2005-03-03

Boston University Symphony Orchestra, March 3, 2005

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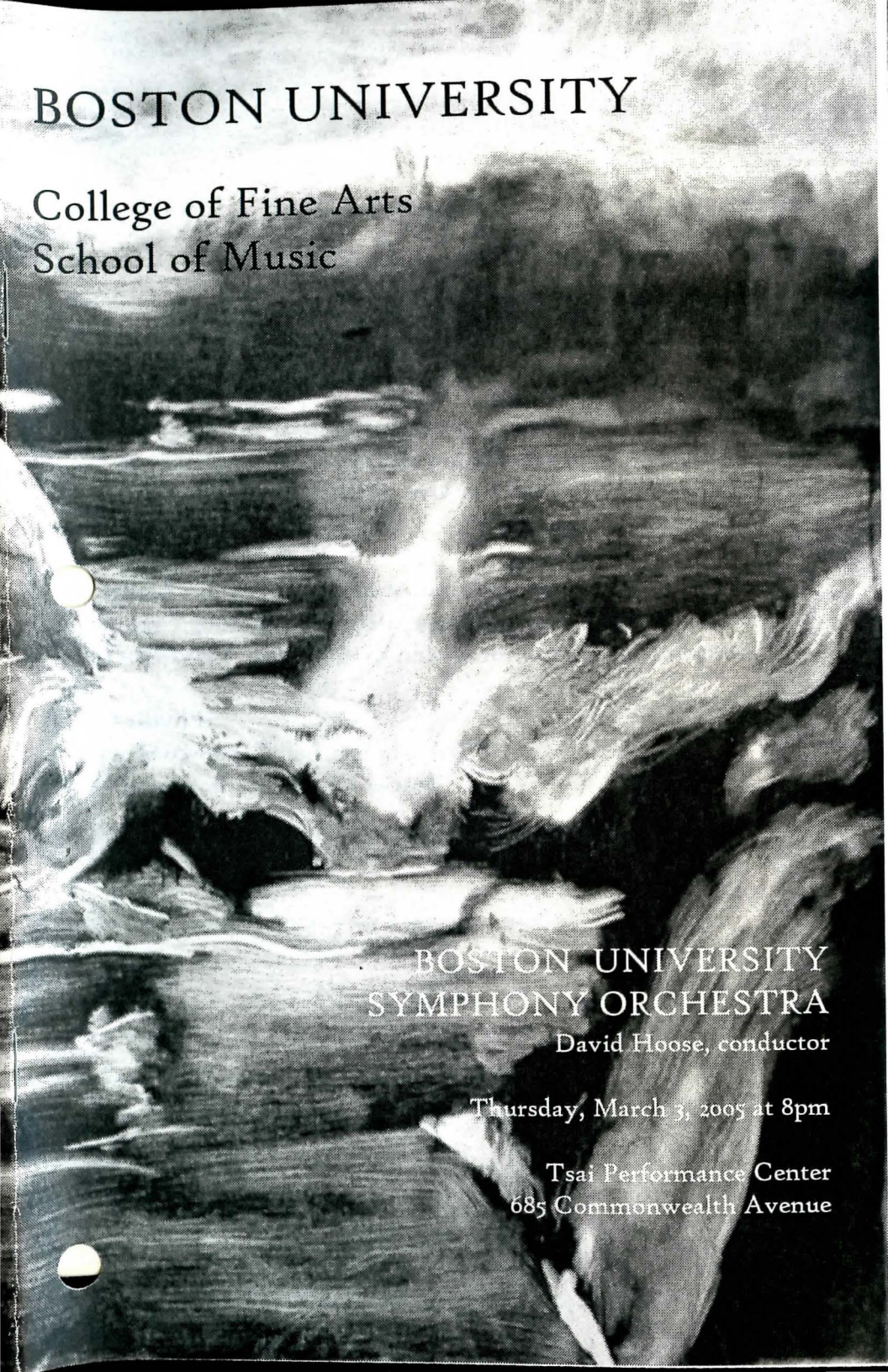

BOSTON UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

David Hoose, conductor

Thursday, March 3, 2005 at 8pm

Tsai Performance Center
685 Commonwealth Avenue

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-Phyllis Curtin
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In a new collaboration, artwork by the students in the School of Visual Arts will be featured on the covers of the School of Music Programs. The piece for this month's program is by ChristinaGoodwin, '05.

