

Harvard Radcliffe Orchestra

2006-2007 Season

James Yannatos
Music Director



Verdi

Overture to

“La Forza del Destino”

Brahms

Double Concerto

Emily Bruskin, violin

Julia Bruskin, cello

(from the Claremont Trio)

Strauss

Ein Heldenleben

8pm, Friday Dec 1 Sanders Theatre

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HISTORY OF THE HRO

The Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra (HRO) is the oldest symphony orchestra in the United States. It traces its history back to the night of March 6, 1808, when six Harvard men first formed the Pierian Sodality, an organization dedicated to the consumption of brandy and cigars, as well as to the serenading of young ladies. Its midnight expeditions were not confined to Cambridge, but rather extended to Watertown, Brookline, Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, and Boston – wherever, in short, dwelt celebrated belles. Among the Sodality's other activities included the serenading of then Harvard College President John Kirkland in 1819. According to a June 29, 1840 entry in the Sodality's record book, the group's late-night music-making antics earned them fame that "did wax exceedingly great, and did reach all the places round about Cambridge."

The early Pierians had so much spirit that in the 1830s, the Faculty of Harvard College publicly admonished the Sodality for absenting themselves from Cambridge for a whole night, serenading. Administration censure was so great, in fact, that in 1832, the Pierian Sodality was reduced to one man: Henry Gassett.³⁴ According to a March 29, 1943 issue of *Time* magazine, Gassett held meetings with himself in his chair, paid himself dues regularly, played his flute in solitude and finally persuaded another flautist to join in duets. It seemed the Sodality was in danger of disappearing. Gradually, however, other members were elected, and the Sodality played on. The Sodality not only played on, but also profoundly influenced the development of music in Cambridge and Boston over the next fifty years. In 1837, Sodality alumni formed the Harvard Musical Association with an aim to foster music at the college. The Harvard Glee Club and the Boston Symphony Orchestra both owe their existence to the early Pierians.

As a musical organization, the Pierians were also interested in performance. In 1860, shortly after Harvard President James Walker made Harvard the first institution to add music as a regular subject of study in the curriculum, the Pierian Sodality was given permission to "hire a hall and give a public concert, on condition that no tickets be sold."¹ Thus began the performing career of the Pierians. They began to give regular concerts, and rehearsed to prepare for them. Eventually, the orchestra's performances garnered

enough attention to be reported in the *New York Times*, which wrote in 1891: "The Pierian Sodality is especially strong this year...containing some of the best musical talent of the university."²

By the turn of the century, the Pierian Sodality could at last justly refer to itself as the Harvard University Orchestra. It had grown into a serious musical organization and had become the largest college orchestra in America. It deemed itself ready for its first out-of-state tour, the Centennial Tour of 1908, which took the orchestra through New York state, and was so successful that other tours quickly followed. In 1921, the Sodality toured New York City, Providence, and even played in Washington's National Theater for First Lady Mrs. Warren Harding and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge.³ The orchestra gradually built an international reputation and played for many distinguished audiences in the country.

It was not until November of 1936 that members of the Pierian Sodality finally condescended to assist the Radcliffe Orchestra in some of its larger concerts. Joint concerts became more frequent in the late thirties, and in 1942, the Pierians suggested that the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra be formed. Since the Sodality's membership was depleted during the years of World War II, and since the Radcliffe Orchestra lacked certain instruments, both groups benefited from the merger. Thus the men and women of Harvard and Radcliffe united in their music-making efforts, and the HRO as it is today was born.

It is said that around 1950, HRO stopped making history and started making music with a degree of seriousness never before seen at the university. The orchestra continued to improve in quality and reputation as it took tours to Mexico (1962), Washington, D.C. (1966), and Canada (1972). It performed in venues such as Carnegie Hall and, in 1978, placed third in the Fifth Annual International Festival of Student Orchestras. The 1980s and 1990s saw tours of the former Soviet Union (1984), Asia (1985 and 1988), Europe (1992), and Italy (1996). Most recently, HRO conducted successful tours of Brazil in 2000, and Canada in the summer of 2004.

