

Saturday, October 3, 8pm

JULIAN KUERTI (BEETHOVEN) AND SHI-YEON SUNG conducting

BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY NO. 4 IN B-FLAT, OPUS 60

Adagio—Allegro vivace

Adagio

Allegro vivace

Allegro ma non troppo

{INTERMISSION}

CARTER “MOSAIC,” FOR HARP AND CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

ANN HOBSON PILOT

ELIZABETH OSTLING, FLUTES

MALCOLM LOWE, VIOLIN

CYNTHIA MEYERS, PICCOLO

STEVEN ANSELL, VIOLA

KEISUKE WAKAO, OBOE

MARTHA BABCOCK, CELLO

ROBERT SHEENA, ENGLISH HORN

EDWIN BARKER, DOUBLE BASS

THOMAS MARTIN, CLARINET

CRAIG NORDSTROM, BASS CLARINET

DEBUSSY “DANSES SACRÉE ET PROFANE,” FOR HARP AND ORCHESTRA

MS. HOBSON PILOT

WILLIAMS “ON WILLOWS AND BIRCHES,” CONCERTO FOR HARP (2009)

“On Willows”: Adagio. Dreamily

(“We hanged our harps upon the willows...”—Psalm 137)

“On Birches”: Allegro. Con gioia

(“One could do worse than be a swinger of birches”—Robert Frost)

MS. HOBSON PILOT

RAVEL “LA VALSE,” CHOREOGRAPHIC POEM

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Ludwig van Beethoven

Symphony No. 4 in B-flat, Opus 60

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN was baptized in Bonn, Germany, on December 17, 1770, and died in Vienna on March 26, 1827. He composed his Fourth Symphony during the summer and early fall of 1806, leading the first performance, a private one, at the Vienna town house of Prince Franz Joseph von Lobkowitz in March 1807 (the “Coriolan” Overture and Piano Concerto No. 4 also receiving

their premieres on that occasion), and conducting the first public performance on April 13, 1808, in Vienna at the Burgtheater.

BEETHOVEN'S FOURTH SYMPHONY IS SCORED for one flute, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings.

The works Beethoven completed in the last half of 1806—the Fourth Symphony, the Violin Concerto, and the Fourth Piano Concerto among them—were finished rather rapidly by the composer following his extended struggle with the original version of his opera *Fidelio*, which had occupied him from the end of 1804 until April 1806. The most important orchestral work he had produced before this time was the *Eroica*, in which he overwhelmed his audiences with a forceful new musical language reflecting both his own inner struggles in the face of impending deafness and his response to the political atmosphere surrounding him. The next big orchestral work to embody this “heroic” style—with a striking overlay of defiance as well—would be the Fifth Symphony, which had begun to germinate in 1804, was worked out mainly in 1807, and was completed in 1808. But in the meantime, a more relaxed sort of expression began to emerge, emphasizing a heightened sense of repose, a broadly lyric element, and a more spacious approach to musical architecture. The Fourth Symphony, the Violin Concerto, and the Fourth Piano Concerto share these characteristics to varying degrees, but it is also important to realize that these works, though completed around the same time, do not represent a unilateral change of direction in Beethoven's approach to music, but, rather, the emergence of a particular element that appeared strikingly at this time. Sketches for the Violin Concerto and the Fifth Symphony in fact occur side by side; and that the two aspects—lyric and aggressive—of Beethoven's musical expression are not entirely separable is evident also in the fact that ideas for both the Fifth and the *Pastoral* symphonies appear in the *Eroica* sketchbook of 1803-04. These two symphonies—the one strongly assertive, the other more gentle and subdued—were not completed until 1808, two years after the Violin Concerto. And it appears that Beethoven actually interrupted work on his Fifth Symphony so that he could compose the Fourth in response to a commission from the Silesian Count Franz von Oppersdorff, whom he had met through Prince Carl von Lichnowsky, one of his most important patrons during the early years in Vienna and the joint dedicatee, together with Count Razumovsky, of the Fifth and Sixth symphonies.

So Beethoven's Fourth Symphony partakes successfully and wonderfully of both these worlds, combining a relaxed and lyrical element with a mood of exuberantly aggressive high spirits. The key is B-flat, which suggests—insofar as we can describe the effects of different musical keys—a realm of spaciousness, relaxation, and warmth, in contrast, for example, to the “heroic” E-flat of the Third Symphony and *Emperor* Concerto, the “defiant” C minor of the Fifth, and the “heaven-storming” D minor of the Ninth.

Beethoven actually begins the first movement with an Adagio introduction in a mysteriously pianissimo B-flat *minor*, and the mystery is heightened as the music moves toward B-*natural*, via the enharmonic interpretation of G-flat to F-sharp, until trumpets and drums force the music back to B-flat, and to the major mode, of the Allegro vivace. (This same gambit will be repeated on a larger scale as the music of the Allegro moves from the development into the recapitulation, at which point, once again, the timpani will play a crucial role in telling us where we belong—this time with an extended drumroll growing through twenty-two measures from a pianissimo rumble to a further nine measures of thwacking fortissimo.) Once the Allegro is underway, all is energy and motion, with even the more seemingly relaxed utterances of the woodwinds in service to the prevailing level of activity. One more word about the first movement: one wants the exposition-repeat here, not just for the wonderful jolt of the first ending's throwing us back to the home key virtually without notice, but also for the links it provides to the end of the introduction and the beginning of the coda.

