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1998-03-03

# Boston University Symphony Orchestra, March 3, 1998

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*Boston University School for the Arts  
Music Division*

*—presents—*

BOSTON UNIVERSITY  
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

THEODORE ANTONIOU  
*conductor*

PENELOPE BITZAS  
*mezzo-soprano*

XX

Tuesday, March 3, 1998 at 8:00 p.m.  
The Tsai Performance Center  
685 Commonwealth Avenue  
Boston, Massachusetts

# BOSTON UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

THEODORE ANTONIOU, *conductor*

PENELOPE BITZAS, *mezzo-soprano*

Tuesday, March 3, 1998

8:00 p.m.

## Program

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### Variaciones concertantes, Op. 23

Alberto Ginastera  
(1916-1983)

Tema par violoncello ed arpa  
Interludio per corde  
Variazione giacosa per flauto  
Variazione in modo di scherzo per clarinetto  
Variazione drammatica per viola  
Variazione canonica per oboe e fagotto  
Variazione ritmica per tromba e trombone  
Variazione in modo di moto perpetuo per violino  
Variazione pastorale per corno  
Interludio per fiati  
Ripresa dal tema per contrabasso  
Variazione finale in modo di rondo per orchestra

### Poems of Emily Dickinson, Book III (1983-84) (Version for Full Orchestra, 1998)

John Goodman  
(b. 1937)

This Is My Letter to the World  
A Loss of Something Ever Felt I  
I Reason Earth Is Short  
I Felt a Funeral In My Brain  
I Read My Sentence Steadily  
One Blessing Had I Than the Rest  
Interlude  
These Are the Days When Birds Come Back

Penelope Bitzas, *mezzo-soprano*

—Intermission—

### Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36

Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky  
(1840-1893)

Andante sostenuto—moderato con anima  
Andantino in modo di canzone  
Scherzo: Pizzicato ostinato  
Finale: Allegro con fuoco

## Poems of Emily Dickinson, Book III

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### **This is my letter to the World**

That never wrote to Me—  
The simple News that Nature told—  
With tender majesty.

Her Message is committed  
To Hands I cannot see—  
For love of Her—  
Sweet—countrymen—  
Judge tenderly—of Me.

### **A loss of something ever felt I—**

The first that I could recollect  
Bereft I was—of what I knew not  
Too young that any should suspect  
A Mourner walked among the children  
I notwithstanding stole about  
As one bemoaning a Dominion  
Itself the only Prince cast out—

Elder, Today, a session wiser  
And fainter, too  
I find myself still softly searching  
For my Delinquent Palaces—

And a Suspicion, like a Finger  
Touches my Forehead now and then  
That I am looking oppositely  
For the site of the Kingdom of Heaven.

### **I reason, Earth is short—**

And Anguish—absolute—  
And many hurt,  
But, what of that?

I reason, we could die—  
The best Vitality  
Cannot excel Decay,  
But, what of that?

I reason, that in Heaven—  
Somehow, it will be even—  
Some new Equation, given—  
But what of that?

### **I felt a Funeral in my Brain,**

And Mourners to and fro  
Kept treading—treading—till it seemed  
That Sense was breaking through—  
And when they all were seated,  
A service, like a Drum—  
Kept beating—beating—till I thought  
My Mind was going numb—

And I heard them lift a Box  
And creak across my Soul  
With those same Boots of Lead, again,  
Then Space—began to toll,  
As all the Heavens were a Bell,  
And Being, but an Ear,  
And I, and Silence, some strange Race  
Wrecked, solitary, here—

**I read my sentence—steadily—**  
Reviewed it with my eyes,  
To see that I made no mistake  
In its extremest clause—  
The Date, and manner, of the shame—  
And then the Pious Form  
That "God have mercy" on the Soul  
The Jury vote Him—  
I made my soul familiar—with her extremity—  
That at the last, it should not be a novel Agony—  
But she, and Death, acquainted—  
Meet tranquilly, as friends—  
Salute and pass, without a Hint—  
And there the matter ends—

**One Blessing had I than the rest**  
So larger to my Eyes  
That I stopped gauging—satisfied—  
For this enchanted size—

It was the limit of my Dream—  
The focus of my Prayer—  
A perfect—paralyzing Bliss—  
Contented as Despair—

I knew no more of Want—or Cold—  
Phantasms both become  
For this new Value in the Soul—  
Supremest Earthly Sum—

The heaven below the Heaven above—  
Obscured with ruddier Blue—  
Life's Latitudes leant over—full—  
The judgement perished—too—  
Why Bliss so scantily disburse—  
Why Paradise defer—  
Why Floods be served to Us—in bowls—  
I speculate no more.

