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Fortieth Season
2017 - 2018

ALEA III

Theodore Antoniou,
Music Director

Contemporary Music Ensemble
in residence at Boston University since 1979

Piano Four Hands

Curated by **Apostolos Paraskevas**

Tsai Performance Center
685 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston

Thursday, April 19, 2018

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ALEA III was conceived by Boston University faculty and has been operating in affiliation with and with major intellectual, artistic and financial contributions from Boston University faculty, students and alumni.

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The Greek word *alea* taken from Homer, means "to wander." In Latin, it refers to "dice used for playing at games of chance." The term *aleatoric music* indicates music based upon the principles of indeterminacy as evidenced by certain random and/or statistical procedures of composition. In regard to the ensemble, *aleatoric* is concerned with the expression of a multiplicity of musical directions, historical styles, and performance practices.

- - *Theodore Antoniou*

During our fortieth 2017-2018 season, the need for meeting our budget is very critical. Despite the generosity of our various sponsors, ALEA III still needs the support of its audience. At this point we are short several thousand dollars for the 40th season. Please consider becoming a Friend of ALEA III by completing the form to the right and sending it to:

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Should you have any time to donate to ALEA III, it would be most welcome. We need assistance with publicity, fundraising, poster distribution, mailing, etc.

We hope you enjoyed tonight's program and we look forward seeing you in our future events.

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ALEA III

Theodore Antoniou, Music Director

Piano Four Hands

Thursday, April 19, 2018, 8:00 p.m.

Tsai Performance Center
685 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston

Curated by **Apostolos Paraskevas**

An evening presenting works
composed or arranged for piano – four hands

Laura Villafranca – Ai-Ying Chiu
piano duo

PROGRAM

Rhapsody in Blue George Gershwin

arr. by Henry Levine

The Seasons Astor Piazzolla

Winter

arr. by Kyoko Yamamoto

Three Portraits Theodore Antoniou

II

Sabre Dance Aram Khachaturian

arr. by Greg Anderson

----- *Brief Intermission* -----

The Dance of Desire

Apostolos Paraskevas

Libertango

Astor Piazzolla

arr. by Kyoko Yamamoto

La valse

Maurice Ravel

arr. by Lucien Garban

ALEA III

Alea III is the contemporary music ensemble in residence at Boston University, a group devoted to promoting, playing, and teaching music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Founded in 1978, Alea III is the third such group organized by Music Director Theodore Antoniou. The ensemble is consistent with the music it embraces--flexible in size, open to experimentation and exploration. Over the years, Alea III has offered world-première opportunities for dozens of contemporary composers, often under the composer's direction, and with extended program notes or comments. The group has performed 1,495 works by 857 composers--most of them living. Frequent international touring has enhanced the relationships of American performers with their colleagues and composers from other parts of the world. With its inspiration, several other contemporary groups have been formed, offering growing opportunity to young composers and musicians to play and comprehend contemporary music.

-Theodore Antoniou, *Music Director*

Theodore Antoniou, *Music Director*

Theodore Antoniou, one of the most eminent and prolific contemporary artists, leads a distinguished career as composer, conductor, and professor of composition. He studied violin, voice, and composition at the National Conservatory and the Hellenic Conservatory in Athens, with further studies in conducting and composition at the Hochschule für Musik in Munich, and the International Music Center in Darmstadt. After holding teaching positions at Stanford University, the University of Utah, and the Philadelphia Musical Academy, he became professor of composition at Boston University in 1978.

As a conductor, Professor Antoniou has been engaged by several major orchestras and ensembles, such as the Boston Symphony Orchestra Chamber Players, the Radio Orchestras of Berlin and Paris, the Bavarian Radio Orchestra, the Tonhalle Orchestra (Zurich), the National Opera of Greece, and the Berkshire Music Center Orchestra. In 1974 he became assistant director of contemporary activities at Tanglewood, a position he held until 1985. An ardent proponent of new music, Professor Antoniou has founded various contemporary music ensembles, including ALEA II at Stanford University; ALEA III, in residence at Boston University; the Philadelphia New Music Group; and the Hellenic Group of Contemporary Music. He is also director of the ALEA III International Composition Competition, president of the Greek Composers' Union since 1989 and former director of the Experimental Stage of National Opera of Greece.

