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# Boston University Symphony Orchestra, October 5, 1999

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*Boston University School for the Arts  
Music Division*

—presents—

BOSTON UNIVERSITY  
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

DAVID HOOSE, *conductor*

xx

Tuesday, October 5, 1999 at 8:00 p.m.  
The Tsai Performance Center  
685 Commonwealth Avenue  
Boston, Massachusetts

# BOSTON UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

DAVID HOOSE, *conductor*

Tuesday, October 5, 1999  
8:00 p.m.

## PROGRAM

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Overture to Genoveva, Op. 81

Robert Schumann  
(1810-1856)

Egdon Heath, Homage to Hardy, Op. 47

Gustav Holst  
(1874-1934)

*First Boston Performance*

—Intermission—

Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Op. 47

Dmitri Shostakovich  
(1906-1975)

Moderato  
Allegretto  
Largo  
Allegro non troppo

## PROGRAM NOTES

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### Robert Schumann (1810-1856) Overture to *Genoveva*, Op. 81

To Schumann, dramatic music represented the apex of his lifelong effort to raise music to the level of literary culture. The son of a bookseller, publisher and author, Robert Schumann spent his childhood immersed in books. He made several attempts during his lifetime to write a German 'literary opera', but failed repeatedly until relatively late in his career. Schumann developed most of his chosen topics into libretti that closely adhered to the original literary form. At times, the poetic quality of his libretti often prevailed over their inherent dramatic content, forestalling the satisfactory completion of his many operatic projects—until *Genoveva*. Therefore, dramatic music occupies the smallest portion of Robert Schumann's total output. *Genoveva*, his only opera, and the series of choral-orchestral compositions called the *Szenen aus Goethe's Faust* are seldom performed today. However, the Overture to *Manfred*, a melodramatic treatment of a text based on Byron, has become a staple of the orchestral repertoire.

A number of composers had already treated the well-known legend of Genevieve de Brabant. After reading two contemporary dramas based on the legend, one by Friedrich Hebbel and the other by Ludwig Tieck, Schumann enlisted Robert Reinick as his librettist. In the course of work on the opera, Schumann determined Reinick's setting to be unsatisfactory and personally overtook the crafting of the text. The excitement generated by his initial reading of Hebbel's drama prompted Schumann to sketch out the Overture in just three days. Within these initial sketches he attempted to capture the progression from betrayal to redemption, the crux of the text, thus foreshadowing the direction of the opera. Reversing the standard procedure of writing an operatic overture *after* having composed the opera, Schumann, secure in his musical concepts before ever setting down a note, orchestrated the overture before beginning the body of the work.

The opera was completed by August 4, 1848, but did not have its first performance until June 25, 1850 in Leipzig. The first two acts went well, but unfortunately the last two, in Clara Schumann's words, 'less well.' The opera played in many of the major European houses, but as a contemporary of Wagner, Schumann (the opera composer) became the target for comparative and mostly negative criticism.

The failure of the opera perhaps owed more to its obstinate faithfulness to its literary models than to anything else. Moreover, Schumann patterned the opera after a less than popular genre: the Baroque *Trauerspiel*, a play of mourning whose primary aim was the display of human misery,

wretchedness, and suffering. The plot, as realized by Schumann, combines the well-known 'Genoveva' legend with Schumann's vision of a quasi-Christian redemptive ending. Briefly stated, Golo, a lusting manservant, falsely accuses Genoveva of adultery during her husband's absence. Siegfried (the husband) orders Genoveva to be condemned to death for her actions. Learning of the plot against the loyal Genoveva, Siegfried rushes home, arriving at the crucial moment, and thus sparing her life.

The music Schumann composed for *Genoveva* has always been held in higher regard than the libretto. The Overture is often heard as an independent concert piece, and opens with a slow introduction that reveals a portrait of the tragic Genoveva, beginning with the first chord, an unprepared ninth chord. Schumann continues by overlapping thematic ideas with accompanying figures supported by unpredictably shifting harmonies. This combination of these devices, in turn, effect an urgent sense of forward motion throughout the Overture, which drives toward the triumphant coda, whereupon Genoveva's initial motif of a falling fifth is transformed, signifying her ultimate redemption.