The E-flat major Adagio sets a *cantabile* theme against a constantly pulsating accompaniment, all moving at a relaxed pace which allows for increasingly elaborate figuration in both melody and accompaniment as the movement proceeds. The second theme is a melancholy and wistful song for solo clarinet, all the more effective when it reappears following a fortissimo outburst from full orchestra. The scherzo, another study in motion, is all ups and downs. Beethoven repeats the Trio in its entirety following the scherzo *da capo* (a procedure he will follow again in the third movement of

the Seventh Symphony). A third statement of the scherzo is cut short by an emphatic rejoinder from the horns.

The whirlwind finale (marked “Allegro ma non troppo,” “Allegro, but not too...”; the speed is built into the note values, and the proceedings shouldn’t be rushed by an overzealous conductor) is yet another exercise in energy, movement, and dynamic contrasts. Carl Maria von Weber, who didn’t much like this symphony when he was young and it was new, imagined the double bass complaining: “I have just come from the rehearsal of a Symphony by one of our newest composers; and though, as you know, I have a tolerably strong constitution, I could only just hold out, and five minutes more would have shattered my frame and burst the sinews of my life. I have been made to caper about like a wild goat, and to turn myself into a mere fiddle to execute the no-ideas of Mr. Composer.” Beethoven’s approach in this movement is wonderfully tongue-in-cheek and no-holds-barred: the solo bassoon, leading us into the recapitulation, is asked to play “*dolce*” (“sweetly”) when he’s probably thankful just to get the notes in, and only at the very end is there a brief moment of rest to prepare the headlong rush to the final cadence.

Marc Mandel

THE FIRST AMERICAN PERFORMANCE of *Beethoven’s Symphony No. 4* was given by *Theodor Eisfeld and the Philharmonic Society at the Apollo Rooms in New York on November 24, 1849.*

THE FIRST BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PERFORMANCES of *Beethoven’s Fourth Symphony* were given by *Georg Henschel on December 2 and 3, 1881, during the orchestra’s inaugural season, subsequent performances being given by Wilhelm Gericke, Arthur Nikisch, Emil Paur, Karl Muck, Max Fiedler, Pierre Monteux, Serge Koussevitzky, Ernest Ansermet, Charles Munch, Eugene Ormandy, Erich Leinsdorf, William Steinberg, Seiji Ozawa, Okko Kamu, Andrew Davis, Kurt Masur, Michael Tilson Thomas, Marek Janowski, John Eliot Gardiner, Franz Welser-Möst, Leonard Slatkin, André Previn (including the most recent subscription performances, in October 2008), Ilan Volkov, Bernard Haitink, and Mark Elder (the BSO’s most recent Tanglewood performance, on July 20, 2007).*

Elliott Carter

“Mosaic,” for harp and ensemble

ELLIOTT COOKE CARTER, JR., was born on December 11, 1908, in New York City, and lives there. He wrote “Mosaic” in 2004 to fulfill a joint commission from the Nash Ensemble of England and the Boston Symphony Orchestra for the Boston Symphony Chamber Players. The Nash Ensemble, with its harpist Lucy Wakeford, gave the world premiere in the Purcell Room in London on March 16, 2005. BSO principal harpist Ann Hobson Pilot gave the American premiere with Fellows of the Tanglewood Music Center conducted by Ryan Wigglesworth on July 22, 2008, at Tanglewood, during that summer’s Festival of Contemporary Music, which was an all-Carter celebration of the composer’s 100th birthday year. This is the first performance of the piece in a Boston Symphony Orchestra concert.

IN ADDITION TO THE SOLO HARP, the ensemble consists of flute (doubling piccolo and alto flute), oboe (doubling English horn), clarinet (doubling bass clarinet), violin, viola, cello, and double bass. “Mosaic” is about twelve minutes long.

In the past couple of decades, Elliott Carter has made a practice of writing instrumental concertos and concertante, that is, solo-with-ensemble, works, exploring the expressive and technical potential of a particular solo instrument versus a group of players. *Mosaic*, included in this celebration of the career

of former BSO principal harp Ann Hobson Pilot, is the first of three Elliott Carter solo-and-ensemble pieces to be led by James Levine on Boston Symphony Orchestra concerts this season. *Mosaic* will be followed by Carter's *Dialogues* for piano and orchestra, featuring Pierre-Laurent Aimard, on January 28, 29, and 30, and his Flute Concerto, which will receive its American premiere with BSO principal flute Elizabeth Rowe on February 4, 5, and 9. These works continue the long relationship the composer has had with the BSO, which began when he was a young audience member at the orchestra's Carnegie Hall concerts in the early 1920s and continued through his Harvard years. The first piece of his performed by the orchestra was his Variations for Orchestra in 1964, and his Piano Concerto was premiered here in 1967.