Many of Professor Antoniou's compositions were commissioned by major orchestras around the world, and around three hundred of his works have been published by Bärenreiter Verlag (Germany), G. Schirmer (USA) and Philippos Nakas (Greece). He has received many awards and prizes, including the National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship grants and the Richard Strauss Prize, as well as commissions from the

Fromm, Guggenheim, and Koussevitzky Foundations, and from the city of Munich for the 1972 Olympic Games. He has been recognized with ASCAP Awards for several years, and in 1991 he was awarded the Metcalf Award for Excellence in Teaching by Boston University. In December 1997 he was presented with the Music Award from the Greek Academy of Arts and Letters, one of the most prestigious awards and the highest academic distinction in music; and in January 2000, the Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation awarded him the Dimitri Mitropoulos Award for his lifelong contribution to music. In 2004 the University of Vienna and the Alfred Töpfer Foundation of Hamburg, Germany, awarded him the prestigious Herder Prize, in recognition of his contribution to mutual cultural understanding and peace among the countries of southeastern Europe. Kodaly, Lutoslawski and Penderecki are among the personalities awarded this Prize. In January 2005 the Ionian University conferred upon him an honorary doctorate, while in December 2005 the CFA faculty of Boston University awarded him with «The Distinguished Faculty Award», an award which is presented to honor CFA faculty members for their outstanding achievements, contributions to the arts, and distinguished service to the community.

Theodore Antoniou's works are numerous and varied in nature, ranging from operas and choral works to chamber music, from film and theatre music to solo instrumental pieces - his scores for theatre and film music alone number more than a hundred and fifty compositions. Among his works, the opera *Bacchae* premiered in the Athens Festival in Greece. His newest opera, *Oedipus at Colonus*, commissioned by the SWF (Sued-West Funk), Baden-Baden, in Germany, received the prestigious Music Award presented by the Hellenic Union of Music and Theatre Critics. For his theatre music, he has also been awarded with “Karolos Koun” award (he was the first one to receive it in 1988) and the “Dimitris Mitropoulos” award (for 2006) by the Museum and Study Centre of the Greek Theatre and the Judging Committee for Distinguished Awards awarded to stage artists, in appreciation of his prominent presence in that area until today. His most recent distinctions are the “Commander of the Order of Honor”, presented by the President of the Hellenic Republic (February 2007), Professor Emeritus at the College of Fine Arts at Boston University (October 2008) and an Honorary Doctorate bestowed upon him by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (March 2009), and the 2011 “Honoring Greek Culture” Award of Harvard University. In May 2014, he became a full member of the Academy of Athens.

- - Eftychia Papanikolaou

Tonight's performers

Mexican-American pianist **Laura Villafranca** is an active soloist and chamber musician. After playing her debut with the Mexico City Chamber Orchestra at the age of thirteen, she won a scholarship to continue her musical studies at Interlochen Arts Academy in the United States of America. Ten years later she won the Silver Medal at Mexico's National Piano Competition "Angélica Morales-Yamaha" where she was also given the prize for best Bach interpretation. Other awards include first prize at The Boston Conservatory Concerto Competition, Honorable Mention in the Corpus Christi International Competition and the A.R.T.S Competition where she was selected for the Who's Who Among American High School Students, the Oberlin Conservatory's Dean's Scholarship, the Wilfred Churchill Competition and the Benjamin Kasser scholarship which earned her full tuition at The Boston Conservatory.

Ms. Villafranca has performed with the Mexican National Symphony Orchestra at the Palacio de Bellas Artes, the Querétaro Philharmonic Orchestra, the Mexico City Chamber Orchestra, The Boston Conservatory Orchestra in Harvard's Sanders Theatre and the Sinfonia Perusina in Italy. Recent appearances include chamber recitals at the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City, live broadcasted performances in Mexican classical music stations Radio IMER and Radio UNAM.

