

# ~ The Apollo Ensemble Presents ~

An orchestral concert featuring the music of  
Beethoven, Ravel, and Stravinsky



*The Apollo Ensemble of Boston*  
Elias Miller, Cofounder & Conductor  
Michael Tabak, Cofounder

Saturday, 22 June 2019 at 8:00pm  
First Baptist Church of Medford  
29 Oakland Street, Medford, MA 02155

# The Apollo Ensemble of Boston

Elias Miller, Conductor

## Violin I

Key: Jesse Macdonald (Concertmaster)  
Toshi Motoyama  
Allison Dobbs  
Elizabeth Cai  
Leonardo Espinosa  
Laura Fanning

## Violin II

Dorisiya Yosifova (Principal)  
Terry Spinelli  
Ruta Nikitska  
Christopher Goessling  
Catherine Cerny

## Viola

Stephen Jue (Principal)  
Kathy Larsen  
Nicole Kootz  
Emilie Catlett

## Cello

Marc Pasciucco (Principal)  
Hwakyung Jang  
Suah Kim

## Bass

Jessi Eisdorfer (Principal)  
Martha Davis

## Flute

Michael Tabak<sup>ωδ</sup>  
Sara Simpson

## Oboe

Joel Bard<sup>ωδ</sup>  
Michael Barnett<sup>ψ</sup>

## Clarinet

Yi-Ting Hsieh<sup>ω</sup>  
Yhasmin Valenzuela<sup>δ</sup>

## Bassoon

Shu Satoh<sup>ωδ</sup>  
Matt Capone<sup>ψ</sup>

## Horn

Isaac Julien<sup>ω</sup>  
Jeff Stewart<sup>ψ</sup>  
William Prince<sup>δ</sup>

## Trumpet

Cheryl Przytula<sup>ωδ</sup>  
Frank Chiodo<sup>ψ</sup>

## Trombone

Byul Yoo<sup>ψ</sup>

## Harp

Jennifer MacGray<sup>ω</sup>

## Timpani

Jeremy Lang<sup>δ</sup>

ω – First in *Le Tombeau de Couperin*

ψ – First in *Pulcinella Suite*

δ – First in *Symphony No. 1 in C major*

# The Apollo Ensemble of Boston

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## ~ Program ~

### Le Tombeau de Couperin

Maurice Ravel

I. Prélude - Vif

(1875 - 1937)

II. Forlane – Allegretto

III. Menuet – Allegro moderato

IV. Rigaudon – Assez vif

### Pulcinella Suite

Igor Stravinsky

I. Overture: Sinfonia

(1882 – 1971)

II. Serenata

III. Scherzino, Allegro, Andantino

IV. Tarantella

V. Toccata

VI. Gavotta, Variation 1, Variation 2

VII. Vivo

VIIIa. Minuetto

VIIIb. Finale

## Intermission

### Symphony No. 1 in C Major, Op. 2

Ludwig van Beethoven

I. Adagio molto, Allegro con brio

(1770 – 1827)

II. Andante cantabile con moto

III. Menuetto: Allegro molto e vivace

IV. Adagio, Allegro molto

## ~ Notes ~

### **Ravel:**

Deemed too diminutive to join the French military during the World War I, Ravel decided to enlist as a nurse's aide in order to serve his country. He was accepted into this position in October 1914, and it was during that same month that he decided to begin a suite for piano in the French baroque style. Unsurprisingly, Ravel was unable to devote much time to composing during the three years of his military service, but after he was discharged in 1917 (after one year as a nurse's aide and two as a truck driver for an artillery regiment), he returned to work on his French suite.

While "Tombeau" ("memorial") is an old French musical term that usually denotes a work honoring only one person, Ravel never intended to pay direct tribute to François Couperin "The Great" (1668 – 1733) in his *Le Tombeau de Couperin*. Rather, he sought to pay homage to the French baroque keyboard suite more generally, a genre in which Couperin was a master. Through his use of baroque ornamentation and figuration, modal harmonies, and baroque dance forms, Ravel accomplished this to stunning affect, taking care to update the baroque dance forms with chromatic harmonies that give the piece a decidedly neoclassical air.

