

Thursday, October 11, at 8 | The Beranek Concert
Friday, October 12, at 1:30 | -The Fanny Peabody Mason Memorial Concert
Saturday, October 13, at 8
Tuesday, October 16, at 8

Robert Spano conducting

Gandolfi The Garden of Cosmic Speculation
 The Quark Walk
 Fractal Terrace
 The Universe Cascade
 The Jumping Bridge
Poulenc Concerto for Organ, String orchestra, and Timpani
 (in one movement)
 Simon Preston, organ
 Timothy Genis, timpani

Simon Preston's appearances are supported by a gift from the Gomidas Organ Fund in memory of Berj Zamkochian.

{ intermission }
Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 6 in B minor, opus 74, *Pathétique*
 Adagio—Allegro non troppo
 Allegro con grazia
 Allegro molto vivace
 Adagio lamentoso—Andante

Michael Gandolfi

"The Garden of Cosmic Speculation" (2004/07)

MICHAEL GANDOLFI WAS BORN ON JULY 5, 1956, IN MELROSE, MASSACHUSETTS, AND LIVES IN CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS. HE WROTE THE ORCHESTRAL PIECE "IMPRESSIONS FROM 'THE GARDEN OF COSMIC SPECULATION' " (IN FOUR MOVEMENTS) IN THE SPRING OF 2004 TO FULFILL A COMMISSION FROM THE TANGLEWOOD MUSIC CENTER WITH SUPPORT FROM THE PAUL JACOBS MEMORIAL FUND. IN EARLY 2007 HE WROTE SEVEN MORE MOVEMENTS, COMMISSIONED BY THE ATLANTA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA FOR PERFORMANCES THAT TOOK PLACE IN MAY 2007, ALTHOUGH THE FIRST PERFORMANCE OF THE ELEVEN-MOVEMENT PIECE WAS BY THE NEW WORLD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, ROBERT SPANO CONDUCTING, ON APRIL 21, 2007. THE COMPLETE SUITE IS ABOUT SEVENTY MINUTES OF MUSIC. THE WORK IS CONFIGURED SUCH THAT ANY NUMBER OF MOVEMENTS MAY BE PERFORMED IN ANY ORDER, SUITING THE OCCASION; THE PRESENT CONCERTS WILL FEATURE FOUR OF THE ELEVEN (NOS. 10, 8, 6, AND 9, IN THAT ORDER), TOTALING ABOUT 21 MINUTES.

THE GARDEN OF COSMIC SPECULATION REQUIRES AN ORCHESTRA OF THREE FLUTES (THIRD DOUBLING PICCOLO), THREE OBOES (THIRD DOUBLING ENGLISH HORN), THREE CLARINETS IN B-FLAT (THIRD DOUBLING BASS CLARINET), THREE BASSOONS (THIRD DOUBLING CONTRABASSOON), FOUR HORNS, THREE TRUMPETS, TWO TROMBONES, BASS TROMBONE, TUBA, TIMPANI, PERCUSSION (THREE PLAYERS MINIMUM: XYLOPHONE, CROTALES [TWO-OCTAVE SET], GLOCKENSPIEL, TUBULAR BELLS, THREE SUSPENDED CYMBALS, SMALL SPLASH CYMBAL, CRASH CYMBAL, FOUR TOM-TOMS, BASS DRUM, BRAKE DRUM, AGOGO [AFRICAN BELL], TAMBOURINE, SLAPSTICK, SLEIGH BELLS, TRIANGLE), HARP, PIANO, AND STRINGS.

The Garden of Cosmic Speculation illustrates just one facet of Michael Gandolfi's broadly flexible musical and intellectual imagination. The breadth of his interests encompasses not only contemporary concert music, but also the jazz, blues, and rock by which route he first became a musician; as both artist and teacher, he has sought to find connections between music and other disciplines, including science, film, and theater. He has collaborated with Shakespeare & Co. and director Tina Packer, filmmaker Pamela Larsen, artist and writer Dana Bonstrom, and videographer

Ean White. As an educator, he has expanded on these interests by organizing innovative, cross-disciplinary collaborations bringing together Tanglewood Music Center Fellows with Shakespeare & Co., with the dance festival Jacob's Pillow, and in a collaborative project with experimental filmmakers. While a Composition Fellow of the Tanglewood Music Center in 1986, he met and became associated with the British conductor and composer Oliver Knussen, who championed Gandolfi's orchestral piece *Transfigurations*. His works were also performed by such groups as Speculum Musicae and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra; Orpheus led a consortium, also including the Saint Paul and Los Angeles chamber orchestras, to commission Gandolfi's *Points of Departure*, a piece that has since been performed quite frequently, including by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Robert Spano in April 1998. He has also received commissions from Boston Musica Viva, Speculum Musicae, and the Koussevitzky Foundation, among many others; his wind-band piece *Vientos y Tangos* has received literally hundreds of performances. He is also a dedicated teacher, and has taught at Harvard, Phillips Academy in Andover, MA, and at the New England Conservatory for several years. He has been a member of the Tanglewood Music Center faculty since 1997.

Gandolfi's recent projects include his Fantasia for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra for Kenneth Radnofsky and the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, premiered in January 2007 under Gil Rose's direction; two composer residencies with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (during one of which the complete *Garden of Cosmic Speculation* was performed by the orchestra); and a piece for the Boston Symphony Chamber Players, *Plain Song, Fantastic Dances*. This was premiered by the Chamber Players in October 2005, was repeated at Tanglewood in 2006, and is scheduled again for the final concert of their Jordan Hall series this season, on May 11, 2008. He is also writing a bassoon concerto for BSO principal bassoon Richard Svoboda and the Melrose Symphony Orchestra.

