

BOSTON PHILHARMONIC 40TH ANNIVERSARY 80TH BIRTHDAY

BENJAMIN ZANDER
CONDUCTOR



NOVEMBER 2018

GINASTERA
*Variaciones
concertantes*

**BENJAMIN
ZANDER**
conductor

RAVEL
*Daphnis and Chloé,
Suite No. 2*

STRAUSS
Ein Heldenleben

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HISTORY OF THE ORCHESTRA

In 1979, ninety-six enthusiastic players, professionals, students, amateurs, a dynamic, probing conductor named Benjamin Zander, and an impassioned donor and amateur musician named Seymour Rothchild joined together to found the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra. Today, the musicians represent the original spirited blend and account for the passion, high level of participation, and technical accomplishment for which this ensemble is celebrated. The professionals maintain the highest standard, the students keep the focus on training and education, and the gifted amateurs—including doctors, lawyers, teachers, and computer programmers—remind everybody that music-making is an expression of enthusiasm and love.

The Boston Philharmonic's message rings loud and clear—music making is a privilege and a joy, and above all, a collaborative adventure. The orchestra's season includes performances at New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall, Sanders Theatre at Harvard University, and the historic Symphony Hall. The BPO performs with a wide range of soloists from highly gifted performers at the start of their international careers such as Stefan Jackiw, Gabriela Montero, Jonah Ellsworth, and George Li, to world-famous artists like Yo-Yo Ma, Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Russell Sherman, Kim Kashkashian, and Alisa Weilerstein, and legendary masters such as Ivry Gitlis, Denes Zsigmondy, Georgy Sandor, Leonard Shure, and Oscar Shumsky.

The BPO has released five critically acclaimed recordings, including works by Stravinsky, Beethoven, Mahler, Shostakovich, and Ravel. Among many other reviews of extravagant praise, *Classic CD* magazine gave the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra's recording of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* the highest rank of all available recordings. Of Mahler's *Symphony No. 6*, *American Record Guide* wrote: "This joins the Rattle and the two Bernstein recordings as the finest on record... All the glory to Zander and his semi-professional orchestra, for the sixth is probably Mahler's most difficult and complex symphony... All things considered, when I reach for a recording of the sixth to play for my own pleasure, it will most likely be this one."

Boston Philharmonic Orchestra concerts have long been a two-part experience; each performance is preceded by one of Benjamin Zander's illuminating and entertaining pre-concert lectures, which prepare listeners to understand the ideas and the structure of the music they are about to hear. The Philharmonic's commitment to reaching and educating a wide audience is maintained by its Music Without Boundaries program, which raises money to provide tickets for school-age students, and its Crescendo! Community Engagement programs that provide thousands of students throughout Boston with musical activities ranging from concerts to individualized instruction to workshops and more.

