

OVERTURE!

The Newsletter of the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra

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March 2004

Jae Kim To Solo With HRO in Sibelius



by Jenny Tsai

The winner of the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra's 2003-2004 concerto competition is Jae Young Kim, a junior chemistry concentrator in Mather House. He will be playing the Sibelius Violin Concerto on March 5, 2004, as part of the HRO's performance during Junior Parents Weekend. Jae has been playing in the first violin section of the Harvard-

Radcliffe Orchestra since freshman year, and will be concertmaster of the orchestra for the last concert of the 2003-2004 subscription series.

Jae, who chose the violin at the age of four, is no stranger to the stage. In his junior year of high school, he won the Juilliard Pre-College concerto competition, playing Max Bruch's Scottish Fantasy with the most advanced Pre-College orchestra. Jae studied violin under the instruction of Margaret Pardee at the Juilliard Pre-College program for seven years.

This year, Jae was chosen out of a pool of around sixteen talented performers from across the Harvard undergraduate student body. The panel of judges was very impressed with his performance during the competition rounds, and Dr. James Yannatos, music director of the HRO, said that the judges' decision was unanimous in Jae's favor.

"They all thought he would make a great soloist, so they picked him, and the rest is history," said Yannatos.

When asked about his selection of the Sibelius Violin Concerto, Jae described the second movement as "one of the most beautiful

things ever written."

"The first and third movements are technically difficult, but also require musical stamina," said Jae. "You need energy not only for the notes, but also for the technical issues." Essentially, the Sibelius will be a challenge to pull off, but he is ready to take on the challenge. When asked about his thoughts on the performance, Jae said, "naturally I'm nervous, but I think it'll come together." He will be playing on a Vuillaume violin on loan from Dan Stepner, one of the instructors for the performance course Music 180.

In addition to being a dedicated member of the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra, Jae is involved with other musical groups on campus. He has played with the Harvard Baroque Chamber Orchestra and is a member of the Brattle Street Chamber Players. Jae is also the director of community service for the Asian American Brotherhood.

Future plans for Jae include attending a music conservatory for a master's degree and medical school later on.

TIAA-CREF Sponsors HRO

The Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra is proud to announce a sponsorship affiliation with TIAA-CREF, one of the nation's leading financial services companies.

HRO President Ethan Gray '05 expressed excitement over the sponsorship agreement between the HRO and TIAA-CREF. "From the HRO's standpoint, the sponsorship is really ideal," said Gray. "Thanks to a Pierian Sodality matching grant, we will almost double the amount of the sponsorship, resulting in a much larger tour fund."

"TIAA-CREF has a great, long-standing relationship with Harvard and its administration, faculty and staff," said Todd Dawson, a TIAA-CREF representative. "The sponsorship of the HRO is an extension of our commitment to this great institution."

According to TIAA-CREF consulting officer Rochelle Prentice, TIAA-CREF has been working with the Harvard community since

1936, providing retirement investment options to its faculty and staff. "The HRO is just one of the many organizations we support in the Harvard community. We believe that the HRO represents a great historical tradition and we're pleased to support it," said Prentice.

The primary benefit of the sponsorship will be focused on this summer's tour to Montreal and Quebec. "When Todd Dawson from TIAA-CREF called to gauge our interest in a form of sponsorship," said Gray, "I floated the possibility of TIAA-CREF becoming our tour sponsor. TIAA-CREF was initially uninterested because their interests are in the US while the majority of the publicity they were to receive as our tour sponsors was in Canada. However, after a few months of negotiations between myself and Mr. Dawson, we were able to agree on an arrangement that would provide TIAA-CREF with the opportunity to reach out to their *continued on page two*

THE HARVARD-RADCLIFFE ORCHESTRA

James Yannatos, Music Director

Dr. Yannatos' 40th Anniversary Season with the HRO

THIRD SUBSCRIPTION SERIES CONCERT

Beethoven: Coriolan Overture

Sean Henry Ryan, conductor

Sibelius: Violin Concerto

Jae Kim '05, soloist

Dvorak: Symphony No. 9

Friday, March 5, 2004
8:00 PM Sanders Theatre

Ryan Takes the Stage as Assistant Conductor

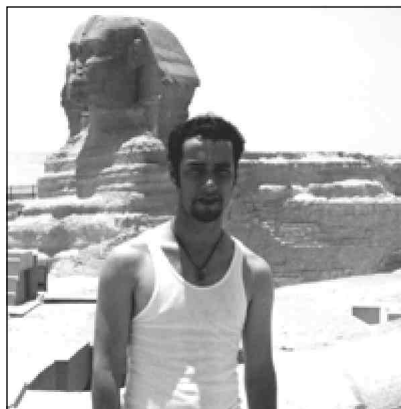
by Rachel Nolan

When Sean Henry Ryan '03, this season's assistant conductor of the HRO, steps up to the podium on the stage of Sanders Theatre and leads the orchestra on March 5 in Beethoven's Coriolan Overture, the performance will represent a culmination of sorts of a difficult decision made over six months ago. While deciding on an overture to perform with the orchestra, Ryan was torn between two by Beethoven, the Egmont and Coriolan overtures. He describes them as "quite different, especially their endings. Egmont is really popular because the final coda is fast and loud and exuberant, and it whips the audience into a frenzy...Coriolan just peters away in despair."

