

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
2015-2016 Mellon Grand Classics Season

October 16, 17 and 18, 2015

YAN PASCAL TORTELIER, CONDUCTOR
GRETCHEN VAN HOESEN, HARP

EDU LOBO

Suíte Popular Brasileira

- I. Baque de Guerra
- II. Quase Memoria
- III. Pé de Vento

ALBERTO GINASTERA

Concerto for Harp and Orchestra, Opus 25

- I. Allegro giusto
- II. Molto moderato
- III. Liberamente capriccioso (cadenza) — Vivace

Ms. Van Hoesen

Intermission

IGOR STRAVINSKY

The Rite of Spring, Pictures of Pagan Russia,
Ballet in Two Parts (1947 revision)

Part One: The Adoration of the Earth

Introduction — Dance of the Young Girls —

Mock Abduction — Round Dance —

Games of the Rival Clans —

Procession of the Wise Elder — Adoration of the Earth —

Dance of the Earth

Part Two: The Sacrifice

Introduction — Mystical Circles of the Young Girls —

Glorification of the Chosen Victim —

The Summoning of the Ancients —

Ritual of the Ancients — Sacrificial Dance

PROGRAM NOTES BY DR. RICHARD E. RODDA

EDUARDO DE GÓES (“EDU”) LOBO

Born 29 August 1943 in Rio de Janeiro

Suíte Popular Brasileira (2010-2011)

Orchestrated by Nelson Ayers

PREMIERE OF WORK: São Paulo, Brazil, 15 September 2011; Sala São Paulo; Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo; Yan Pascal Tortelier, conductor

THESE PERFORMANCES MARK THE PSO PREMIERE

APPROXIMATE DURATION: 23 minutes

INSTRUMENTATION: piccolo, three flutes, alto flute, three oboes, English horn, three clarinets, bass clarinet, three bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp and strings

Eduardo de Góes (“Edu”) Lobo is among the leading composers and performers of the generation of Brazilian musicians who have carried on and broadened the style, expressive ethos and international popularity of Bossa Nova pioneered in the 1960s by Antônio Carlos Jobim and João Gilberto. Lobo was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1943, began singing and playing guitar as a youngster, and formed his first trio when he was eighteen, just as the Bossa Nova craze was taking root. (Jobim wrote *The Girl from Ipanema* the following year.) In 1962, Lobo began writing songs with lyricist Vinicius de Moraes, whose lyrics brought a heightened social awareness to the genre, and a year later he issued his first recording, an album entirely of his own music, which drew on a wider range of popular Brazilian stylistic influences than earlier Bossa Nova. During the mid-1960s, he also collaborated on his first of many theatrical productions, performed widely, recorded four more albums, and received a top prize at the First Annual Brazilian Popular Musical Festival. Lobo’s increasing visibility, however, made him a target for the authoritarian government officials who were displeased with the disruptive social messages inherent in his songs, and in 1969 he left Brazil for Los Angeles. Among the first musicians he met there was pianist and composer Sergio Mendes, a Brazilian compatriot, who had moved to America five years before and established a solid reputation for performances and recordings with his own band and with such major jazz artists as Cannonball Adderley and Herbie Mann. Mendes immediately took Lobo into his group and arranged a recording contract for him with A&M. (*From a Hot Afternoon* featuring saxophonist Paul Desmond playing Lobo’s compositions was released in 1969; *Sergio Mendes presents Lobo* came out two years later.) Lobo returned to Brazil in 1971, where he augmented his performing and recording activities by composing for film, theater and television, most notably during the mid-1970s for Globo TV, one of the country’s leading media corporations; his score for the 1979 feature film *Barra Pesada* (“*Heavy Trouble*”) won “Best Soundtrack” honors at the Gramado Film Festival in southern Brazil. Lobo has continued to perform, record and compose prolifically, numbering among his credits dozens of songs, three musicals, four ballets, and soundtracks for more than thirty movies and television series.