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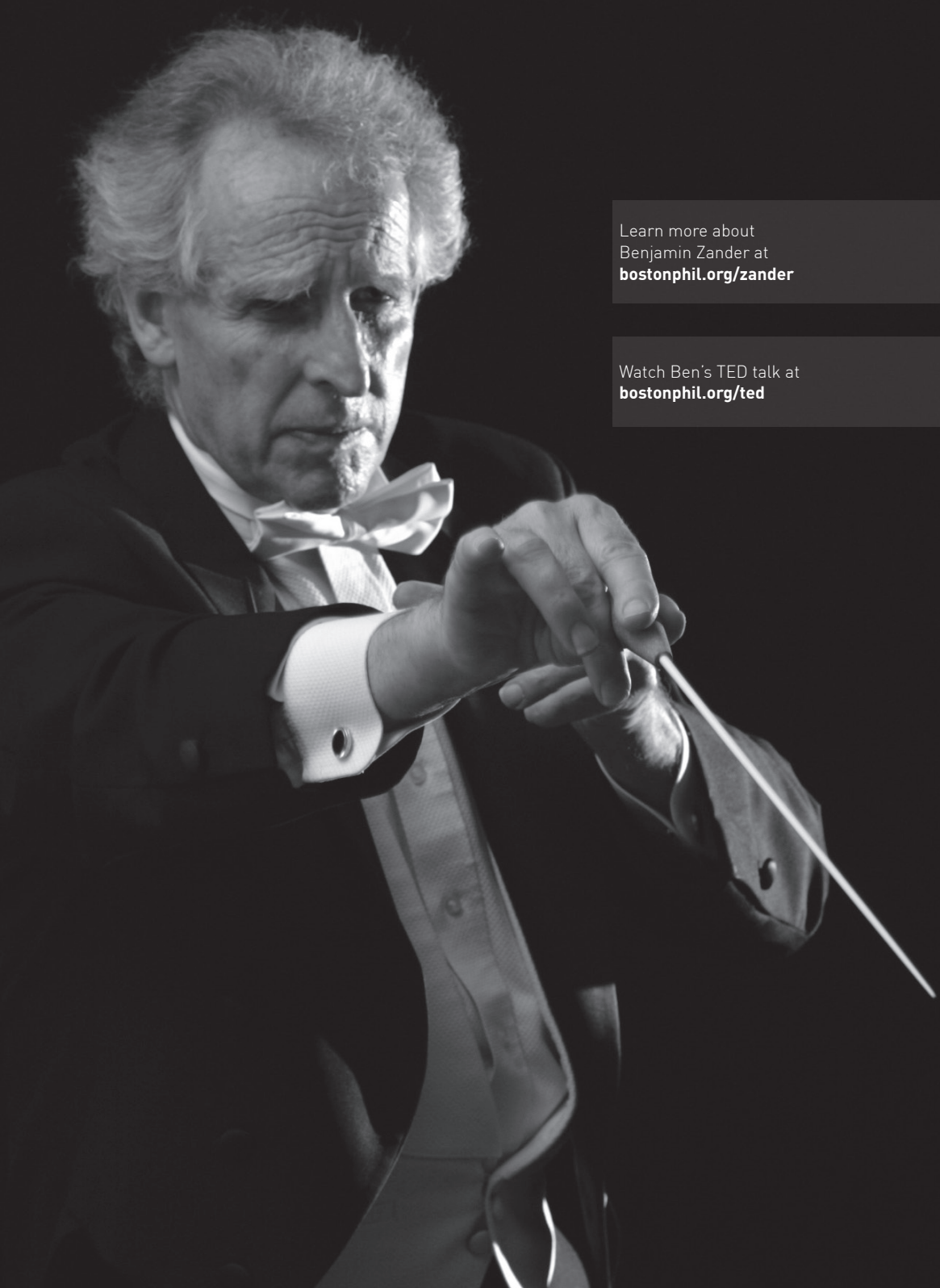
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Photo by Koren Reyes

BENJAMIN ZANDER CONDUCTOR

For the past 50 years, Benjamin Zander has occupied a unique place as a master teacher, deeply insightful and probing interpreter, and as a profound source of inspiration for audiences, students, professional musicians, corporate leaders, politicians, and more. He has persistently engaged well-informed musical and public intellectuals in a quest for insight and understanding into the western musical canon and the underlying spiritual, social, and political issues that inspired its creation.

Zander founded the Boston Philharmonic in 1979 and has appeared as guest conductor with orchestras around the world. His performances have inspired thousands of musicians, renewed their sense of idealism, and shed fresh, insightful, and sometimes provocative light on the interpretation of the central symphonic repertoire of the 19th and 20th centuries. Critics and the public have been united in their praise of Zander's interpretations of the central repertoire.

For 25 years, Zander has enjoyed a unique relationship with the Philharmonia Orchestra, recording a series of Beethoven and Mahler symphonies. *High Fidelity* named the recording of Mahler's 6th as 'the best classical recording' of 2002; the 3rd was awarded 'Critic's Choice' by the German Record Critics' Award Association; the Mahler 9th, Mahler 2nd, and Bruckner 5th recordings were nominated for Grammy awards.