The original inspiration for Michael Gandolfi's *The Garden of Cosmic Speculation* was architect Charles Jencks's book by that title, an extensive photographic documentation of a Scottish garden designed by Jencks. Gandolfi wrote the first, four-movement version of the piece in early 2004, and it was premiered at Tanglewood on August 16 that year by the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra, Robert Spano conducting, during that summer's Festival of Contemporary Music. The following season, David Zinman conducted the first Boston Symphony Orchestra performances of the work, on January 27, 28, 29, and February 1, 2005. In 2006 Gandolfi visited Jencks's garden in person along with videographer Ean White to gather material for an expanded version of the piece; the additional elements were commissioned by the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Robert Spano, music director. The complete eleven-movement work, now called, more simply, *The Garden of Cosmic Speculation*, was premiered by the New World Symphony with Spano conducting on April 21, 2007; Spano brought the piece to the Atlanta Symphony the following month. The original four movements were incorporated (in order) as movements 1, 2, 3, and 11 of the expanded piece.

Jencks's garden is a series of plots or zones, each of which was inspired by a scientific concept, from the smallest of concepts (quarks and DNA) to the largest (the structure of the universe). The architect's reactions to these concepts range from a more-or-less direct depiction of the idea, such as the sculptural double helixes of the DNA plot and the wave-forms that recur throughout the garden, to less concrete, more poetic elements such as the little functionless building known as The Nonsense, a demonstration of serendipitous design incorporating architectural "found objects" scavenged by Jencks from a project by fellow architect James Stirling. Gandolfi's music is a second level of translation: he responds both to Jencks's designs and to the concepts that inspired them. For example, in "Soliton Waves" (the second movement of the whole), melody and orchestration are used as musical illustration of the concept of waves that interact and transform and yet retain their essential qualities. The final movement of the whole, "The Nonsense," takes the freely, even absurdly matched postmodern architectural materials of its namesake as a cue to explore contrasting high-energy musical passages juxtaposed with jump-cuts. Both the garden itself and Gandolfi's piece are concerned deeply with patterns and their interaction and evolution.

Michael Gandolfi's concept in the present work is open-form: any performance may feature all eleven movements or any different selection, suggesting a walk through a different sequence of "plots." The four movements performed in these concerts take us through "The Quark Walk," "Fractal Terrace," "The Universe Cascade," and "The Jumping Bridge."

The Quark Walk is a short path beside a burn, or stream, connecting the Water Dragon with the Slug Lakes (see photo on this page). (The Jumping Bridge leaps it.) A quark is (as far as we know) the fundamental particle of matter; there are seventeen different kinds, all but one of which

(Higgs's boson) has been first hypothesized, then proven to exist through subatomic research. One of the methods of this research is through the use of a supercollider to burst open the nucleus of an atom. Quarks, although they can't themselves be seen, leave evidence of themselves in unique swirling "bubble tracks" in a chamber of hydrogen (sort of like blowing air into gelatin). Jencks's Quark Walk combines with the garden feature The Ultimate Particles of the Year 2000, a celebration of the known or posited quarks, which features sculptural representations, in metal, of individual particles' spiraling bubble tracks. These are mimicked in Gandolfi's rapid, spinning patterns.

"Fractal Terrace" employs a foreground pattern of sixteenth-notes along with larger and smaller versions—longer or shorter note-values and wider intervals—in combination as a shifting mosaic of orchestral color. This is Gandolfi's reaction to a Jencks terrace that transforms gradually from a strict grid adjacent to a (very square) building to a no-less-ordered but more complex, dynamic alteration of shapes as the terrace approaches nature.

Jencks's Universe Cascade is a timeline of the physical universe represented by a sequence of stair-courses zigzagging up a steep hillside overlooking the main house. Each flight of steps (which are opposed to one another in herringbone pattern) ends in a sculptural element representing a point in time in the theorized history of the universe. At the bottom of the hill, below the surface of a small body of water, is the pre-universe, pre-time, pre-space. As the steps ascend, they pass through points of change, too many and too complex to recount here, but including the initial super-rapid expansion (at the time point of 0 plus 10 to the negative 41st power, or a decimal followed by 41 zeros and a 1), through the creation of light (+300,000 years), through the moon's stabilization of the earth (8.55 billion years), to the present/future (13 billion years) beyond the top of the hill. This is probably the most conceptually complex of all of the garden's plots or structures. A "Big Bang" opens the movement, but in its continuation Michael Gandolfi has the very interesting idea of linking the timeline to a timeline of Western music history. Among other quotations, we hear, in chronological order, Gregorian chant, an *Ars Nova* motet, the English round "Sumer is icumen in," and quotations from Dufay, Palestrina, Alessandro Scarlatti, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Berlioz, Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Sibelius, Bartók, Miles Davis, and Steve Reich, chosen and joined in such a way that each emerges organically out of the background texture of sustained strings.

The Jumping Bridge (photo above), with The Nonsense one of the most playful structures of the garden, is a design of "fractals that lean against one another." The Jumping Bridge "jumps over two streams and dives into the ground" and we can assume its path continues under the earth, at least conceptually. This movement incorporates several levels of syncopation with rapid shifts in texture, meter, and pattern groupings that might suggest a duality of flight/movement and groundedness.

Like Jencks's garden, Gandolfi's *The Garden of Cosmic Speculation* is a work of transformational potential: a garden, like a piece of music, is never the same from one visit to the next, whether or not deliberate intervention on the part of the visitor or designer takes place. Plants grow according to their own rules and schedules; as Jencks puts it, "Gardens, like cities, are whispering games in which the key is to pass on meaning even as it changes. They may reach momentary equilibrium, but should never be pickled. Respect is shown by continuing and transforming the plots." A piece of music relies, in its finest details, on the indeterminate nature of interpretation of all of the performing participants, an interpretation that must shift each time the work is approached anew, even if by the same players—a kind of seasonal change touches the work as it "grows."