¹ Samuel Eliot Morison, *Three Centuries of Harvard: 1636-1936* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2001), p.295.

² "News From Harvard," *The New York Times*, Dec. 16 1891.

³ "Harvard Orchestra on Tour," *The New York Times*, Dec. 19 1921.

HARVARD-RADCLIFFE ORCHESTRA

199th Season, 2006-2007

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Aaron Kuan '09
co-principal
Christine Barron '09
Samuel Bjork '09
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Rachel Lefebvre '08
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HARVARD-RADCLIFFE ORCHESTRA

199th Season, 2006-2007



JAMES YANNATOS, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Friday, 1 December 2006, 8:00 P.M.
Sanders Theatre, Harvard University

~Program~

Giuseppe Verdi
(1813-1901)

Overture to La Forza del Destino

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

Concerto for Violin, Violoncello, and
Orchestra in A minor, Op. 102

I. Allegro

II. Andante

III. Vivace Non Troppo

Emily Bruskin, violin

Julia Bruskin, cello

~Intermission~

Richard Strauss
(1864-1949)

Ein Heldenleben, Op. 40

I. The Hero

II. The Hero's Adversaries

III. The Hero's Companion

IV. The Hero's Battlefield

V. The Hero's Works of Peace

VI. The Hero's Retreat from the World and
Fulfillment



DR. JAMES YANNATOS *conductor*



James Yannatos was born and educated in New York City. After attending the High School of Music and Art and the Manhattan School of Music, he pursued composition and studies with Philip Bezan-son, Nadia

Robards, narrator, and was aired on National Public Radio. The work has been released on Albany Records. Seven recordings have been released by Albany Records featuring his music and the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra, including the recent performance of his violin concerto, premiered by Joseph Lin '00.

He has been a consultant and conductor for major orchestras in Bangkok, Thailand, and a guest composer and conductor in international festivals in Leningrad. The latter led to the premiere of his Symphony No. 3 for Strings in the former USSR by the Lithuanian State Orchestra and Leningrad Symphony.

Yannatos has also published four volumes of Silly and Serious Songs based on the words of children. In addition, he has written music for television including Nova's "City of Coral" and Metromedia's "Assassins Among Us". He has received innumerable awards as a composer, including the Artists Foundation Award of 1988 for his Trinity Mass.

"Yannatos has composed a striking musical memorial to the tragic events that took place in Tiananmen Square in 1989. His Symphony No. 4: Tiananmen Square is an uninterrupted six movement arc, both narrative and contemplative as it depicts the gathering of crowds, the idealism, the crushing response, the mourning, the summing up. Yannatos writes brilliantly for orchestra...a compelling sincerity is the ultimate effect of this work. The performance by the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra under the composer's direction was very impressive."

-Boston Globe

Stormy and rhapsodic...a gorgeous main melody of melting tenderness ...Yannatos' blending of quartet writing with the orchestra is masterful ...This is attractive, wonderfully effective music ...He elicits richly committed and virtuosic playing from the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra."

-Gramophone

Boulanger, Luigi Dallapiccola, Darius Milhaud, and Paul Hindemith, as well as conducting studies with William Steinberg and Leonard Bernstein which took Yannatos to Yale University (B.M., M.M.), the University of Iowa (Ph.D.), Aspen and Tanglewood Music Festivals, and Paris.

He has been music director of the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra since 1964 and has led that group on tours to Europe, the former Soviet Union, Asia, and South America.

He has appeared as guest conductor-composer at the Aspen, Banff, Tanglewood, Chautauqua, and Saratoga Festivals, and with the Boston Pops, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Baltimore, and San Antonio Symphonies and the Sverdlovsk, Leningrad, Cleveland, and American Symphony Chamber Orchestras. He also has been the co-director of the New England Composers Orchestra.