Upon Ravel's return from the front, the piece evolved into more than a cheery neoclassical take on the French baroque. Crushed by the losses of many of his friends during the war and the death of his mother and disturbed by the complete upheaval of European society World War I had wrought, Ravel had entered a much darker place by the time he returned home. Abandoning his original intent to create a rather bright and pleasant baroque suite, Ravel dedicated each movement of the work to one of his friends who had died during the war, thus endowing the work with a tragic sense of nostalgia.

In 1919, at the behest of his publisher, Ravel set about orchestrating four of the work's six movements (Ravel chose to omit the original score's toccata and fugue). Rhené Baton conducted the

Pasdeloup Orchestra in the work's orchestral premiere in 1920, and it is this version of the work that is most frequently performed today.

### **Prélude**

Dedicated to Lieutenant Jacques Charlot, a close friend of Ravel's and a cousin of Jacques Durand, Claude Debussy's music publisher, this movement features nearly constant whirring sixteenth triplets first presented by the oboe in a famous solo line.

### **Forlane**

Dedicated to Lieutenant Gabriel de Luc, a Basque painter, the Forlane is based on a Venetian *passamezzo* and is characterized by some extremely dissonant and chromatic harmonies and melodic gestures. Ravel had transcribed a forlane from Couperin's *Concerts Royaux* before he began writing the piece, and he used Couperin's work as a formal model for this movement.

### **Menuet**

This movement contains the work's most solemn and melancholic music. It was dedicated to Jean Dreyfus, the stepson of Madame Fernard Dreyfus to whom Ravel wrote many personal letters during his time at the front. After Ravel was discharged from the military, he spent some time recuperating at the Dreyfus family home near Rouen.

### **Rigaudon**

An exciting dance that features many hopping steps, the Rigaudon originated in Provence in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Ravel dedicated this movement to his childhood friends Pierre and Pascal Gaudin, brothers who were killed by the same shell during their first day at the front in 1914.

## Stravinsky:

Late in the summer of 1919, Stravinsky began work on his *Pulcinella*, a ballet in one act that calls for three vocal soloists, a small chamber orchestra, and solo strings. Sergei Diaghilev – the famed Russian impresario whose commissions for his ballet company, *Ballets Russes*, included Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, *Petrushka*, and *The Firebird*, Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloe*, Debussy's *Jeux*, and many more – had approached Stravinsky that spring with the idea of a ballet based on orchestrations of some scores by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, an 18<sup>th</sup> century Italian composer. Although he was initially skeptical, Stravinsky finally agreed to look through the many manuscripts Diaghilev presented him, and proceeded to pick out some trio sonatas, assorted orchestral works, selections from operas, and a score that featured a setting of many comic adventures of Pulcinella, a classical Neapolitan commedia dell'arte character. Recent scholarship has proven that more than half the scores that Stravinsky studied for this project were not actually by Pergolesi, but were rather by various other less famous composers such as Domenico Gallo, Count van Wassenauer, and Carlo Ignazio Monza. Stravinsky knew nothing of this, however, and believed that he had genuinely fallen in love with Pergolesi's music.

Despite having only been commissioned to assemble and orchestrate various works for the ballet, Stravinsky felt himself unable to simply arrange the pieces he had studied. Instead, he chose to update them in various ways using dissonant harmonies, creative orchestrational effects, and complex rhythms and accent patterns that were distinctively his own. The result was an entirely new musical style for him – this was Stravinsky's first foray into the world of neoclassicism. Many other great works including the *Octet* for winds, *Concerto in E-flat* "Dumbarton Oaks," *Symphony of Psalms*, *Oedipus Rex*, *Apollon Musagète*, and *The Rake's Progress* would result from his experiments with this musical language.