Robert Kirzinger

Of further interest, here is a complete (current) list of movements for "The Garden of Cosmic Speculation":

Part 1:

The Zeroroom

Soliton Waves

The Snail and the Poetics of Going Slow

Symmetry Break Terrace/Black Hole Terrace

The Willow Twist

Part 2:

The Universe Cascade

The Garden of the Senses Suite (in six movements):

Allemande (Audition)

Courante (Olfaction)
Sarabande (Gustation)
Passepied (Palpation)
Gigue (Vision)/Chorale (The Sixth Sense: Intuition)

Part 3:

Fractal Terrace
The Jumping Bridge
The Quark Walk
The Nonsense

Francis Poulenc

Concerto in G minor for Organ, String Orchestra, and Timpani

FRANCIS POULENC WAS BORN IN PARIS ON JANUARY 7, 1899, AND DIED IN PARIS ON JANUARY 30, 1963. HE COMPOSED HIS ORGAN CONCERTO BETWEEN 1934 AND 1938; THE FIRST PERFORMANCE, A PRIVATE ONE, TOOK PLACE IN THE PARIS SALON OF THE PRINCESSE EDMOND DE POLIGNAC ON DECEMBER 16, 1938, WITH MAURICE DURUFLÉ, ORGAN, AND NADIA BOULANGER CONDUCTING. THE PUBLIC PREMIERE TOOK PLACE ON JUNE 21, 1939, IN THE SALLE GAVEAU, PARIS, WITH DURUFLÉ, AND ROGER DÉSORMIÈRE CONDUCTING.

THE CONCERTO IS SCORED FOR SOLO ORGAN WITH STRINGS AND TIMPANI.

Poulenc was in the habit of noting dates at the end of his published scores, and on the last page of the score of his Concerto for Organ, String Orchestra, and Timpani we read: “Noizay, April 1938—Anost, August 1938,” suggesting that this work occupied him for only four months in his thirty-eighth year. In fact its gestation was long and difficult, and the composer admitted that it was one of the hardest pieces he ever had to write. This was no doubt because he had never written for the organ before, and although there were a few pieces for organ and strings in circulation (Handel’s concertos, for example), the addition of timpani to the mix creates a completely new ambience for which there was no precedent whatever. In addition, Poulenc had decided to avoid the traditional three-movement or three-part concerto form and develop a looser structure related to the 18th-century *Fantaisie*, a form without standard guidelines of any sort.

Two remarkable women, both of whom contributed immensely to French music between the wars, were at the heart of the concerto’s origin. The first was the Princess Edmond de Polignac, born Winnaretta Singer, heiress to the sewing-machine fortune. Born in America and brought up in England, she made Paris her home, and by marrying the Prince de Polignac (a modest composer) she supplied her husband with a fortune and herself with a title. After her husband’s death in 1901, the Princess replaced their fashionable residence in the XVI^e Arrondissement with an enormous Greek-revival mansion containing a sizeable concert room in which she had an organ installed by the celebrated builders Cavaillé-Coll. She established a pattern of commissioning works by young composers for performance at her home; the long list of composers who benefited from her largesse includes Satie, Stravinsky, Milhaud, Falla, Tailleferre, Sauguet, Françaix, Poulenc, and Weill. At its height, between the wars, the Princess’s salon was where the most important new French music of any kind was to be heard.

The other godmother to the Poulenc concerto was Nadia Boulanger, who pioneered the revival of early music, taught several generations of young composers, and forced the acceptance of women as conductors upon a resistant world. She became a close friend of the Princess and in 1933 started conducting concerts in the salon. The following year the Princess suggested to Nadia that the very young Jean Françaix might write an organ concerto simple enough for her, Winnaretta, to play. Françaix, who had a film score to write, suggested that Poulenc be asked instead (or as well), but the latter, although he accepted the commission, found it exceedingly difficult to do. He had already composed a concerto (for two pianos) for the Princess in 1932, which he had played with Jacques Février at the Venice Biennale, where she took obvious pride in her patronage. In the case of the new concerto, three years passed in which Nadia was trying to bring it to the center of Poulenc’s attention, but early in 1938 it was still not ready. His *Litanies à la vierge noire*, a film score, the Mass in G, and a series of fine songs all somehow got in the way. By the time Poulenc completed the work, making a special effort in the summer of 1938, it was no longer intended for the Princess as its solo performer.

When it was finally heard in the Hôtel Singer-Polignac in December 1938, it was Maurice Duruflé who played the solo part with Nadia Boulanger conducting, and it was again Duruflé who gave the first public performance in Paris six months later, this time under the baton of Roger Désormière (who in Poulenc's opinion lacked Nadia's warmth and lyricism). The score acknowledges Duruflé's help with the registration of the solo part and is dedicated to the Princess.

The long gestation of the concerto may be in part attributed to the shift in Poulenc's world-view that occurred at that time. His early music earned him prodigious success just following the end of World War I, and of all the members of Les Six he was the one who most clearly personified the spirit of clowning and frivolity for which they became quickly notorious. His music did not exactly lack seriousness, but its wit, its tunefulness, and its sprightly rhythms seemed to cast him as the ideal composer for *Le Jazz-Age*. Through his exploration of modern poetry and his reattachment to the Catholic church, a new strain of religious devotion and of poetic depth can be heard. He was aware that the Organ Concerto would probably be performed in churches, and its devotional tone belongs there. It was in keeping with his quest for a deeper spiritual language that he created for himself the obstacles of instrumentation and form that called for a special creative effort to overcome. The clown's grin is nowhere to be seen.