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE of
Fine Arts

Thursday, March 3, 2005 at 8pm
Tsai Performance Center

BOSTON UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

DAVID HOOSE, conductor
JONATHAN GIRARD, EMILY SENTURIA,
assistant conductors

MESSIAEN — *L'Ascension*

Majesté du Christ demandant sa gloire à son Père
Alléluias sereins d'une âme qui désire le ciel
Alléluia sur la trompette, alléluia sur la cymbale
Prièr du Christ montant vers son Père

INTERMISSION

BRUCKNER — Symphony No. 7 in E Major

Allegro moderato
Adagio: Sehr feierlich und sehr langsam
Scherzo: Nicht schnell; Trio: Langsam
Finale: Bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell

This program was prepared with the assistance of Edwin Barker, Richard Cornell, Terry Everson, Jonathan Girard, Michael Reynolds, Eric Ruske, Emily Senturia and Peter Zazofsky.

PROGRAM NOTES

Perhaps no two composers more openly revealed their religious faiths through their music than Anton Bruckner and Olivier Messiaen. Except, of course, for Johann Sebastian Bach, Heinrich Schütz, Hermann Schein, and hosts of others from the Renaissance and Mediaeval periods. But all of these were composing for the church and were offering their music as tools for worship or, in the case with Bach and Schütz, as actual sermons. Anton Bruckner and Olivier Messiaen, born of later times and different cultural sensibilities, were creating music as personal confessional-as witness to belief-and were composing for the concert hall. Their day was one of increasing focus on the self-Robert Schumann and Gustav Mahler and Arnold Schoenberg spanned these years-and the self's relationship with the world. Surprisingly, Bruckner and Messiaen fit comfortably into that company, for their musical voices are as individual and personal as anyone's. But their focus seems less on letting us know who they are than on laying themselves open before God. Or, as crucially, reaching toward God. The iconoclast Milton Babbitt may have been the one to say, "Who cares if you listen?" but it could have as easily been Bruckner or Messiaen. Although both yearned for success in this world, there is a way in which it wouldn't matter if you listened, for their deepest hope was that You listen.

But if we mortals choose to listen, we will find ourselves in the presence of two of the most original, endearing and rapturous musical minds the world has known. Both composers live in expansive musical worlds, immensely patient ones that ask for our own patience, but der it only if we are inclined to fidget. Enter and embrace their unique sense of time and drama, and we may notice our metabolisms calming even as the most exalted music unfolds around us. Enter their worlds that are at once outlandish and unostentatious, at once radical and conservative, and at once transcendent and deeply human, and we may not believe, but we will be changed.

Oliver Messiaen (1908–1992)
L'Ascension

Oliver Messiaen completed his "Four Symphonic Meditations," *L'Ascension*, in 1933. Only his second significant orchestral work, it precedes his largest compositions by at least fourteen years-the seventy-five minute *Turangalîla*, along with numbers of other evening-long compositions, was yet to come. But, in its broad phrases, its sense of stasis, and its colorful orchestra--one in which first the wind instruments process in ritual and in which at the close the strings (absent the earth-centered double basses) ascend to the heavens- *L'Ascension* reveals a mature Messiaen, one unafraid to reach beyond the expected in order to seek the Expected. The infinite stamina and composure of the organ, Messiaen's own instrument, suggests the pace at which the work unfolds. It is no surprise, therefore, that when he later decided to create a version of the work for organ, he composed a completely new movement to replace the most traditionally orchestral movement, the third, an exuberant and even primal dance of religious ecstasy.

Each movement carries a title and a sub-title. Their vivid descriptiveness may offer the clearest window on the music and on the composer's heart.

Movement I

Majesté du Christ demandant sa gloire à son Père -
Majesty of Christ offering his glory to his Father -
Père, l'heure est venue, glorifie ton Fils, afin que ton fils te glorifie.
Father, the hour is come: glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee.
(Saint Jean)

Movement II

Alléluias sereins d'une âme qui désire le ciel -
Alleluias from a soul longing for Heaven -
Nous vous en supplions, ô Dieu,... faites que nous habitions aux cieux en esprit.
We beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we may in mind dwell in Heaven.
(Ascension Mass)

Movement III

Alléluia sur la trompette, alléluia sur la cymbale -
Alleluia on the trumpet and the cymbal -
Le Seigneur est monté au son de la trompette... Nations, frappez toutes de mains; célébrez Dieu par des cris d'allégresse!
The Lord rises to the sound of the trumpet... Nations, clap your hands, praise God with cries of joy!
(Psalm 48)

Movement IV

Prière du Christ montant vers son Père -
Prayer from Christ ascending towards His Father -
Père,... j'ai manifesté ton nom aux hommes... Voilà que je ne suis plus dans le monde; mais eux sont dans le monde, et moi je vais à toi.
And now, o Father, I have manifested Thy name unto men... and now, I am no more in the world, but these are in the world and I come to Thee.
(Saint Jean)