**These are the days when Birds come back—**  
A very few—a Bird or two—  
Two take a backward look.

These are the days when skies resume  
The old—old sophistries of June—  
A blue and gold mistake

Oh fraud that cannot cheat the Bee  
Almost thy plausibility

Induces my belief

Till ranks of seeds their witness bear  
And softly thro' the altered air  
Hurries a timid leaf.

Oh Sacrament of summer days,  
Oh Last Communion in the Haze—  
Permit a child to join.

Thy sacred emblems to partake—  
Thy consecrated bread to take—  
And thine immortal wine!

## Program Notes

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Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983)

*Variaciones concertantes* (Concertante Variations) for chamber orchestra, Op. 23 (1953)

Alberto Ginastera was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He took his first music lessons at the age of seven, and by the age of 25 he had already attracted wide attention with his early ballet music. He belongs to the generation following the Brazilian Heitor Villa-Lobos, the Latin American nationalist composer *par excellence*. Like his predecessor, Ginastera was a versatile composer, whose music is expressively rooted in the nationalistic idioms of his native country.

The original Theme of *Variaciones concertantes* (introduced by the cello and harp), is followed by 9 variations, mainly melodic in character, each one featuring a different instrument. After an Interlude for Strings (II), the first variation, *Variazione giocosa* (III), features the flute. The next variations are as follows: IV. *Variazione in modo di scherzo* for clarinet; V. *Variazione drammatica* for viola; VI. *Variazione canonica* for oboe and bassoon (canonic imitation at the fifth between the two solo instruments); VII. *Variazione ritmica* for trumpet and trombone; VIII. *Variazione in modo di moto perpetuo* for violin; IX. *Variazione pastorale* for horn; X. *Interlude for winds*; XI. *Reprise of the theme for double-bass*; XII. *Final Variation in the form of a Rondo for orchestra*.

*Variaciones concertantes* belongs to the composer's second period of what he called "subjective nationalism." Contrary to the "objective nationalism" of his early period, where folk music idioms were openly incorporated in his works, this second period is characterized by a sublimation of his nationalist tendencies. As Ginastera himself explained about the *Variaciones*, "Instead of employing folklore material, an Argentine atmosphere is obtained by the use of original melodies and rhythms."

The work was commissioned by the Asociación Amigos de la Música of Buenos Aires. It was first performed in Buenos Aires on June 2, 1953, with Igor Markevitch conducting. Seven years later the music became the basis for a ballet entitled *Tender Night*.

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John Goodman (b. 1937)

Poems of Emily Dickinson, Book III

Seven Songs for mezzo-soprano and orchestra (1984, orch. 1998)

John Goodman was born in Kansas City, Missouri in 1937, and received his Bachelor's, Master's, and doctoral degrees from Northwestern University, the Yale School of Music, and Boston University, respectively. Among his teachers are Elliott

Carter, Donald Martino, Quincy Porter, and Gardner Read. He was a member of the faculty of New England Conservatory of Music and Emmanuel College before assuming his current position on the faculty of Boston University School for the Arts in 1969. He served as chairman of the Department of Theory and Composition from 1971 until 1988.

In 1990 he was commissioned by the Barlow Foundation and the Snowbird Institute to write his Second String Quartet, which was performed by the Muir Quartet in Salt Lake City and Boston, as well as in Austria and Germany. In recent years his compositions also have been performed by the Masterworks Series in Washington D.C., the Summerstrings Ensemble in Boston, and Woodstock, Vermont; the Boston University Summer Concert series and the Holy Cross Chamber Players in Worcester.

Several of his works have been premiered by the Boston-based contemporary music ensemble ALEA III, including his *Fantasy for Violin and Piano*, his opera *The Garden of Flowers*, and two sets of songs to poetry of Emily Dickinson for female voice and chamber orchestra. His musical, *Simple Simon*, was performed in the spring of 1994 by the Boston University Undergraduate Opera Workshop.

*Poems of Emily Dickinson*, Book III, was premiered in 1984, with Maeda Freeman as soloist and Theodore Antoniou conducting. The following year it was performed by Pamela Gore with Charles Fussell conducting. In both performances the work was scored for a small chamber orchestra. Tonight's performance is a premiere of the version for full orchestra, which also includes a few minor revisions both to text and music.

According to the composer, "The issue of selecting an authentic, or 'best' version of Emily Dickinson's poems has not been of great concern, the choices coming down ultimately to versions which seem more singable, or simply to a matter of preference. Beyond occasional differences in words and punctuation, the matter of version is most acute in the fourth song, in which the final verse, omitted in some published editions, has not been set musically."