### **Gustav Holst (1874-1934)**

Edgon Heath, Homage to Hardy, Op. 47

Gustav Holst began composing in grammar school, armed only with what he could garner from reading Berlioz's treatise on instrumentation. Later, when sent to the Royal College of Music to study with Charles Villiers Stanford, Holst met Ralph Vaughan Williams, with whom he would share a life-long friendship and love of the compositional process. A succession of teaching appointments led to Holst's heading the music department at Morley College, where he was involved in an historic performance of Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*, the first since 1697. This experience spurred him to seek "the musical idiom of the English language," but in contemporary terms.

*Egdon Heath* was Holst's first full-scale orchestral work after the phenomenal success of his orchestral suite, *The Planets*. Written in 1927 on commission from the New York Symphony Orchestra, *Egdon Heath* was premiered on February 12, 1928 under the baton of Walter Damrosch. The next day Holst himself conducted the first European performance in Cheltenham, leading the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

In his program note for the Cheltenham premiere, Holst wrote: "Thomas Hardy gave the name "Egdon Heath" to the partly wild, partly cultivated stretch of country that lies east of Dorchester." Holst actually paid a visit to Hardy, who gladly showed him around Egdon Heath. He delighted in the area, both real and imaginary, as it inspired the locales in

Hardy's many novels. According to Holst, "This piece of music is the result of memories of "Egdon" as it exists in nature and in Hardy's writing, particularly in the first chapter of *The Return of the Native*." Thomas Hardy died a few weeks before the premiere of *Egdon Heath*, prompting Holst to alter the dedication to read, 'Homage to Thomas Hardy'.

The mood of *Egdon Heath* evolved from a sentence in *The Return of the Native*; where Hardy described the heath as "a place perfectly accordant with man's nature—neither ghastly, hateful, or ugly: neither commonplace, unmeaning, nor tame; but, like man, slighted and enduring; and withal singularly colossal and mysterious in its swarthy monotony." This corresponded with Gustav Holst's idea of beauty—composing *Egdon Heath* represented a homecoming for him.

The opening bars seem to grow from a silence slightly disturbed by the murmur of muted double basses, the sound of which blossoms into a lyrical passage for woodwinds (apparently this composer's nod to the finale of Beethoven's Ninth). Muted strings reach across four octaves to play the opening theme. The oboe introduces a melody of restless urgency, causing the whole orchestra to join in a sad procession that moves toward collective discord. Soon after, the trumpet quotes the opening theme, and a serenely lyrical passage ensues, followed by a reminiscence of the trumpet's piercing cry. The flute and bassoons transform this lament into a melancholy dance, and the theme returns, now shrouded in an atmosphere of mystery. Throughout *Egdon Heath*, at times called a one-movement symphony, Holst maintains cohesiveness despite its loose structure (a large number of short sections based on six distinct, yet related, motives).

Holst's uncanny directness of expression pervaded both his life and his music. Indeed, the music of *Egdon Heath* resembles Holst's own nature: stark, austere and free from compromise. The overwhelming economy of *Egdon Heath* startled the audience at its premiere; even Holst's friend and supporter, Vaughan Williams wrote of his initial bewilderment. Holst was deeply disappointed that the work was not better received during his lifetime, and in fact favored it over everything else in his output. *Egdon Heath* fulfills Holst's youthful quest, for in this work of his maturity, Holst became the master "of the musical idiom of the English language."

### Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

#### Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Op. 47

Shostakovich once said that the meaning of his music was crystal-clear for those "with ears to listen." A strong pull toward tragedy and a keen sense of the ironic were clearly in evidence in much of his early music, but the

doctrine of the Stalinist regime demanded that optimism and heroic triumph predominate in the music of Soviet composers. Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony, perhaps more than any of his other compositions, illustrates a struggle to reconcile the need for personal expression with the declared aims of the society to which Shostakovich claimed allegiance. As a result, the ideological content of his compositions has been a target for effusive and often vitriolic commentary for over sixty years.

In 1936 an editorial in *Pravda* condemned Shostakovich's tremendously popular opera, *Lady Macbeth of Mtensk*. This mouthpiece for Soviet propaganda derided, among other things, the opera's technical and emotional complexity. Fearful of further repercussions, Shostakovich withdrew his mammoth Fourth Symphony, which was already in rehearsal at the time. The terror of the Stalinist regime was at its height, and Shostakovich and his circle were not immune to reprisals. Such were the circumstances under which Shostakovich wrote his Fifth Symphony, designated "a Soviet artist's creative response to just criticism."