Diaghilev gave *Pulcinella* its premiere at the Paris Opera House in May of 1920. Léonide Massine did the choreography, and Pablo

Picasso designed the costumes and sets. Despite many artistic differences between members of the creative team – Diaghilev was initially shocked and upset by Stravinsky's original take on the baroque works, and he also got into several fights with Picasso, asking him to redo his designs twice and even once throwing Picasso's drawings on the floor and stomping on them – and various attacks by certain members of the public who declared Stravinsky a pastiche artist and accused him of defacing the works of the great masters, Stravinsky deemed the work a complete triumph.

Stravinsky created an orchestral suite from the ballet in 1922 for use as a concert piece. The suite uses the same size orchestra as the original, but doesn't employ any vocalists. It is in this form that we will present the work today.

## **Beethoven:**

Ludwig van Beethoven left Bonn for Vienna in November of 1792. Mozart had died only one year earlier and Count Waldstein, an early and important patron of Beethoven's, predicted in a farewell letter to the composer that he would "receive Mozart's spirit through Haydn's hands" once he arrived there and thus carry on the great German classical tradition. Once in Vienna, Beethoven took composition lessons not only with Haydn, but also with Johann Albrechtsberger who helped him master counterpoint. He also established himself as a piano virtuoso and frequented the salons of various members of the nobility, amazing aristocrats with his improvisations and performances of the preludes and fugues of J.S. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*. While he did begin to sketch a symphony in C major in 1795, Beethoven scrapped the idea and focused primarily on writing works for the piano – achieving some fame for several of his early piano sonatas.

It wasn't until 1799 that Beethoven returned to work on his first symphony. He completed the work the next year and premiered it at a benefit concert alongside one of Mozart's symphonies, excerpts from Haydn's *Creation*, and performances of his own *Septet in E-flat*

*Major* and one of his piano concertos. It should come as no surprise that Beethoven's first symphony fits firmly within the classical mold. Beethoven employed many melodic, harmonic, and formal elements that recall the symphonies of Mozart and Haydn and put to use the contrapuntal skills he had worked so meticulously to develop (these skills are most clearly put on display in the witty fugue that begins the symphony's second movement).

Yet, while the work is relatively conservative in nature, Beethoven's mark on the music is unmistakable. Instead of beginning the symphony in a typical fashion with a tonic harmony, Beethoven chose to start the work in a shocking manner: on the dominant of another key. It isn't until several measures and significant harmonic wandering have occurred that the music solidifies into the key of C major. Beethoven would employ similar mechanisms to obscure the starting tonic key of several of his future pieces, perhaps most famously in his Piano Sonata No. 21 in C major ("Waldstein"). Beethoven's decision to use timpani and trumpets in the symphony's slow second movement was somewhat innovative, and his third movement minuet is not a minuet at all. In reality, it is fully realized scherzo – the first of Beethoven's many great symphonic scherzi. Finally, instead of generating music from long melodies in a Mozartian fashion, Beethoven derived most of the symphony's music from short melodic gestures at the start of each movement. Additionally, many of his melodies are quite segmented and feature distinct rhythmic patterns of accents. Beethoven would continue to employ these melodic techniques throughout his entire symphonic output to great effect. Thus, while his first symphony does owe a great deal to the works of Haydn and Mozart, it is an original work that clearly foreshadows the monumental contributions to the symphonic genre that Beethoven would soon make.

