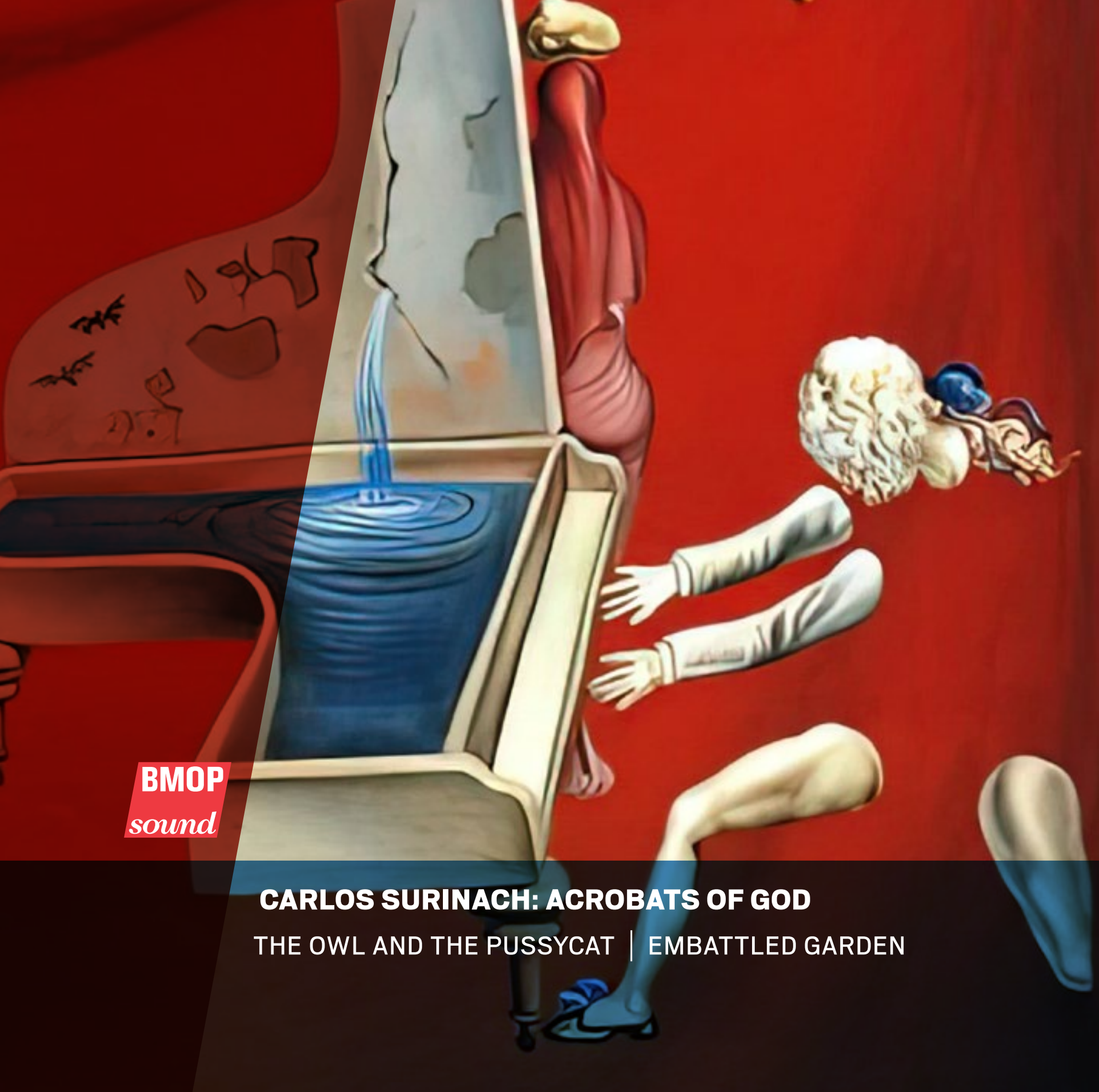

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CARLOS SURINACH: ACROBATS OF GOD

THE OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT | EMBATTLED GARDEN

CARLOS SURINACH 1915-1997

ACROBATS OF GOD

THE OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT

EMBATTLED GARDEN

ALIANA DE LA GUARDIA narrator

BOSTON MODERN ORCHESTRA PROJECT
Gil Rose, conductor

ACROBATS OF GOD (1960)

[1] Scene I Fanfare 3:14
[2] Scene II Interlude 2:05
[3] Scene III Antique Dance 2:23
[4] Scene IV Interlude 2:19
[5] Scene V Bolero 2:16
[6] Scene VI Interlude 1:53
[7] Scene VII Minuet 2:26
[8] Scene VIII Interlude 1:07
[9] Scene IX Spanish Gallop 5:00

THE OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT (1978)
Aliana de la Guardia, narrator

[10] Introduction 2:55
[11] "The Owl and the Pussy-cat went to sea" 1:20
[12] "The Owl looked up to the stars above" 2:49
[13] "Pussy said to the Owl, 'You elegant fowl'" 1:57
[14] "They sailed away, for a year and a day" 2:15
[15] "Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling your ring?" 1:11
[16] "And they were married next day" 4:46
[17] "They dined on mince, and slices of quince" 5:08

EMBATTLED GARDEN (1957)

[18] Allegro ma non troppo 4:41
[19] 1. Tiento de Queja 3:11
[20] 2. Tiento de Pena 2:48
[21] 3. Tiento de Alegria 5:04

TOTAL 60:49

PRODUCTION PHOTO FROM THE DEVIL AND THE ODYSSEY AT, 1978. PHOTO COURTESY MARTHA GRAHAM DANCE COMPANY.