Drawn to both of them, his choice came down to a single question: "I asked myself, come March, which emotional state are you most likely to be identifying with, for whatever reason: transcendent elation, or cold, mind-numbing rage?" says Ryan. "I had to go with the rage. Anyway, Beethoven really manages to harness the conflicted personality of Coriolan—proud and confident but deeply insecure, with fluctuating feelings about life that can be traced back to, surprise, his mother, who some writers say pleads with him not to destroy Rome in the major-key second subject of the overture. It is also not an easy piece to play, or conduct, and I thought the challenge would be fun." So far, though, Ryan and the HRO have risen to the challenge. "The last

three rehearsals with HRO have been the most fun I've had all year," Ryan says. "I wish I could conduct an orchestra like HRO every day."

Ryan began his career in music as a first grade singer at the Trotter Elementary School in Roxbury, MA. Ms. Rose Holland, his chorus teacher, also started him on basic piano lessons. At the tender age of eight, he began private



lessons at the Community Music Center of Boston (CMCB). He recalls, "I 'auditioned' at NEC [the New England Conservatory] too, but I was really intimidated by the atmosphere there and felt kind of uncomfortable." He continued to study piano with Will Fickes at the CMCB until his graduation from high school, with a diverse musical instruction that

included theory, Dalcroze Eurythmics, and jazz piano. Ryan played chamber music frequently during his last two years of high school, both at the CMCB and through the Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra, and also performed at an NEC piano seminar.

Participation in Boston University's Tanglewood Institute at the age of 15 and the International Institute for Young Musicians in Kansas at 16 continued Sean's musical involvement over the summers. Of the latter, he remembers, "I got depressed there because there were all these piano prodigies who only played the hardest pieces by Liszt and Rachmaninoff. I had never really taken piano that seriously until about the 10th grade. Then all of a sudden, I got really into it and practiced like 4 hours a day, so I could catch up to all these ridiculous players, like the kind we have here at Harvard."

Continuous exposure to orchestral concerts at Tanglewood had sparked Sean's interest in conducting, so upon his arrival at Harvard he immediately sought out conducting opportunities. As a freshman, Sean took a class taught by Dr. Yannatos, music director of the HRO. Despite describing himself then as "a really bad conductor," Ryan followed up the next year with a class taught by Jameson Marvin. Ryan then began attending summer programs including a conducting program in South Carolina and the Pierre Monteux School in Maine. As a junior he conducted the Harvard-Radcliffe Gilbert & Sullivan Players and, after his third time auditioning, was elected music director of the Bach Society Orchestra for his senior year.

After graduating as a music concentrator in 2003, Ryan's musical opportunities have continued. Besides serving as the assistant conductor of the HRO, he recently participated in a conducting retreat in Washington, ME, and a master class with Ton Koopman, a renowned baroque conductor. His main project currently is with the Lowell House Opera. He describes the Ravel opera that they are preparing as "very beautiful and very hard."

When asked about his future plans, Ryan replied: "I'd like to go to graduate school and get a master's [degree] in orchestral conducting. If I fail miserably at conducting, the only other thing I can think of that I might be interested in doing is urban architecture and planning."

But for now, he is focused on enjoying his work with the HRO. Of the upcoming concert, Ryan exclaims, "We are going to rock Sanders. We are going to have one intense, exhausting 8 minutes of fun. I hope that we make everyone there yearn for some lost day of purity in their lives with the 3rd appearance of the second subject theme. I hope that we scare the ---- out of everybody, and summon up their repressed fears of mortality with the driving, climactic final rush back to the big octave C's."

TIAA-CREF Sponsors HRO

continued from page one

targeted audience and the HRO with the needed funding to go on tour. While TIAA-CREF is officially neither the tour sponsor or a sponsor for specific concerts, they are officially recognized as the Corporate Sponsor of the HRO for 2003-2004."

As part of the agreement, TIAA-CREF will receive ticket packages and host a reception at each of the next two performances. In addition, TIAA-CREF will be acknowledged during performances and in all print and electronic media.

"I believe that this sponsorship demonstrates the real value TIAA-CREF is placing on the orchestra," said Gray. "I believe that both TIAA-CREF and the HRO will be better off for it."

