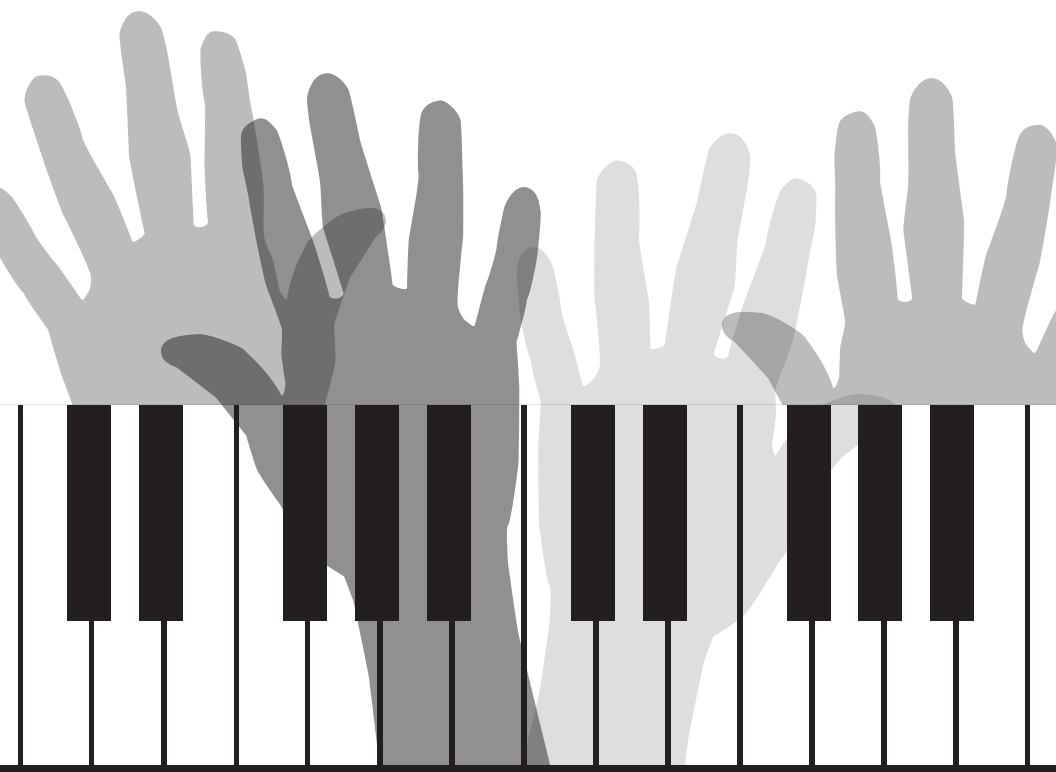


Concerts at the Point

17TH SEASON 2013-2014



presents ...

RANDALL HODGKINSON
& MIHAE LEE

DECEMBER 15, 2013, 3:00 PM

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Concerts at the Point

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2013

RANDALL HODGKINSON & MIHAE LEE

Randall Hodgkinson, piano

Mihae Lee, piano

...

LA MER (THE SEA)

Arranged for piano four hands by the composer

DEBUSSY

From Dawn to Noon on the Sea

Play of the Waves

Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea

RHAPSODY IN BLUE

Arranged for piano four hands by Henry Levine

GERSHWIN

INTERMISSION ...

RITE OF SPRING

(subtitled PICTURES OF PAGAN RUSSIA)

Arranged for piano four hands by the composer

STRAVINSKY

Adoration of the Earth

The Sacrifice

THE PERFORMERS



RANDALL HODGKINSON

Randall Hodgkinson is a man of many musical talents and capacities. He is a graduate of the Curtis Institute and New England Conservatory, and now is on the piano faculty at the New England Conservatory, Wellesley College, and Longy School of Music. Frequent guest soloist at festivals and with orchestras around the country, he also is associated with many chamber music groups, including being a member of the Boston Chamber Music Society since 1983. He has performed for Concerts at the Point many times, in various small chamber groups. In May 2013, Mr. Hodgkinson performed live the complete Goldberg Variations for WGBH Classical New England radio for a special celebration of Bach's 328th birthday.