By Carlos Surinach

Excerpted from an interview with Katy Matheson, February 27, 1979.

I had to put things in between related to the same music [for *Embattled Garden*]. And Martha has a very funny way to do things. Once you serve her the music and she gets the music she more or less wants, she puts the music below her arm and disappears and she doesn't call you until the dress rehearsal, when everything is done. She's a very personal lady. And why not, there is a saying that says "let the miracle be done, even if it is done by the devil." In this case, Martha is a little devil, but in the good sense, a little bit like Stravinsky. She has the charisma of a devil; there is no other devil but she alone. Which is a very agreeable devil, and for the ones who are like me and a maturish devil, it's very agreeable to play with her.

I liked *Embattled Garden* very much. I could see a point of a sort of irony against the Spanish music. Sort of a certain spoof of Hispanity which was very agreeable to me. Remember that there are those bamboos in the Isamu Noguchi set and those bamboos signify Spain but Spain in the way anybody sees Spain abroad, in other words, as a very hot country. So my music fit very well because she took good care that my music would fit, in that sort of the work itself deals with the Devil, is the serpent there, is quite establishing the Eden, or the Paradise, and the Devil, and Eve and Lilith make appear all of a sudden a sort of Jewish Spain, which is a very funny thing, but extraordinarily witty and good. So I liked it very much and it was completely new to me. Because at that moment I didn't know who Lilith was. She had to explain to me that in the same way that the Serpent shows or teaches Eve how

to make love with Adam, Lilith teaches Adam how to make love to Eve. And then the thing ends exactly as it began, but nobody is pure anymore. It's absolutely genius. Only a genius could do those things. And she wouldn't find a Lilith in the established Bible so she went to the Talmud. Why not? The Talmud has Lilith as you know.

* * *

The money for that came from a Capezio Prize given to Martha Graham. And she said already when she was given the Capezio Prize she mentioned already there, where I was a guest, that the money would be given to me for a commission of a new work. She told me to come to that party because I would get a surprise. So I went to the party, and I didn't get the check at the party, neither I thought it would have been proper, but it was mentioned already there. So that was the story and the birth of *Acrobats of God*.

All I could tell you is a French word for it that I don't think exists in English. "Success," if I could tell you "success" would imply an audience success, which it was. But the French word is "réussite" which means "a success in what you do for yourself." As a comic ballet, making fun of herself, and her studio and her manners and her ways and the way the dancers react and the way everything goes, I don't think anybody in that dance history has done anything so beautiful. I don't speak about the music. If you want to say that the music is beautiful it's up to you, but I speak about the choreography, so well. "Réussite!" as the French would say.

As I told you, Martha Graham is a lady who you deliver her the score and when she knows what it is then she disappears with the score. I never knew anything how the work was being choreographed. But I saw the last two rehearsals in the theater and they didn't show at all any sign of hesitation. Not at all. Not to me. And I think I had taken a good part in

the action of the work. Moreover, the work has the same symbolism that I had been told when I was commissioned.

I mean about the dancers, the tribulations of the dancers, and terrible and good things that happen to the artistic world. That's all what it is about. I didn't laugh. You never laugh or cry when your work is part of your system. You are part of it, you are not a newcomer to it. Therefore you have lost the freshness of someone in the audience who comes out of the blue and sees the piece.

About laughing I must tell you a very honest thing. I have a few works that have been written with an intention to smile not to laugh. Those symphonic works or ballet works, one of them was premiered this last summer at the Metropolitan, *The Owl and the Pussycat*, also with Martha Graham. The audience from one day to another never laughed in the same places. And that's remarkable. You cannot figure out that. Many times yes, but many times they don't. You don't understand them. It may be a situation of the kind of audience, of that day in the atmosphere that has been formed in the theater, I don't know. Or maybe if one breaks out laughing the other will. If that doesn't happen the others may not.

The mood of the performance on that day and the way they dash a scene or do less of a dashing through it. Many things. But it is admitting anything that is human is always different, including a performance of a thing that is very or highly organized, which is the choreography of a ballet.

* * *

[*The Owl and the Pussycat*] was new to me. I was approached by Martha Graham, I think it was in November '77, only. And she told me the story, and I told her that I was busy writing a concerto for harp and orchestra that just two weeks ago was world premiered in Michigan with Nicanor Zabaleta, the best harpist in the world. And I told her that I was about to finish

UNCREDITED ILLUSTRATION FOR "THE OWL AND THE PUSSY-CAT" BY EDWARD LEAR, 1871

that but I was still well a month away from finishing, and it was very important to finish because that work for a soloist, he has to practice and that takes sometimes a year until he or she plays it well. And I had to let it lie and I couldn't take *The Owl and the Pussycat*. At that moment *The Owl and the Pussycat* was going to be for television. But somehow it didn't happen and two months later she calls me again and says, "Now *The Owl and the Pussycat* is not being done for television and it's going to be done at the Met. Would you do it." And I said, "Well, I must think about the months that we have left." And that was at the beginning of February exactly a year ago, when I began to work on *The Owl and the Pussycat*. So it took hardly six months, first of February and was premiered 26 July.