Lobo wrote *Pé de Venot* (“*Running Like the Wind*”) for the 2010 European tour of the Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo. The following year OSESP commissioned him to use that piece as the basis of the *Suíte Popular Brasileira*, which was premiered in São Paulo on September 15, 2011 under the direction of Yan Pascal Tortelier, then the orchestra’s Principal Conductor. *Pé de Vento* became the suite’s flamboyant, irresistibly propulsive finale. As the second movement, Lobo adapted his song *Quase Memória* (“*Almost Memory*”), a gentle, poignantly nostalgic waltz from his 2001 recording *Cambaio*, that year’s Latin Grammy winner in the “Musica Popular Brasileira” category. He opened the *Suíte Popular Brasileira* with the newly composed *Baque de Guerra* (“*Sounds of War*”), based on a traditional dance type of African origin associated with Carnival parades in the coastal city of Recife in the northeastern state of Pernambuco. The *Suíte Popular Brasileira* was orchestrated by Brazilian pianist, arranger and record producer Nelson Ayers.

ALBERTO GINASTERA

Born 11 April 1916 in Buenos Aires; died 25 June 1983 in Geneva

Concerto for Harp and Orchestra, Opus 25 (1956)

PREMIERE OF WORK: Philadelphia, 15 September 1965; Academy of Music; Philadelphia Orchestra; Eugene Ormandy, conductor; Nicanor Zabaleta, soloist

PSO PREMIERE: 14 September 1978; Heinz Hall; Andre Previn, conductor; Gretchen Van Hoesen, soloist

APPROXIMATE DURATION: 23 minutes

INSTRUMENTATION: piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, percussion, celesta and strings

Alberto Ginastera, Argentina's most famous and widely performed composer, was the outstanding creative figure in South American music following the death of Villa-Lobos in 1959. Ginastera's career was divided between composition and education, and in this latter capacity he held posts at leading conservatories and universities in Argentina and at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. His musical works, many written on American commissions, include three operas, two ballets, six concertos, eleven film scores, eight orchestral works, various vocal and choral compositions, and much music for chamber ensembles and piano. Ginastera traveled extensively to oversee the presentation of his scores and to adjudicate major musical competitions. For his contributions to music, he was honored with many awards, including memberships in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

The Harp Concerto marked a significant turning point in the development of Ginastera's musical style. The composer categorized his works before the mid-1950s as "Nationalistic," drawing inspiration and material for them from the rhythms and melodies of the Argentine folksongs and dances known as *musica criolla*, though he seldom used literal quotations. This nationalistic music is imbued with the symbolism of the pampas and the "gauchesco" tradition of the Argentinean cowboys, for which Ginastera became the leading musical spokesman. His second style ("Neo-Expressionism") began around 1958 and encompassed most of his later compositions, works in which he employed such avant-garde techniques as polytonality, serial writing, quarter-tones and other micro intervals, and an extension of instrumental resources. The Harp Concerto stands at the threshold between Ginastera's two musical idioms, blending the vibrant rhythms and characteristic melodic leadings of indigenous Argentine music with the expanded harmonic, textural and coloristic resources of his gestating later manner. The strongest thread tying together his old and new modes of musical speech is not technical, however, but expressive, as he indicated in writing about his 1961 Piano Concerto: "A work must produce a feeling of comprehension, a flow of attraction between public and artist, independent of structural implications.... Art is first perceived by our senses. It then affects our sentiments and in the end awakens our intelligence. A work that speaks only to the intelligence of man will never reach his heart.... Without sensibility the work of art is only a cold mathematical study, and without intelligence or technique it is only chaos. Thus the perfect formula would be sensitive beauty plus technical skill." The Harp Concerto is such a work.

The Harp Concerto follows the traditional three movements, though the form is amended by the inclusion of an extended solo cadenza as the bridge to the finale. The opening movement follows the usual sonata-form pattern: a close-interval main theme is presented by the harp to the accompaniment of whirring figures in the strings and sharp punctuations from the winds and percussion; the second theme, marked in its first measure by a wide-ranging arpeggio from the harp, follows after some soft timpani taps, a brief silence and a sentence of simple prefatory chords from the soloist. The middle of the movement contains a passage of dynamic energy exploiting the rhythmic ambiguity inherent in the movement's meter (and calling for "*col legno*" — tapping with the wood of the bow — from the strings) and a development of the main theme initiated by string tremolos and flutter-tonguing on the flutes. The main theme and second theme in abbreviated versions (separated by a brief cadenza) round out the first movement.