Yannatos has received numerous commissions for orchestral, vocal, and instrumental works. His compositions range from solo vocal (Sounds of Desolation and Joy) to large choral-orchestral (Trinity Mass) and have been performed in Europe, Canada, and the United States in concert, radio and television. His most ambitious work, Trinity Mass (for soloists, chorus and orchestra), was premiered in Boston and New York in 1986 with the HRO and Harvard choral groups and Jason

EMILY BRUSKIN *violin*



Emily Bruskin has performed as soloist with the Quincy (MA) Symphony Orchestra and the Milton Academy Orchestra and has given solo recitals in Boston and at The Juilliard School's Paul Hall. As a member of the Firebird String Quartet,



Ms. Bruskin was a prizewinner in the 1998 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition (Junior Division) and a recipient of the New England Conservatory's Eugene Lehner Chamber Music Award. She has also performed with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and participated in the Ravinia, Lucerne, La Jolla, Moab, Norfolk, Aspen, Encore, and Musicorda summer festivals. Ms. Bruskin began studying the violin at the age of four. She attended the New England Conservatory Preparatory School, where she received the Frances B. Lanier Award. In May, 2002, Ms. Bruskin graduated summa cum laude from Columbia University with a BA in Neuroscience. The following year she received her MM from the Juilliard School, where she worked with Donald Weilerstein and Ronald Copes. She has also studied with Naoko Tanaka, Cho-Liang Lin, James Buswell, Susan Kent Reed, Gregory Fulkerson and David Updegraff.

JULIA BRUSKIN *cello*

Julia Bruskin made her debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra when she was 17 after winning their Young Artist Competition. She recently made her New York concerto debut in Avery Fisher Hall performing Barber's Cello Concerto with Jahja Ling and the Juilliard Symphony. Additional concerto appearances include playing the Walton Cello Concerto with Benjamin Zander and the NEC Youth Philharmonic Orchestra in Jordan Hall, Boston.

In 2004, Ms. Bruskin won the Schadt String Competition and placed third in the International Johannes Brahms Competition in Austria. She has also won concerto competitions at the Juilliard School and at the New England Conservatory of Music, and has been recognized by the Harvard Musical Association and the National Foundation for Achievement in the Arts. In the summers, she has performed at La Jolla Summerfest, the Taos School of Music, and at the Mostly Mozart, Caramoor, Bard, Ravinia, Norfolk, Great Lakes, and



Moab music festivals.

Born in Boston, Massachusetts, Ms. Bruskin began cello lessons at age four. Her major teachers have included Timothy Eddy, Joel Krosnick, Andres Diaz, Norman Fischer, and Nancy Hair. She graduated from Columbia University in 2002 with a degree in Eastern European History and was elected to their chapter of Phi Beta Kappa. When she received her Master of Music degree from the Juilliard School, she became one of the few students to complete the five-year BA/MM exchange program between Juilliard and Columbia University.



NOTES ON THE MUSIC

verdi - la forza del destino

By the time Giuseppe Verdi began work on *La Forza Del Destino*, he had already retired from the opera world twice - once in 1840 after his second opera failed, and again in 1859 after he had produced a number of masterpieces, including *Nabucco*, *Macbeth*, *Rigoletto*, and *La Traviata*. Despite his efforts, however, Verdi simply could not abandon the world of opera. Thus, shortly after announcing his second retirement, Verdi accepted a commission from the Imperial Theater of St. Petersburg to compose *La Forza Del Destino*.

The opera initially received mostly positive reactions - upon seeing the fourth performance in St. Petersburg, Tsar Alexander II personally called on Verdi to congratulate him. Early audiences, however, were somewhat disgusted by the gratuitous deaths within the tragedy: Verdi himself wrote to the opera's librettist, "We've got to find some way to avoid all these dead bodies." Verdi's 1869 revision of the opera, which eliminated some of the more grotesque deaths, is the version most frequently performed today.

La Forza Del Destino follows the story of two secret lovers, Don Alvaro and Leonora, in their desper-

ate attempts to marry against the opposition of Leonora's family. The plot continually thickens as a result of chance accidents and oaths taken by the characters. The sum of these factors ultimately pits the two lovers against a force they cannot overcome: the force of destiny.