The work as you know is based on an Edward Lear poem. It's no longer Edward Lear, it's so Martha Graham–esque. It has nothing of Edward Lear, including the dolphins. Lear never has dolphins. And one of the great successes of the ballet are those dolphins appearing there with such vitality and all that.

Used with permission from the Oral History Project of the Jerome Robbins Dance Division at the New York Public Library.

NOTES

ACROBATS OF GOD is scored for solo winds, horn, trumpet, trombone, tuba, percussion, harp, mandolin trio, and strings, and was premiered on April 27, 1960, conducted by Robert Irving, at 54th Street Theatre, New York, NY.

EMBATTLED GARDEN, scored for full orchestra, received its premiere on April 3, 1958, at the Adelphi Theatre, New York.

THE OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT is scored for solo winds, horn, trumpet, trombone, tuba, percussion, harp, and strings, was premiered on June 26, 1978, at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York.

By Clifton Ingram

> *Quoting Cervantes, the great Spanish writer, he said,* "If you are born Italian, you sing; if German, you play; if Spanish, from the moment you are out of the womb, you want to dance." *It turns out that my music, even the most serious pieces, all suggest, in some way, dance. Most of my works have not been written for ballet, but they nevertheless were taken by choreographers, and they made a ballet out of them.*
>
> — Carlos Surinach, in an interview with Bruce Duffie (1987)

When one speaks of the musical quality of Carlos Surinach's work, of the innate sense of rhythm and melody, one cannot avoid the Spanish-born composer's background. Surinach is considered by many to be a natural successor to the Spanish nationalist school of Albeniz, Granados, and Falla. Therefore, it is no surprise that Surinach's reliance on the Phrygian flavor of the flamenco tradition—that is, descending patterns usually revolving around the notes A–G–F–E—firmly infuses the composer's work with an undeniable Spanish flair. But while this generalization might be evident and even helpful in some regards, it is a sweeping statement nonetheless, obscuring a much more complex life of cosmopolitan experience.

Barcelona-born Carlos Surinach (1915–1997) is regarded today as an American composer, having become a United States citizen in 1959 after emigrating to the States in 1951 (by way of Paris in 1947). Of course, at this time Surinach was but one of many Spaniards who had fled, were fleeing, or would flee their native land in search of security and prosperity elsewhere in the face of fascism during Franco's reign through the mid-1970s. Although Surinach's leaving Spain was more likely a decision based on professional development rather than political oppression, Surinach did note, "I had been a soldier with the Liberals against Franco, but he occupied Barcelona and that was the end of the civil war." Surinach's decision to seek work elsewhere paid off, however, as his later work would gain him enough widespread success that he was named Knight Commander of the Order of Isabella of Castile in 1972 during the twilight years of Franco's political dominance.

Early on in his life, Surinach's Austrian–Polish mother, being a house pianist herself, introduced him to music. After attending the Caminals Academy of Music, Surinach continued his learning in his native Spain at the Barcelona Municipal Conservatory with private lessons from director Enrique Morera. These studies were bolstered even more by traveling to Germany, where he attended the Robert Schumann Conservatory in Dusseldorf, the Hochschule in Cologne, and the Preussische Akademie der Kunst in Berlin. Notably, at the latter he attended several of the lecture-seminars under the pioneering Richard Strauss, which does not surprise one looking upon Surinach's finely crafted scores. About his decision to study in Germany, Surinach noted:

> Why did I go to Germany? As I said, I wanted to make popular Spanish forms suitable for the concert hall, and for that, Germany was very useful: They write music very seriously. You must remember that the Germans helped Franco during the Spanish Civil War, and by 1939 they had occupied France, so it was impossible to study there. But with a recommendation from my teacher in Barcelona to Richard Strauss, I was given a fellowship, so I went to Germany in 1940 … [While w]e were very upset about all that was going on, when America got into the war and started bombing Berlin, I decided to go back to Spain.
>
> —Surinach, in interview with Robert Sherman (1996)

After being appointed conductor of the Barcelona Philharmonic Orchestra and the Gran Teatro del Liceo Opera House in 1944, the pace of his travels increased to meet a growing taste for the Spanish composer's cosmopolitan style, a unique fusion of the national sounds of his motherland with all the technical facility that he picked up from his studies in Germany. Surinach's music is therefore a balancing act, a sophisticated amalgam that demonstrates the clear, transparent textures of his generation's love for Stravinsky-inspired Neoclassicism, which itself lends a cooling frame to the explosive expressivity of Surinach's use of flamenco sounds.

Within a decade of arriving in the United States, Surinach was commissioned by Martha Graham, one of the most influential choreographers of her generation. He would go on to compose a total of three ballets for the illustrious Graham—*Embattled Garden* (1957), *Acrobats of God* (1960), and *The Owl and the Pussycat* (1978)—and these three works would quickly become Surinach's calling card as a composer.