Laura Villafranca studied with Michael Lewin, Angela Cheng, Stephen Perry, Victoria Mushkatkol and Benjamin Valdes Aguilar.

For further information visit: www.lauravillafranca.com

Pianist **Ai-Ying Chiu** has appeared as both soloist and chamber pianist at many important concert halls in Europe, North America and Asia. In pursuit of her Master's degree and Graduate Performance Diploma, She entered The Boston Conservatory with a full-tuition scholarship in 2005, and began studies with Michael Lewin. During her time at The Boston Conservatory, she won the highly competitive H. Wilfred Churchill Piano Scholarship Competition and an opportunity to work with the Conservatory orchestra on *Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini* by Rachmaninoff. In 2008, Ms. Chiu received an Honorable Mention Award at The Boston Conservatory's Mozart Concerto Competition, earning another opportunity to play the concerto with The Boston Conservatory Orchestra and conductor Bruce Hangen.

Ms. Chiu has been a finalist and award recipient at many International Competitions such as Russian Music Piano Competition, Seattle Piano Competition, Chinese International Piano Competition, Steinway Piano Competition, Arlington Young Artist Competition, etc. She has been invited to perform in numerous important concert halls in Russia, France, Germany, Italy, U.S.A., Canada and Taiwan. This includes performances of a Mozart Piano Concerto K.488 at Basilica San Francesco in Assisi, with Enrico Marconi and the Sinfonia Perusina, and solo performances at the Rachmaninoff Concert Hall in Tambov, Russia, The Town Hall in NYC, Illsley Ball Nordstrom Recital Hall at Benaroya in Seattle among others, receiving highly favorable reviews from the audience

As a pianist, Ms. Chiu actively works with other musicians and artists. She is also the founding member of Kaohsiung Chamber Music Ensemble and Voyage Piano Trio which has been one of the Ensembles - in Residence of the Newbridge on Charles concert series. She is a piano faculty at New School of Music in Cambridge.



Tonight's program

George Gershwin (1898 – 1937) was born in Brooklyn, New York from Russian-Jewish immigrants and grew up in Manhattan. He is one of the best known and best loved 20th century composers having written music and songs for Broadway musicals, movies, pieces for piano, chamber music, concertos. His music, strongly influenced by jazz and blues, is very alive, joyful, romantically lyrical sometimes, humorous and his pianistic style is unique.

Rhapsody in Blue composed in 1924 for solo piano and jazz band combines elements of classical music with jazz-influenced effects. Commissioned by bandleader Paul Whiteman, the composition was orchestrated by Ferde Grofé several times, including the original 1924 scoring, "theater orchestra" setting published in 1926, and the symphony orchestra scoring published in 1942, though completed earlier. The piece received its premiere in the concert, *An Experiment in Modern Music*, which was held on February 12, 1924, in Aeolian Hall, New York, by Whiteman and his band with Gershwin playing the piano.

Gershwin hastily set about composing a piece, and on the train journey to Boston, the ideas of *Rhapsody in Blue* came to his mind. He told his first biographer Isaac Goldberg in 1931:

"It was on the train, with its steely rhythms, its rattle-ty bang, that is so often so stimulating to a composer – I frequently hear music in the very heart of the noise.... And there I suddenly heard, and even saw on paper – the complete construction of the *Rhapsody*, from beginning to end. No new themes came to me, but I worked on the thematic material already in my mind and tried to conceive the composition as a whole. I heard it as a sort of musical kaleidoscope of America, of our vast melting pot, of our unduplicated national pep, of our metropolitan madness. By the time I reached Boston I had a definite plot of the piece, as distinguished from its actual substance."

Gershwin began his work on January 7 as dated on the original manuscript for two pianos. The piece was titled "*American Rhapsody*" during composition. The title *Rhapsody in Blue* was suggested by Ira Gershwin 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*). After a few weeks, Gershwin finished his composition and passed the score to Whiteman's arranger Ferde Grofé, who orchestrated the piece, finishing it on February 4, only eight days before the premiere.