The poetry of Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) is characterized by a deceptive simplicity. The aphoristic style and terse, laconic language of her poems are here complemented by music either equally aphoristic (third song), lyrical (second song), or sometimes overtly dramatic (fourth song). Each poem is carefully treated as an entity, while each verse retains its individuality. Although no specific narrative runs through the seven poems, all of them center around similar themes of loss, solitude and agony. In the words of the composer, "The set of songs is conceived as a cycle in which there is a series of contemplations and a progressively evolving outlook as the singer reviews her relationship to existence and death. The crucial line occurs in the second song, 'Too young that any should suspect a mourner dwelt among the children.' By the end of the sixth song the singer comes to 'speculate no more.' An orchestral interlude, in which many of the themes of the earlier songs are reviewed, leads into the final song in which the singer communes in harmony with her existence." The tonal repose of the last song emphasizes precisely that concluding harmony of the text.

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**Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)**

**Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36 (1878)**

**Andante sostenuto—moderato con anima**

**Andantino in modo di canzone**

**Scherzo: Pizzicato ostinato**

**Finale: Allegro con fuoco**

Tchaikovsky is admittedly one of the most important symphonic composers outside the boundaries of the Germanic tradition. An inventive melodist by nature and a skillful orchestrator, his symphonies abound in melodic luxury and vivid orchestral colors. The potentialities of personal expression inherent in program music were quite appealing to the composer. So, it should not surprise us that extra-musical associations would have infiltrated an "absolute" music genre such as the symphony in Tchaikovsky's output.

While working on his opera *Eugene Onegin*, Tchaikovsky completed the Fourth Symphony in Italy in January 1878, after a period of immense emotional frustration, which included his catastrophic marriage and a subsequent breakdown. Overwhelmed by a sheer sense of fatalism, a month after the completion of the Fourth Symphony, Tchaikovsky wrote a letter including an extensive analysis of the 'programmatic' elements of the work (although, in another famous letter to Taneyev, he had described the genre of the symphony as "an expression of the soul's emotions for which there was no words"). The recipient of the letter, dated February 17, 1878, was also the dedicatee of Tchaikovsky's work, Nadezhda Filaretovna von Meck, a wealthy widow who had become Tchaikovsky's patroness on the condition that the two would never meet.

In this letter, Tchaikovsky describes the fanfare-like opening motto of the Symphony as the "kernel of the whole work"; it represents *Fate*, "the force of destiny, which ever prevents our pursuit of happiness from reaching its goal...which hangs like a sword of Damocles over our heads and constantly, ceaselessly poisons our souls." A dream-like moment of happiness, in the form of the second theme, is interrupted by the ominous recurrence of the *Fate* motive in the trumpets: "There were only dreams, and *Fate* awakens us from them," wrote the composer. (In another letter, Tchaikovsky associated the central idea of *Fate* in his Symphony to that in Beethoven's Fifth).

The two middle movements represent memories of things past for the composer, "blissful moments" of youth, and at the same time "bitter moments of ir retrievable" The solo oboe line of the second movement, played above pizzicato string accompaniment, conveys precisely that "melancholy" associated with the past. The third movement is the most original of all: the strings play pizzicato throughout, in the manner of "capricious arabesques, fugitive images which pass through one's mind when one has had a little wine to drink and is feeling the first effects of intoxication."

The last movement is thematically linked to the first: the *Fate* motto returns in full force. The movement starts with music reminiscent of a joyful and "popular holiday festivity," an appropriate place for Tchaikovsky to introduce a popular Russian folk song ("On the bank a little birch stood"). "But hardly have you succeeded in forgetting yourself and enjoying the spectacle of others' joys, when tireless *Fate* reappears and insinuates itself. But the others pay no heed. They do not even look around to see you standing there, lonely and depressed...Never say that all the world is sad. You have only yourself to blame." This last confession is an apocalyptic summary of the composer's fatalistic attitude at the time.

Tchaikovsky's letter, with its 'programmatic' analysis of the Symphony, is a valuable document that has been variously interpreted - and, often, misinterpreted. Although it would be a mistake to try to make literal correspondences between all the points and the actual music ("one should remember that the 'program' came only as an afterthought, after the completion of the work), there are, nevertheless, certain autobiographical aspects in the music that Tchaikovsky felt able to convey in *words* to his "best friend," as the dedication on the score reads.

The first performance of the Fourth Symphony took place at a concert of the Russian Musical Society in Moscow on February 22, 1878, conducted by Nicolai Rubinstein.

## Meet the Artists

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**Theodore Antoniou**, one of the most eminent and prolific contemporary artists, leads a distinguished career as composer, conductor, and Professor of Composition at Boston University. 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 became 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, and the Berkshire Music Center Orchestra. In 1974 he became Assistant Director of Contemporary Activities at Tanglewood, a position he held until 1985. An ardent proponent of new music, Professor Antoniou had founded various contemporary music ensembles, including ALEA III, in residence at Boston University, the Philadelphia New Music Group, and the Hellenic Group of Contemporary Music. He is also the director of the ALEA III and Olympia (Athens) International Composition Competitions.