Anton Bruckner (1824–1896)
Symphony No. 7 in E Major

With his Seventh Symphony, Anton Bruckner earned his first significant recognition. He exemplified the misunderstood composer, rejected by Brahms advocates for choosing Wagner as his idol but overlooked by Wagnerites for not composing music that resembled the master's. Even his supporters, attempting to help this man who seemed not to understand this world, ended up doing more damage than good. With just enough self-doubt, Bruckner accepted so many of their suggestions for improving his music that it can be difficult to know what his intentions really were. However, the E Major Symphony comes to us relatively free of others' manipulations (a cymbal stroke in the slow movement being a possible exception-did he want it or not?) and in it we can trust that we are hearing the composer's voice.

Trust is actually one of the strongest feelings engendered by the Seventh Symphony, for very little music after the Renaissance unfolds with such equanimity. None sails across such arching spaces in gestures that don't drive toward as much as open onto myriad stunning vistas. And rarely suggests such deep calm. Drama, often wild drama, does fill the music, but it is a fire distinct from Beethoven's or Mahler's or that of his beloved Wagner.

The complex narrative of Bruckner's music doesn't fight for resolution-he seems not to need to ask the fundamental questions that Beethoven, Mahler and Wagner did-but rises out of his deeply human need to seek God. It is not difficult to sense his own trust, if not in himself, then in that infinite source. Even Bach did not compose with such spiritual confidence.

There exists a facile notion that all of the nine Bruckner symphonies are the same, each only longer than the last. In some obvious ways, they do resemble each other: all begin in quiet expectation (all but the Sixth with quiet string tremolos) and all but the incomplete Ninth close in resplendent glory. Moreover, all employ an orchestra barely larger than one that Brahms used, one lacking the vivid instrumental characters of Mahler's and Schoenberg's, and all use it a rather uncomplicated way. But the similarities among the Bruckner nine symphonies, as much as they exist, seem inevitable. Each work is personal without self-involvement. Each reaches profundity but displays only humility. In the final analysis, each symphony is an enormous prayer-and when one prays regularly, the prayers may not change that much. Each day brings only desire to be more open to a boundless light.

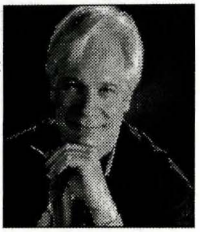
The first movement of the E Major Symphony unfolds with a glimmering, golden-silver radiance, often noble, often fleet, and sometimes even rustic, and belies any idea that his music is muscular or overweight. The development section does shake its fist for a while, but the fury seems more a foil for the music's unfolding confident spirit. As the music strides into its final measures, a high vaulted ceiling seems to suspend over the entire movement.

In richly chromatic and searching phrases, the second movement laments a deep human loss but, then, releases into a lightness that, to this listener, suggests the analogous material of the slow movement in Beethoven's Ninth. After alternating the two contrasting materials, the movement rises to a splendid plateau from which the final pages gradually emerge, measures that Bruckner composed after receiving word that Wagner had died. At first privately pained, the closing moments enter an elevated calm that only deepens the sorrow. Whether the four Wagner tubas that the composer introduced for the first time in this movement were planned from the outset may be unclear, but their dark, hollow presence hovers over this spectral music that was "in memory of the dearly beloved, immortal Master, now departed from this life."

The *Scherzo*, whose straightforward sonata design is obscured by unpredictable harmonic and dynamic twists, suggests Beethoven in its serious vigor, Dvorak in its peasant dancing. The more expansive Trio sings beguilingly, although it, too, shows no hesitation to take us on exotic harmonic journeys. The emotional directness of the third movement makes the *Finale*'s crazed demeanor all the more unexpected. Bruckner often delayed his most volatile music until the last movements, a position other composers might reserve for summation and resolution. His Seventh Symphony, too, juxtaposes the highest contrasts of the work: jumpy giddiness, serene and fleeting chorales, and weighty (and loud!) Handelian striding. We cannot predict how the materials will push against each other, and we are even less certain which elements might ultimately prevail. But the festive spirit keeps the ear spinning until, when this hour-long symphony sails through its final clamorous notes, we realize that no one thing has had to win. The symphony has not concluded, for it is not about doing or even about being. It is about becoming.