Bach's organ fantasias provide the closest model on which Poulenc might have drawn. Bach-like phrases are heard at intervals throughout; Stravinsky's spiky style is also to be heard (Bach and Stravinsky were Nadia Boulanger's twin gods). Poulenc's harmonic palette ranges from forthright common chords (major and minor, offered without shame or embarrassment) to dense coagulations of notes that sound harsh on the organ yet sweetened by the strings. The organ, of course, can tinkle or roar; it can hold a melody over string accompaniment or itself provide a chordal background for the other instruments. In the context of 20th-century French organ music, especially that of Messiaen, the solo writing does not approach the virtuosity which the instrument can accommodate, but remains more narrowly within the Bach orbit.

If Poulenc was thinking of a normal orchestra, just omitting wind instruments on the grounds that the organ is itself a battery of wind instruments, then the timpani would be a normal remnant. But the timpani adds such a striking *tinta* to the ensemble that a normal orchestra never even comes to mind. Poulenc writes for the timpani as a fully chromatic instrument with a range of half an octave, leaving the re-tunings and the choice of drums to the player. But like the organ part its purpose is not virtuoso display.

The piece is perhaps best understood as an Introduction and five principal sections, respectively fast-slow-fast-slow-fast, with many suggestions of themes and figures borrowed from one section to another. The Introduction offers an imperious statement in a solid G minor from the organ with a mild-mannered response. The strings suggest a lamentation, and the music remains tentative until a decisive Allegro sets up a bright forward motion, the first main section. This reaches a brilliant G major ending and gives way to another Andante, perhaps to be seen as a slow movement in which the music flows modestly along, mostly subdued. This too rises to a brilliant ending, this time with huge A minor and A major chords on the organ. The third episode is speedy and agitated, and the fourth is calm. The fifth is a reworking of the first Allegro, followed by the return of the opening bars. The rest is a sublimely peaceful coda in which a solo viola and then a solo cello join the organ's chords against a gently rocking figure in the rest of the strings and a long held G from the organ pedalboard.

Hugh Macdonald

Hugh Macdonald is Avis Blewett Professor of Music at Washington University in St. Louis and principal pre-concert lecturer for the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra. A frequent guest annotator for the BSO, he taught at Oxford and Cambridge universities before moving to the United States in 1987. The author of books on Berlioz and Scriabin, and general editor of the New Berlioz Edition, he has also written extensively on music from Mozart to Shostakovich and has had his opera translations sung in a number of leading opera houses.

The first American performance of Poulenc's Concerto for Organ, String Orchestra, and Timpani was in a concert at the Germanic Museum at Harvard on February 24, 1942, under the auspices of Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge; E. Power Biggs was organ soloist with the Fiedler Sinfonietta, Arthur Fiedler conducting.

The First Boston Symphony Orchestra performances of Poulenc's concerto were given on October 29 and 30, 1948, with Richard Burgin conducting and E. Power Biggs as soloist, an additional performance being given that November 21. The only BSO performances since then featured Biggs with Charles Munch conducting in November 1949 (a benefit for the Albert Schweitzer Hospital); Berj Zamkochian with Munch conducting in November 1960 (at which time the work was recorded for RCA); and Simon Preston, in his BSO debut, with Seiji Ozawa conducting on November 30 and December 3, 1991, as part of a program marking the 100th anniversary of Charles Munch's birth (and on which occasion the work was recorded in concert by Deutsche Grammophon).

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Opus 74, "Pathétique"

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY WAS BORN AT VOTKINSK, VYATKA PROVINCE, ON MAY 7, 1840, AND DIED IN ST. PETERSBURG ON NOVEMBER 6, 1893. HE COMPOSED THE SIXTH SYMPHONY BETWEEN FEBRUARY 16 AND AUGUST 31, 1893. THE FIRST PERFORMANCE TOOK PLACE IN THE HALL OF NOBLES, ST. PETERSBURG, ON OCTOBER 28 THAT YEAR WITH TCHAIKOVSKY CONDUCTING, NINE DAYS BEFORE HIS DEATH. THE SECOND PERFORMANCE, WITH EDUARD NÁPRAVNÍK CONDUCTING, TOOK PLACE TWENTY DAYS LATER IN THE SAME HALL, AS PART OF A CONCERT GIVEN IN MEMORY OF THE COMPOSER.

THE SYMPHONY IS SCORED FOR THREE FLUTES (THIRD DOUBLING PICCOLO), TWO OBOES, TWO CLARINETS, TWO BASSOONS, FOUR HORNS, TWO TRUMPETS, THREE TROMBONES, TUBA, TIMPANI, CYMBALS, BASS DRUM, TAM-TAM, AND STRINGS.

During Tchaikovsky's last years, his reputation grew enormously outside of Russia, but he was left prey to deepening inner gloom, since his countrymen rarely recognized his genius. He had, moreover, been shattered by the sudden breaking-off of the strange but profoundly moving epistolary relationship that he had carried on for fourteen years with Nadezhda von Meck, whose financial assistance and understanding had sustained him through difficult times. Though they never met face to face, their relationship was one of the strongest, in its emotional depth, that either of them was ever to experience. She, for unknown reasons, decided to end the correspondence decisively in October 1890; Tchaikovsky never fully recovered from the blow. Another reason for his depression was an old but continuing concern—the constant fear that his homosexuality might become known to the public at large or to the authorities (which would lead to terrible consequences, since homosexuality was regarded as a crime that might involve serious legal consequences, including banishment and the loss of his civil rights).

