

# BMOP

## APOLLO'S FIRE

FRIDAY **MAY 18, 2012** 8:00

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JORDAN HALL AT NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY

PRE-CONCERT TALK HOSTED BY THE SCORE BOARD 7:00

## **NIKOS SKALKOTTAS** 5 GREEK DANCES (1936)

- I. Epirotikos
- II. Kretikos
- III. Tsamikos
- IV. Arkadikos
- V. Kleftikos

## **ELLIOTT CARTER** THE MINOTAUR (1947)

- I. Scene I: King Minos's Palace in Crete – Overture
- II. Queen Pasiphae prepares for a tryst with a sacred bull
- III. Entrance of the bulls and the sacred bull
- IV. Dance of the bulls and Pasiphae with the sacred bull
- V. Interlude – Pasiphae's heartbeat becomes the pounding of hammers used in building the labyrinth
- VI. Scene II: Before the Labyrinth – Building the labyrinth to imprison the Minotaur who destroys men
- VII. Entrance of King Minos
- VIII. Selection of Greek victims to be sent into the labyrinth
- IX. Ariadne, princess of Crete, dances with Theseus, a Greek victim
- X. Greek victims are driven into the labyrinth

INTERMISSION

## **IGOR STRAVINSKY** APOLLON MUSAGÈTE (1927–28, REV.1947)

- I. Tableau I
  - i. Naissance d'Apollon
- II. Tableau II
  - i. Variation d'Apollon *Apollon et les Muses*
  - ii. Pas d'action *Apollon et les trios Muses: Calliope, Polymnie et Terpsichore*
  - iii. Variation de Calliope *l'Alexandrin*
  - iv. Variation de Polymnie
  - v. Variation de Terpsichore
  - vi. Variation d'Apollon
  - vii. Pas de deux *Apollon et Terpsichore*
  - viii. Coda *Apollon et les Muses*
  - ix. Apothéose

## **LEWIS SPRATLAN** APOLLO AND DAPHNE VARIATIONS (1987)

- I. Introduction
- II. Theme with Ten Variations
- III. Coda

**GIL ROSE**, conductor



## TONIGHT'S PERFORMERS

### FLUTE

Sarah Brady  
Rachel Braude  
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Nancy Dimock  
Laura Pardee

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Karen Heninger  
Amy Advocat

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Greg Newton  
Margaret Phillips

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Eli Epstein  
Kevin Owen  
Meredith Gangler

### TRUMPET

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Richard Watson  
Joe Foley

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Alexei Doohovskoy

### BASS TROMBONE

Chris Beaudry

### TUBA

Don Rankin

### PERCUSSION

Nick Tolle  
Aaron Trant  
Bill Manley

### HARP

Judy Saiki Couture

### PIANO

Linda Osborn-Blaschke

### VIOLIN I

Charles Dimmick  
Megumi Stohs  
Piotr Buczek  
Miguel Perez-Espejo  
Melanie Auclair-Fortier  
Colleen Brannen  
Annegret Klaua  
Susan Faux  
Colin Davis  
Amy Sims

### VIOLIN II

Annie Rabbat  
Lois Finkel  
Julia Cash  
Brenda van der Merwe  
Beth Abbate  
Edward Wu  
Mina Lavcheva  
Tera Gorsett  
Anna Korsunsky  
Lori Everson

### VIOLA

Joan Ellersick  
Nathaniel Farny  
David Feltner  
Dimitar Petkov  
Emily Rideout  
Jonina Mazzeo  
Abigail Cross  
Adrienne Elisha

### CELLO

Rafael Popper-Keizer  
David Russell  
Holgen Gjoni  
Nicole Cariglia  
Jing Li  
Katherine Kayaian

### BASS

Tony D'Amico  
Scot Fitzsimmons  
Bebo Shiu  
Reginald Lamb

## PROGRAM NOTES

By Robert Kirzinger

*How, then, shall I sing of you who in all ways are a worthy theme of song?*

Homeric Ode to Apollo Delian (trans. H.G. Evelyn-White)

Who was this Apollo person?