In recent years the orchestra and James Levine have been among the most consistent champions of Carter's music. Of the works to be performed this season, *Mosaic* and the Flute Concerto are BSO co-commissions, as was his *Interventions* for piano and orchestra, written for soloist Daniel Barenboim and conductor James Levine and premiered by them with the BSO to celebrate the composer's 100th birthday in December 2008. (The piece had its New York premiere with the same forces on the birthday itself in Carnegie Hall. There was cake.) A recent BSO-only commission was for his Horn Concerto, written for the orchestra's principal horn James Sommerville, who premiered it here in November 2007. These pieces are among a dozen or so such works in the composer's recent output, including concertos for oboe, violin, clarinet, and cello.

Mosaic is not a standard concerto but a "pocket concerto," one of those uniquely scored chamber ensemble pieces that have become a loosely identifiable genre in the past half-century or so. The origins of this kind of mixed-chamber piece can probably be traced to Schoenberg's 1911 *Pierrot Lunaire*. Beginning in the 1960s, as an alternative to orchestras, professional mixed-instrument new-music groups, constituted to play this kind of repertoire, began to crop up all over Europe and the United States. Founded in 1964, the Nash Ensemble, which co-commissioned *Mosaic*, was one of the first such groups in England. (The Boston Symphony Chamber Players was coincidentally founded in the same year by Erich Leinsdorf, although the group's repertoire is not exclusively modern.)

Prior to this piece, Carter had written for harp in a solo role for Ursula Holliger in his *Bariolage* and *Immer neu*, both of which are movements of his harp-and-oboe *Trilogy*. For *Mosaic*, Carter's imagination was fired by the exciting beginnings of modernism in music in the 1920s. The great French harpist Carlos Salzedo (1885-1961), who lived in the United States from 1909, was a brilliant pianist and harpist and co-founder, with Edgard Varèse, of the important International Composers Guild, and he significantly advanced the harp as a solo instrument with new playing methods beyond the arpeggio and melodic approaches. He spent much time in Maine, where he established the Salzedo Harp Colony in Camden. His "Salzedo Method" and fingering and pedal notations are widely used today. About *Mosaic*, Carter has written,

Carlos Salzedo, the extraordinary harpist, was a member of the small group of modernists that surrounded Varèse and Ives in the 1920s and '30s and has remained a memory which I cherish. His unusual developments in harp technique always seemed to me too infrequently explored in recent times. So in writing *Mosaic*, I decided to explore many of his exciting inventions to recall his friendship in the early 1930s.

The score is formed by many short mosaic-like tesserae [i.e., single tiles] that I hope make one coordinated impression.

The piece opens with solo harp and proceeds with the soloist trading comments with its tiny ripieno (accompanying group) in short contrasting episodes. Extended techniques for the harp include "rustling glissando," "snare drum effect," "slap pizzicato," "thunder," and a whistling sound made by running the fingers down the windings of the strings. Carter characteristically opposes, for example, winds against strings within the ensemble, and there is also a long accompanied oboe solo (another common occurrence in his late work). The ripieno has an extended passage by itself in the middle of the piece. A quiet passage for harp alone near the end elicits a sharp reaction from the group, but the soloist holds her ground and ends the piece quietly.

Robert Kirzinger

Claude Debussy

“Dances sacrée et profane,” for harp and string orchestra

ACHILLE-CLAUDE DEBUSSY was born on August 22, 1862, at St. Germain-en-Laye, France, and died on March 25, 1918, in Paris. He composed these two “DANSES pour HARPE Chromatique avec accompt d’orchestre d’instruments à Cordes” (as the title appears on the first page of the score; “Dances for chromatic harp with string orchestra”) in 1904, also producing an arrangement for two pianos that year. Edouard Colonne conducted the first performance, in Paris on November 6, 1904.

The *Dances sacrée et profane* of Claude Debussy—who had composed his *Faun* Prelude about a decade earlier and was, in 1904, when he wrote these dances, still working on *La Mer*—were a promotional endeavor, commissioned by the piano- and harp-manufacturing firm of Pleyel to demonstrate the possibilities of the new design of the chromatic harp. The instrument, meant to make things easier for players of that angelic but bewildering (for non-harpists) instrument, was a failure. It was hideously heavy (about 130 lbs.), required players to learn an entirely new technique, and, worst of all, could only produce glissandos in the key of C. Still, we must be grateful to Gustave Lyon, Director of Pleyel, Wolff, & Cie., for his misstep, for Debussy transmuted his advertising copy into poetry. The “Sacred Dance” is atmospheric and grave, while the “Profane” one might best be described as a waltz with Spanish seasoning.

Michael Steinberg

THE ONLY PREVIOUS BOSTON SYMPHONY PERFORMANCE of Debussy’s “*Dances sacrée et profane*” took place at Tanglewood on August 20, 1999, with Ann Hobson Pilot as soloist; Charles Dutoit conducted. More recently, Ms. Pilot played the two dances in a version for harp and string quintet this past summer at Tanglewood, in the Friday Prelude concert of July 31, 2009, in Seiji Ozawa Hall.

John Williams

“On Willows and Birches,” Concerto for Harp (2009)

JOHN TOWNER WILLIAMS was born on February 8, 1932, in New York City and lives in Los Angeles, California. He wrote his “On Willows and Birches,” Concerto for Harp, in late 2008 and early 2009 for harpist Ann Hobson Pilot. The score is inscribed “Written to celebrate the illustrious career and outstanding artistry of Ann Hobson Pilot...With admiration and affection. –J.W.” Ann Hobson Pilot played the world premiere performance with James Levine and the Boston Symphony Orchestra in this season’s Opening Night gala concert on September 23, 2009, a program they repeated in New York to open the Carnegie Hall season this past Thursday night, October 1.