On February 9, 2014, Mr. Hodgkinson will play with the Boston Symphony Chamber Players in a special concert to celebrate the Chamber Players 50th Anniversary. Works will include Loeffler Rhapsodies for oboe, viola and piano; Beach Quintet in F-sharp minor for piano and strings; plus new works commissioned by the Boston Symphony by Kati Ag'ocs, Hannah Lash, Gunther Schuller, and Yehudi Wyner.

MIHAE LEE

Korean-born pianist Mihae Lee has captivated audiences throughout North America, Europe, and Asia in solo recitals and chamber music concerts. An active chamber musician, she is a founding member of the Triton Horn Trio with violinist Ani Kavafian and hornist William Purvis. She has appeared frequently at numerous international chamber music festivals and been a guest artist with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, St. Paul Chamber

Orchestra, Bargemusic and Speculum Musicae, and has collaborated with the Tokyo, Muir, Cassatt and Manhattan string quartets. She has been a member of the Boston Chamber Music Society since 1987.

Ms. Lee is also the Artistic Director of the Essex Winter Series, presenting chamber music in the Connecticut River Valley. Check their website for the upcoming season: essexwinterseries.com

A first-prize winner of the Kosciuszko Foundation Chopin Competition, she received her bachelor's and master's degrees from the Juilliard School and her artist diploma from the New England Conservatory.

PROGRAM NOTES

Today's program includes transcriptions via three different routes. Historically, transcriptions have served multiple purposes. Before the advent of recording technology, the public could familiarize itself with new orchestral works by playing them in arrangements, usually for piano and most often in one's own home. In addition, compositions would reach a broader audience when performable by different instrumental combinations. Just as painters learned from copying the canvases of the masters, so did budding composers learn the craft of orchestration through the process of transcription. And many composers start their processes of composition by working through ideas on the piano, and then transcribing/orchestrating from there.

Debussy transcribed his orchestral work *La Mer* for piano four hands, shortly after it was premiered in orchestral form in 1905. This transcription has been described as relating to the orchestral original as a beautifully detailed black-and-white photo would to an oil painting. *Source: etCetera*

Gershwin's *Rhapsody In Blue* was first drafted in 1924 for two pianos—one part for the piano solo and the second piano part that

was intended to be orchestrated for jazz orchestra in a second step. The original orchestration was done by Ferde Grofé, pianist and arranger for the Whiteman orchestra, in part because there was little time left for Gershwin to attempt this and also some say that Gershwin was not yet skilled enough to do it. This piano and jazz orchestra version, after several re-orchestrations, was also used as the basis for a two piano version, with the second piano part working backwards from that orchestration. Gershwin transcribed various versions of the score—for solo piano and for two pianos; he also recorded a four hands piano roll version. Henry Levine was one of the few arrangers privileged to work with Gershwin directly, and is said to have worked from the original score to produce the piano four hands version most known today. Levine later published arrangements targeted at different skill levels in solo piano, duo, two piano duet and for various orchestral combinations.

Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* was first drafted as orchestra sketches, but then Stravinsky also prepared a two-hand piano version, subsequently lost, which he may have used to demonstrate the work to Diaghilev and the Ballet Russes conductor Pierre Monteux in April 1912. He also made a four-hand piano arrangement which became the first published version of *The Rite*; he and the composer Claude Debussy played the first half of this together, in June 1912.