For three millennia, the classical Greek culture has been the wellspring of Western aesthetic. Even the absurdly generic term “classical music” (apparently coined in the early 19th century) acknowledges this debt, although usage has washed the phrase nearly clean of its original implication. In fact what the early users of that term may have meant was what we now sometimes call “Apollonian,” designating formal restraint and clarity over the “Dionysian” hot-bloodedness of the Romantic era.

The Apollo in question was the mythological son of Zeus and the goddess Leto, and twin to the goddess Artemis. Leto, hounded on behalf of Zeus’s jealous wife Hera, gave birth first to Artemis (one tradition says at Ortygia), and then to Apollo, with Artemis’s aid, on the “floating island” of Delos, since Hera had decreed that no “land” shelter her rival. (Delos was later fixed in place.) Artemis was the goddess of the hunt, of nature. Apollo was the god, among other things, of human artifice—the arts, music, poetry, science. And also light, although the god’s identification with Phoebus, the Sun God, was a long time in coming. He was also the leader of the Muses (which gives him the appellation Apollon Musagète), who are useful to invoke at the start of any artistic endeavor. Several could be appropriate for this concert—the flute-carrying Euterpe of song, Erato of love poetry with her cithera, or Terpsichore, the dance muse, with her lyre. Let’s just invoke them all tonight for these works by Stravinsky, Carter, and Spratlan sprung from the endless and universal wealth of Greek myth, along with the earthier modes of translated, traditional Greek dance by Nikos Skalkottas.

### NIKOS SKALKOTTAS (1904–1949)

#### 5 GREEK DANCES

Born into a family of several generations of musicians, Nikos Skalkottas grew up in Athens, Greece, and became an accomplished violinist, studying with his father and uncle. After graduating the Athens Conservatory, he went on to study with Willy Hess in Berlin. By the middle 1920s his focus had shifted to composing. He became Schoenberg’s pupil and quickly fell under the master’s spell. The worsening political and economic situation in Berlin dried up prospects for violin performance, so Skalkottas returned to Greece. The majority of his music was twelve-tone or freely atonal, a style that kept him from receiving performances and recognition in conservative Athens. He was nevertheless very prolific. During the 1930s alone he wrote three piano concertos and a two-piano concertino, concertos for violin and for cello, and a fair amount of chamber music.

Most of Skalkottas’s major works were premiered only after his death, no doubt as part of the broader exploration of Schoenberg’s pedagogic legacy, but also in belated recognition of Skalkottas’s individuality and talent. Schoenberg disciple Hermann Scherchen led the premiere of the Piano Concerto No. 2 with the North German Radio Symphony; in the late 1960s Antal Dorati led the premieres of the composer’s *Return of Odysseus* (with the London Symphony) and his Suite No. 2 for orchestra (with the BBC Symphony Orchestra),

among other major first performances. However, his most characteristic music seems to be rarely performed today. His style exhibits a concrete rhythmic sensibility and chromatic harmonic pitch language that bears a passing resemblance to Bartók (although of course Bartók didn't use the twelve-tone technique).

Skalkottas did have significant success during his lifetime with another kind of piece, his *36 Greek Dances* in three sets, which exist in various orchestrations. Like Brahms's *Hungarian Dances* and Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances* (both also very popular), and unlike Bartók's treatment of folk music, these are somewhat destylized and gentrified, but still characteristic, versions of authentic regional types, with the exception of a few original works in pastiche. Skalkottas wrote these pieces in the years following his return from Berlin to Greece; four of them were premiered by the composer's longtime friend and colleague Dimitri Mitropoulos in Athens in 1934. The present group of five dances for string orchestra (virtually any combination is acceptable for performance) includes, in order of performance: Set I, No. 3, Epirotikos; I/2, Kretikos; I/1, Tsamikos; III/10, Arkadikos; and III/3, Kleftikos. (Some of the regions or types are represented more than once in the complete sets.) Epirotikos is a dance from Epiros (or Ipiros), the region on the Adriatic coast just south of Albania near the island of Corfu. In this two-beat dance, first violins have the active melody, with imitations in the bass and second violins. Kretikos indicates a dance of Crete, here a bit of a stomper with heavy beats in the basses and cellos. Tsamikos, or "dance of the Chams," refers to the Chamerian region of Albania/Greece, which has some overlap with Epiros, and the people who traditionally lived there. It is a slow dance in 3/4. Arkadikos is a milder dance with a naïve melodic turn in the violas. Arkadia is a region on the Peloponnese. There is a touch of polytonal harmony here. Kleftikos is literally "dance of the thieves," referring to the "Klepht" Greeks who historically lived in the mountains and resisted Ottoman rule. This is a quick, active dance.