THE TWO MOVEMENTS OF “ON WILLOWS AND BIRCHES” have separate scorings. In addition to the solo harp, “On Willows” calls for two flutes, piccolo, two clarinets, bass clarinet, percussion (glockenspiel, marimba, vibraphone, crotales, small glass bowl, small triangle), celesta, and strings (without double basses). “On Birches” calls for solo harp, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, three horns, percussion (vibraphone, marimba, crotales, small triangle, tambourine, small tambourine, high suspended cymbal, tom-toms, tuned medium and low drums), celesta, harp, and strings (including double basses). The concerto is about fifteen minutes long.

Ann Hobson Pilot's remarkable career with the Boston Symphony Orchestra will resonate in the orchestral world for a long time to come, as will her continuing life as a musician outside the orchestra, as a soloist, teacher, and researcher into the history of her instrument. She began her tenure with the BSO in 1969 and in 1980 was named principal harp. She has frequently performed as soloist with the orchestra, and now, for the first time, on the occasion of her retirement from the BSO, she plays a piece specifically written for her—a gift from someone who knows her playing especially well, composer/conductor John Williams, a colleague of thirty years' standing who got to know her during his years as conductor of the Boston Pops (1980-1993). Ms. Pilot has had works written for her before, among them Thomas Oboe Lee's 1985 Harp Concerto; and she commissioned and premiered a concerto by Kevin Kaska. She is also the harpist for the Boston Symphony Chamber Players, for whom, along with the Nash Ensemble, Elliott Carter wrote his harp-and-ensemble piece *Mosaic* (she gave the American premiere of that work in July 2008 at Tanglewood).

It was Ms. Pilot who first suggested to Williams that he write a concerto for her to play, beginning with casual suggestions years ago. He demurred, given his schedule and his awareness of the difficulty of writing for the harp as a solo instrument with orchestra. (On top of the complexities of harp-playing technique, balancing the orchestral accompaniment so the harp can be heard is a notoriously tricky task.) Ms. Pilot's earnest request last year, linked with her impending retirement, caused Williams to change his mind: "I thought about it, and thought about the privilege of being asked to do this for this truly great woman." He then embraced the opportunity to pay tribute to one of the orchestral world's most admired performers. By November 2008, it had been decided that the concerto would be the centerpiece of the BSO's gala concerts for the orchestra's own Symphony Hall opening night this season as well as for Carnegie Hall's opener. Williams began the piece in fall of 2008, largely finishing the second movement by the end of the year and the first sometime later. Further tweaking has taken place over the course of 2009 after conversations and read-throughs with his soloist.

John Williams is, of course, the composer of perhaps the greatest body of film music in history; this aspect of his career needs little introduction. Fans of the five-time Academy Award-winner's soundtracks for *Jaws*, *Star Wars*, *Schindler's List*, and *Memoirs of a Geisha* may not be aware of his stint conducting and arranging for service bands during his Air Force service, his composition studies with Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco at UCLA, or his piano studies with the legendary Rosina Lhévinne at Juilliard. His early professional work was as a studio and jazz pianist and composer for television. He won two Emmys while in his thirties; his first Oscar was for his adapted soundtrack to *Fiddler on the Roof* (1971). From their beginnings in the 1970s, his longtime collaborations with the directors Steven Spielberg and George Lucas have become among the most celebrated of such relationships in Hollywood lore, leading to four of his five Oscars and some of the most recognizable tunes on the planet.

Film music, at least in the classic sense, is a collaboration-intensive pursuit, requiring great trust between director and composer and the latter's close understanding of what and how his music envelopes, underlines, and enhances. The preexisting story, images, and mood are there to trigger the imagination, and in Williams's scores the music goes further, becomes virtually a character in itself. It shouldn't be surprising, then, that his concert music similarly draws on the inspiration of collaboration and occasion. His recent symphonic poems *Tributes: for Seiji* and *Soundings* were both inspired by concert hall architecture; the former, celebrating Seiji Ozawa's 25th anniversary as music director of the BSO, by the acoustic qualities of Boston's Symphony Hall, and the latter, written to inaugurate the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Walt Disney Concert Hall, responding to that hall's sound as well as to Frank Gehry's majestic design. His *Air and Simple Gifts*, a chamber work written for Barack Obama's inaugural ceremony, employs a familiar Shaker tune to evoke American optimism.