In 2012, Zander founded the Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra (BPYO), which draws young musicians from the entire northeastern US to its weekly rehearsals and high-profile performances in Boston. This tuition-free orchestra tours regularly, and has performed in Carnegie Hall, the Concertgebouw, and the Berlin Philharmonie, among others. Over the past two summers, the BPYO toured South America and Europe.

From 1965-2012, Zander was on the faculty of the New England Conservatory of Music (NEC), where he taught Musical Interpretation, and conducted the Youth Philharmonic and Conservatory orchestras. He was the founding Artistic Director of the NEC's joint program with The Walnut Hill School for the Performing Arts. Zander led the NEC Youth Philharmonic on fifteen international tours and made several documentaries for the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). His interpretation class, "Interpretations of Music: Lessons for Life," is being presented this season in partnership with the Boston Public Library once a month at the Central Library in Copley Square. They are free and open to the public, as well as made available online where they are viewed by tens of thousands of people around the world.

Zander enjoys an international career as a leadership speaker, with several keynote speeches at the World Economic Forum in Davos and at TED. The best-selling book, *The Art of Possibility*, co-authored with leading psychotherapist Rosamund Zander, has been translated into eighteen languages.



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7:00PM**
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CONCERT PROGRAM

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 15, 2018 AT 7:00 PM
SANDERS THEATRE, HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Discovery Series

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 17, 2018 AT 8:00 PM
JORDAN HALL, NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY
Guide to the music with Benjamin Zander, 6:45 pm

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 18, 2018 AT 3:00 PM
SANDERS THEATRE, HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Guide to the music with Benjamin Zander, 1:45 pm

Benjamin Zander, *conductor*

GINASTERA *Variaciones concertantes, Opus 23*

RAVEL *Daphnis and Chloé, Suite No. 2*
Introduction
Danse guerrière
Danse suppliante de Chloé

INTERMISSION

STRAUSS *Ein Heldenleben, Opus 40*

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Unauthorized use of cameras, video and tape recorders is not permitted. Listening devices are available from the venue, please ask for assistance.



*This organization is funded, in part, by the
Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.*

PROGRAM NOTES

ALBERTO GINASTERA

VARIACIONES CONCERTANTES OPUS 23

BORN:
April 11, 1916

DIED:
June 25, 1983

WORK COMPOSED:
1953

WORK PREMIERED:
June 2, 1953 with the Asociación de la Música Orchestra, conducted by Igor Markevitch in Buenos Aires, Argentina



Argentinian composer Alberto Ginastera showed precocious musical gifts and began to take piano lessons at the age of seven; by fourteen he was composing, though he eventually destroyed most of his juvenilia. He first attracted widespread attention with two ballet scores, *Panambi* (1936) and *Estancia* (1941), both of which dealt with Argentine life and had a strong element of musical folklore enlivened by a brilliant ear for orchestral color and a strong sense of rhythm.

World War II caused Ginastera to postpone accepting a Guggenheim grant to study in the United States, but by 1945, as a result of Péron's rise to power, he was dismissed from his position at the national military academy. He spent the next several years in the United States, including a summer studying in Aaron Copland's class at Tanglewood. Though he returned to Argentina and worked at reforming the musical life of his native country, he spent most of his last years abroad, in the United States and Europe, owing to continuing political unrest at home. By the late 1950s, he had established an international reputation, and many of his later works were commissioned by organizations north of the Rio Grande (two of his three operas, for example, had their first performances in Washington).

Ginastera began with an outright nationalistic style, drawing upon folk melodies and dances for his early ballets and other works, while modeling his style on the music of such masters of musical folklore as Bartók and Stravinsky. By the late 1940s, his nationalistic strain had become more subjective, presented in abstract musical genres rather than folk ballets, and expanded by musical elements current on the international scene. His later music tended toward twelve-tone constructional techniques, though without ever losing the coloristic imagination that first captured the world's attention.