The overture gives a preview of the tragic events that will occur in the opera. It begins with two sets of three loud chords pronounced by the brass - the imminent power of fate. The music then moves on to feature a dark, swelling theme introduced by the low strings, representing fate's perpetual underlying influence. The remainder of the overture is continually plagued by this theme. From here, Verdi keeps adding new themes from later parts of his opera, with most, such as the woodwind trios and the brass chorale, referring to the oaths or "curses" made throughout the opera. Ultimately, as the pace continues to increase, and with fate still permeating through all of the action, Verdi restates the characters' irreconcilable conflicts and the inescapability of fate by accelerating the orchestra through a dramatic finale that ends violently with brass arpeggios, full-orchestra cadences, and cymbal crashes.

--Brad Oppenheimer

The Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra gratefully acknowledges the David Chang Memorial Fund. This fund was established in 1991 by the Chang Family to support the rental and purchase of music. The David Chang Memorial Fund c/o Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra, Paine Music Building, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 02138.



NOTES ON THE MUSIC

brahms - double concerto in a minor *strauss - ein heldenleben*

Music in the Austro-Germanic part of Europe faced a dilemma in the post-Beethoven years. How could composers continue to work in a traditional environment, when Beethoven had essentially redefined all the major genres? His symphonies, piano sonatas, and string quartets reinvented the boundaries and acceptable means previously held to be given, and composers working after him were left wondering where music could possibly go. Some, like Schumann continued in Beethoven's symphonic vein but continued to thicken and "Romanticize" the orchestration and texture. Others, such as Liszt and Wagner, found interest in other musical forms, such as opera, tone poem, and virtuosic concerto. Two of the composers we hear tonight, Brahms and Strauss, found similar solutions—Brahms, by plunging head-first into the intimidating musical legacy Beethoven had left, and Strauss, by reinventing another genre himself, the tone-poem.

Nobody felt the mantle of Beethoven more strongly than Johannes Brahms. Robert Schumann, an active and influential voice in mid-19th-century Germany, named Brahms the savior of German music and Beethoven's true successor. This enormous weight and life in the public eye led to the famously long gestation period of Brahms's symphonies. He was in his forties by the time the *First Symphony* was produced, although having broken that barrier

the other three followed relatively quickly. While he is considered one of the most important symphonists of the 19th century (his work paving the way for Bruckner, Mahler, Sibelius, etc), he worked in virtually all the genres of his predecessors. His catalogue includes sonatas for piano, violin, violoncello and other instruments, string quartets, choral works, variations, overtures, concertos for piano and violin, a host of works for solo piano and small ensembles, and of course the *Double Concerto* for violin and violoncello heard tonight. Brahms tended to shun anything but "absolute" music (he never wrote an opera or tone-poem), which set him distinctly apart from the "New German School", namely the supporters of Liszt and Wagner. Brahms considered Wagner's music wildly excessive, and those in the Wagner camp viewed Brahms as something of a dinosaur. While the music of Brahms is actually quite forward-looking in terms of harmonic language, there is no question he was thoroughly a classicist.

One of the most important figures in Brahms's life would be Joseph Joachim, who not only introduced the young Brahms to Schumann, but was the inspiration for the violin concerto (besides giving the premiere, he had quite a hand in the composition). The two musicians were close friends for over a quarter century, but during Joachim's divorce Brahms sympathized with his wife, and they were estranged for several years. As a gesture of reconciliation, Brahms



NOTES ON THE MUSIC

dedicated his last orchestral work to Joachim, a concerto for violin and violoncello. The gesture was genuine and well-received, the work was premiered in October 1887 with Brahms conducting and Joachim and Robert Hausmann (cellist of the Joachim Quartet) as soloists.