Most of Williams's major concert works are concertos, taking their cue from his interactions with many great musician with whom he has worked as composer and conductor. Yo-Yo Ma was the recipient of the composer's Cello Concerto, commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra for the opening of Tanglewood's Ozawa Hall, as well as the cello-and-orchestra work *Heartwood* and the Three Pieces for Solo Cello. His *TreeSong* for violin and orchestra was written for soloist Gil

Shaham; this was also premiered by the BSO at Tanglewood. Other concertos include a piece for Dale Clevenger, principal horn of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, *Five Sacred Trees* for Judith LeClair, principal bassoon of the New York Philharmonic (on the occasion of that orchestra's 150th anniversary), and half a dozen more. Because of Williams's relationship to the BSO and Boston Pops, it follows that many of his concerted works have originated with BSO players. His Concerto for Tuba, written in 1985 for former BSO member Chester Schmitz and the Boston Pops for the Pops' centennial season, and more recently his Concerto for Viola, written for Boston Pops principal violist Cathy Basrak, who premiered it with Williams and the Pops this past spring, are now joined by his gift to Ann Hobson Pilot, *On Willows and Birches*, Concerto for Harp.

The title of the concerto ties it to many others of Williams's works with its reference to trees, which are an ongoing fascination for the composer. In a recent interview about writing this work for Ann Hobson Pilot, he related,

In thinking about what to write for her, in the process of my reading about trees, which I do fairly frequently, I came upon a quote from the Biblical Psalm 137, "We hanged our harps upon the willows."...This fascinated me, the picture of harps hanging on the trees with the wind wafting through the strings of the harps making, one can imagine, a beautiful, very delicate, subtle sound. I thought, what a wonderful idea for a movement for the harp, and so the first movement is called "On Willows."

To contrast that—more trees, really—I've always loved the Frost poem "On Birches," and the idea of, as I remember in my mind, the picture of the little boy swinging on the birch branches. Musically, the idea of the second movement...is to contrast "Willows," in the sense that it would offer a rhythmic vitality, in contrast to this impressionistic or diaphanous kind of quality of the first movement, and show the rhythmic brilliance of Ann Hobson Pilot and what the harp can contribute to that. And also, the idea of "swinger" of birches ["One could do worse than be a swinger of birches"—Robert Frost]—"swinger" in our language has a lot of connotations; it might suggest a dance, some movement, some light feeling of choreographic activity.

Psalm 137, which famously begins "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept," is a song of the Hebrew exile in Babylon. When their captors ask for a song, the heartbroken people are silent, and instead hang their instruments among the weeping willows. "On Willows" takes this mood and image and evokes the sorrow of the exile and the wind in the trees and in the strings of the hanging harps. The soloist shifts seamlessly between clearly ringing pitches and free, gestural glissandos. The orchestral scoring is atmospheric, and in particular the celesta plays the role of creating a kind of sonic halo around the soloist. The movement ends with a short notated cadenza. The second movement, marked "Allegro. Con gioia"—"with joy"—is dancelike, full of syncopation and distinct changes of meter. The orchestra is far more assertive, joining in the festivities whose "main purpose," says the composer, "is to celebrate a great woman and a great career."

Robert Kirzinger

Maurice Ravel

"La Valse," Choreographic poem

JOSEPH MAURICE RAVEL was born on March 7, 1875, in Ciboure, near Saint-Jean-de-Luz, Basses-Pyrénées, in the Basque region of France just a short distance from the Spanish border, and died on December 28, 1937, in Paris. He composed "La Valse" in 1919 and 1920, basing it on sketches he made before the war for a symphonic poem with the intended title "Wien" ("Vienna"). Ravel and Alfredo Casella performed a two-piano version of "La Valse" in November 1920 at a concert of Arnold Schoenberg's Society for Private Musical Performances. The orchestral version was given its premiere by Camille Chevillard and the Lamoureux Orchestra of Paris on December 12 that year.

THE SCORE OF “LA VALSE” calls for two flutes and piccolo, two oboes and English horn, two clarinets and bass clarinet, two bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, triangle, tambourine, side drum, bass drum, cymbals, castanets, tam-tam, crotales, two harps, and strings.

Ravel found it difficult to return to normal work after the ravages of the First World War. Quite aside from the long interruption in his compositional activity and the loss of many friends, he was suffering from a recurring insomnia that plagued him for the rest of his life and played a considerable role in the dramatic reduction of new works. He had already started sketching a symphonic poem that was intended to be a musical depiction of Vienna; naturally it was a foregone conclusion to cast the work as a grand orchestral waltz. Ravel had never yet visited the Austrian capital (he was only to do so in 1920, after finishing his big waltz composition), but he “knew” Vienna through the composers, going back to Schubert and continuing with the Strauss family and many others who had added a special Viennese lilt to the waltz. (In this sense Ravel was as familiar with Vienna as Bizet and Debussy were with Spain when they composed what we still regard as the most convincing “Spanish” music ever written.)

The first sketches for *Wien* apparently date from 1907, when Ravel was completing another musical travelogue, the *Rapsodie espagnole*. He began orchestrating the work during 1914 but ceased after the outbreak of hostilities; he complained in his letters that the times were not suitable for a work entitled *Vienna*. After the war, Ravel was slow to take up the composition again. Only a commission from Serge Diaghilev induced him to finish it, with the new title “*La Valse, Poème chorégraphique*,” and intended for production by the Russian Ballet. When the score was finished, however, Diaghilev balked. He could see no balletic character in the music, for all its consistent exploitation of a dance meter, and he refused to produce the ballet after all. (This marked the end of good relations between the composer and the impresario.) So *La Valse* was first heard in concert form; only in 1928 did Ida Rubenstein undertake a ballet production of the score, for which Ravel added a stage direction: “An Imperial Court, about 1855.” The score bears a brief scenic description:

Clouds whirl about. Occasionally they part to allow a glimpse of waltzing couples. As they gradually lift, one can discern a gigantic hall, filled by a crowd of dancers in motion. The stage gradually brightens. The glow of chandeliers breaks out *fortissimo*.