TIAA-CREF is dedicated to America's education, research, and health care communities. With over \$300 billion under management (as of 12/31/03), TIAA-CREF is a Fortune 100 company and one of the world's

largest and most respected financial service leaders. For more than 80 years, TIAA-CREF has been dedicated to ensuring the long-term financial security of its participants and their families. Today, TIAA-CREF offers a wide range of products and services to help its participants save for retirement and other goals, and to meet its client institutions' evolving needs. TIAA-CREF is committed to the values and practices that have always set it apart — objectivity, value, integrity, sound investment management, a high level of service, and consultants whose compensation is not tied to commissioned sales.



For over 65 years, TIAA-CREF has provided retirement investment options to the faculty and staff of Harvard University and furthers its commitment to the University through this sponsorship of the HRO.

"We're very excited about the sponsorship of the HRO and we encourage everyone to come out and enjoy the fine performances," said Dawson.

by Doug Balliett

Dvorak has the unique place in history of occupying two nationalist roles: he is deeply and undeniably Bohemian (from what is now the Czech Republic), and this Czech flavor is present in virtually every piece he composed. However, Dvorak is also a truly American symbol, owing to the years he spent in America in the late 19th century. This American period produced what is almost definitely Dvorak's best-known and most-loved piece, the Ninth Symphony. For many musicians, scholars and performers alike, the New World Symphony is the first truly American symphony. Ironically, however, this "Americanism" is misleading—there are many characteristics about the symphony that have been misreported and misread over the years, leading to a misunderstanding of the work and an invention of its history.



Dvorak 9: From the New World?

Around the time of the symphony's composition, the music Americans were interested in composing either came from Europe or was strongly European in flavor, composed on European models. Dvorak was attractive to American musicians searching for their own national school because he had single-handedly given his native Bohemia a unique voice and put it on the map musically, and for these reasons he had acquired international fame. However, it wasn't fame that made the Americans want him for their own, but rather his ability to capture the flavor of the nation in his compositions. Works like *Domov muj* ("My Homeland"), *Ceska suita* (Czech suite), and the famed Slavonic Dances seemed to perfectly capture the meadows and streams of rural Bohemia.

In June of 1891 Jeannette Thurber, president of the National Conservatory of Music in America (located in New York), invited Dvorak to assume the post of artistic director and professor of composition there, starting in October of 1892. Dvorak's arrival was a greatly celebrated occasion, and he immediately set to work looking for source material to form an American style. An interview for the New York Herald furnished the famous quote in which Dvorak confidently asserted that he had found the key to a new American school of music: "I am now satisfied that the future music of this country must be founded upon what are called the negro melodies. This must be the real foundation of any serious and original school of composition to be developed in the United States."

This mentality surely stems from his reliance on Bohemian folk tunes in his Czech music, and he surely did discover a wealth of melody from the black community. Dvorak also greatly stressed the importance of Native American music, similarly citing the wealth of music that could be used to create an American style. After compiling sources, Dvorak came up with a set of musical characteristics that set the songs and melodies apart as distinctly "American": pentatonic melodies, flatted leading tones, plagal cadences, drones and rhythmic ostinatos, and the "Scotch Snap."

With these "American" traits in mind, Dvorak set to work on his first wholly American essay in music, his Ninth Symphony. By choosing the

symphony as his first genre to work in, Dvorak allied himself with a long-standing European tradition, and in fact makes references to symphonic moments of historical significance during the piece (the beginning of the scherzo, for example, makes explicit reference to Beethoven's own Ninth Symphony). By allying himself with this tradition, Dvorak demonstrated that Americans could become part

of the European world of "serious" music while still maintaining their individuality through distinctly American characteristics.

Probably the most famous passage from Dvorak's Ninth Symphony is the English horn solo that opens the second movement. To many Americans, it seems to come straight out of a plantation of the Deep South. This solo and similar passages throughout the work almost certainly constitute what Dvorak was referring to in interviews as one of the ways Americans could utilize their rich heritage in forming a national style. In one article, Dvorak described the second and third movements as having been inspired by the "local Indian color." To many people, the New World Symphony represents the zenith of American patriotism and the entire history of America in its ambitus of musical styles, especially in its ability to bring together European tradition with the "natural" qualities of the Indians and the soulful qualities of African-Americans

Unfortunately, much of the speculation and inference that led to this symphony's place in history is entirely invented, culminating in the idea that every one of the wealth of melodies in this symphony came from a primary source. It is now common for music history textbooks to report that all the melodies, especially the famous second movement melody, were sung to Dvorak by black and Native American students. While this is a very inspiring story, it is unfortunately entirely false. None of the themes in this symphony were pre-existing melodies, they are all inventions of Dvorak's manipulation of the American music characteristics from above. Even that famous melody from the second movement is completely original, and is no more an authentic black melody than anything Dvorak had composed while in Bohemia. In fact, to give the history of the symphony more authenticity, spiritual-like words were later added to the melody, giving birth to the popular "Goin' Home." Such retroactive recreation of history results in the mistaken belief that "Goin' Home" was and always had been a real spiritual, one that Dvorak lifted from the plantations and plugged into his Symphony.