Embattled Garden opens [**18**] in a fittingly primordial fashion: an atavistic crashing of cymbals and primordial *pizzicato* punching of strings sets the stage for violent waves of *tutti* flamenco melody across the whole ensemble, repeatedly summoned by dramatically

ascending harp *glissandi* and coaxed on by booming bass drum hits. This grinding of musical tectonic plates is both dramatically propulsive and fiercely lyrical, subsiding into a brief moment of respite of plaintive clarinet solo work. Suddenly, a pent-up Allegro blasts forth. Like before, the full ensemble snaps to attention to engage in a fiery primeval dance of heavily accented and taut *secco* flamenco figures. It is a music of fixation, tightly revolving around a single pitch and exploiting the crunchy expression of close harmony, especially the emphasis on the semitone inherent to flamenco music. The brass section is on display, but again the full chamber orchestra crashes to a halt, falling away to reveal a brief duet of piccolo and oboe. Like the clarinet solo previous, this high wind duo obsesses over a flamenco motif in a both yearning and more playful manner. The tantric dancing Allegro returns—this time *ma non troppo* ("not too much")—to bring the chamber orchestra to another bombastic climax.

However, from the ashes of this fiery orchestral display, a new kind of music emerges, the first of three dance numbers. Titled "Tiento de Queja" [**19**], the first is a quixotic trio of English horn, timpani, and harp. The mysterious melody of the English horn quickly expands to include a conversational exchange with the lower reedy registers of the bassoon, and the growing support of strings helps to propel the music forward. An English horn cadenza provides another reprieve before lapsing back into a full ensemble music, which accelerates suddenly into new terrain. A brief transitional section of the opening flamenco motif with heart-beat pulsing percussion brings about the second dance, "Tiento de Pena" [**20**], a much more tender affair. The English horn is again on display, here paired to great effect with the brassy sound of horn, which are supported by sweeping harp and a yearning countermelody of strings. The amorous lulling of this cinematic Spanish siesta is dramatically halted. The flamenco transitional motif is taken on by piccolo and bassoon, cuing the third and final dance, entitled "Tiento de Alegria" [**21**], a tempestuous event marked *Tempo di Bolero*. Here,

PRODUCTION PHOTO FROM MARTHA GRAHAM'S *EMBATTLED GARDEN*. PHOTO BY MARTHA SWOPE. COURTESY OF MARTHA GRAHAM DANCE CO. AND THE MARTHA SWOPE ESTATE.

the orchestra twists and turns, cross-cutting brassy fanfares against serpentine winds, until finally the music slowly fades into the distance like the setting of the sun over Iberian hills.

The music of these dances is actually an older piece of Surinach's, reworked from the original trio, entitled *Tientos* ("Essays"), for the orchestral *Embattled Garden*. Following the success of his 1953 ballet, *Ritmo Jondo*, word of Surinach had spread, and Martha Graham, using a recording of his *Tientos*, choreographed the piece without the composer's knowledge. Yet despite this *faux pas*, the composer forgave her professional misstep, finding Graham's choreography both hysterical and brilliant. Graham requested that Surinach work with her, and the composer expanded upon the *Tientos* pieces to become *Embattled Garden*. Although this title is a veiled allusion to the Garden of Eden, overt biblical references were avoided for the production. The touch of Surinach's Spanish-inflected music was enhanced by Japanese-American artist Isamu Noguchi's set design, which sported tropically-colored abstracted tree-like structures. Graham designed the costumes herself: dancers wore *toreador*-style trousers and tortoise-shell peineta, the supportive combs which are part of the traditional *mantilla* (lace head covering). *Embattled Garden* had a distinct Spanish flavor, all while maintaining its own unique aesthetic, aligning with Surinach's own sentiment that he did not wish to copy or recast his native traditions, but instead capture and invoke their spirited essence:

> I wanted to put that kind of music, and flamenco too, at a concert level, to tame its raw energy with the better manners of classical music. However, I very rarely quote folk tunes or use actual flamenco rhythms: They may inspire me, but the mood comes into my imagination; once I hear a theme, I digest it and dissolve it into powder, so that when it comes back from my mind, it's something else. I hope that the mood is still there, but with very few exceptions, my music is completely original.
>
> — Surinach, in interview with Sherman (1996)

The second of the Graham–Surinach collaborations, *Acrobats of God*, is actually a much lighter piece than one would imagine given the religious weight of its title. The work's name plays off a medieval tradition of monks being called "athletes of god" due to their rigid physical practices. *Acrobats of God* was therefore imagined by Graham as "a lighthearted celebration of the art of dance and the discipline of the dancer's world," playing ironic mockery against genuine respect.

The work begins with "Fanfare" [**1**], a lively affair whose jocular gestures span across light wind turns atop abrupt full orchestra *tutti* passages that disrupt the proceedings. "Interlude" is next [**2**], the first of four such movements—that is, the even numbered ones in an *intermezzi* design. If the ear detects a coy slyness to the music of the Interludes, this may be because when the work is fully staged, they feature soloist dancers named "The Choreographer" and "The Ringmaster" (complete with whip), who "join in the action, creating and commenting on the dances," according to Graham. This self-critical element can also be found in Surinach's music as reference, making the score a kind of cyclical form of a dance suite, where thematic material occurs in more than one movement as a unifying device. Indeed, the first Interlude ends much the same way as the first "Fanfare" dance.