Tchaikovsky was also concerned that he was written out. In 1892 he began a symphony and had even partly orchestrated it when he decided to discard it entirely. (Completed by a Russian musicologist some fifty years ago, it was then performed as Tchaikovsky's "Seventh Symphony"; the composer's self-critical view was right.) But a trip to western Europe in December brought a warm reunion: he visited his old governess, whom he had not seen for over forty years. The two days he spent with her, reading over many letters from his mother and his brothers and sisters, not to mention some of his earliest musical and literary work, carried him off into a deep nostalgia. As the composer wrote to his brother Nikolai, "There were moments when I returned into the past so vividly that it became weird, and at the same time sweet, and we both had to keep back our tears."

The retrospective mood thus engendered may have remained even though he returned to Russia at low ebb: "It seems to me that my role is finished for good." Yet the recent opportunity to recall his childhood, when combined with his fundamentally pessimistic outlook, may well have led to the program for the work that suggested itself to him and captured his attention on the way home. Within two weeks of writing the foregoing words, Tchaikovsky was hard at work on what was to become his masterpiece. Home again, he wrote in mid-February to a nephew that he was in an excellent state of mind and hard at work on a new symphony with a program—"but a program that will be a riddle for everyone. Let them try and solve it." He left only hints: "The program of this symphony is completely saturated with myself and quite often during my journey I cried profusely." The work, he said, was going exceedingly well. On March 24 he completed the sketch of the second

movement—evidently the last to be outlined in detail—and noted his satisfaction at the bottom of the page: “O Lord, I thank Thee! Today, March 24th, completed preliminary sketch well!!!”

The orchestration was interrupted until July because he made a trip to Cambridge to receive an honorary doctorate (see photo on page 61), an honor that he shared with Saint-Saëns, Boito, Bruch, and Grieg (who was ill and unable to be present). He was presented for the degree with a citation in Latin that appropriately singled out the “*ardor fervidus*” and the “*languor subtristis*” of his music. When he returned home he found that the orchestration would be more difficult than he expected: “Twenty years ago I used to go full speed ahead and it came out very well. Now I have become cowardly and unsure of myself. For instance, today I sat the whole day over two pages—nothing went as I wanted it to.” In another letter he noted, “It will be...no surprise if this symphony is abused and unappreciated—that has happened before. But I definitely find it my very best, and in particular the most sincere of all my compositions. I love it as I have never loved any of my musical children.”

Though Tchaikovsky was eager to begin an opera at once, the Sixth Symphony was to be the last work he would complete. The premiere on October 28 went off well despite the orchestra’s coolness toward the piece, but the audience was puzzled by the whole—not least by its somber ending. Rimsky-Korsakov confronted Tchaikovsky at intermission and asked whether there was not a program to that expressive music; the composer admitted that there was, indeed, a program, but he refused to give any details. Five days later Tchaikovsky failed to appear for breakfast; he complained of indigestion during the night, but refused to see a doctor. His situation worsened, and in the evening his brother Modest sent for medical help anyway. For several days Tchaikovsky lingered on, generally in severe pain. He died at three o’clock in the morning on November 6.

Though it is generally believed that Tchaikovsky’s death was the result of cholera brought on by his drinking a glass of unboiled water during an epidemic, the extraordinarily expressive richness of the Sixth Symphony, and particularly that of its finale, has inspired a great deal of speculation regarding the composer’s demise. It has even been suggested—in accordance with a theory advocated by the Russian musicologist Aleksandra Orlova and then taken up by the English Tchaikovsky scholar David Brown in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1980)—that Tchaikovsky poisoned himself fearing denunciation to the Tsar as a homosexual by a duke with whose nephew he had struck up a friendship! Other writers have asserted that the music was composed because of the composer’s premonitions of impending death. For now, as Roland John Wiley writes in the revised *New Grove* (2001): “The polemics over his death have reached an impasse.... We do not know how Tchaikovsky died.”

As to the composer’s alleged “premonitions of impending death,” one finds from a perusal of his letters that, until the last few days, he was clearly in better spirits than he had enjoyed for years, confident and looking forward to future compositions. The expressive qualities of the Sixth Symphony follow from his two previous symphonies, which are also concerned in various ways with Fate. The Fourth and Fifth symphonies had offered two views of man’s response to Fate—on the one hand finding solace in the life of the peasants, on the other struggling to conquest, though through a somewhat unconvincing victory. In the Sixth Symphony, Fate leads only to despair.

Tchaikovsky never did reveal a formal program to the symphony, though a note found among his papers is probably an early draft for one:

The ultimate essence of the plan of the symphony is LIFE. First part—all impulsive passion, confidence, thirst for activity. Must be short. (Finale DEATH—result of collapse.) Second part love; third disappointments; fourth ends dying away (also short).

In the end, all of this (and any possible elaborations of it) remained the composer’s secret. The title that it now bears came only the day after the first performance, when the composer, having rejected “A Program Symphony” (since he had no intention of revealing the program) and Modest’s suggestion of “Tragic,” was taken with his brother’s alternative suggestion, “Pathetic.” Modest recalled his brother’s reaction: “‘Excellent, Modya, bravo, *Pathetic!*’ and before my eyes he wrote on the score the title by which it has since been known.” The title gives a misimpression in English, where “pathetic” has become a debased slang word, almost totally losing its original sense of “passionate” or “emotional,” with a hint of its original Greek sense of “suffering.” In French it still retains its significance. And the symphony is, without a doubt, the most successful evocation of Tchaikovsky’s emotional suffering, sublimated into music of great power.

