Woman of Rumelia
An opera by Ketty Nez
Jeffrey Means, conductor
Concert Hall

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Tudor Dornescu
Taichi Fukumura
Jiyeon Han
Kate Outterbridge
Grace Yuiko Nakano
Narae Han
Jihye Kim
Kendra Lenz
Hannah Choi
George Millsap

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Laura Manko, *principal*
Michelle Rahn
Anna Griffith
Andrew Salo
Oliver Chang
Min Springer
Esther Nahm
Silvija Kristapsons
Yingchen Tu
Brianna Pesce

Cello

Cora Swenson, *principal*
Stephen Marotto
David Cruz
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Cello (continued)

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SCHOOL OF MUSIC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Susan Conkling, *Music Education*
Richard Cornell, *Music Studies*
Phyllis Hoffman, *Applied Studies and Performance*
Ann Howard Jones, *Ensembles*

BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC UPCOMING EVENTS AND PERFORMANCES

Monday, April 11, 8:00pm

**Boston University Symphonic Chorus
and Symphony Orchestras**

Ann Howard Jones, conductor
James Demler, Elijah
Penelope Bitzas, mezzo-soprano
Elizabeth Baldwin, soprano
Martin Bakari, tenor
Mendelssohn *Elijah*
Symphony Hall

April 21, 22, and 23, 7:30pm

Mainstage Opera

Sunday, April 24, 2:00pm

Roméo et Juliette

Music by Charles Gounod
Libretto by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré
William Lumpkin, conductor
Sharon Daniels, stage director
Allison Voth, supertitles
Boston University Theatre, Mainstage

Tuesday, May 3, 8:00pm

Boston University Symphony Orchestra

Soloists' Competition Winners' Concert

Victor Cayres, piano
Sang Ae Kim, flute
Maja Tremiszewska, collaborative piano
Davide Ianni *Incastro*
John Page, conductor
Tsai Performance Center

For more information on our events, please contact the School of Music office at (617) 353-3341.

Sign up for the CFA E-calendar at www.bu.edu/cfa/events

Boston University Theatre, Mainstage, 264 Huntington Avenue
Symphony Hall, 301 Massachusetts Avenue
Tsai Performance Center, 685 Commonwealth Avenue

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