- Elias Miller



## ~ Biographical Notes ~

### Conductor:

A distinguished pianist and cellist, **Elias Miller** has established a reputation as one of Boston's leading young conductors and orchestra builders. As music director of the Harvard Early Music Society since 2016, Miller has conducted a series of critically acclaimed operatic productions in the Boston area including performances of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, the Boston premiere of J.A. Hasse's *Alcide al Bivio* in collaboration with the Harvard Baroque Chamber Orchestra, the North American premiere of Telemann's 1745 *Johannespassion*, a production that featured famed countertenor Charles Humphries and earned Miller an enthusiastic preview in the *Boston Globe*, and, most recently, the North American premiere of J.A. Hasse's *Sanctus Petrus et Sancta Maria Magdalena*. Miller's other recent conducting highlights include appearances with the University of Michigan's University Philharmonia and Campus Philharmonia orchestras, the Ann Arbor Camerata, the Medomak Symphony Orchestra, and the Weston Wind Quintet & Friends.

Music director of the Apollo Ensemble of Boston since 2018, this is Miller's third concert with the new orchestra. Other ensembles he has conducted in the past include the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra Chamber Players, the Chromos Collaborative Orchestra, the Harvard-Radcliffe Gilbert & Sullivan Players, and Harvard College Opera. He has also served as the assistant conductor of the Boston Chamber Symphony.

Miller graduated from Harvard University summa cum laude in 2016 after transferring there from the New England Conservatory/Tufts University Dual Degree Program. He is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in orchestral conducting at the University of Michigan where he studies with Kenneth Kiesler. Miller's past conducting teachers include his father, David Alan Miller, conductor of the Albany Symphony Orchestra, and Federico Cortese, conductor of the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra.

**Cofounder:**

**Michael Tabak** studied flute, theory, and ensemble at the Juilliard School of Music Preparatory Division where he was rated “Exceptional” by the woodwind faculty jury and was principal flute and soloist multiple times with the orchestra. He has been principal flute of orchestras including the National High School Symphony at Interlochen, the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra, the Fine Arts Symphony, the Boston Chamber Symphony, and others. An avid chamber musician, he is a founding member of the Weston Wind Quintet, the Atrium Winds, and the Aujourd’hui Ensemble. He has displayed a talent for assembling orchestras and chamber groups from scratch. While in high school, he organized and was flutist of the Long Island Wind Quintet, whose oboist became principal oboe of the Munich Philharmonic and whose clarinetist became principal clarinet of the Atlanta Symphony. He recruited the members of the Boston Chamber Symphony from its inception in 2012 through 2016, and often expands his chamber music groups to play pieces for larger ensembles. Live recordings of many of those concerts are available, free of charge, at [soundcloud.com/wwq/sets](https://soundcloud.com/wwq/sets).

## ~ First Baptist Church of Medford ~

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH of Medford, Massachusetts is an inclusive, welcoming, and kid friendly community of faith.

Our worship services are formal, filled with beautiful music, and conducted according to the rich New England Protestant tradition. Our strength and vitality spring from our love of God and our rich diversity of people and opinions.

*We have open hearts, open minds, and an open seat for you, wherever you are on life's journey!*

We pride ourselves on providing a vibrant concert and recital scene for the benefit of the city of Medford and the wider Greater Boston/Metro-North community. Our 1917 Estey/Pelland organ, 1948 Schulmerich Carillon, and Baldwin D concert grand piano are treasured possessions and are maintained to highest specifications.

This congregation has a proud tradition of supporting the arts and classical music. This tradition continues each Sunday of the academic year in the work of sanctuary choir under the expert leadership of Dr. Nancy Crandall, and our vocal coach, Ms. Gina Picerno. All are invited to hear this choir in action on any Sunday morning of the academic year.



## ~ A Note of Thanks~

Rev. Matthew Rasure, for his unwavering support and administrative help throughout our rehearsal and concert cycle

First Baptist Church of Medford, for the use of their sanctuary as a rehearsal space and concert venue

Dustin Bell and St. John's Episcopal Church for the use of the church's sanctuary as a rehearsal space

Rev. Herb Taylor, Francesca Carrillo, and The Harvard-Epworth United Methodist Church, for the use of the church's vestry as a rehearsal space

### **Program Image:**

Edgar Degas – “The Star” (1878)