The slow introduction begins in the “wrong” key but works its way around to B minor and the beginning of the Allegro non troppo. The introduction proves to foreshadow the main thematic material, which is a variant of the opening figure in the bassoon over the dark whispering of the double basses. The great climax to which this builds is a splendid preparation for one of Tchaikovsky’s greatest tunes, a falling and soaring melody that is worked to a rich climax and then dies away with a lingering afterthought in the clarinet. An unexpected orchestral crash begins the tense development section, which builds a wonderful sense of energy as the opening thematic material returns in a distant key and only gradually works round to the tonic. The romantic melody, now in the tonic B major, is especially passionate.

The second movement is quite simply a scherzo and Trio, but it has a couple of special wrinkles of its own. Tchaikovsky was one of the great composers of the orchestral waltz (think of the third movement of the Fifth Symphony); here he chose to write a waltz that happens to be in 5/4 time! According to the conservative Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick: “This disagreeable meter upsets both listener and player.” But the odd rhythmic twist is more than compensated for by the extraordinary grace of the music.

The third movement is a brilliant march, beginning with rushing busy triplets that alternate with a crisp march melody that bursts out into a climactic full orchestral version, a momentary triumph. That triumph comes to a sudden end with the beginning of the final movement, which bears the unprecedented marking “Adagio lamentoso.” The first theme is divided between the two violin parts in such a way that neither first nor second violin part alone makes sense, but when played together they result in a simple, expressive, descending melody. The second theme, a more flowing Andante, builds to a great orchestral climax exceeded only by the climax of the opening material that follows. This dies away and a single stroke of the tam-tam, followed by a soft and sustained dark passage for trombones and tuba, brings in the “dying fall” of the ending, the second theme descending into the lowest depths of cellos and basses.

Ultimately, of course, Tchaikovsky’s farewell vision is a somber one, congruent with his own pessimistic view of life. But it is worth remembering—especially given all the stories that whirl around the composer—that his art, and especially the *Pathétique* Symphony, was a means of self-transcendence, a way of overcoming the anguish and torment of his life. It has sometimes been assumed in the past that Tchaikovsky chose to revel in his misery; but in the Sixth Symphony, at least, he confronted it, recreated it in sound, and put it firmly behind him.

Steven Ledbetter

Steven Ledbetter was program annotator of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1979 to 1998. In 1991 his BSO program notes received an ASCAP/Deems Taylor Award. He now writes program notes for orchestras and other ensembles from Boston to California and for such concert venues as Carnegie Hall.

The first American performance of the “Pathétique” Symphony took place on March 16, 1894, at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, with Walter Damrosch conducting.

The first Boston Symphony Orchestra performances of the “Pathétique” Symphony were led by Emil Paur on December 28 and 29, 1894, subsequent BSO performances being given by Paur, Wilhelm Gericke, Karl Muck, Max Fiedler, Pierre Monteux, Serge Koussevitzky, Richard Burgin, Charles Munch, Ferenc Fricsay, Robert Shaw, Erich Leinsdorf, David Zinman, Seiji Ozawa, Michael Tilson Thomas, Christoph Eschenbach, Leonard Bernstein, Yuri Temirkanov, Mariss Jansons, Mstislav Rostropovich, Semyon Bychkov, Kurt Masur (the most recent subscription performances, in April 2003), and Hans Graf (the most recent Tanglewood performance, on July 30, 2005).

To Read and Hear More...

The article on Michael Gandolfi in the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 2001 edition, is by Steven Ledbetter. The best, most up-to-date source of information on the composer and his works is his own website, www.michaelgandolfi.com. This includes a biography, works list, photos, and sound clips of some of the pieces. Gandolfi’s *Points of Departure* was recorded by the conductorless Orpheus Chamber Orchestra in the early 1990s, but this Deutsche Grammophon disc seems to have fallen out of the catalog. Gandolfi’s *Caution to the Wind* for flute and strings and *Il ventaglio di Josephine* for piano were included on a CRI disc sponsored by the American Academy of Arts and Letters; the now defunct label’s complete catalog has been reissued by New World

Records. A recording of his *Pinocchio's Adventures in Funland* is available on the Innova label. The large, beautifully illustrated book *The Garden of Cosmic Speculation* by Charles Jencks is published by the British firm Frances Lincoln, Ltd. (ISBN 0 7112 2216 9). Jencks's website is www.charlesjencks.com.

Robert Kirzinger

Benjamin Ivry's *Francis Poulenc* is a copiously illustrated biography in the excellent paperback series "20th-Century Composers" (Phaidon paperback). The "Oxford Studies of Composers" series includes Wilfrid Mellers's *Francis Poulenc* (Oxford paperback). Keith W. Daniel's *Francis Poulenc: His Artistic Development and Musical Style* is an important older source (University of Rochester Press, Studies in Musicology 52). The article in the 2001 revised Grove Dictionary is by Myriam Chimènes (on Poulenc's life) and Roger Nichols (on the music), Nichols having previously provided the entirety of the 1980 Grove entry.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra has recorded Poulenc's Concerto for Organ, String Orchestra, and Timpani twice: famously in 1960 with Charles Munch and organist Berj Zamkochian (RCA; though it's been transferred to CD, current availability is unclear), and then in 1991 with Seiji Ozawa and soloist Simon Preston (Deutsche Grammophon). Maurice Duruflé, the original soloist, recorded it with Georges Prêtre and the Orchestre de la Société du Conservatoire Paris (EMI "Great Recordings of the Century"). Other recordings include (alphabetically by conductor) Charles Dutoit's with organist Peter Hurford and the Philharmonia Orchestra (Decca), Jean Martinon's with Marie-Claire Alain and the ORTF Philharmonic (Apex), Robert Shaw's with Michael Murray and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (Telarc), and Yan Pascal Tortelier's with Ian Tracey and the BBC Philharmonic (Chandos).