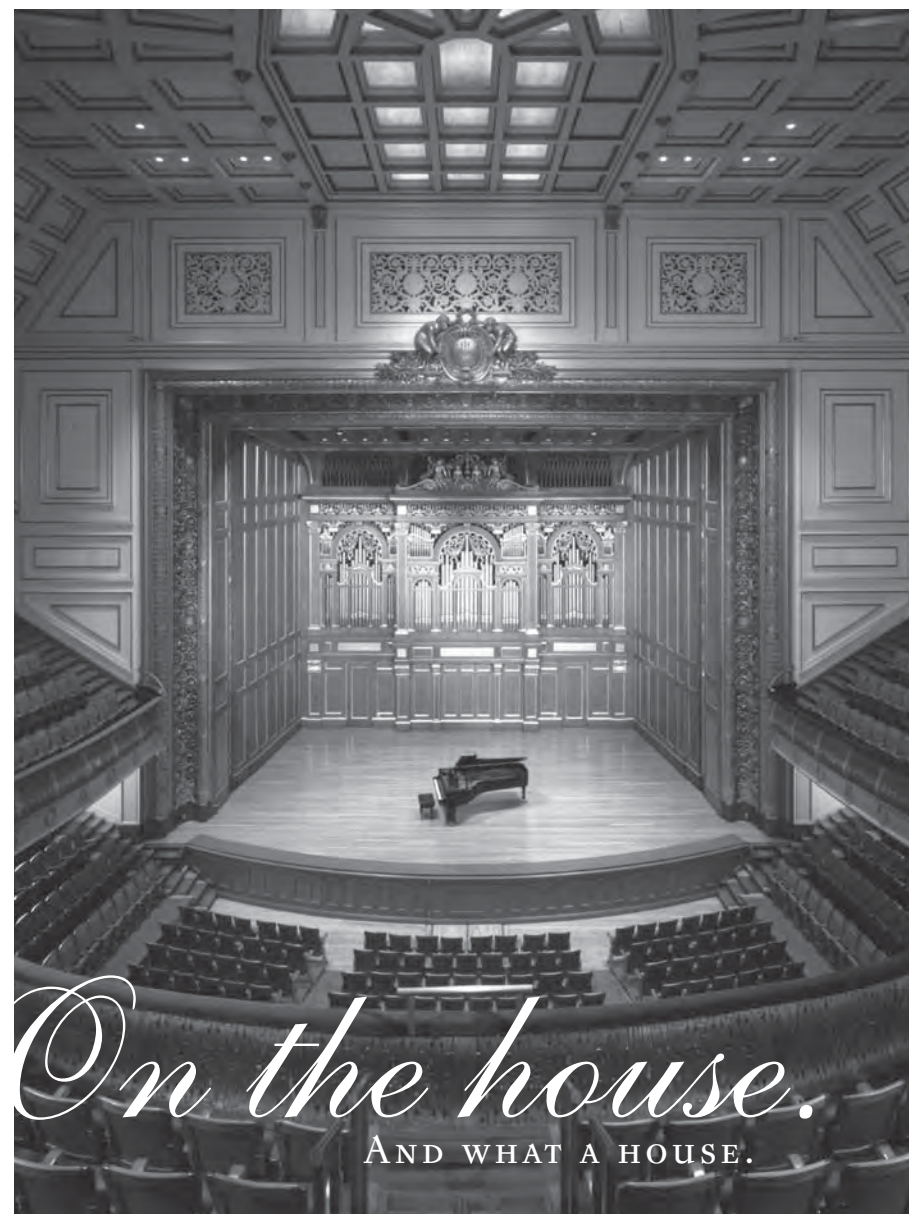
### ELLIOTT CARTER (b. 1908)