This belief that all the melodies of the Ninth Symphony are authentic led only to wilder speculation, such as the claim that Dvorak quotes "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" in the first movement when Dvorak himself denied using it as inspiration. In even more extreme cases, reports of "Yankee Doodle," "Three Blind Mice," and American minstrel music have been found in the last movement, straining the bounds of musicological plausibility.

Realistically, Dvorak didn't have a firm grasp on American folk music before writing his Ninth Symphony. Dvorak's keen perception of the theoretical qualities that define American folk music must be admired, but his treatment of such musical characteristics is no different than if he had been composing in his own Bohemia. In fact, Dvorak's treatment of the "American" themes doesn't differ at all from the way he treats Czech themes in his earlier nationalistic music, but rather is consistent with the Germanic tradition of symphonic writing. Thus, in composing the Ninth Symphony, Dvorak was not opening the doors to a new American school of composition. On the contrary, he was applying the nationalistic school of Bohemian music to America, synthetically creating a "national" music simply by replacing the Bohemian themes with American themes. Were the "American" themes of Dvorak's Ninth replaced with more Germanic melodies, absolutely nothing about the symphony would be "From the New World" at all.

Looking ahead...

Friday, April 16, 2004

Ravel: Daphnis et Chloe
(Suite No. 2)

Yannatos: Concerto
for Violin and Orchestra
World premiere featuring
Joseph Lin '00, violin

Brahms: Symphony No. 4

*The final subscription series
concert of 2003-2004!*

News Briefs

Compiled by Cassandra Wolos

• Tour Raffle Winner

The HRO awarded Maria Barth '06, an undergraduate living in Dunster House, a free trip for two to London as part of a fundraiser for the upcoming tour to Montreal and Quebec. Raffle tickets were sold on campus and through the mail in anticipation of the drawing immediately following the HRO's December concert. Barth purchased the winning ticket in front of the Science Center. "I've always wanted to go to London," she said, "so I gave it a shot." To Barth's surprise, her ticket won, and she and her roommate will travel to London this November. Barth expressed gratitude toward the HRO and looks forward to her vacation: "I've never won anything big before, and to win a free trip to London is really amazing!"

• Spring Retreat a Success

On Sunday, February 8, the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra held a spring retreat in Sanders Theatre. Dr. Yannatos began the morning rehearsal with Brahms' Symphony #4 and also ran through the second suite from Ravel's Daphnis et Chloe, in preparation for the fourth concert in May. Between rehearsals, the musicians relaxed at a pizza lunch in Loker Commons, then returned to Sanders Theatre for a group meeting. HRO President **Ethan Gray '05** gave a brief "state of the orchestra"

speech, after which he and President-Elect **Stephanie Hurder '06** led a discussion among orchestra members, covering topics such as the upcoming Montreal tour and the orchestra's general tour policies, ideas for social activities, and the progress of the orchestra over the year. In the afternoon, Dr. Yannatos led the orchestra through Dvorak's Symphony No. 9 and then the Sibelius Violin Concerto with concerto competition winner **Jae Kim '05**. The retreat concluded with assistant conductor **Sean Henry Ryan '03** conducting Beethoven's Coriolan Overture. After seven hours of music and meetings, the spring season of the HRO was off to a great start.

• Outreach Committee Update

As part of a community outreach program started this year by **President Ethan Gray '05**, the HRO Outreach Committee, headed by co-chairs **Reed Collins '04** and **Hans Cutiongco '06**, will be offering thirty complimentary tickets to the HRO's upcoming March 5 concert to the students, faculty and families of the Community Music Center of Boston (CMCB). Now in its 94th year, CMCB is a community music school noted for its welcoming environment and ethnically diverse student body as well as its commitment to excellence in music education. Over 600 students of all ages (from infants to the elderly) take lessons at CMCB's home at the Boston Center for the Arts, located in Boston's South End neighborhood, and many more take advantage of CMCB's programs

located throughout Boston at public schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and human service agencies. The HRO's assistant conductor **Sean Henry Ryan '03**, an alumnus of CMCB, is very enthusiastic about having the opportunity to give back to CMCB. Current members of the CMCB community who use the complimentary tickets will be able to see Ryan conduct at the concert.

-Hans Cutiongco

Comments or suggestions? Please send us e-mail at hro@hcs.harvard.edu. Your feedback is always welcome.

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