The mandolins are heavily featured in their melodic role in "Antique Dance" [**3**], as their *dolcissimo* tender tremolo, along with the clack of castanets, lend a distinct Mediterranean feel. Like the first two movements, disruptive orchestral stabs bring the dance to an end as solo trumpet helps cool down the action. The following "Interlude" [**4**] is much more aggressive, as the relentless bombast of low brass is cross-cut with an acrobatically wide-leaping clarinet *espressivo.* But the bombast wins out, as timpani pounds a faster time in a five pattern (3+2).

"Bolero" [**5**] features the tremolo mandolins again, who take up a spirited, chromatic melody. Below all this bustle, the orchestra supports with the feeling of a loping waltz: Surinach's

German training on subtle display. The third "Interlude" [**6**] that follows features a supple arrangement of winds and strings, but listen close and there is the gentle wooden "white noise" of sustained xylophone lurking just below this sentimental surface. The clarinet melody from before is recycled to signal the next dance, "Minuet" [**7**]. Here, flute joins and ornaments the *grazioso* mandolin melody with its many leaps and grace notes in a series of variations. The brassy bluster of the fourth movement returns for this fourth and final "Interlude" [**8**], as does the leaping clarinet melody and the timpani-driven five-beat orchestral driving to signal the final movement of the suite.

"Spanish Gallop" [**9**] begins with sectionally-led panels of rapid sixteenth notes, high winds cutting in on a dense dance between mandolin and strings. This hushed Vivace of instrumental interjections reaches new heights, as an ascending sweeping glissando gesture is repeated over and over by keyboard percussion, piano, and harp. The ostinati-heavy low-brass bombast of the Interludes is recycled, but melts away in the presence of a new melody. A solo cello brings the orchestra's machinations to a halt, allowing for a final moment of tenderness. This lyricism passes the baton to a wandering flute cadenza, whose culmination to a repeated ascending gesture is subverted by an ironic completion by low plucked strings.

The Owl and the Pussycat [**10-17**], the final ballet collaboration between Graham and Surinach, is based on the beloved poem by Edward Lear. Lear was an intriguing 19th-century English figure, a self-proclaimed "dirty landscape painter" better known today for his "nonsense verse" than his visual art. He often lived an itinerant life, traveling from place to place whether it be to illustrate the animals at the Earl of Derby's menagerie or to paint the topographical landscapes of Rome. Although this rootlessness suggests an adventurous spirit, Lear's poetry often reveals a tinge of melancholy just below a nonchalantly comedic surface. Indeed, Lear was highly solitary, often keeping others at a distance to hide his epilepsy, an affliction which he dubbed his "Demon." To complicate things, Lear's hidden homosexuality also kept him at odds from the sort of close intimate togetherness

that the characters in his poems often attain. Therefore, the comic absurdity of his verse is bittersweet, a deflection from his poor health and loneliness. In this way, Lear's poetic works share much in common with the Victorian verse of his day, much like that of Lewis Carroll, Thomas Hood, or W.S. Gilbert, by using verbal playfulness to soften the blows of cruelty, pain, and death by means of absurdity and humor. The enthusiastic reception of *Nonsense Songs*, a gathering of his poems published in 1870, perplexed Lear, who would have preferred to have been known for his visual art. "The Owl and the Pussy-cat" is the best known from this publication and is typical of the collection, featuring nonhuman characters on a journey who along the way sing, dance, eat, and celebrate on a moonlit shore.

Surinach's musical setting of Lear's well-known poem about an anthropomorphic Owl and Pussycat's journey to find happiness together opens somewhat unexpectedly with uncertainty. However, the foreboding up-down surging flourish of strings and an ominously dissonant sustain of woodwinds and brass are quickly supplanted by a spritely Allegro. The adventurous theme of staccato high winds and rattling xylophone is playfully tossed around the orchestra at break-neck speeds. There is a sense of sea-sick danger to Surinach's dazzling orchestration, a sort of jaunty jut of the tongue, defiant in the face of danger to what might await the two unsuspecting lovers. Much of the ballet's music is a mocking scherzando in the face of a roiling orchestra, which often seems to be at the brink of losing control at any moment.

But Surinach also brings a deep and empathetic romanticism to Lear's surreal narrative. The music's slapdash and violent tones will suddenly turn tender, lovestruck in the star-like dazzle of twinkling glockenspiel and clavinet (an electrically amplified clavichord, a uniquely modern take on the Renaissance-era clavichord perfectly chosen to invoke the strange reality of Lear's wondrous tale), for example. Or, although an ominous grinding of low strings might threaten to sour the lover's optimistic attitude, moments later the pluck of a carefree harp will then blithely "mickey-mouse" the on-stage strumming of Graham's Owl dancer's "small guitar" as he serenades his Pussycat.

In this way, Surinach matches the paradoxical tone of Lear's "nonsense verse" by focusing his music on contrasts between light and heavy. Coy winds and plunking *pizzicato* strings are confronted by *pesante* brass, or quietly ethereal *sul ponticello* tremolos of strings are followed by a mockingly militaristic thwack and shake of percussion. So too are expectations, which are set up by repetition of ostinato figures, exploded by a shiftless and mercurial musical wit, additionally allowing each instrument of the orchestra its own opportunity to shine. Even the contrast between vibrant musical motion and taut silence is exploited to excellent effect. As the final collaboration between Graham and Surinach, *The Owl and the Pussycat* demonstrates the matured hand of the Spanish composer, where the more overtly Spanish essence of previous collaborations is instead relinquished to make room for finely tuned and clever compositional craftsmanship, which never fails to incite both the listener's mind and body to dance.