#### THE MINOTAUR

*El original dice catorce, pero sobran motivos para inferir que en boca de Asterión, ese adjetivo numeral vale por infinitos.* (The original had "fourteen," but there is reason to infer that in Asterion's conception this number is a stand-in for "infinite.")

—Jorge Luis Borges, "La Casa de Astérion"

Pasiphaë was the daughter of the Sun, Helios, and married the King of Crete, Minos. Minos had been in a power struggle with his brothers and, after banishing them, prayed to Poseidon to send, as a token of the correctness of his reign, a snow-white bull. Poseidon complied. When the bull appeared, Minos was so taken with the perfect creature that he chose to keep it rather than sacrifice it; Poseidon, as a punishment for the broken promise, apparently made Pasiphaë fall in love with the bull. She had the great engineer Daedalus build a wooden heifer in which she hid herself to entice the white bull, who copulated with the artifice, impregnating the goddess with the monster, a man with a bull's face or head, named Asterion like Minos's father. The Minotaur was imprisoned in a labyrinth of Daedalus's devising, and was periodically sent tribute from Athens (the complicated reasons for which we won't go into here) of a young man and several young women, whom the monster killed and presumably ate. The hero Theseus put an end to the blood-tribute



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and the Minotaur with the monster's half-sister Ariadne's aid, unraveling her thread to the center of the maze and following it back after killing the hybrid. (Ariadne left Crete with Theseus but he soon abandoned her on Naxos. She was better off, for a time; she caught the eye of the god Dionysus and bore him many children.)

Elliott Carter's ballet score *The Minotaur* was commissioned from the composer by Lincoln Kirstein for his Ballet Society, the company that was the foundation for the New York City Ballet. Kirstein had commissioned Carter's earlier ballet *Pocahontas* for his Ballet Caravan. *The Minotaur* was meant from the start to be choreographed by the great George Balanchine (Stravinsky's collaborator for *Apollo*), but he left for what he thought was a chance to run the Paris Ballet (which fell through). Meanwhile the choreography was done by John Taras. *The Minotaur* was premiered in March 1947 (Carter would have been thirty-eight) at the Ballet Society's usual venue—the Central High School of Needle Trades in Manhattan.

*The Minotaur* is Carter's most Stravinskian piece (as you'll hear). Although a relatively early work in his immensely long career, *The Minotaur*, in retrospect, is an entirely successful piece of music in its own right, and at close hearing isn't entirely wayward from his later body of work. An ultramodernist by predilection in his younger years, Carter was steeped in neoclassicism in the 1930s and during his time working with Nadia Boulanger. Most of his scores up through *The Minotaur* had that flavor, as practiced in the U.S. by such composers as Roy Harris and William Schuman. *The Minotaur* was Carter's last big work in this vein, written essentially concurrently with his Woodwind Quintet, a neoclassical

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archetype dedicated to Boulanger. Revitalizing his ultramodern roots with his Sonata for Cello and Piano in 1948, Carter began to develop the much more personal and distinctive voice that has characterized his music for the past sixty-plus years and making him one of the most celebrated composers in American history. He is still composing with great fluidity; his new *Two Controversies and a Conversation* for piano, percussion, and chamber orchestra will be premiered in New York City on June 8 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The subject matter and general idea of a ballet based on Greek myth would have been comfortable for Carter. Although dedicated to the idea of a life as a composer, Carter's studies at Harvard University were in literature, philosophy, Greek, and mathematics. He went on to get his master's degree in music at Harvard, and wrote choral settings and incidental music related to the Greek classics for the Harvard Glee Club and other groups. Carter actually derives much of the melodic material for the piece from the so-called Seikilos Song, a fragment of ancient Greek music.

