

BOSTON MODERN ORCHESTRA PROJECT

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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BMOP Brings Big Band Music to Jordan Hall

APRIL 4, 2006 - BOSTON, MA - The Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), ends its 2005-2006-concert season with "Big Band," featuring a new work from the composer William Thomas McKinley commissioned by Boston Modern Orchestra Project. The performance takes place on May 26, 2006 at 8:00pm at New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall.

As one of the few professional orchestras dedicated exclusively to promoting music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, BMOP commissions, performs, and records more new works than any other new music organization in the country. Founded in 1996 by Artistic Director Gil Rose, BMOP has programmed more than 50 concerts of contemporary orchestral music, released ten world premiere recordings, and won eight ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming.

"Big Band" features *RAP*, a new work by William Thomas McKinley. McKinley wrote his new piece for BMOP and the clarinetist Richard Stoltzman. Also being performed on this program are the original jazz-band version of George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, featuring pianist Stephen Drury, and works by George Antheil, Milton Babbitt, and Leonard Bernstein.

The common thread in this program - apart from the geography - is the influence of American jazz on classical orchestral repertoire. Artistic Director Gil Rose explains, "All five composers on this program crossed the line between classical and popular music. Gershwin moved from popular to classical concert music, while others crossed in the opposite direction. All came to the same result - a hybrid form of musical expression that incorporates both classical techniques and jazz material."

The most recognized work on this program, George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, was commissioned by bandleader Paul Whiteman in 1924. Its premiere was a legendary success; in a single, fifteen-minute span, jazz was firmly established in American "classical" concert music. The soloist on BMOP's program is Stephen Drury, who has performed the work to critical acclaim in many prominent venues, including the Boston Pops.

Executive Director Catherine Stephan remarks, "BMOP has programmed multiple concerts highlighting the intersection between jazz and classical music, and by no means are we the first. Paul Whiteman was a trailblazer in this field, and commissioning a new work from Tom McKinley was a natural way to pay tribute to his legacy."

William Thomas McKinley's *RAP* was composed at the suggestion of Richard Stoltzman, a frequent collaborator of McKinley's and a leading advocate for the continuation of big band composition. Stoltzman's reputation as an innovative jazz artist equals his reputation for performing and recording

classical repertoire. McKinley's new work, the title of which stands for "rhythm and pitch," is composed in the same populist style as the majority of his works, drawing on the dynamic energy of jazz yet informed in many ways by the entire range of his rich and varied life in music - from his early neoclassical style to atonal serialism to improvisation.

In addition to the new work by McKinley, Stoltzman will perform Leonard Bernstein's *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs*, which was written in 1949 for clarinetist Woody Herman and his Thundering Herd. Herman's band dissolved by the time the piece was finished, however, and the dedication eventually went to clarinetist Benny Goodman. Several years after its completion, Goodman played the first performances of the piece during a television broadcast in Bernstein's "What's Jazz?" in October 1955.

Rounding out the program are George Antheil's *A Jazz Symphony*, and Milton Babbitt's *All Set*. Babbitt, known by most as a committed proponent of serialist music, grew up playing both classical violin and popular show music on clarinet and saxophone. He developed a comprehensive knowledge of the tunes of Cole Porter and the Gershwin's, and wrote his own songs in the sophisticated pop style of the time. Milton Babbitt's *All Set* is a ten-minute piece written for a jazz ensemble in 1957. *All Set* takes a classic Babbitt title referring both to the phrase "everything's fine" as well as to the piece's use of pitch set construction.

"Big Band" begins at 8:00 pm on Friday, May 26, 2006 at Jordan Hall at the New England Conservatory (30 Gainsborough St., corner of Huntington Ave.) in Boston, MA. Pre-concert Program Notes with William Thomas McKinley begin at 7:00 pm in the hall and is free for all ticket holders. Ticket prices are \$10 for students with valid ID. Regular admission tickets are \$19, \$28, \$38 based on seat selection. Seniors and members of partnering organizations receive a 10% discount. For more information or to purchase tickets, call (617) 363-0396 or visit www.bmop.org. Jordan Hall is handicapped accessible.

Calendar Submission / At A Glance

What: Big Band, presented by Boston Modern Orchestra Project

Who: Boston Modern Orchestra Project; Gil Rose, Artistic Director and Conductor
Richard Stoltzman, clarinet; Stephen Drury, piano

When: Friday, May 26, 2006 at 8:00 pm

Pre-concert Program Notes with William Thomas McKinley at 7:00 pm
Open to all ticket holders

Where: Jordan Hall at New England Conservatory
(30 Gainsborough St., corner of Huntington Ave.)

Program: George Antheil *A Jazz Symphony* (1925)
George Gershwin *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924)
Milton Babbitt *All Set* (1957)
William Thomas McKinley *RAP* (2006)
World Premiere Commissioned by BMOP
Leonard Bernstein *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs* (1949)

Tickets: \$10 for students with ID / \$19 / \$28 / \$38
Available at www.bmop.org and (617) 363-0396

Information: For more information, please call (617) 363-0396 or visit www.bmop.org.

PRESS please note: Current high-resolution photographs of Gil Rose, Stephen Drury, and Richard Stoltzman are available to download at http://www.bmop.org/news/press_kit.aspx. Please use these images instead of any already on file.

Interviews with Gil Rose, Stephen Drury, and William Thomas McKinley can be arranged through the BMOP office (617-363-0396). Interviews with Richard Stoltzman can be arranged through Nancy Shear Arts Services (212-496-9418).