The second movement consists of a large central section framed at beginning and end by strongly contrasting music. A lugubrious imitative passage rising from the low strings, a timbre and texture reminiscent of the fugue in Strauss' *Zarathustra*, opens the movement. The harp and woodwinds trade expressive comments on the strings' opening statement. The principal part of the movement is given over to a paragraph of "night music" in which the harp's snapping figures are set against an eerie, rustling background, a quality perhaps indebted to the slow movements of several of Béla Bartók's orchestral

compositions. The return of the tiny string fugue and the harp's comments upon it close the movement. A dramatic and virtuosic cadenza serves as the gateway to the finale, a rondo whose structure is marked by the sharp reports of the tom-toms heralding the appearances of the main theme.

IGOR STRAVINSKY

Born 17 June 1882 in Oranienbaum, near St. Petersburg; died 6 April 1971 in New York City

The Rite of Spring, Pictures of Pagan Russia, Ballet in Two Parts (1910-1912; the revised version of 1947 is performed at this concert)

PREMIERE OF WORK: Paris, 29 May 1913; Théâtre des Champs-Élysées; Ballet Russe; Pierre Monteux, conductor

PSO PREMIERE: 27 November 1953; Syria Mosque; William Steinberg, conductor

APPROXIMATE DURATION: 34 minutes

INSTRUMENTATION: two piccolos, three flutes, alto flute, four oboes, two English horns, E-flat clarinet, three B-flat clarinets, two bass clarinets, four bassoons, two contrabassoons, eight horns, trumpet in D, four trumpets, bass trumpet, three trombones, two tubas, timpani, percussion and strings

Stravinsky's conception for the epochal *The Rite of Spring* came to him as he was finishing *The Firebird* in 1910. He had a vision of "a solemn pagan rite; wise elders, seated in a circle, watching a young girl dance herself to death. They were sacrificing her to propitiate the god of spring." Stravinsky knew that his friend Nicholas Roerich, an archeologist and an authority on the ancient Slavs, would be interested in his idea. Stravinsky also shared the vision with Serge Diaghilev, impresario of the Ballet Russe, the company that had commissioned *The Firebird*. All three men were excited by the possibilities of the project — Diaghilev promised a production and encouraged Stravinsky to begin work immediately. Having just nearly exhausted himself with the rigors of completing and staging *The Firebird*, however, Stravinsky decided to compose a *Konzertstück* for piano and orchestra as relaxation before undertaking his pagan ballet. This little "concert piece," however, grew into the ballet *Petrushka*, and he could not return to *The Rite* until the summer of 1911.

"What I was trying to convey in *The Rite*," said Stravinsky, "was the surge of spring, the magnificent upsurge of nature reborn." Inspired by childhood memories of the coming of spring to Russia ("which seemed to begin in an hour and was like the whole earth cracking," he remembered), he worked with Roerich to devise a libretto which would, in Roerich's words, "present a number of scenes of earthly joy and celestial triumph as understood by the ancient Slavs." Stravinsky labored feverishly on the score through the winter of 1911-1912, and Diaghilev scheduled the premiere for May 1913. The performance created a sensation (and a near-riot), and the *Rite's* position in the repertory was soon secured.

The following précis of the stage action is excerpted from *The Victor Book of Ballet* by Robert Lawrence: "The plot deals with archaic Russian tribes and their worship of the gods of the harvest and fertility. These primitive peoples assemble for their yearly ceremonies, play their traditional games, and finally select a virgin to be sacrificed to the gods of Spring so that the crops and tribes may flourish. There is a prelude in which the composer evokes the primitive past. Insistent, barbaric rhythms are heard, shifting accent with almost every bar. The first rites of Spring are being celebrated, and a group of adolescents appears. They dance until other members of the tribe enter. Then the full round of ceremonies gets under way: a mock abduction, games of the rival tribes, the procession of the Sage, and the thunderous dance of the Earth. The curtain falls, and there is a soft interlude representing the pagan night. Soon the tribal meeting place is seen again. It is dark and the adolescents circle mysteriously in preparation for the choice of the virgin to be sacrificed to the gods. Their dance is interrupted, and one of the girls is marked for the tribal offering. The others begin a wild orgy glorifying the Chosen One and — in a barbaric ritual — call on the shades of their ancestors. Finally the supreme moment of the ceremony arrives: the ordeal of the Chosen One. It is the maiden's duty to dance until she perishes from exhaustion. Throughout the dance, the music gathers power until it ends with a crash as the Maiden dies."

— Dr. Richard E. Rodda