The detailed scenario was devised by Balanchine, and required specific attention on Carter's part to illustrating clearly the moods and some of the specific actions of the narrative (unlike the more abstract action of Stravinsky's *Apollo*). Carter related the story of the Minotaur's victims to the death-camp atrocities revealed at the end of World War II, which informs the more dissonant, violent action of the score. There are two scenes. The first, following the Overture, focuses on the anxious Pasiphaë and her tryst with the white bull. In the brass-driven Dance of the Bulls, the French horns' and later the trombones' decisive slower melody over the strings' rapid figurations is an early example of Carter's preoccupation with different concurrent tempos. In a detail from Balanchine, at the end of the scene Pasiphaë's heartbeat transforms into the work of hammers building the labyrinth (as the string motif at the end of Scene 2 of Wagner's *Rheingold* is supplanted by the ringing of actual anvils). Scene 2 of the ballet begins with the completion of the labyrinth, the imprisonment of Asterion, and the introduction of Theseus to Ariadne as the tribute victims are led into the maze. Ariadne's dance with Theseus is the longest episode, with prominent instrumental solos over pizzicato strings. Theseus enters the labyrinth with Ariadne's thread (clarinet solo), fights and kills the Minotaur (ending with dissonant brass and a tam-tam stroke). Ariadne reels in the thread, but it breaks (rising flute scales as she pulls in the end of the string); she despairs. Theseus and a few of the victims rush out of the maze. Theseus abandons Ariadne, and an echo of the Overture frames the piece.

#### IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882–1971)

##### APOLLONS MUSAGÈTE

*Apollon musagète* (or *Apollo* as Stravinsky later preferred to call it) was Stravinsky's first true collaboration with George Balanchine; they would ultimately collaborate for several decades on such works as *The Card Game*, *Orpheus*, and *Agon* in one of the most fruitful composer/choreographer partnerships of the twentieth century. *Apollo* was, like the composer's breakthrough works *The Firebird*, *Petrushka*, and *The Rite of Spring*, written with the Ballets Russes in mind, although the actual commission had come from the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation in Washington, D.C. The ballet was first

performed in April 1928 at the Library of Congress, with choreography by Adolph Bolm. The Balanchine-choreographed Ballets Russes production was given that June in Paris.

Stravinsky wrote *Apollo* in Nice, France, in 1927 and 1928, beginning work just after finishing the big opera-oratorio *Oedipus rex*. *Oedipus*, a collaboration with Jean Cocteau, was in some ways an experiment in objectivity and austerity, a further proof of the necessity of the neoclassical style that had been central to Stravinsky's aesthetic from the early 1920s. *Apollo*, likewise on a Classical Greek theme, took the idea several steps further for a score that Balanchine called "white on white" in its purity. The orchestra is strings alone, unusual for Stravinsky, who generally preferred the timbral possibilities of wind instruments. He deliberately set out to create beauty without subjective expressivity.

The scenario of *Apollo* begins with a prologue depicting Apollo's birth, with dotted-note figures recalling the Baroque French overture style. Leto gives birth to the god (in a scene that belies the nine-day labor that legend describes), who is led blithely away to Olympus. Scene 2 is "Apollo and the Muses," with the god represented by solo violin. The muses, who arrive at the end of the scene, here are but three: Calliope, Polyhymnia, and Terpsichore, with the last representing the fullness of dance. The following Pas d'action is a beautiful dance in 3/4 time for full strings. Each of the muses has a variation: Calliope's an Allegretto in Alexandrine rhythm, characterized by a pause in the line. Polyhymnia's variation is a quick and short Allegro. Terpsichore's is a dotted-rhythm Allegretto (with pauses in the middle of the movement for held poses). Apollo's next variation begins with dramatic chords, which cede briefly to string quintet. The Pas de deux between Apollo and Terpsichore is an almost static Adagio of exquisite calm, with a solo cello role. A Coda, "Apollo and the Muses," introduces a quirky syncopated episode, which grows more



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agitated as the movement continues. In the coolly majestic Apotheosis, the god leads his charges to Parnassus, the place of his birth.