While living in France, Stravinsky agreed to arrange (and to some extent re-compose) many of his early works for the "Pleyela," Pleyel's brand of player piano. He did so in a way that made full use of all of the piano's eighty-eight notes, without regard for human fingers or hands. The rolls were not recorded, but were instead marked up from a combination of manuscript fragments and handwritten notes by Jacques Larmanjat, musical director of Pleyel's roll department. Among the Stravinsky compositions that were issued on Pleyela piano rolls are *The Rite of Spring*, *Petrushka*, *The Firebird* and *Song of the Nightingale*. Sources: Wikipedia

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

LA MER (THE SEA)

Arranged for piano four hands by the composer

From Dawn to Noon on the Sea

Play of the Waves

Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea



Debussy considered himself a composer who presented “ancient things in a novel way.” His piano music reveals mostly unheard and revolutionary sounds for this instrument. These works display both the brilliant pianism at the heart of Debussy’s musical imagery and the composer’s affinity for the unexpected—a quality that allowed many of his compositions to unfold like highly sophisticated improvisations. His music disregards traditional western music chord structure and tonality, and the whole tone scale. Debussy remarked that “there is no theory. You merely have to listen. Pleasure is the law.”

La Mer was started in 1903 in France and completed in 1905 on the English Channel coast. Debussy called his work “three symphonic sketches,” avoiding the loaded term symphony, yet the work is sometimes called a symphony. It consists of two powerful outer movements framing a lighter, faster piece that acts as a type of scherzo.

While the structure of the work places it outside of both absolute music and programme music as those terms were understood in the early 20th century, it obviously uses descriptive devices to suggest wind, waves and the ambience of the sea. But structuring a piece around a nature subject without any literary or human element to it—neither people, nor mythology, nor ships are suggested in the piece—also was highly unusual at the time.

Debussy tapped a spectrum of inspirational sources. Wagner’s emotionally charged operas enthralled Debussy during his formative years. But, ever going forward, Debussy focused his attention on more exotic sources of musical vitality. Over the course of the 1889 Paris World’s Fair, Debussy avidly attended performances of Japanese



gamelan music, an experience that opened the French composer's ears to a world of ringing metallophones. The 1889 World's Fair also kindled the composer's passion for Russian music, thanks to two symphonic concerts that were given under the direction of Rimsky-Korsakov.

Debussy was just as influenced by other art forms as he was by music, if not more so. He took a strong interest in literature and visual art and used these mediums to help shape his unique musical style. Witness his choice for cover of first published score of *La Mer*, with the now famous, but then new to Europe Japanese art by Hokusai.

Debussy was also influenced by the French symbolist movement, an art movement from the 1880s with interests in the esoteric and the indefinite, and the rejection of naturalism and realism. Like the symbolists, Debussy aimed to reject common techniques and approaches to composition and attempted to evoke more of a sensorial experience for the listener with his works.

Painter James McNeill Whistler appears to have had a profound influence on Debussy as well. In 1894, Debussy wrote to violinist Eugène Ysaÿe describing his Nocturnes as "an experiment in the different combinations that can be obtained from one color—what a study in grey would be in painting." Although it is not known what it is meant by this statement, one can observe in his music a careful use of orchestral, textural, and harmonic shading. Sources: *The Prismatic Debussy*- Eastman School of Music; Pytheas Center for Contemporary Music; © All Music Guide; Wikipedia

GEORGE GERSHWIN (1898–1937)

RHAPSODY IN BLUE

Arranged for piano four hands by Henry Levine

Gershwin was commissioned by bandleader Paul Whiteman to compose a piano and jazz orchestra “concerto” to be part of his proposed “Experiment in Modern Music.” Whiteman hoped to demonstrate that the relatively new form of music called jazz deserved to be regarded as a serious and sophisticated art form. Gershwin produced a rhapsody; a rhapsody in music is a one-movement work that is episodic yet integrated, free-flowing in structure, featuring a range of highly contrasted moods, color and tonality. An air of spontaneous inspiration and a sense of improvisation make it freer in form than a set of variations.