The *Variaciones concertantes*, though basically an abstract composition, retains a strong sense of the Hispanic element, in the cello's rhapsodic opening solo and especially in the harp's accompaniment, built of stacked fourths that imitate the tuning of a guitar, a common harmonic device of Ginastera's music in that period. The theme itself is very slow, poignant in mood, momentarily passionate, lamenting. A soft, slow passage for muted strings carries on the mood of the opening before the first of the variations explodes upon us. All of the variations highlight a solo instrument or duet from the orchestra; this concerto-like element is what marks the work as a set of "concertante" variations, rather like a concerto for orchestra, but in the form of variations.

The composer offered a characterization for each variation. First comes a "jocose variation" for the flute of a markedly rhythmic, dancing character. The "variation in the manner of a scherzo" for clarinet calls upon the skills of the whole woodwind section in addition to the featured soloist. Its 6/8 dance grows dark and mysterious toward the end, anticipating the next section, the violist's "dramatic variation," a slow, passionate drama reminiscent of the opening and the muted string passage. Oboe and bassoon begin a plangent dialogue ("canonic variation") growing out of the viola's dying fall, a tranquil passage. The "rhythmic variation" for trumpet and trombone breaks out in an energetic, rhythmic character, a brief interlude running directly into the violin's "perpetual motion variation," which continues the same fast 6/8 meter. The horn warmly sings its "pastoral variation," after which an interlude for winds brings back the opening cello theme, repeated by the solo double bass with harp accompaniment. It dies away into silence, and a rhythmic figure leads into the brilliant rondo finale, the longest and most elaborate section of the work, which caps it off with tremendous élan.

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PROGRAM NOTES

MAURICE RAVEL

DAPHNIS AND CHLOE, SUITE NO. 2

BORN:

March 7, 1875

DIED:

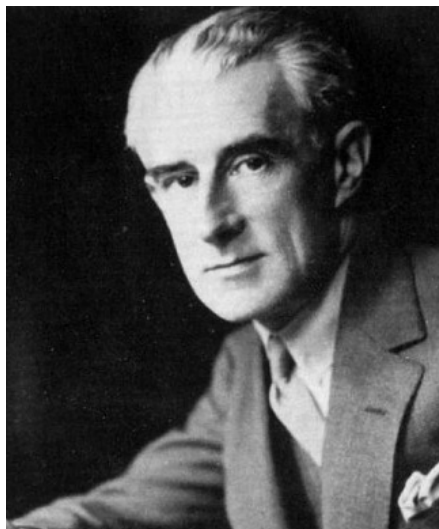
December 28, 1937

WORK COMPOSED:

1909-1912

WORK PREMIERED:

June 8, 1912 at Théâtre du Châtelet
in Paris, France, conducted
by Pierre Monteux
and performed by Ballets Russes



Ravel was commissioned to write *Daphnis and Chloé*, his largest and finest orchestral score, in 1909, even before the Ballets Russes had become established in Paris as an artistic vanguard. He completed a piano score only in May 1910, then substantially reworked the finale in 1911 and completed the scoring in that year. The problem then was to mount the work on the stage. It was not mounted until June 1912.

The typical ballet of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was made up of isolated musical numbers whose character was determined by the kind of dance the choreographer wanted to create; this typically controlled the tempo, meter, and length of the music. At its most devastatingly dull, you can identify ballet music of this sort upon hearing a single phrase.

Daphnis and Chloé is entirely different from typical ballets of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Rather than consisting of isolated numbers decreed by the choreographer, this score is symphonically constructed. Ravel drew two suites out of the score, essentially using each of the two main parts as a single orchestral number.