### LEWIS SPRATLAN (B. 1940)

#### APOLLO AND DAPHNE VARIATIONS

One of the most honored composers in the country, Lewis Spratlan attended Yale University and studied under the jazz-leaning modernists Gunther Schuller and Mel Powell. He was awarded a fellowship to the Berkshire Music Center as a conductor in 1966 and while there attended composition seminars with Roger Sessions. He has taught at Penn State University and Tanglewood, among other institutions, and was on the faculty of Amherst College from 1970 until his retirement in 2006.

Spratlan has explored many different kinds of music ranging from serialism to jazz in his career; his mature music is stylistically open-ended and essentially lyrical, as well as expertly crafted. Although well-known as a composer since the 1960s, his public profile received a significant boost when he was awarded the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for the concert version of Act II of his opera *Life Is a Dream*, which was already over twenty years old by that point. It's an unusual story. Spratlan had written the opera, based on the 17th-century Calderón play, in 1975 at the request of New Haven Opera Theater (through the good offices of composer Yehudi Wyner), but the company disbanded before the project came to fruition. Although Gunther Schuller published the score right away it was another twenty-two years before any part of it was properly performed. The premiere of the second act, in a concert version, was given by Dinosaur Annex in January 2000, along with his *Sojourner*. The complete piece was given its staged premiere, at long last, at Santa Fe Opera under Leonard Slatkin's direction in summer 2010.

Spratlan has otherwise been recognized by the Guggenheim and Rockefeller foundations and the National Endowment for the Arts, and has had a great following among Boston's musicians and ensembles. His works have been performed by BMOP, Boston Musica Viva, and Dinosaur Annex, among others, as well as by New York's Sequitur, the San Francisco Opera, pianist Jonathan Biss, cellist Matt Haimovitz, and many, many others. Recent works include the hour-long *Vespers Cantata: Hesperus is Phosphorus*, to be premiered in New York and Philadelphia on June 2 and 5, 2012. A CD and DVD of the composer's opera *Architect*, based on the life of Louis Kahn, will be released by the Navona label. Other imminently due recordings include arrangements of lullabies for Sanford Sylvan and Frederica von Stade on the Oxingale label. His website is [www.lewisspratlan.com](http://www.lewisspratlan.com).

The composer has provided the following note for his *Apollo and Daphne Variations*:

*The familiar tale of Apollo and the young nymph Daphne, who, rather than accept his amorous advances, turns into a laurel tree, must surely rank as our earliest radical-feminist tract. This musical contemplation of the myth takes the form of a theme and series of variations enclosed within a narrative introduction and coda.*

*For its material the piece mines the heart of European Romanticism, much as Stravinsky and others mined American jazz in the twentieth century. The theme, a sixteen-bar "character piece" called Apollo and Daphne, is vaguely in the style of Schumann and was written independently in December of 1986. The introduction presents various aspects of the theme in isolation while setting the dramatic scene. The*

theme, which appears in its original form as a piano solo, emerges from the tonal mist as a kind of found object. The Variations preserve the essential dualism of the theme as they explore a variety of approaches by Apollo and rebuffs by Daphne, culminating in a double fugue, itself a mirror of their antagonism, and the expressive heart of the piece. The Coda gives us the final pursuit, Daphne's vain cry to her father, the river-god Peneus, the arboreal transformation, and Apollo's reflections upon the lost Daphne.

Apollo and Daphne Variations was composed during the summer and fall of 1987 for a Brooklyn Philharmonic competition (that it didn't win) and received its world premiere in October of 1989 in Kislovodsk, Soviet Union, by the Kislovodsk State Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Sergei Vlasov. It was subsequently performed in two other cities of the Caucasus, and in Tampa, St. Petersburg, and Clearwater, Florida, by the Florida Orchestra, Jahjah Ling, conductor. The piece will be accompanied by my saxophone concerto, Eliot Gattegno, soloist, and A Summer's Day, premiered by BMOP in 2009, on a forthcoming BMOP/sound album.