Gershwin conceived his famous work while on a train to Boston. He said at the beginning of 1924: “I had already done some work on the rhapsody. It was on the train, with its steely rhythms, its rattle-ty bang that is often so stimulating for a composer.”

The piece was titled “American Rhapsody” during composition. The title *Rhapsody in Blue* was suggested by Ira Gershwin (the word-man of the family) after his visit to a gallery exhibition of James McNeill Whistler paintings, which bear titles such as *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket* and *Arrangement in Grey and Black* (better known as *Whistler’s Mother*).



Why Blue? We don’t know what Ira Gershwin had in mind, but the concept of blue note is found in African American music, which flattens the progression of a scale to reach the natural harmonic series. This is unlike the equal temperament utilized in western diatonic harmony. Equal temperament is an artifice or compromise originally employed in the eighteenth century to address the problems posed

in the creation of keyboard instruments. Equal temperament was an artificial 'straightening out' of a tendency for the natural harmonic series (musical intervals as they exist in nature) to go off at a tangent, meaning that higher intervals and octaves in their natural form are of a different pitch than the lower intervals and octaves. This made it difficult to create keyboard instruments that were 'coherent'. Hence the blue note is an attempt to correct this artifice by playing a note that is closer to the interval as it exists in the natural harmonic series.

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882–1971)

THE RITE OF SPRING

Arranged for piano four hands by the composer

Adoration of the Earth

The Sacrifice



Stravinsky & Debussy,
1911

Stravinsky's compositional career was notable for its stylistic diversity. He first achieved international fame with three ballets commissioned by the impresario Sergei Diaghilev and first performed in Paris by Diaghilev's Ballets Russes: *The Firebird* (1910), *Petrushka* (1911) and *The Rite of Spring* (1913). His "Russian phase" was followed in the 1920s by a period in which he turned to neoclassical music while living mainly in Western Europe. In the 1950s, Stravinsky adopted serial procedures while living in the US. His compositions from all three phases share traits of rhythmic energy, the construction of extended melodic ideas out of a few two- or three-note cells and clarity of form, of instrumentation and of utterance.

The Rite of Spring is a ballet and orchestral concert work. Although designed as a work for the stage, with specific passages accompanying characters and action, the music achieved equal if not greater recognition as a concert piece, and is widely considered to be one of the most influential musical works of the 20th century.



Dancers in Roerich's original costumes.

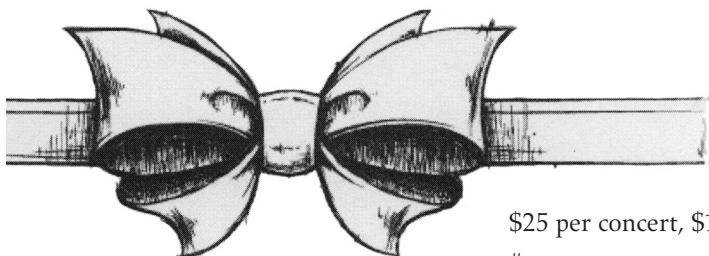
In a note to the conductor Serge Koussevitzky in February 1914, Stravinsky described *The Rite of Spring* as “a musical-choreographic work, [representing] pagan Russia...unified by a single idea: the mystery and great surge of the creative power of Spring.” In his analysis, Pieter van den Toorn writes that the work lacks a specific plot or narrative, and should be considered as a succession of choreographed episodes.

Diaghilev brought together the avant-garde in all art forms. The original choreography was by Vaslav Nijinsky, with stage designs and costumes by Nicholas Roerich. When first performed, at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, the avant-garde nature of the music and choreography caused a sensation and a near-riot in the audience. Ultimately, it was the music’s rhythmic structure that was most shocking. Stravinsky artfully contrives to keep the listener rhythmically off-balance by frequent meter changes and unpredictable accents. Nijinsky’s choreography closely reflected these rhythms with frequent jumps and spastic contortions. *Source: Wikipedia*

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