During the first part, the nymph Chloé had been seized by pirates and carried far from her lover Daphnis, who prays to the god Pan for assistance. Suite No. 2 opens with one of Ravel's brilliantly achieved depiction of dawn in the grotto where Daphnis sleeps. Birds sing, the waterfall splashes, and the sun increasingly penetrates the mists. Shepherds find Daphnis and awaken him. He looks around and sees Chloé, and sees her arriving at last. They throw themselves into one another's arms.

An old shepherd Lammon explains to them that if Pan did indeed help them, it was in remembrance of his lost love for Syrinx. Daphnis and Chloé mime the story of Pan and Syrinx: Pan expresses his love for the nymph Syrinx, who, frightened, disappears in the reeds. In despair, Pan forms a flute out of a reed and plays upon it to commemorate his love. (During the ravishing flute solo, Chloé reappears and echoes, in her movements, the music of the flute.) The dance becomes more and more animated. At its climax, Chloé throws herself into Daphnis' arms, and they solemnly exchange vows before the altar. A group of young girls dressed as bacchantes enter with tambourines. Now the celebration can begin in earnest, in the extended Danse Générale, one of the most brilliant and exciting orchestral passages ever written.

PROGRAM NOTES

RICHARD STRAUSS

EIN HELDENLEBEN (A HERO'S LIFE), OPUS 40

BORN:
June 11, 1864

DIED:
September 8, 1949

WORK COMPOSED:
1898

WORK PREMIERED:
March 3, 1899 in Frankfurt,
Germany by the Städtliches
Orchester, conducted by Richard
Strauss



When it came to his prodigious gift for tone painting, Richard Strauss was not exactly a modest man: he once said he could set a spoon to music! But even by his standards *Ein Heldenleben* is a masterpiece of characterization and storytelling in music.

The subject is “The Life of a Hero”, and because Strauss was not a modest man, he chose himself as the heroic subject of his tone poem. Thus, the Hero’s enemies are the music critics with their barbed and cruel pens; the Hero’s beloved companion is portrayed in a vivid and accurate portrait of the composer’s own wife, Pauline; and the Hero’s good deeds are represented by quotations from the composer’s earlier compositions. But Strauss’ immodesty goes even beyond that. When he came to choose a key and a theme to represent his embodiment of the heroic ideal, he chose the key (E-Flat) and the thematic shape (the rising arpeggio) of Beethoven’s own essay in the genre: *The Eroica Symphony*.

There is no real story line to *Heldenleben*, rather it is a record of reactions and responses on the theme of heroism. It opens with the Hero swaggering, plunging, soaring, and striding in a theme spanning three octaves against a pounding rhythm, followed by several other themes that represent the gentler side of his character. Sometimes the music gets so complicated and opaque that we can

hardly make out all the myriad voices—for, in Strauss’ view, complexity, as much as power, is an aspect of heroism. In the two bars of silence that end the first section, the Hero seems to defiantly await the world’s response to his challenge.

What follows is one of the most surprising passages in all of music. The woodwinds, in their spikiest, meanest, and most petty mode, represent the Hero’s adversaries: the music critics. These narrow minded and smug enemies seem unworthy opponents of a great hero but their attacks succeed in affecting his mood enough to depress his heroic theme and cause him to fall into a doleful state. Finally, he becomes angry and shakes them off.

With the entry of the solo violin we meet his companion and wife. What a character she is! At once seductive, shrewish, nagging, and deeply loving, the section culminates in a glorious soaring passage expressing their passionate love for each other. It subsides in music of deep and real affection to which the critics’ irritating bickering is merely a muted background. Suddenly, with the sound of distant trumpets, the Hero arises and, with his beloved’s help, puts on his armor. His adversaries are routed in the most splendid battle that has ever been painted in music. We know that the love of his companion has been a major factor in the Hero’s success, for when we return to the opening statement (the recapitulation), the Hero’s theme is now accompanied by his companion’s theme, whereas when it first appeared he stood alone. New ideas now burst out all over, suggesting the highly creative nature of the Hero who must not for a moment rest on his laurels, but be ever driven on by ambition. The music surges towards a great climax quoting the heroic theme from *Don Juan* and *Zarathustra* amongst the composer’s mightiest conceptions.