David Brown's *Tchaikovsky*, in four volumes, is the major biography of the composer (Norton); the *Pathétique* Symphony is discussed extensively in the last volume, "The Final Years: 1885-1893" (Norton). More recently Brown has produced *Tchaikovsky: The Man and his Music*, an excellent single volume (512 pages) on the composer's life and works geared toward the general reader (Pegasus Books). It was Brown who provided the article on Tchaikovsky for the 1980 edition of The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians. The article in the revised New Grove (2001) is by Roland John Wiley. Though out of print, John Warrack's *Tchaikovsky* is worth seeking both for its text and for its wealth of illustrations (Scribners). Warrack is also the author of the short volume *Tchaikovsky Symphonies & Concertos* in the series of BBC Music Guides (University of Washington paperback). Daniel Felsenfeld's *Tchaikovsky: The Man and his Music*, in the recent series "Unlocking the Masters" (each volume of which includes a book plus musical examples on CD), features the *Pathétique* Symphony among the works excerpted on the disc (Amadeus Press). Anthony Holden's *Tchaikovsky* is a single-volume biography that gives ample space to the theory, now largely discounted, that Tchaikovsky did not die of cholera but committed suicide for reasons having to do with his homosexuality (Bantam Press). Alexander Poznansky's *Tchaikovsky's Last Days: A Documentary Study* also takes a close look at this question (Oxford). Other useful books include *Tchaikovsky: A Self-Portrait* by Aleksandra Orlova, which draws upon the composer's letters, diaries, and other writings (Oxford); *The Life and Letters of Tchaikovsky* by the composer's brother Modest as translated by Rosa Newmarch (Vienna House paperback), and *Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Letters to his Family: An Autobiography*, annotated by Percy M. Young and translated by Galina von Meck, the granddaughter of Tchaikovsky's patron Nadezhda von Meck (Stein and Day). Valuable if you can find it is *The Diaries of Tchaikovsky*, translated and edited by Wladimir Lakond (Norton, out of print). Also useful are David Brown's chapter "Russia Before the Revolution" in *A Guide to the Symphony*, edited by Robert Layton (Oxford paperback) and Hans Keller's chapter on Tchaikovsky's symphonies in *The Symphony*, edited by Robert Simpson (Pelican paperback). Michael Steinberg's program notes on Tchaikovsky's Fourth, Fifth, and *Pathétique* symphonies are in his compilation volume *The Symphony—A Listener's Guide* (Oxford paperback).

The Boston Symphony Orchestra recorded the *Pathétique* Symphony under Pierre Monteux in 1955 (available on CD in RCA's "Living Stereo" series) and under Serge Koussevitzky in 1930 (originally RCA; for a while available on the "78s" CD label). Noteworthy, relatively recent recordings include Daniele Gatti's with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (Harmonia Mundi) and Antonio Pappano's with the Santa Cecilia Orchestra of Rome (EMI). James Levine recorded the *Pathétique* in 1984 with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (RCA). Other recordings include—alphabetically by conductor—Claudio Abbado's with the London Symphony Orchestra (Deutsche

Grammophon) and Chicago Symphony Orchestra (Sony Classical), Leonard Bernstein's with the New York Philharmonic (Sony Classical), Valery Gergiev's with the Kirov Orchestra (Philips), Kurt Masur's with the Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig (Warner Classics), Evgeny Mravinsky's with the Leningrad Philharmonic (Deutsche Grammophon "Originals"), and Mikhail Pletnev's with the Russian National Orchestra (Virgin Classics). Igor Markevitch's first-rate traversal of the Tchaikovsky symphonies with the London Symphony Orchestra offers excellent value as well as fine performances (Philips "Duos," with the symphonies 1-3 in one two-disc volume and 4-6 in another). Noteworthy monaural recordings include Guido Cantelli's with the Philharmonia Orchestra, from 1952 (Testament), Wilhelm Furtwängler's powerful concert performance, from 1951 in Cairo, with the Berlin Philharmonic (Archipel), and Arturo Toscanini's commercial recording with the Philadelphia Orchestra, from 1942 (RCA).