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Clifton Ingram is a composer, performer (Rested Field, guitars/electronics), and writer interested in the fault lines between contemporary and historical traditions. He holds degrees in music (composition) and classics from Skidmore College and The Boston Conservatory.

The Owl and the Pussy-Cat

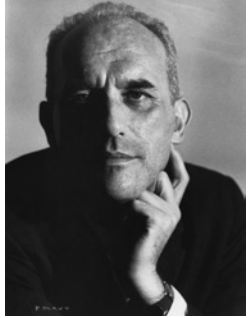
Poem by Edward Lear

The Owl and the Pussy-cat went to sea
In a beautiful pea-green boat;
They took some honey, and plenty of money
Wrapped up in a five-pound note.
The Owl looked up to the stars above,
And sang to a small guitar
"O lovely Pussy, O Pussy, my love,
What a beautiful Pussy you are,
You are,
You are!
What a beautiful Pussy you are!"

Pussy said to the Owl, "You elegant fowl,
How charmingly sweet you sing!
Oh! let us be married; too long we have tarried:
But what shall we do for a ring?"
They sailed away, for a year and a day
To the land where the Bong-Tree grows,
And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood
With a ring at the end of his nose,
His nose,
His nose,
With a ring at the end of his nose.

"Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling
Your ring?" Said the Piggy, "I will."
So they took it away, and were married next day
By the Turkey who lives on the hill.
They dined on mince, and slices of quince,
Which they ate with a runcible spoon;
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,
They danced by the light of the moon,
The moon,
The moon,
They danced by the light of the moon.

RAPHAEL: *ADAM AND EVE* (CEILING PANEL AT THE STANZA DELLA SEGNATURA), CA. 1509–1511. PHOTO BY JEAN-POL GRANDMONT.



FRED PLAUT

Carlos Surinach, born on March 4, 1915, in Barcelona, was among this century's premier composers for the dance. Studies in composition at the Barcelona Conservatory were followed by advanced work at the Düsseldorf Conservatory, the Cologne Hochschule, and Berlin's Prussian Academy as well as at lecture-seminars under Strauss. He was conductor of the Barcelona Philharmonic and the orchestra of the Gran Teatro del Liceo before moving to the United States in 1951 where he gained renown as both composer and conductor.

In the United States, Surinach's scores were quickly picked up by choreographers and dance companies including Martha Graham and the Joffrey Ballet. Graham included his *Acrobats of God* and *Embattled Garden* in her Edinburgh Festival programs, and the Joffrey programmed his *Feast of Ashes* for their Russian tour in 1963. An impressive body of orchestral, choral, and chamber music as well as music for the dance is uniquely colored by Surinach's innate sense of rhythm and melody.

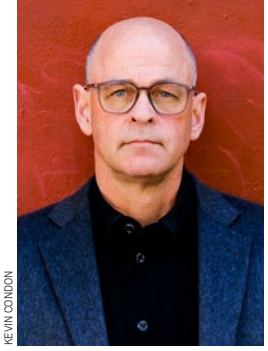
Surinach taught at Carnegie Mellon University and received commissions and grants from the Louisville Orchestra, Ricordi, the Rothschild Foundation, Martha Graham, MGM Records, and many other institutions. He was awarded England's Bax Society Medal for Non Commonwealth Composers in 1966 and the Spanish title of Knight Commander of the Order of Isabella I of Castille in 1972.

Aliana de la Guardia is "an energetic, dramatic clarion" (*New Music Box*), whose "uninhibited" (*New York Arts*) and "vocally fearless" (*Boston Globe*) performances have garnered rave reviews in Boston and beyond. The multifaceted Cuban-American artist boasts a vibrant career as a soprano vocalist specializing in new music and new opera, theater artist, and nonprofit arts leader.

She has enjoyed collaborations with American Lyric Theater, Beth Morrison Projects, Castle of our Skins, Center for Contemporary Opera, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Boston New Music Festival, Dinosaur Annex, Enigma Chamber Opera, Ludovico Ensemble, Monadnock Music, New Gallery Concert Series, Transient Canvas, Winsor Music, and more. She is a PARMA Recordings Artist with five commercial releases on their Navona and Ravello Records labels, and can also be heard on BMOP/sound and independent labels.

She is an ensemble member, co-founder, and Artistic Director of Guerilla Opera, a Boston-based experimental opera ensemble, with which she has produced and performed in many new operas that "redefine the opera experience" (*Opera News*).

As a theater artist, she moves beyond the concert and opera stage in genre-bending collaborations with Mountain Time Arts and Atlas UNLIMITED, and can be seen guest starring on the ABC series *Body of Proof*. (alianadelaguardia.com)



KEVIN CONDON

Gil Rose is one of today's most trailblazing conductors, praised as "amazingly versatile" (*The Boston Globe*) with "a sense of style and sophistication" (*Opera News*). Equally at home performing core repertoire, new music, and lesser-known historic symphonic and operatic works, "Gil Rose is not just a fine conductor, but a peerless curator, sniffing out—and commissioning—off-trend, unheralded, and otherwise underplayed repertoire that nevertheless holds to unfailingly high standards of quality. In doing so, he's built an indefinable, but unmistakable, personal aesthetic" (WQXR).