Piazzolla - Winter and Libertango

Astor Piazzolla (1921 - 1992) was born in Mar del Plata, Argentina, of Italian origin, but, due to his family immigration to the United States, spent most of his childhood in New York.

He is considered as the Grand Master of the Argentine "nuevo tango" mainly responsible for the regeneration of "tango". Pianist, *bandoneonist* (a square, accordion-like instrument without the black and white keys, very popular in Argentina) and composer, Astor Piazzolla studied with Alberto Ginastera, Nandía Boulanger and Arnold Schoenberg. The bandoneon, a gift from his father, proved enough for him to revive the tango style music, transform it to the "Nuevo Tango", and establish himself as the main figure of it. The "Nuevo Tango" is a combination, a fusion of the traditional tango dance rhythmical motives with modern jazz elements, contemporary style harmonies - Piazzolla was well aware of, from his years in Paris studying with Nadia Boulanger - and of elements of counterpoint.

He formed many orchestras (adding to the traditional: violin-guitar-bandoneon-flute tango orchestra the bass and many types of percussions), and established himself as "king of nuevo tango" by composing more than 300 tangos, an opera, chamber music and music for several movies. He describes his music as a combination of tango, tragedy, comedy and "loose" living. Later in his life, during the 80s, he composed large scale works, inspired by the spirit, the rhythms and the forms of the "Nuevo Tango".

The *Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas*, also known as the *Estaciones Porteñas* or *The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*, are a set of four tangos, which were originally conceived and treated as different compositions rather than one suite, although Piazzolla performed them together from time to time. The pieces were scored for his quintet of violin (viola), piano, electric guitar, double bass and bandoneón. By giving the adjective *porteño*, referring to those born in Buenos Aires, the Argentine capital city, Piazzolla gives an impression of the four seasons in Buenos Aires.

Libertango was recorded and published in 1974 in Milan. The title is a portmanteau merging "Libertad" (Spanish for liberty) and "Tango", symbolizing Piazzolla's break from Classical Tango to Tango Nuevo.

Theodore Antoniou's bio can be found earlier in the program. He has provided the following note on tonight's work:

Three Portraits for piano-four hands (2004) is the second version of the one for Twelve Pianists on Six Pianos (2002), commissioned by "The Friends of the Foundation Melina Merkouri" and with the support of HELEXPO – Thessaloniki International Fair S.A. to be performed in Thessaloniki, Greece by the Ensemble PIANDAEMONIUM, on December 21st 2002.

My Portraits are rather expressing my subjective abstract interpretation and the personal feelings I have for very special and very close friends of mine, like **Melina Merkouri**, **Manos Hadjidakis** and **Dimitris Dragatakis**. Those three friends were in my mind, during the composition of my piece. I did not use any characteristics of their music (Manos and Dimitris were composers) or of their musical preferences. I have just composed with my "inability" to express the real great dimension of my feelings for them. What piece refers to Melina, Dimitris and Manos I leave to the performer and the listener to detect. In that way probably one would help my *Three Portraits* to project the missing characteristics I was unable to express.

Aram Il'yich Khachaturian, 6 June 1903 – 1 May 1978) was a Soviet Armenian composer and conductor. He is considered to have been one of the leading Soviet composers.

Born and raised in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, Khachaturian moved to Moscow in 1921 following the Sovietization of the Caucasus. Without prior music training, he enrolled in the Gnessin Musical Institute, subsequently studying at the Moscow Conservatory in the class of Nikolai Myaskovsky among others. His first major work, the Piano Concerto (1936), popularized his name within and outside the Soviet Union. It was followed by the Violin Concerto (1940) and the Cello Concerto (1946). His other significant compositions include the *Masquerade Suite* (1941), the Anthem of the Armenian SSR (1944), three symphonies (1935, 1943, 1947), and around 25 film scores. Khachaturian is best known for his ballet music - *Gayane* (1942) and *Spartacus* (1954). His most popular piece, the *Sabre Dance* from *Gayane*, has been used extensively in popular culture and has been covered by a number of musicians worldwide. His style is "characterized by colorful harmonies, captivating rhythms, virtuosity, improvisations, and sensuous melodies".