The hazy beginning of *La Valse* perfectly captures the vision of “clouds” that clear away to reveal the dancing couples. The piece grows in a long crescendo, interrupted and started again, finally carried to an energetic and irresistible climax whose violence hints at far more than a social dance.

Ravel’s date of “1855” for the *mise-en-scène* was significant. It marked roughly the halfway point of the century of Vienna’s domination by the waltz—the captivating, carefree, mind-numbing dance that filled the salons, the ballrooms, and the inns, while the whole of Austrian society was slowly crumbling under an intensely reactionary government, the absolutism of Emperor Franz Joseph, who was twenty-five in 1855 and reigned until the middle of the First World War. The social glitter of mindless whirling about concealed the volcano that was so soon to explode. Ravel’s *La Valse* has the captivating rhythms in full measure, but the music rises to an expressionistic level of violence, hinting at the concealed rot of the society. Would *La Valse* have been different if composed before the horrors of the war? Who can tell? In any case, consciously or not, Ravel’s brilliantly orchestrated score captures the glitter and the violence of a society that, even as he was composing, had passed away.

Steven Ledbetter

STEVEN LEDBETTER was program annotator of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1979 to 1998 and now writes program notes for other orchestras and ensembles throughout the country.

THE AMERICAN PREMIERE OF “LA VALSE” was given on October 28, 1921, with Alfred Hertz conducting the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra.

THE FIRST BOSTON SYMPHONY PERFORMANCES of “*La Valse*” were on January 13 and 14, 1922, with Pierre Monteux, subsequent BSO performances being led by Monteux, Serge Koussevitzky, Ravel himself (in January 1928), Richard Burgin, Paul Paray, Leonard Bernstein, Charles Munch, Ernest Ansermet, Georges Prêtre, Michael Tilson Thomas, Seiji Ozawa, Charles Dutoit, Kurt Masur, Dennis Russell Davies, Christoph von Dohnányi (the most recent subscription performances, in April 2005), and Ludovic Morlot (the most recent Tanglewood performance, on July 28, 2006).

To Read and Hear More...

Although now more than ten years old, the second edition of David Schiff’s *The Music of Elliott Carter* (1998) is the place to start for a detailed study of Carter’s music. Despite some discussion of technique, the book is for the most part accessible to a concertgoing audience (Cornell University Press). Just published is *Elliott Carter: A Centennial Portrait in Letters and Documents*, edited by Anne Schreffler of Harvard University and Felix Meyer of the Paul Sacher Foundation (Boydell Press). *Elliott Carter: A Centennial Celebration*, edited by Marc Ponthus and Susan Tang, includes a conversation about Carter’s music between Ponthus and Pierre Boulez as well as articles and tributes by Fred Lehndahl, Charles Rosen, John Ashbery, Alvin Curran, and others (Pendragon Press “Festschrift Series” paperback). *Elliott Carter, Collected Essays and Lectures, 1937-1995*, edited by Jonathan Barnard, compiles the composer’s early reviews and later essays on his own and others’ music (University of Rochester paperback). David Schiff wrote the Carter essay in *The New Grove II* (2001). The essay in the 1980 edition of *The New Grove Dictionary* is by Bayan Northcott. The most recent full biography of Carter is in French—Max Noubel’s *Elliott Carter et le temps fertile* (Contrechamps). A short biography, news, and other useful information about Carter can be found on the website of his publisher, Boosey & Hawkes (www.boosey.com). Also on the web is Frank Oteri’s interesting and unstuffy interview with the composer on the website of the American Music Center, www.newmusicbox.org, although it’s from spring 2000 (search for “Elliott Carter”). Frank Scheffer’s touching 2004 documentary on Carter, *A Labyrinth of Time*, is available on DVD (Juxtapositions).

Carter’s *Mosaic* has been recorded twice, for discs released in time for the composer’s 100th birthday in December 2008: by the Toronto-based New Music Concerts Ensemble, Robert Aitken, director, with Carter’s *Dialogues* for piano and orchestra and a few smaller pieces (Naxos); and by harpist Ursula Holliger and a group including her husband, oboist Heinz Holliger. Carter’s Oboe Quartet, written for Heinz Holliger, the song cycle *Tempo e Tempi*, and some smaller works are also on that disc (Neos). Nearly all but the most recent of Carter’s works are available on CD. James Levine recorded Carter’s *Variations for Orchestra* in 1990 with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (Deutsche Grammophon), and again recently with the Munich Philharmonic (Oehms Classics). There are many other good recordings of Carter’s orchestral music. Of particular interest is an ongoing Bridge series featuring excellent performances by the likes of longtime Carter devotees Fred Sherry, Nicolas Hodges, Charles Rosen, and Oliver Knussen. The series so far includes seven discs, with an eighth in production.