A global leader in American contemporary music, Rose is the founder of the performing and recording ensemble the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), who "bring an endlessly curious and almost archaeological mind to programming… with each concert, each recording, an essential step in a better direction" (*The New York Times*), as well as the founder of Odyssey Opera, praised by *The New York Times* as "bold and intriguing" and "one of the East Coast's most interesting opera companies."

Since its founding in 1996, the "unique and invaluable" (*The New York Times*) BMOP has grown to become the premier orchestra in the world for commissioning, recording, and performing music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Under Rose's leadership, BMOP has won seventeen ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming, been selected as *Musical America's* Ensemble of the Year in 2016, and in 2021 was awarded a *Gramophone* Magazine Special Achievement Award in recognition of its extraordinary service to American music of the modern era. Under Rose's baton, BMOP has been featured at numerous festivals including the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), Concerts at the Library of Congress (Washington, DC), and the MATA Festival in New York.

In 2013, Gil Rose expanded his musical vision with the founding of Odyssey Opera, a company dedicated to eclectic and underperformed operatic repertoire from all eras. Working with an international roster of singers and directors, Odyssey has presented more than 35 operas in Boston, with innovative, thematically linked seasons. The company has also established

itself as a leader of modern opera in the United States, having given three world premieres and numerous U.S. premieres.

In addition to his role as conductor, Rose is leading the charge for the preservation and advancement of underperformed works through recordings. BMOP/sound, the independent record label Rose founded in 2008, has released over 86 recordings of contemporary music by today's most innovative composers, including world premieres by John Cage, Lukas Foss, Chen Yi, Anthony Davis, Lisa Bielawa, Steven Mackey, Eric Nathan, and many others. With Rose as executive producer, the label has secured six GRAMMY® nominations and a win in 2020 for Tobias Picker's opera *Fantastic Mr. Fox*. Odyssey Opera's in-house label has released five CDs, most recently a complete version of Camille Saint-Saëns's *Henry VIII*.

Beyond Boston, Gil Rose enjoys a busy schedule as a guest conductor and educator. Equally at home on the podium in both symphonic and operatic repertoire, Rose has led performances by the Tanglewood Opera Orchestra, the Netherlands Radio Symphony, the American Composers Orchestra, the National Symphony of Ukraine, the Matsumoto Festival of Japan, the New York City Opera, and the Juilliard Symphony, among others. In addition to being former faculty at Tufts University and Northeastern University, Rose has worked with students across the U.S. at institutions such as Carnegie Mellon University, MIT, New England Conservatory, and the University of California at San Diego. He is a visionary curator of music, inaugurating the Ditson Festival of Music at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art and programming three seasons for the Fromm Concerts at Harvard series.

In the coming seasons, Gil Rose leads Odyssey Opera in a concert performance of three one-act operas by Rachmaninoff and brings John Corigliano and Mark Adamo's new opera *The Lord of Cries* to Boston audiences. In addition, he and BMOP will travel to Carnegie Hall for the orchestra's debut performance and culmination of their 25th season, and BMOP and Odyssey will co-produce *Harriet Tubman: When I Crossed That Line to Freedom*, the second opera in *AS TOLD BY: History, Race, and Justice on the Opera Stage*, a five-year initiative highlighting Black composers and vital figures of Black liberation and thought.

TINA TALLON

The **Boston Modern Orchestra Project** is the premier orchestra in the United States dedicated exclusively to commissioning, performing, and recording music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Described by *The New York Times* as "one of the most artistically valuable" orchestras in the country, BMOP is a unique institution in today's musical world, disseminating exceptional orchestral music "new or so woefully neglected that it might as well be" via performances and recordings of the highest caliber.

Founded by Artistic Director Gil Rose in 1996, BMOP has championed composers whose careers span over a century. Each season, Rose brings BMOP's award-winning orchestra, renowned soloists, and influential composers to the stage of New England Conservatory's historic Jordan Hall, with programming that is "a safe haven for, and champion of, virtually every *ism*, and every genre- and era-mixing hybrid that composers' imaginations have wrought" (*Wall Street Journal*). The musicians of BMOP are consistently lauded for the energy, imagination, and passion with which they infuse the music of the present era.

BMOP's distinguished and adventurous track record includes premieres and recordings of monumental and provocative new works such as John Harbison's ballet *Ulysses*, Charles Wuorinen's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, and Lei Liang's *A Thousand Mountains, A Million*

Streams. The composers performed and commissioned by BMOP contain Pulitzer and Rome Prize winners, Grawemeyer Award recipients, and MacArthur grant fellows.

From 1997 to 2013 the orchestra won thirteen ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming. BMOP has been featured at festivals including Opera Unlimited, the Ditson Festival of Contemporary Music with the ICA/Boston, Tanglewood, the Boston Cyberarts Festival, Concerts at the Library of Congress (Washington, DC), the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), Music on the Edge (Pittsburgh, PA), and the MATA Festival in New York. During its 20th anniversary season, BMOP was named Musical America's 2016 Ensemble of the Year, the first symphony orchestra in the organization's history to receive this distinction.