During most of his career, Khachaturian was approved by the Soviet government and held several high posts in the Union of Soviet Composers from the late 1930s, although he joined the Communist Party only in 1943. Along with Sergei Prokofiev and Dmitri Shostakovich, he was officially denounced as a "formalist", and his music dubbed "anti-

people" in 1948, but was restored later that year. After 1950 he taught at the Gnessin Institute and the Moscow Conservatory, and turned to conducting. He traveled to Europe, Latin America and the United States with concerts of his own works. In 1957 Khachaturian became the Secretary of the Union of Soviet Composers, a position he held until his death.

Sabre Dance is a movement in the final act of **Aram Khachaturian's** ballet *Gayane* (1942), where the dancers display their skill with sabres. It is Khachaturian's best known and most recognizable work. Its middle section is based on an unnamed Armenian folk song. "Sabre Dance" is considered one of the signature pieces of 20th century popular music. It was popularized by covers by pop artists, first in the US and later in other countries, such as the UK and Germany.

Apostolos Paraskevas is a classical guitarist and composer as well as an award-winning film director and producer. He has received multiple international awards for his compositions and was nominated for a Grammy Award. He is the only guitarist ever to have a major orchestral piece performed at Carnegie Hall under the direction of Lukas Foss—and the only musician who has performed there in a Grim Reaper outfit. He has made over a dozen recordings of his music and his orchestral music has been performed around the world by numerous symphony orchestras including Albany, Landmarks, BUS, Newton, Atlantic, Odessa, National Greek, Cyprus, FIU Symphony orchestras. He served for 16 years as the artistic director of the International Guitar Congress-Festival of Corfu, Greece.

After his undergraduate music studies in Volos he pursued advanced studies in classical guitar with Costas Cotsiolis (diploma, 1990) and Leo Brouwer (Havana 1984, 1988), as well as postgraduate studies in composition with Lukas Foss and Theodore Antoniou (DMA in composition, Boston University, 1998). Paraskevas embarked on a successful career as a guitar soloist and contemporary composer, achieving distinctions in both disciplines: Grammy nomination for *Chase Dance* (Bridge Records, 1999); first prize for *Night Wanderings* (Lukas Foss Composition Competition, 2000); first prize for *Phygein Adynaton* (National Composers Conference, 1997); and numerous prestigious commissions, performances, and publications. Following teaching posts at Northeastern and Boston Universities, Paraskevas has taught since 2001 at the Berklee College of Music in Boston (professor of composition and classical guitar). Although he was struck by focal hand dystonia in 2009, he recovered in 2013 after reconstructing his playing technique.

His eclectic compositional style arises as an idiosyncratic integration of seemingly conflicting influences – from avant-garde approaches to harmonic structure, form, and timbre, to pop-folk modal and rhythmical concepts – amalgamated into a personal

evocative musical language, characterized by rhythmic verve, melodic grace, dramatic (and sometimes unexpectedly humorous) gestures, and ritualistic or theatrical elements. The latter feature has also led Paraskevas to the creation of films, notably the acclaimed *I Finally Did It* (Gold award, California Film Awards 2010), dealing wittily with Death, a recurring extra-musical theme in his music.

Publishers: Bèrben (Ancona, Italy), Clear Note (USA), Santerelle/Allegra Musikverlag (Erzhausen, Germany), Papagrigoriou-Nakas (Athens, Greece), Centaur Records, Bridge Records (USA).

-- Costas Tsougras (*The Groves Dictionary of Music*)

The composer provides the following note for tonight's work *The Dance of Desire*:

"The beauty of such a percussive, polyphonic, melodic and sonorous instrument as the piano makes me always think that I compose for at least three or four different instruments. Furthermore to be presented with the opportunity to write for four hands was a ... "sky is the limit" invitation.

