

The Shepherd Society

presents

BEGINNINGS: YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONCERT

Saturday, January 27, 2007

10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.

Stude Concert Hall

STORIES IN SOUND

The Tales of Father Goose (excerpts)

György Ránki

(1907-1992)

MEMBERS OF THE SHEPHERD SCHOOL BRASS CHOIR

Larry Hernandez, trumpet; Greg Haro, trumpet; John Williamson, trumpet;

Erin Koertge, French horn; Mark Holley, trombone; Ali Jackson, tuba;

Craig Hauschildt, percussion; and Bryan Dilks, percussion

MARIE SPEZIALE, CONDUCTOR

COLIN WISE, TROMBONE SOLOIST

RACHEL BUCHMAN, NARRATOR

A little about György Ránki, composer of *The Tales of Father Goose*: Ránki said that since Ravel had already written a Mother Goose suite (we performed it on last year's Young People's Concert) he would compose a Father Goose suite. Ránki made up a humorous story about a superhero goose that satirizes many composers' music, from Wagner to Gershwin. In speaking with conductor László Marosi, who knew Ránki personally, I discovered that he was a man of great courage. During the darkest days of the communist period in Hungary, Ránki composed his children's opera, *King Pomade's New Clothes*, a re-working of *The Emperor's New Clothes*, as a not too subtle commentary on the Hungarian dictator of the time. The production was a big success. When the official limousine arrived at Ránki's house soon after the opening, he assumed it was coming to take him away, but instead, someone was coming to inform him that he was being awarded a prize. Ránki thought it fitting that the dictator in question apparently did not even understand the irony in the opera! NOTE: A septet is a piece written for seven players. Do you know another word that begins with "sept" (not septic!). September. September used to be the seventh month of the year, until July and August were added!

The Sorcerer's Apprentice

Paul Dukas

(1865-1935)

SHEPHERD SCHOOL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

LARRY RACHLEFF, MUSIC DIRECTOR

THOMAS HONG AND CRISTIAN MĂCELARU, CONDUCTORS

Both of our pieces today, a symphonic and a brass tone poem, were composed with very specific stories in mind, but with the intention that no story would be read during the playing of the piece (as it is for example in Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*). This kind of music is called program music. That means the composer has a particular story in mind and describes with music the mood, characters and even the plot of the story. The history of *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* (*L'apprenti sorcier*) is a story itself! The core of the story is nearly 2000 years old! The first written version was by the Latin author Lucian. Then the great German poet, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, wrote a ballad (a long rhyming poem) in 1797 called *Der Zauberlehrling*. Goethe's poem inspired the French composer Paul Dukas to write his symphonic poem one hundred years later in 1897. And then in 1940, Walt Disney created a visual version of the story in *Fantasia* using Dukas' music and Goethe's storyline. No one else had ever made a movie like this before. Have you seen it? Are there any words in the Mickey Mouse version? No! The story is told completely in moving pictures and music. At the end of the 19th century, when Dukas was composing, there were many other composers experimenting with the same idea — creating stories which are sound based on well-known tales and texts. These composers were ahead of their time, for what they were doing was composing film scores without the films! The action of their "movies" was going on inside the heads of their audiences. So, when Walt Disney created his ground-breaking film *Fantasia*, he was just catching up with the composers; he was putting the pictures he and his animators saw in their heads onto the screen for everyone to see. Here are the names of just a few of the many pieces composed in this genre. These are great fun to listen to; it is almost impossible when one listens to them not to create your own inner movie: *Till Eulenspiegel* by Richard Strauss, *Scheherazade* by Rimsky-Korsakov, *Pictures at an Exhibition* by Moussorgsky/Ravel (based on paintings in a museum, rather than a story), and *Night on Bald Mountain* by Moussorgsky/Rimsky-Korsakov (also in the first *Fantasia*). Short and simple as it is, Goethe's ballad *Der Zauberlehrling* (*The Sorcerer's Apprentice*), is rich in its themes, as it is powerful in its poetic structure. Writing at the beginning of the industrial revolution, when machines on a never-before imagined scale were doing the work people did before, Goethe foresaw the questions we still have to answer today — that is — what is our relationship to our own creations? (Have you ever wondered what would happen if robots took over the world?) What happens if we create things we can't control? Isn't this the fundamental question in our relationship to the environment? We've created technology that, even as it makes life easier in many ways, is monstrous in its destructiveness (see *Frankenstein* by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley). The poem also touches on the theme of the arrogance and impatience of the insufficiently trained. This is a theme that was re-visited in the scenes between Luke Skywalker, Obi-Wan Kenobi and Yoda in the first three *Star Wars* movies, and is one of the most popular in all art and literature. Dukas' piece is beloved not only because it tells an exciting story, but because it is able to embody the depth of these themes in its musical story telling.