–David Hoose

DAVID HOOSE, conductor



David Hoose is Professor of Music and Director of Orchestral Activities at the Boston University School of Music. He holds the position of Music Director with three distinguished organizations, The Cantata Singers & Ensemble, Collage New Music and the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra, and appears regularly as conductor of the Young Artists Orchestra at the Boston University Tanglewood Institute.

David Hoose has conducted the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Saint Louis Symphony, Utah Symphony, Korean Broadcasting Symphony (KBS), Orchestra Regionale Toscana (Florence), Quad Cities Symphony Orchestra, Ann Arbor Symphony, Opera Festival of New Jersey, and at the Warebrook, New Hampshire, Monadnock and Tanglewood music festivals. In Boston he has appeared as guest conductor with the Boston Symphony Chamber Players, Handel & Haydn Society, Back Bay Chorale, Chorus Pro Musica, Fromm Chamber Players, Dinosaur Annex, Auros, and numbers of times with the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra and Emmanuel Music.

He has been guest conductor at the New England Conservatory, Eastman School of Music, Shepherd School of Rice University and University of Southern California. David Hoose's recordings are on the New World, Koch, Nonesuch, Delos, CRI and GunMar labels. His recording with the Cantata Singers of John Harbison's *Four Psalms* and *Emerson* has recently been released by New World Records. His recording of Peter Child's opera, *Embers*, and of John Harbison's Motteti di Montale with Collage New Music are soon to be issued.

As a horn player, David Hoose served as principal horn of the New Hampshire Symphony, Portland Symphony (Maine), Boston Musica Viva, Handel & Haydn Society, Boston Philharmonic, Emmanuel Chamber Orchestra, Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra, Monadnock Music and the Cantata Singers, as well as appearing as soloist with many of these. He also performed with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Boston Pops, and toured with the Apple Hill Chamber Players. For ten years he was a member of the Emmanuel Wind Quintet that, in 1981, won the Walter W. Naumburg Award for Chamber Music. David Hoose is a recipient of the Dimitri Mitropoulos Award, and was recently honored by Tallahassee, Florida, by the city's naming a week after him for his service to the community.

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Tuesday, March 15, 8pm

Faculty Recital Series
A program of African-American spirituals
SIMON ESTES, bass-baritone
DONALD RYAN, piano
Tsai Performance Center

Saturday, March 19, 8pm

Boston University Women's,
Chamber, and Concert Choirs
Boston University Chamber Orchestra
ANN HOWARD JONES, MICHAEL MCGAGHIE and JAMES WILSON, conductors
MOZART Missa Brevis in G Major, K. 140
MACHAUT Puis qu'en oubli
LANDINI Echo la primavera
RAVEL Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis (from Trois Chansons)
LASSUS Matona mia cara
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS Just as the tide was flowing
STANFORD Quick! we have but a seco
CFA Concert H

Monday, March 21, 11am

The Annual Ralph Gomberg
Masterclass and Recital
JOSEPH ROBINSON
Principal oboist, New York Philharmonic
CFA Concert Hall

Monday, March 21, 8pm

ALEA III
THEODORE ANTONIOU, director
ALTIN VOLAJ (Albania) *In Memoriam Bledi Llongozi*
LAWRENCE MOSS (USA) *The Swan*
BERND FRANKE (Germany) *Cut II*
IAKOVOS KONITOPOULOS (Greece) *Dromenon II*
ARVO PART (Lithuania) *Fratres*
GILBERT AMY (France) *Après...d'un désastre obscure*
RICHARD FELCIANO (USA) *An American Decameron* (excerpts)
Tsai Performance Center

Wednesday, March 23, 8pm

Musicology Lecture Series
Joel Sheveloff, Boston University
CFA Marshall Room

Thursday, March 31, 5:30pm

Music Education Research Seminar
CFA Room 154

Monday, April 4, 8pm

Faculty Recital Series
MICHAEL ZARETSKY, viola
GEORGE KERN, piano
ETHAN SLOANE, clarinet
HENZE Sonata for viola and piano
BRAHMS Klavierstücke, Op. 76
BRUCH Trio for clarinet, viola, and piano
Tsai Performance Center

Wednesday, April 6, 8pm

Times Arrow
RICHARD CORNELL, director
Works by Argento and Crumb
CFA Concert Hall

Thursday, April 7, 8pm

Muir String Quartet
in residence at Boston University
with guest artist Gilbert Kalish, piano
HAYDN String Quartet in C Major, Op. 20 No. 2
RAVEL String Quartet in F Major
ELGAR Piano Quintet in A minor, Op. 84
Tsai Performance Center

