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**The Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP) Brings *Apollo's Fire* –
A Season-Ending Concert Inspired by Greek Mythology**

BMOP in Concert: *Apollo's Fire*

When: Friday, May 18 @ 8:00pm (free pre-concert talk @ 7:00pm)

Where: Jordan Hall (30 Gainsborough Street), Boston, T: Symphony

Tickets: \$28 - \$52. Students/Seniors \$10. To purchase tickets, contact BMOP at 781.324.0396 or visit www.BMOP.org

Boston, MA (For Release 04/24/12) --- The Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), the nation's premier orchestra dedicated exclusively to commissioning, performing, and recording new orchestral music, presents its final concert of the 2011-12 season – *Apollo's Fire*. Like many artists and composers of the Western world, BMOP finds contemporary significance in Greek mythology, especially Apollo. On the program are four works by composers who looked back to ancient Greece as inspiration: *Greek Dances* by Nikos Skalkottas; *The Minotaur* by Elliott Carter; *Apollon Musagete* by Igor Stravinsky; and *Apollo & Daphne Variations* by Lewis Spratlan.

"In Greek mythology, Apollo is associated to light and truth, as well as music and poetry. It's not surprising that the ilk of classical music finds relevance in Apollo and classical mythological themes," explains Gil Rose, Artistic Director/Conductor of BMOP. Fittingly, philosophers have used the term "Apollonian" to describe art that exhibits order, balance, clarity and precision.

A leading figure in Greek music, **Nikos Skalkottas** (1904-1949) was one of the first Greek composers to adopt atonality and the 12-tone method subsequently creating an entirely new sound world. Of particular interest is the presence of Greek folk material in his works – most notably, his famous collection of *Greek Dances* (1936) for full orchestra and "low" instruments. Each of the 36 dances (three sets of 12) is an exuberant and sophisticated re-creation of indigenous Greek folk-ensemble sounds (both real and custom-made) each with its own distinct rhythm, harmony and flavor.

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Symbolizing the dynamics of the Greek islands, their titles refer to areas of Greece, types of indigenous dance and specific folksongs. And, their East Mediterranean expressions conjure up different emotions and energies such as national pride, freedom and fire.

Elliott Carter (b. 1908), one of the prime innovators of 20th century music, composed *The Minotaur* (1947) during a time when his style was influenced by Igor Stravinsky (also featured on BMOP's program) and Medieval music. Based on the Greek myth of Theseus in the Labyrinth, and conceived as a ballet in collaboration with George Balanchine, it premiered in 1947 in New York by the Ballet Society. Described by Aaron Copland as, "one of America's most distinguished creative artists in any field," Carter is consistently innovative and is known for his explorations of tempo relationships and texture that characterize his music.

Apollon Musagete (1927-28, rev. 1947) trans. *Apollo, The Leader of the Muses* (later shortened to *Apollo*), has grown to become one of the most popular neo-classical ballets in history. Conceived by **Igor Stravinsky** (1882-1971) as an austere score of great purity and unity, he settled on a theme of Apollo, and his interaction with the muses (streamlined to three muses out of the original nine): Calliope, the personification of poetry and rhythm; Polyhymnia, representing mime; and Terpsichore, dance. It begins with the birth of Apollo, then the presentation of the gifts from the muses, and ends with their ascent into the arena of the Gods on Mount Olympus. George Balanchine, who choreographed the first European staging in 1928, understood the essence of Stravinsky's achievement. "In its discipline and restraint, in its sustained oneness of tone and feeling the score was revelation. It [Apollon] seemed to tell me that I could dare not to use everything that I, too, could eliminate."

Completing the program is the love story of Apollo and the nymph, Daphne. *Apollo & Daphne Variations* (1987) by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer **Lewis Spratlan** (b. 1940) tells the gripping tale of Apollo proclaiming his love and eminence for Daphne who turned into a bay laurel tree when Apollo was on the verge of catching her. Winner at the New England Composers Orchestra Competition for readings of new works, *Apollo & Daphne Variations* is what Spratlan describes as, "wonderfully danceable and dramatically gripping." Spratlan currently resides in both the Berkshires and Amherst, MA.



About BMOP:

The Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP) is widely recognized as the leading orchestra in the United States dedicated exclusively to performing new music, and its signature record label, BMOP/sound, is the nation's foremost label launched by an orchestra and solely devoted to new music recordings. Founded in 1996 by Artistic Director Gil Rose, BMOP affirms its mission to illuminate the connections that exist naturally between contemporary music and contemporary society by reuniting composers and audiences in a shared concert experience.

In its first twelve seasons, BMOP established a track record that includes more than 80 performances, over 70 world premieres (including 30 commissioned works), two Opera Unlimited festivals with Opera Boston, the inaugural Ditson Festival of Contemporary Music with the ICA/Boston, and 32 commercial recordings, including 12 CDs from BMOP/sound.

In March 2008, BMOP launched its signature record label, BMOP/sound, with the release of John Harbison's ballet *Ulysses*. Its composer-centric releases focus on orchestral works that are otherwise unavailable in recorded form. The response to the label was immediate and celebratory; its five inaugural releases appeared on the "Best of 2008" lists of *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, National Public Radio, *Downbeat*, and *American Record Guide*, among others.

BMOP/sound is the recipient of five Grammy Award nominations: in 2009 for *Charles Fussell: Wilde* (Best Classical Vocal Performance); in 2010 for *Derek Bermel: Voices* (Best Instrumental Soloist Performance with Orchestra); and three nominations in 2011 for its recording of *Steven Mackey: Dreamhouse* (Best Engineered Classical Album, Best Classical Album, and Best Orchestral Performance). *The New York Times* has proclaimed, "BMOP/sound is an example of everything done right." Additional BMOP recordings are available from Albany, Arsis, Cantaloupe, Centaur, Chandos, ECM, Innova, Naxos, New World, and Oxingale.

In Boston, BMOP performs at Boston's Jordan Hall and Symphony Hall, and the orchestra has also performed in New York at Miller Theater, the Winter Garden, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, and The Lyceum in Brooklyn. A perennial winner of the ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming of Orchestral Music and 2006 winner of the John S. Edwards Award for Strongest Commitment to New American Music, BMOP has appeared at the Bank of America Celebrity Series (Boston, MA), Tanglewood, the Boston Cyberarts Festival, the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), and Music on the Edge (Pittsburgh, PA). In April 2008, BMOP headlined the 10th Annual MATA Festival in New York.

BMOP's greatest strength is the artistic distinction of its musicians and performances. Each season, Gil Rose, recipient of Columbia University's prestigious Ditson Conductor's Award as well as an ASCAP Concert Music award for his extraordinary contribution to new music, gathers together an outstanding orchestra of dynamic and talented young performers, and presents some of the world's top vocal and instrumental soloists. *The Boston Globe* claims, "Gil Rose is some kind of genius; his concerts are wildly entertaining, intellectually rigorous, and meaningful." Of BMOP performances, *The New York Times* says: "Mr. Rose and his team filled the music with rich, decisive ensemble colors and magnificent solos. These musicians were rapturous—superb instrumentalists at work and play." <http://www.bmop.org>

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