This work fits the classically molded concerto—a long sonata form first movement, a beautiful Adagio, and a lively finale. The main point of departure from the normal concerto lies of course in the fact that there are two soloists. Sometimes the soloists work together, as in the slow movement; at other times they work individually, as in the recitative-like opening statements of the first movement.

Richard Strauss, also working around the turn of the century, faced the same challenges as Brahms. He was brought up in a household where Wagner's music was seen as inferior; his father, a brilliant horn player and a staunch classicist, discouraged study of anything but "abstract" music. Strauss's early works reflect this upbringing; here one finds concertos, sonatas, etc. However, in 1885 (at age 21, while assistant conductor of the well known Meiningen Orchestra), Strauss met Alexander Ritter, who encouraged the young Strauss not only to study Wagner, but to explore programmatic composition (that is, music that explicitly depicts something extramusical). Strauss eagerly took his advice, and at age 24 he produced Don Juan, which was immensely successful. Here Strauss chooses the

opposite path from the one Brahms took; for the rest of the century he composed almost exclusively tone-poems, expanding and eventually redefining Liszt's original model. After 1900 Strauss turned to opera, and devoted himself to this (also programmatic!) genre for the rest of his life.

While there is some discussion about whether or not the "hero" of Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben* (A Hero's Life) is Strauss himself (Strauss implied that it was not him), everything about the piece would indicate that it is. Like Wagner, Strauss makes use of recurring leitmotifs, which characterize something specific in the music (such as the Strauss's enemies, the critics), and make the work especially accessible and understandable. It is cast as a single huge sonata-form movement and divides into six distinct sections:

I. *The Hero*—an enormous musical paragraph, over-the-top bombastic, incredibly inventive with material, orchestration and texture, and pitched in the exceptionally heroic key of Eb (as defined by Beethoven with his *Eroica* Symphony). This opening may explain why the work was criticized as "improper and vainglorious".

II. *The Hero's Adversaries*—biting woodwind figures and slow-moving low brass lines represent Strauss's critics. This is especially relevant because Strauss's first opera, *Guntram*, had just been subject to scathing reviews.

III. *The Hero's Companion*—a musical

NOTES ON THE MUSIC



portrait of Pauline Maria de Ahna, whom Strauss had married in 1894. Pauline was a soprano, eccentric, outspoken and volatile, but the family was happy (take, for example, the *Sinfonia Domestica*, also about Strauss's family), and Strauss captures his wife's constantly changing moods and capriciousness. She is represented by an extended violin solo.

IV. *The Hero's Battlefield*—Strauss goes to war with his critics in a massive, diabolical waltz. The battle is heralded by distant trumpets, and the war is fought using the Hero theme and the Critics theme.

V. *The Hero's Works of Peace*—perhaps the clearest indication that Strauss is in fact the hero: after the battle dies down peace is achieved through other Strauss works. The quotes from this section include *Don Juan*, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, *Tod und Verklärung*, *Don Quixote*, the opera *Guntram*, *Macbeth*, and the song *Traum durch die Dämmerung*.

VI. *The Hero's Retreat from the World and Fulfillment*—a coda, in which Strauss and his companion find peace from the outside world.

--Doug Balliett

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Aaron Kuan '09, Assistant Conductor
- * Concerto Competition Winner TBA
- * Stravinsky - Firebird Suite

Friday April 20, 2007

- * Mendelssohn - Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream
- * Yannatos - Cello Concerto ****Premiere****
Matt Haimovitz '96, cello
- * Brahms - Symphony No. 2

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- * Mahler - Symphony No. 2, "Resurrection"

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Wei-Jen Yuan '06, piano
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 Mendelssohn - Verleih uns Frieden
 Haydn - Te Deum
 Beethoven - Symphony No. 9
featuring the Harvard Radcliffe Chorus

March 3, 2006

Respighi - Pines of Rome
 Mozart - Piano Concerto No. 24
Robert Levin, piano
 Dvorak - Symphony No. 7

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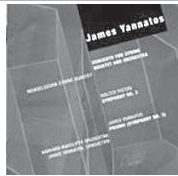
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