Saturday, April 9th, 8:30pm

Composers' Forum Concert
Contemporary works by BU students
CFA Concert Hall

Monday, April 11, 8pm

Boston University Symphony Orchestra and Symphonic Chorus
ANN HOWARD JONES and DAVID HOOSE, conductors
VERDI Quatri Pezzi Sacri
STRAVINSKY Rite of Spring
Symphony Hall

Friday, April 15, noon

Muir String Quartet
in residence at Boston University
Noon concert
CFA Concert Hall

Saturday, April 16, 8pm

Boston University Women's and Chamber Choirs
MATTHEW ANDERSON and BARBARA WILD, conductors
works by Brahms, Debussy, Hildegard, and Stravinsky
CFA Concert Hall

Sunday, April 17, 8pm

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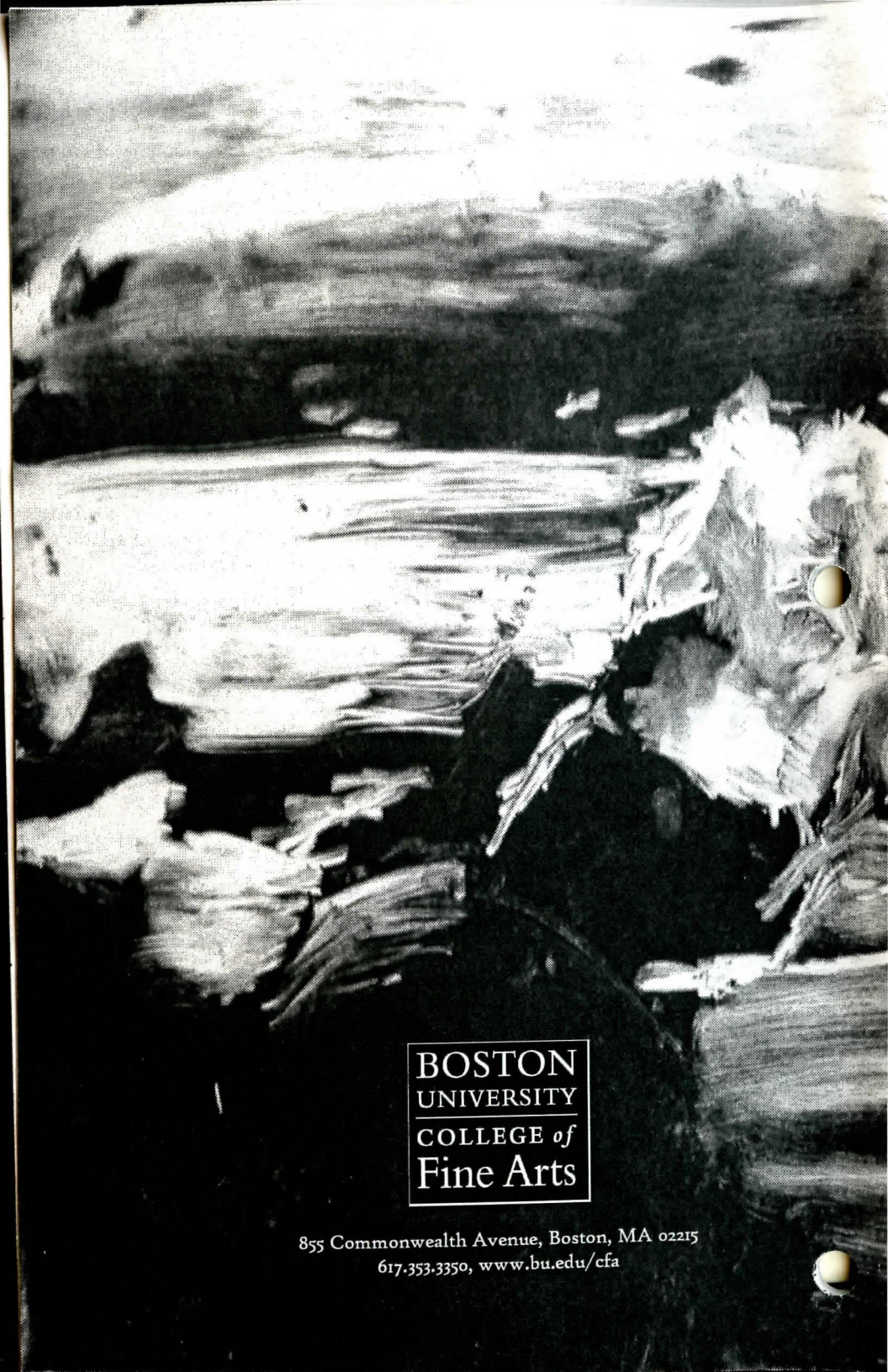
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