The Dance of Desire starts with a barbaric pulsating rhythm followed by a melody that is both haunting and dancing. The desire to move ahead results in several variations of this idea distributed between the pianists.

A slow dark-pensive part unfolds after the initial theme, almost as a prayer in the dark, while the following fugato idea brings back order. Here is where both pianists share my love for Bach and for, yes... Samba.

The slow pensive but now monotonous haunting melody re-appears to prepare the final dance of desire. The work ends in fireworks, full of energy and with a touch of insanity.

Dedicated to Laura and Ai-Ying and their unique talent. "

Joseph Maurice Ravel⁷ March 1875 – 28 December 1937) was a French composer, pianist and conductor. He is often associated with impressionism along with his elder contemporary Claude Debussy although both composers rejected the term. In the 1920s and 1930s Ravel was internationally regarded as France's greatest living composer.

Born to a music-loving family, Ravel attended France's premier music college, the Paris Conservatoire; he was not well regarded by its conservative establishment, whose biased treatment of him caused a scandal. After leaving the conservatoire, Ravel found his own

way as a composer, developing a style of great clarity, incorporating elements of baroque, neoclassicism and, in his later works, jazz. He liked to experiment with musical form, as in his best-known work, *Bolero* (1928), in which repetition takes the place of development. He made some orchestral arrangements of other composers' music, of which his 1922 version of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* is the best known.

As a slow and painstaking worker, Ravel composed fewer pieces than many of his contemporaries. Among his works to enter the repertoire are pieces for piano, chamber music, two piano concertos, ballet music, two operas and eight song cycles; he wrote no symphonies or church music. Many of his works exist in two versions: first, a piano score and later an orchestration. Some of his piano music, such as *Gaspard de la Nuit* (1908), is exceptionally difficult to play, and his complex orchestral works such as *Daphnis et Chloe* (1912) require skilful balance in performance.

Ravel was among the first composers to recognize the potential of recording to bring their music to a wider public. From the 1920s, despite limited technique as a pianist or conductor, he took part in recordings of several of his works; others were made under his supervision.

La valse, *poème chorégraphique pour orchestre* (a choreographic poem for orchestra), is a work written by **Maurice Ravel** (1875 – 1937) between February 1919 and 1920; it was first performed on 12 December 1920 in Paris. It was conceived as a ballet but is now more often heard as a concert work. The idea of *La valse* began first with the title "Vienne", then *Wien* (French and German for "Vienna", respectively) as early as 1906, where Ravel intended to orchestrate a piece in tribute to the waltz form and to Johann Strauss II. Ravel completely reworked his idea of *Wien* into what became *La valse*, which was to have been written under commission from Sergei Diaghilev as a ballet. However, he never produced the ballet. After hearing a two-piano reduction performed by Ravel and Marcelle Meyer, Diaghilev said it was a "masterpiece" but rejected Ravel's work as "not a ballet. It's a portrait of ballet". Ravel, hurt by the comment, ended the relationship. Subsequently, it became a popular concert work and when the two men met again during 1925, Ravel refused to shake Diaghilev's hand. Diaghilev challenged Ravel to a duel, but friends persuaded Diaghilev to recant. The men never met again. The ballet was premiered in Antwerp in October 1926 by the Royal Flemish Opera Ballet, and there were later productions by the Ballets Ida Rubinstein in 1928 and 1931 with choreography by Bronislava Nijinska. The music was also used for ballets of the same title by George Balanchine, who had made dances for Diaghilev, in 1951 and by Frederick Ashton in 1958.

Ravel described *La valse* with the following preface to the score:

"Through whirling clouds, waltzing couples may be faintly distinguished. The clouds gradually scatter: one sees at letter A an immense hall peopled with a whirling crowd. The scene is gradually illuminated. The light of the chandeliers bursts forth at the fortissimo letter B. Set in an imperial court, about 1855."