Marc Mandel

Guest Artists

Robert Spano

Recognized as one of the brightest and most imaginative conductors of his generation, Robert Spano is now in his seventh season as music director of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. He has enriched and expanded the Atlanta Symphony's repertoire through innovative programming and elevated the ensemble to new levels of prominence. In North America, Mr. Spano has also conducted the symphony orchestras of Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. Internationally he has led the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Orchestra of La Scala in Milan, the Czech Philharmonic, Berlin Radio Symphony, the BBC Scottish Symphony and BBC Symphony Orchestra, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, New Japan Philharmonic, and Oslo Philharmonic. He has appeared with the opera companies of Chicago and Houston, as well as with Santa Fe Opera, the Royal Opera-Covent Garden, and Welsh National Opera. His three acclaimed cycles of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at Seattle Opera in 2005 led to his immediate reengagement for the company's next *Ring* cycles in 2009. In Atlanta this season, Mr. Spano leads a four-week festival celebrating Paris; world premieres by Wynton Marsalis, the Venezuelan composer Gonzalo Grau, and the Iranian composer Behzad Ranjbaran; and John Adams's *On the Transmigration of Souls*, to be recorded for Telarc and released with Jennifer Higdon's *Dooryard Bloom*. In April 2008, Mr. Spano, with the Atlanta Symphony and Chorus, returns to Carnegie Hall with Christopher Theofanidis's *The Here and Now*, commissioned and recorded by the ASO. Operatic engagements take him to Chicago Lyric Opera for John Adams's *Dr. Atomic* and to London for Osvaldo Golijov's *Ainadamar* at the Barbican Centre. In Europe he leads the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Oslo Philharmonic, and BBC Scottish Orchestra. In North America he conducts the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Philadelphia Orchestra. Robert Spano's acclaimed recordings for Telarc and Deutsche Grammophon have garnered six Grammy Awards. Under his direction, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra has recorded Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*, Vaughan Williams's *A Sea Symphony*, and "Rainbow Body," featuring works by American composers, all for Telarc, as well as a disc of Jennifer Higdon works and a Grammy-winning Berlioz *Requiem*. In October 2005 Telarc released a disc featuring David Del Tredici's *Paul Revere's Ride*, composed in the wake of, and with thematic references to the bravery of firefighters on, September 11, 2001. The disc also includes a work by Christopher Theofanidis based on texts by the Persian poet Rumi. The ASO's most recent Telarc release features Vaughan Williams's *Symphony No. 5, Variations on a Theme of Thomas Tallis, Serenade to Music*, and Tallis's *Why fum'th in fight*. In 2004 Deutsche Grammophon announced a dynamic new partnership between Osvaldo Golijov and the Atlanta Symphony and Chorus under Mr. Spano. Current recording projects include *Three Songs, Oceana*, and the chamber opera *Ainadamar*, which received two 2006 Grammy Awards. Robert Spano was head of the Conducting Fellowship Program at the Tanglewood Music Center from 1998 to 2002, and served as Director of the TMC's Festival of Contemporary Music in 2003 and 2004. From 1996 to 2004 he was music director of the Brooklyn Philharmonic. He is currently a professor of conducting at the Oberlin Conservatory; in January 2007 he led a critically acclaimed performance by the Oberlin Student Orchestra at Carnegie Hall. He was music director of the 2006 Ojai Festival and appears frequently at the Aspen Music Festival. Also an accomplished pianist, he performs chamber music with colleagues from the Atlanta Symphony, Brooklyn Philharmonic, and Oberlin Conservatory. Born in 1961 in Conneaut, Ohio, and raised in Elkhart, Indiana, Robert Spano grew up

in a musical family, composing and playing flute, violin, and piano. He is a graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, where he studied conducting with Robert Baustian, and continued his studies at the Curtis Institute of Music with the late Max Rudolf. He has been featured on CBS's *Late Night with David Letterman*, CBS *Sunday Morning*, A&E's *Breakfast with the Arts*, and PBS's *City Arts*. Robert Spano makes his home in Atlanta. An assistant conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1990 to 1993, he made his BSO debut with subscription concerts in February 1991 and has returned frequently since then to both Symphony Hall and Tanglewood. His most recent Tanglewood appearance with the BSO was in August 2004; his most recent subscription concerts were in April 2006.

Simon Preston

Simon Preston made his debut at the Royal Festival Hall in London in March 1962, performing the organ solos in Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*. But before that, devotees of the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, broadcast each Christmas Eve from King's College, Cambridge, had heard Mr. Preston accompanying the choir from the chapel where he had been a chorister as a boy and where he returned later as Organ Scholar. Shortly after his London debut, Mr. Preston was appointed sub-organist of Westminster Abbey and later that same year appeared for the first time at the Henry Wood Promenade Concerts at the Royal Albert Hall. During that period he worked under such conductors as Leopold Stokowski, Pierre Monteux, Leonard Bernstein, and Benjamin Britten. In 1965 he made his first tour to the United States and Canada, and by the time he left Westminster Abbey in 1967, he was already an internationally acclaimed artist. In 1981 he was appointed organist and Master of the Choristers at Westminster Abbey, where his work with the choir received great acclaim. He directed the music at the 1986 Royal Wedding of Sarah Ferguson and Prince Andrew and was also responsible for writing much of Salieri's music in the movie *Amadeus*. Since leaving Westminster Abbey in 1987, he has continued to pursue an active career as a highly sought-after concert organist. He has recorded Saint-Saëns's *Organ Symphony* with the Berlin Philharmonic and James Levine, Poulenc's Concerto for Organ, String Orchestra, and Timpani with the Boston Symphony and Seiji Ozawa, and Copland's *Organ Symphony* with the Saint Louis Symphony and Leonard Slatkin. A regular visitor to the United States since his first tour in 1965, he has appeared as a guest artist at conventions of the American Guild of Organists and toured most of the states. Mr. Preston was named International Performer of the Year (New York Chapter, AGO) for 1987. The description in a Vienna newspaper recently of Simon Preston as "a living legend" serves as a reminder that his recording career began nearly fifty years ago with the performance of a Gibbons Fantasia on a King's College, Cambridge, disc. There are currently nearly fifty CDs of his still available, including two versions of the Handel organ concertos—under both Yehudi Menuhin and Trevor Pinnock—as well as Bach's Fifth *Brandenburg* Concerto (with Mr. Preston as harpsichord soloist), and many recordings with the choirs of both Westminster Abbey and Christ Church, Oxford. In 1971 he was awarded an "Edison Classique" for his recordings of Messiaen's *Les Corps glorieux* and Hindemith's organ sonatas. The recording of Handel's *Coronation Anthems* with the Westminster Abbey Choir conducted by Mr. Preston was awarded a 1983 "Grand Prix du Disque." In October 2000, Deutsche Grammophon launched his complete recording of Bach's organ works. *Classic CD* recently named Mr. Preston as one of "The Greatest Players of the Century" in a list that included the entire classical music world. Simon Preston has appeared with the Boston Symphony Orchestra on two previous occasions: his BSO debut under Seiji Ozawa in November/December 1991, as soloist in Poulenc's Concerto for Organ, String Orchestra, and Timpani, which he recorded with the orchestra at that time for Deutsche Grammophon; and under James Levine on Opening Night and in the first subscription program of the 2005-06 season, to perform Saint-Saëns's *Organ Symphony* on the newly refurbished Symphony Hall organ.