First performed in Leningrad on November 21, 1937, for the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution, the Fifth Symphony was hailed by the Soviet critical establishment and the general public as evidence of Shostakovich's 'rehabilitation' as a composer. From this point on his symphonies would serve as something of a nationalist manifesto. Count Alexei Tolstoy proclaimed the value of this new instrument of the state in a government-sanctioned critique, proposing that in the first movement the author-hero's "psychological torments reach their crisis and give way to ardor. In the Largo—the personality submerges itself in the great epoch that surrounds it, and begins to resonate with the epoch." The Finale culminates with the synthesis of the composer's profound conception with the massive orchestral sonorities, thus providing "an enormous optimistic lift." Richard Taruskin, the noted writer on Soviet music and musicians, describes Shostakovich's reward as, "an orgy of public praise," but contends that the manifest philosophical content of the symphony garnered severe criticism from western musicians.

Shostakovich's reconciliation with the west came with the release of his memoirs, *Testimony*, a book edited (and indeed perhaps authored) by Solomon Volkov, the authenticity of which has stirred great debate. The following excerpt from *Testimony* may represent a retrospective commentary by the composer on his Fifth Symphony. "I think that it is clear to everyone what happens in the Fifth. The rejoicing is forced, created under threat.. as if someone were beating you with a stick and saying, 'Your business is rejoicing, your business is rejoicing,' and you rise, shaky, and go marching off, muttering, 'Our business is rejoicing, our business is rejoicing'."

The distinctive simple materials of the opening movement are centered on four melodic gestures initially introduced by the strings, which then resurface and subsequently combine. The powerful dotted figure over chromaticized large leaps recalls the opening of the first movement of Beethoven's Ninth—one of the many gestures outwardly connecting this symphony to the Viennese tradition decried by the Communist Party. While this figure is initially paired with a short descending melody, a simple rhythmic gesture then underlays a lyrical, contemplative theme, both of which are explored separately, as a pair, and then in combination with the initial two themes. All of this is further enhanced by Shostakovich's lush orchestration.

A Scherzo and Trio follow. Full of humor (perhaps even caricature) they recall the genial, extroverted minuet of the Viennese classics. The Largo evolves from three meditative ideas that grow in emotional range; in fact, the distraught climax induced outright weeping among members of the audience at the Leningrad premiere. Ian MacDonald, a biographer of Shostakovich, suggests that the funereal character at the end of the movement may represent a requiem for the composer's friend and patron, Mikhail Tukhachevsky, who had been shot that same year, and about whom Shostakovich had been interrogated. Indeed, the end of the movement, consecrated with a passage for brass, evokes the image of a secular Soviet funeral.

Post-glasnost revisionists have enlivened the discussion regarding the meaning of the last movement. MacDonald has described the leading theme "as an outburst of uncouth laughter in the low brass . . . which releases . . . mechanically jabbering notes over which scrapes of melody rage and posture." And yet, writing at the height of the Stalinist terror, when all who dared to dissent were killed or sent to the gulag, Shostakovich would have risked suicide by hiding within the Finale a message of dissent. The composer propels the entire movement toward a hammering crescendo of repeated notes. In the ongoing debate centered on the meaning of Shostakovich's music, the climax of this passage of 'rejoicing' is both lauded and derided as a transformation of human consciousness into active optimism.

Program notes by Karen Ruymann

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Fanning, David, ed. *Shostakovich Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Kay, Norman. *Shostakovich*. London: Oxford University Press, 1971.

## MEET THE CONDUCTOR

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Professor of Music at the Boston University School for the Arts, **David Hoose** is Director of Orchestral Activities and Conductor of the Boston University Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Hoose is also music director of three distinguished organizations: the Cantata Singers & Ensemble and the Collage New Music (both of Boston) and the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra. He has appeared as guest conductor of the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, Utah Symphony Orchestra, Boston Symphony Chamber Players, Korean Broadcasting System Symphony Orchestra (KBS), Orchestra Regionale Toscana (Italy), Handel & Haydn Society, and the June Opera Festival of New Jersey. Mr. Hoose has conducted the Emmanuel Chamber Orchestra, Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra, Chorus Pro Musica, Back Bay Chorale, American-Soviet Festival Orchestra (all of Boston), as well as the Quad City Symphony, Ann Arbor Symphony, Cayuga Chamber Orchestra, and the New Hampshire, Warebrook, and Tanglewood Music Festivals. He has also been a guest conductor at the Eastman School of Music, the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University, the University of Southern California School of Music, and the New England Conservatory.