Many of Professor Antoniou's compositions were commissioned by major orchestras around the world, and more than a hundred and fifty of his works have been published by Bärenreiter Verlag (Germany), G. Schirmer, and Gunmar Music (USA). 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 the Metcalf Award for Excellence in Teaching by Boston University.

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 number more than a hundred and fifty compositions. From his recent output, the work which holds the most prominent place is the opera *Bacchae*, whose first fully-staged production was given for the Athens Festival in Greece. He has just finished a new opera, *Oedipus at Colonus*, commissioned by the Süd-West Rundfunk, Baden-Baden, in Germany, to be paired in programs with Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*, the premiere will take place in Athens on May 9th, 1998. 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.

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Penelope Bitzas, mezzo-soprano, has performed extensively in opera, solo recitals, solos with orchestras, contemporary music and Greek music. She has been a soloist in concerts under conductors Kurt Masur, Seiji Ozawa, Luciano Berio and Robert Page. Her operatic experience includes roles with the Minnesota Opera, Opera Omaha, Boston Concert Opera, Midwest Opera Theater and Little Orchestra Society of New York. Ms. Bitzas has concertized in the United States, Germany, Greece, Cyprus and Turkey, and has performed and premiered contemporary music in such venues as Merkin Hall, Alice Tully Hall and Jordan Hall. Ms. Bitzas was a national finalist in the Metropolitan Opera Auditions in New York, received two fellowships to Tanglewood Music Center, was a member of the Minnesota Opera Studio and a member of the New Music Ensemble at the Banff Centre in Canada.

This fall she was heard in Copland's *In the Beginning* at Sarah Lawrence College, and was recently heard in James Russell Smith's *Canto V* with the Back Bay Chorale. This spring she will perform an All-Greek concert in Lowell, in addition to conducting the Metropolitan Greek Chorale's Spring Concert in New York City.

Ms. Bitzas has been an Assistant Professor of Voice at Boston University since 1994.

# Boston University Symphony Orchestra

## *Violin I*

Jodi Hagen, *concertmaster*  
Joo-Mee Lee  
Marie LeCarlier  
Christina Eng  
Sergei Kvorostuhin  
Kenji Furukawa  
Kaveh Saidi  
Alexia Taylor\*  
Nyssa Patten  
Han Tjoeng  
Rachel Lambdin  
Mary Francis White  
Alexey Shabalin

## *Violin II*

Heidi Braun, *principal*  
Audinga Aukstikalnyte  
Takahiro Nagamine  
Erica Amidon  
Lior Neist  
Margaret Dole  
Lun-Hsiang Tung  
Gabrielle Kopf  
Nina Yoshida  
Anna Kaydanova  
Christine Ledoux  
Anna Brathwaite  
Daniel Han

## *Viola*

Yi-Chen Lin, *principal*  
David Fallo  
Melinda Hirsch  
Anna Wetherby  
Andrea Holz  
Christina Greene  
Miriam Gephardt  
Liza Villanueva

## *Cello*

Chia-Chia Chang *principal*  
Benoit Faucher  
Sonya Knussen

Alex Ludwig  
Shay Rudolph  
Pavel Dovgalyuk\*  
Velleda Pelpel  
Tara Chiatovich  
Pei-Wen Chiu\*  
Alex Lecarme\*  
Phaedre Sassano+  
Alison Seidner+  
Brandon Baptiste+

## *Doublebass*

Matthew Medlock, *principal*  
Susan Hagen  
Changwoo Sohn  
Dwayne Green  
Vincent Gendron+  
George Speed+

## *Flute*

Boaz Meirovitch  
Heather Fortune  
Amanda Wellum  
Wendy Karden  
Hannah Hintze

## *Piccolo*

Amanda Wellum

## *Oboe*

Andrew Price  
Youn-Shin Cho  
Bernadette Avila  
Denis Osver

## *Clarinet*

Abby Raymond  
Laura Harrison

## *Bassoon*

Shinyee Na  
Gabriel Beavers

## *Horn*

Fritz Foss  
Scott Bacon  
Laura Danek  
MaryJo Neher  
Gabrielle Finck  
Jeanne Wiesman

## *Trumpet*

Neil Mueller  
Michael Zonshine

## *Trombone*

Will Kimball  
Sarah Privler

## *Bass Trombone*

Wes Citron

## *Tuba*

J.P. Lee

## *Timpani*

Michael Chang  
Rebecca Kolinski

## *Percussion*

Matthew Persing  
Zhanna Maysyuk  
Ryan Darling

## *Harp*

Alicia Jones  
Franziska Huhn

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+ Personnel only in Tchaikovsky

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