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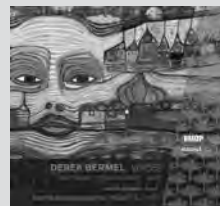
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LIZ LINDER



Gil Rose is a conductor helping to shape the future of classical music. His dynamic performances and many recordings have garnered international critical praise.

In 1996, Mr. Rose founded the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), the foremost professional orchestra dedicated exclusively to performing and recording symphonic music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Under his leadership, BMOP's unique programming and high performance standards have attracted critical acclaim and earned the orchestra thirteen ASCAP awards for adventurous programming as well as the John

S. Edwards Award for Strongest Commitment to New American Music.

Mr. Rose maintains a busy schedule as a guest conductor in both the opera and symphonic worlds. He made his Tanglewood debut in 2002 and in 2003 he debuted with the Netherlands Radio Symphony as part of the Holland Festival. He has led the American Composers Orchestra, Warsaw Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra of the Ukraine, Cleveland Chamber Symphony, Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana and National Orchestra of Porto and has made several appearances with the Boston Symphony Chamber Players. He has curated the Fromm concerts at Harvard University and also served as the artistic director of the Ditson Festival of Contemporary Music at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art.

Mr. Rose recently partnered with the American Repertory Theatre and the MIT Media Lab to create the world premiere of composer Tod Machover's *Death and the Powers*, directed by Diane Paulus. He conducted this multimedia work at its world premiere at the Opera Garnier in Monte Carlo, Monaco, in September 2010, and also led its United States premiere at the Cutler Majestic Theatre in March 2011, as well as its Chicago premiere the following month at Chicago Opera Theatre.

An active recording artist, Mr. Rose's extensive discography includes world premiere recordings of music by Louis Andriessen, Derek Bermel, John Cage, Robert Erickson, Lukas Foss, Charles Fussell, Michael Gandolfi, John Harbison, Lee Hyla, David Lang, Tod Machover, Steven Mackey, Steven Paulus, David Rakowski, Bernard Rands, George Rochberg, Elena Ruehr, Gunther Schuller, Reza Vali, and Evan Ziporyn on such labels as Albany, Arsis, Cantaloupe, Chandos, ECM, Innova, Naxos, New World, and BMOP/sound, the Grammy-nominated label for which he serves as executive producer. His recordings have appeared on the year-end "Best of" lists of the *New York Times*, *Time Out New York*, the *Boston Globe*, *Chicago Tribune*, *American Record Guide*, *NPR*, and *Downbeat Magazine*.

Over the past decade, Mr. Rose has also built a reputation as one of the country's most inventive and versatile opera conductors. The conductor joined Opera Boston as its music director in 2003. In 2010, he was appointed the company's first artistic director. Under his leadership, Opera Boston experienced exponential growth and was acknowledged as one of the most important and innovative companies in America. Mr. Rose led Opera Boston in several national and New England premieres including: Shostakovich's *The Nose*, Weber's *Der Freischütz*, and Hindemith's *Cardillac* and has conducted such luminaries as Stephanie Blythe, Ewa Podle, James Maddalena, and Sanford Sylvan in signature roles. In

2009, Mr. Rose led the world premiere of Zhou Long's *Madame White Snake* which won the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2011.

During his tenure at Opera Boston, Mr. Rose also served as the artistic director of Opera Unlimited, a contemporary opera festival which he also founded. With Opera Unlimited, he led the world premiere of Elena Ruehr's *Toussaint Before the Spirits*, the New England premiere of Thomas Ades's *Powder Her Face*, as well as the revival of John Harbison's *Full Moon in March*, and the North American premiere of Peter Eötvös's *Angels in America* to critical acclaim.

In 2007, Mr. Rose was awarded Columbia University's prestigious Ditson Award as well as an ASCAP Concert Music Award for his exemplary commitment to new American music. He is a three-time Grammy Award nominee.

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