The article on John Williams in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* is by Christopher Palmer and Martin Marks. There is a website dedicated to Williams maintained by the Sony Classical label. Unfortunately its discography for the composer mixes in recordings by another John Williams, the well-known classical guitarist, which may distract the casual browser. In addition to recordings of his film scores and many recordings with the Boston Pops as composer and conductor, much of John Williams’s music for the concert hall has been made available on compact disc. Williams led the Boston Symphony Orchestra and soloist Gil Shaham in a recording of his *TreeSong* for violin and orchestra, the *Violin Concerto*, and concert music from the film *Schindler’s List* (Deutsche Grammophon). Among other discs are Yo-Yo Ma’s recording of the *Cello Concerto* and other works with Williams leading the Los Angeles Recording Arts Orchestra (Sony Classical), and Judith LeClair performing his bassoon concerto *Five Sacred Trees* with the composer conducting the London Symphony Orchestra (also Sony).

Robert Kirzinger

Edmund Morris’s *Beethoven: The Universal Composer* is a thoughtful, first-rate compact biography aimed at the general reader (in the HarperCollins series “Eminent Lives”). The two important full-

scale modern biographies are Maynard Solomon's *Beethoven*, published originally in 1977 and revised in 1998 (Schirmer paperback), and Barry Cooper's *Beethoven* in the "Master Musicians" series (Oxford University Press). Also noteworthy are *Beethoven: The Music and the Life*, by the Harvard-based Beethoven authority Lewis Lockwood (Norton paperback); David Wyn Jones's *The life of Beethoven*, in the "Musical lives" series of compact composer biographies (Cambridge paperback); *The Beethoven Compendium: A Guide to Beethoven's Life and Music*, edited by Barry Cooper (Thames & Hudson paperback), and Peter Clive's *Beethoven and his World: A Biographical Dictionary*, which includes entries on just about anyone you can think of who figured in the composer's life (Oxford). Dating from the nineteenth century, but still crucial, is *Thayer's Life of Beethoven* as revised and updated by Elliot Forbes (Princeton paperback). *The New Grove Beethoven* provides a convenient paperback reprint of the Beethoven article by Alan Tyson and Joseph Kerman from the 1980 Grove Dictionary (Norton paperback). Kerman and Tyson were also among the contributors to the revised Beethoven article in the 2001 Grove. Michael Steinberg's program notes on the nine Beethoven symphonies are in his compilation volume *The Symphony—A Listener's Guide* (Oxford paperback). Donald Francis Tovey's notes on the symphonies are among his *Essays in Musical Analysis* (Oxford). Other useful treatments of the symphonies include George Grove's classic *Beethoven and his Nine Symphonies*, now more than a century old (Dover paperback), and Robert Simpson's *Beethoven Symphonies* in the series of BBC Music Guides (University of Washington paperback).

The Boston Symphony Orchestra recorded Beethoven's Symphony No. 4 with Erich Leinsdorf in 1966 as part of their complete Beethoven symphony cycle (RCA). Other noteworthy complete cycles include (listed alphabetically by conductor) Claudio Abbado's with the Berlin Philharmonic (Deutsche Grammophon), Bernard Haitink's with the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO Live), Nikolaus Harnoncourt's with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe (Teldec), Herbert von Karajan's with the Berlin Philharmonic (Deutsche Grammophon), George Szell's with the Cleveland Orchestra (Sony Classical), and Osmo Vänskä's with the Minnesota Orchestra (BIS). Period-instrument recordings have included John Eliot Gardiner's with the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique (Deutsche Grammophon Archiv), Roy Goodman's with the Hanover Band (originally Nimbus), and Christopher Hogwood's with the Academy of Ancient Music (Oiseau-Lyre). Historic recordings include studio and live renditions of the Fourth led by Wilhelm Furtwängler (with the Vienna Philharmonic and Berlin Philharmonic) and Arturo Toscanini (with the NBC Symphony and BBC Symphony). The very first, and still illuminating, complete recorded Beethoven symphony "cycle" (in quotes because several orchestras were used)—Felix Weingartner's from the 1930s with the Vienna Philharmonic, the London Symphony, the London Philharmonic, and the British Symphony Orchestra—has been reissued on CD in impressively listenable sound (Naxos).

Edward Lockspeiser's *Debussy: His Life and Mind*, in two volumes, is the standard study of the composer (Macmillan). Roger Nichols's *The life of Debussy* is in the useful series "Musical lives" (Cambridge paperback). Nichols provided the Debussy article for the 1980 edition of The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians. The entry in the revised Grove (2001) is by François Lesure and Roy Howat. Still interesting and useful for its wealth of contemporary documentation is Léon Vallas's *Claude Debussy: His Life and Works*, translated from the French by Maire and Grace O'Brien and published originally in 1933 (Dover paperback). Also useful are David Cox's *Debussy Orchestral Music* in the series of BBC Music Guides, which includes some discussion of *Danses sacrée et profane* (University of Washington paperback); Marcel Dietschy's *La Passion de Claude Debussy*, edited and translated—as *A Portrait of Claude Debussy*—by William Ashbrook and Margaret G. Cobb (Oxford); and two recent collections of essays: *Debussy and his World*, edited by Jane F. Fulcher (Princeton University paperback), and *The Cambridge Companion to Debussy*, edited by Simon Trezise and Jonathan Cross (Cambridge University Press).