Mr. Hoose has been a recipient of the ASCAP Chorus America Award for Adventurous Programming (with the Cantata Singers & Ensemble), has been recognized as Musician of the Year by the *Boston Globe*, and has been a recipient, as a member of the Emmanuel Wind Quintet, of the Walter Naumburg Award for Chamber Music. As a fellowship conducting student at the Tanglewood Music Center, he was recipient of the Dmitri Mitropoulos Award. Mr. Hoose's recordings appear on the Koch, Nonseuch, Delos, CRI, GunMar, and New World labels.

### SPECIAL EVENT

Monday, November 22, 8:00 p.m.

**Boston University Symphony Orchestra and Symphonic Chorus**

Gilbert Kaplan, *conductor*

Kelly Kaduce, *soprano*

Mary Hughes, *mezzo-soprano*

Mahler: *Symphony No. 2, Resurrection*

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Christine Vitale  
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Elise Dalleska  
Monica Cheveresan  
Mark Berger  
Shu-Fang Du  
Katherine Collins  
Piotr Buczek  
Gabrielle Kopf  
Yeon-Su Kim  
Stephanie Larsen  
Sarita Uranovsky  
Jeeza Wadler  
In-Kyung Joen  
Nyssa Patten  
Letitia Hom

## Violin II

Laurent Chatel, *Principal*  
Kimberly Griffith  
Chiyoko Mizumura  
Christina Eng  
Costin Anghelescu  
Elizabeth Ryu  
Joung-Hoon Song  
Olivia Young  
Jessica Platt  
Yoojin Kim  
Alexia Taylor  
Zhong Ling Li  
Tao-Ming Yu  
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Takahiro Nagamine  
Anna Brathwaite  
Daniel Han

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Andrea Holz  
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James Raftopoulos  
Jason Martel  
Mark Holloway  
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Aurelien Sabouret, *Principal*  
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Nan Zhou  
Marianne von Nordek  
Kathleen Reardon  
Gabriel Shapiro  
Alexander LeCarme  
Jenny Wilkes  
Jared Hirschhorn  
Bom Kim  
Richard Evans  
Lauren Riley  
Patrick Owen  
Alexandria Rice  
Annie Chang  
Jennifer Peterson  
Sonya Knussen

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Gil Katz  
Akil Marshall  
Mike Williams  
Wang Xu  
Ira Gold  
Daniel Lehrich

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Linda Krueger ^  
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Jun Kuroki

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Kelly Hayes  
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Kai-Yun Lu ^

## E-flat Clarinet

Katherine Leaman

## Bassoon

Elah Laster \*+  
Adrian Jojatu  
Gil Perel  
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Gil Perel  
Lou Ann Pfeil

## Horn

Oliver deClercq ^  
Molly Eastman  
Gabrielle Finck  
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Sheffra Spiridopoulos \*  
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Yun Lee

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Jacob Moerschel

\* principal in Schumann

+ principal in Holst

^ principal in Shostakovich

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October 16  
8:00 p.m.

**Boston University Choral Ensembles**  
Ann Howard Jones, *conductor*  
Boston University Concert Hall  
855 Commonwealth Avenue

October 19  
8:00 p.m.

**Boston University Wind Ensemble**  
David Martins, *conductor*  
The Tsai Performance Center  
685 Commonwealth Avenue

October 21  
8:00 p.m.

**Muir String Quartet**  
The Tsai Performance Center  
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October 25  
8:00 p.m.

Artist Diploma Recital  
**Kai-Yun Lu, clarinet**  
**Gloria Chien, piano**  
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October 26  
8:00 p.m.

Faculty Concert  
**Horia Mihail, piano**  
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Special Benefit Concert  
**Stephen Salters, baritone**  
**Shiela Kibbe, piano**  
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