Now we are told of the Hero’s Accomplishments in Times of Peace, which are composed as snatches of themes from Strauss’ other works—*Don Juan*, *Zarathustra*, *Death & Transfiguration*, *Don Quixote*, and *Till Eufenspiegel*—all woven into a gorgeous tapestry of sound.

The Hero has one more skirmish with his enemies (internal ones this time, it seems) before he contemplates his Retirement and life’s Fulfillment. The Hero considers withdrawing from the world to become a shepherd (suggested by the quotation of the pastoral English-Horn theme from *Don Quixote*), but by the end, he has learned renunciation and achieved peace of mind. That, too, we discover, he learned from his wife, for the serene and noble violin song suggesting his transformation is the very theme with which the hero had lashed out at the critics, which in turn he had derived from his companion’s love theme. He has

PROGRAM NOTES

a brief nightmarish reminder of his struggles against the critics but his beloved companion is there to comfort him and restore his faith. The music almost dies out on the violin's high E-flat but is followed by a slow rising crescendo in the brass, outlining the first six notes of the Hero's theme from the opening of the piece, in a simple, profoundly dignified harmonization.

Perhaps, after all, it was not Strauss' immodesty that led him to dramatize his own life in *Ein Heldenleben*. Rather, it is that he saw that all experience, including his own, could be made to gain universality through the transforming process of art. The "critics" in *Ein Heldenleben* are not of course merely local music critics, but all those barriers and doubts, internal and external that stand in the path of our most cherished dreams and aspirations. That the deep love of a companion can give us superhuman strength and that creativity and virtuosity are our best armor in the struggle of life are universal truths. But the greatest truth of all is embodied in the final exquisite phrases of *Heldenleben*: that a warm, true heart wedded to noble ideals and shared with another is the highest, most heroic path for human beings.

© Benjamin Zander

BOSTON PHILHARMONIC YOUTH ORCHESTRA

BENJAMIN ZANDER
CONDUCTOR

Joined by Ukrainian pianist and YouTube phenom, Anna Fedorova, for "Rach 2", the BPYO will also perform Shostakovich's harrowing Symphony No. 10 and debut its take on Weber's Overture to *Euryanthe*.

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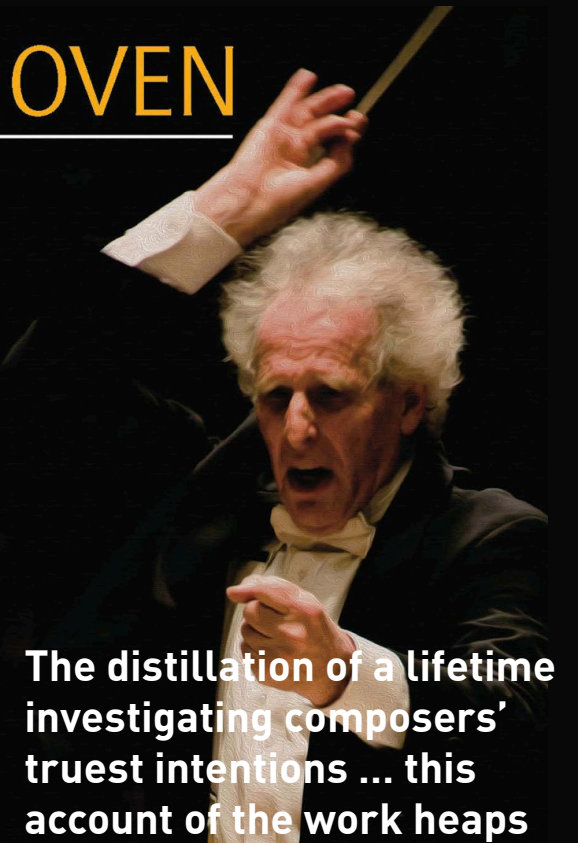
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