Among the various recordings of the *Danses sacrée et profane* is one featuring Alice Chalifoux (Ann Hobson Pilot's teacher) with Pierre Boulez and the Cleveland Orchestra (Sony). Others include conductor Bernard Haitink's with harpist Vera Badings and the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam (Philips), James Galway's with Marisa Robles and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe (RCA), Jean Martinon's with Marie-Claire Jamet and the ORTF National Orchestra (EMI), and Yan

Pascal Tortelier's with Rachel Masters and the Ulster Orchestra (Chandos). Pianists Stephen Coombs and Christopher Scott have recorded the two-piano version, on a disc of Debussy's complete music for two pianos (Helios).

Gerald Larner's *Maurice Ravel* is one of the many well-illustrated volumes in the biographical series "20th-Century Composers" (Phaidon paperback). Laurence Davies's *Ravel Orchestral Music* in the series of BBC Music Guides provides a good brief introduction to that subject (University of Washington paperback). Davies also wrote *The Gallic Muse*, a useful book with essays on Fauré, Duparc, Debussy, Satie, Ravel, and Poulenc (Barnes). Also useful is *The Cambridge Companion to Ravel*, edited by Deborah Mawer (Cambridge University Press). The Ravel entry in the 2001 edition of *The New Grove* is by Barbara L. Kelly. The important biography—unfortunately hard to find in the United States—is Roger Nichols's *Ravel* in the "Master Musicians" series, which replaced Norman Demuth's earlier volume in that same series. Nichols also assembled *Ravel Remembered*, which brings together recollections from musicians and non-musicians who knew the composer personally (Farrar Straus & Giroux). Also of interest are *Ravel* by Arbie Orenstein (Dover), Orenstein's *A Ravel Reader: Correspondence, Articles, Interviews* (also Dover), H.H. Stuckenschmidt's *Maurice Ravel: Variations on his Life and Work* (Calder), and Benjamin Ivry's *Maurice Ravel: a Life* (Welcome Rain).

There have been four commercial recordings of *La Valse* with the Boston Symphony Orchestra: from 1955 (monaural) and 1962 (stereo) under Charles Munch (both RCA), from 1974 under Seiji Ozawa (Deutsche Grammophon), and from 1995 under Bernard Haitink (Philips). An exciting 1962 Munch/BSO broadcast is in the twelve-disc box "Boston Symphony Orchestra, Symphony Hall Centennial Celebration: From the Broadcast Archives 1943-2000" (available at the Symphony Shop). Other choices, of varying vintage, include Ernest Ansermet's with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande (Decca), Pierre Boulez's with the Cleveland Orchestra (Sony), André Cluytens's with the Orchestra of the Paris Conservatoire (EMI), Charles Dutoit's with the Montreal Symphony (Decca), Jean Martinon's with the Orchestre de Paris (EMI), and Paul Paray's with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (Mercury Living Presence). Recordings of the two-piano version include two with Martha Argerich (with Alexandre Rabinovich most recently, on Warner Classics; and with Nelson Freire on Philips); Vladimir Ashkenazy and Vovka Ashkenazy (a recent release on London/Decca), and Earl Wild with Christian Steiner (a reissue on Ivory Classics).

Marc Mandel

Guest Artist

Ann Hobson Pilot

Ann Hobson Pilot retired from the Boston Symphony Orchestra at the end of the 2009 Tanglewood season, following forty years of service to the orchestra. Ms. Hobson Pilot became principal harp of the BSO in 1980, having joined the orchestra in 1969 as assistant principal harp and principal harp with the Boston Pops. Prior to her time with the BSO, she was substitute second harp with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and principal harp of the National Symphony Orchestra. A graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music, she has also had an extensive solo career, performing with many American orchestras as well as with orchestras in Europe, Haiti, New Zealand, and South Africa. She has several recordings available on the Boston Records label, as well as on the Koch International and Denouement labels. Ms. Hobson Pilot holds a Doctor of Fine Arts degree from Bridgewater State College. In 1998 and 1999 she was featured in a video documentary sponsored by the Museum of Afro-American History and WGBH, aired nationwide on PBS, about her personal musical journey as well as her African journey to find the roots of the harp. She is currently working with the producer of "Musical Journey," Susan Dangel, to create a new half-hour documentary which will tell the story of her life in music (www.musicaljourney.org). In September 1999 Ms. Hobson Pilot traveled to London to record, with the London Symphony Orchestra, the Harp Concerto by the young American composer Kevin Kaska, a work she commissioned. Ms. Hobson Pilot has been a faculty member at the New England Conservatory, Boston University, the Tanglewood Music Center, and the Boston University Tanglewood Institute. She is a member of the contemporary music ensemble Collage and has also performed with the Boston Symphony Chamber Players, the Ritz Chamber Players, and the

Marlboro, Newport, and Sarasota music festivals, among others. Ann Hobson Pilot played the world premiere of John Williams's *On Willows and Birches* in the BSO's Opening Night gala concert last week, as part of a program repeated by James Levine and the orchestra in New York to open Carnegie Hall's 2009-10 season two nights ago. Previous BSO appearances have featured Ms. Hobson Pilot as soloist in works by Mozart, Frank Martin, Ginastera, Debussy, and Turina.