Der Zauberlehrling (The Sorcerer's Apprentice)

By Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1797. Translated by Edwin Zeydel, 1955,
with minor revisions by Rachel Buchman. Last stanza translated by Brigitte Dubiel.

That old sorcerer has vanished
And for once has gone away!
Spirits called by him, now banished,
My commands shall soon obey.
Every step and saying
That he used, I know,
And with sprites obeying
My arts I will show.

Flow, flow,
O'er pathways many
Spare not any
Water rushing,
Ever streaming abundantly
Toward a bath in currents gushing.

Come, old broomstick, and behave,
Take these rags and wrap them round you!
Long's the time you've been my slave,
By my wishes now I've bound you.
Have two legs and stand,
And a head for you.
Run, and in your hand
Hold a bucket too.

Flow, flow,
O'er pathways many
Spare not any
Water rushing,
Ever streaming abundantly
Toward a bath in currents gushing.

See him, toward the shore he's racing
There, he's at the stream already,
Back like lightning he is chasing,
Pouring water fast and steady.
A second time he hastens!
But the tub's already filled!
Brimming over are the basins,
How the water's spilled!

Stop now, hear me!
Ample measure
Of your treasure
We have gotten!
Ach, I see it, dear me, dear me.
What's the word I have forgotten?

Ach, the word with which the master
Makes the broom a broom once more!
Ach, he runs and fetches faster!
Be a broomstick as before!
Ever new the torrents
That by him are fed,
Ach, a hundred rivers
Pour upon my head!

No, no longer
Can I appease you,
I will seize you!
Hold you tight!
My misgivings grow the stronger.
What a face, his eyes a fright!

Child of hell, you're not a mortal!
Shall the entire house go under?
Over threshold, over portal
Streams of water rush and thunder.
Broom insane and mean,
Who ignores my will,
Stick that you have been,
Once again stand still!

Can I never, Broom, appease you?
I will seize you,
Hold and whack you,
And your ancient wood
I'll sever,
With a whetted axe I'll crack you.

He returns, more water hauling!
Now I'll throw myself upon you!
Soon, O goblin, you'll be crawling.
Crash! Slippery sharpness has undone you.
What a good blow, truly!
There, he's split, see?
Hope now rises newly,
And my breathing's free.

Woe betide me!
Both halves scurry
In a hurry,
Rise like towers
There beside me.
Help me, help, eternal powers!

Off they run, till wet and wetter
Hall and steps are drowning.
What a flood that naught can fetter!
Lord and master, hear me crying!
Ach, the Master coming.
Sir, my need is sore.
Spirits that I've summoned
My commands ignore.

"To the lonely corner,
Broom! Broom!
Be thou as thou wert before!
Until I, the true Master
Call thee forth to serve once more."

Links to German versions and translations of Goethe's poem:

http://www.fln.vcu.edu/goethe/zauber_e3.html <http://german.about.com/library/blgzauber1.html>

BIOGRAPHIES

RACHEL BUCHMAN, narrator, is of New York Jewish descent via Ellis Island, and loves to ride horses and sing.

PAUL DUKAS (pronounced Du-kas), composer (1865-1935), was of French and Jewish descent, and loved to compose music and destroy most of what he composed.

THOMAS HONG, conductor, is of Korean descent and loves to play sports and sleep.

CRISTIAN MĂCELARU, conductor, is of Rumanian descent and loves to eat and to play the violin.

LARRY RACHLEFF, music director, is of Russian Jewish descent. His wife is of Australian descent, and they love traveling halfway around the world with their three-year old son.

GYÖRGY RÁNKI, composer (1907-1992), was Hungarian and loved to write movie music and maintain his sense of irony when it came to dictators.

MARIE SPEZIALE, conductor, is of Sicilian Italian descent via Ellis Island, and loves baseball, making music and dancing.

You can read more about our merry band at the following websites:

RACHEL BUCHMAN: <www.ruf.rice.edu/~musi/preparatory/buchman.html>

PAUL DUKAS: <www.music.vt.edu/musicdictionary/appendix/composers/D/PaulDukas.html> and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Dukas>

THOMAS HONG: <www.ruf.rice.edu/~musi/preparatory/thomas_hong.html> CRISTIAN MĂCELARU: <www.macelararu.com>

LARRY RACHLEFF: <www.ruf.rice.edu/~musi/facultybios/rachleff.html>

GYÖRGY RÁNKI: <http://movies2.nytimes.com/gst/movies/filmography.html?p_id=218310&mod=films>

MARIE SPEZIALE: <<http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~musi/facultybios/speziale.html>>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Concert concept by Rachel Buchman, Thomas Hong, and Cristian Măcelaru. Script and program notes by Rachel Buchman.

Special thanks to Marie Speziale, Debra Dickinson, Stephanie Jones, László Marosí, Tom Littman, Kristi Johnson,

Troy McLaughlin, Fran Schmidt, Mandy Billings, and Nathan Mulholland.