BMOP has actively pursued a role in music education through composer residencies, collaborations with colleges, and an ongoing relationship with the New England Conservatory, where it is Affiliate Orchestra for New Music. The musicians of BMOP are equally at home in Symphony Hall, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, and in Cambridge's Club Oberon and Boston's Club Café, where they pursued a popular, composer-led Club Concert series from 2004 to 2012.

BMOP/sound, BMOP's independent record label, was created in 2008 to provide a platform for BMOP's extensive archive of music, as well as to provide widespread, top-quality, permanent access to both classics of the 20th century and the music of today's most innovative composers. BMOP/sound has released over 75 CDs on the label, bringing BMOP's discography to 100 titles. BMOP/sound has garnered praise from the national and international press; it is the recipient of a 2020 GRAMMY® Award for *Tobias Picker: Fantastic Mr. Fox*, ten GRAMMY® Award nominations, and its releases have appeared on the year-end "Best of" lists of *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, National Public Radio, *Time Out New York*, *American Record Guide*, *Downbeat Magazine*, WBUR, NewMusicBox, and others.

BMOP expands the horizon of a typical "night at the symphony." Admired, praised, and sought after by artists, presenters, critics, and audiophiles, BMOP and BMOP/sound are uniquely positioned to redefine the new music concert and recording experience.

PRODUCTION PHOTO FROM MARTHA GRAHAM'S *ACROBATS OF GOD*. PHOTO BY MARTHA SWOPE, COURTESY OF MARTHA GRAHAM DANCE CO. AND THE MARTHA SWOPE ESTATE.

FLUTE
Sarah Brady* (piccolo) [1-3]
Rachel Braude (piccolo) [2]

OBOE
Jennifer Slowik
(English horn) [1-3]

CLARINET
Gary Gorczyca [2]
Jan Halloran* [2]
Michael Norsworthy [1, 3]

BASSOON
Ronald Haroutunian [1-3]

HORN
Whitacre Hill [2]
Kevin Owen* [1-3]

TRUMPET
Eric Berlin [2]
Terry Everson* [1-3]

TROMBONE
Hans Bohn* [1-3]
Alexei Doohovskoy [2]

TUBA
Takatsugu Hagiwara [1, 3]

PERCUSSION
Jonathan Hess [3]
Craig McNutt (timpani) [1-3]
Robert Schulz* [2-3]
Nicholas Tolle [1-2]

PIANO
Yoko Hagino (Hohner clavinet) [2]

HARP
Amanda Romano [3]
Ina Zdorovetchi [1-2]

MANDOLIN
William Buonocore [1]
Nathaniel Farny [1]
Sue Faux* [1]

VIOLIN I
MaeLynn Arnold [1, 3]
Gabriel Boyers [1]
Heidi Braun-Hill [2]
Piotr Buczek [1-3]
Sonia Deng [1]
Gabriela Diaz* [1-2]
Omar Guey [2]
Susan Jensen [1-2]
Jae Young Cosmos Lee* [3]
Yumi Okada [1]
Amy Sims [2]
Klaudia Szlachta [1]

VIOLIN II
Colleen Brannen [1]
Paola Caballero [2]
Julia Cash [1]
Tudor Dornescu [2]
Lilit Hartunian [1-2]
Zenas Hsu [2]
Annegret Klaua [1]
Judith Lee [1]
Kay Rooney Matthews [1, 3]
Nivedita Sarnath [1]
Megumi Stohs* [3]
Zoya Tsvetkova [2-3]
Katherine Winterstein* [1-2]

VIOLA
Mark Berger [2]
Abigail Cross [1-3]
Joan Ellersick* [1]
Noriko Futagami* [1, 3]
Dimitar Petkov [1]
Emily Rideout [2-3]
Emily Rome [1]
Peter Sulski* [2]
Alexander Vavilov [2]

CELLO
Brandon Brooks [1]
Nicole Cariglia* [2-3]
Darry Dolezal [2]
Stephen Marotto [1]
Velleda Miragias [3]
David Russell* [2]
Amy Wensink [1]
Aron Zelkowicz* [1-2]

BASS
Anthony D'Amico* [1-2]
Bebo Shiu [1-3]

KEY:
[1] Acrobats of God
[2] Owl and the Pussycat
[3] Embattled Garden
*Principals

Carlos Surinach
Acrobats of God
The Owl and the Pussycat
Embattled Garden

Producer: Gil Rose
Recording engineer: Joel Gordon (*The Owl and the Pussycat*; *Embattled Garden*); Joel Watts (*Acrobats of God*)
Postproduction engineer: Joel Gordon
Assistant engineer: Peter Atkinson
SACD authoring: Brad Michel

All works on this disc are published by Associated Music Publishers, Inc.

Acrobats of God was recorded November 28, 2018, in Fraser Hall at WGBH studios, Boston, MA. *The Owl and the Pussycat* was recorded September 7, 2021, at Mechanics Hall, Worcester, MA. *Embattled Garden* was recorded July 15, 2016, at Distler Auditorium, Tufts University, Somerville, MA.

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