



BMOP
sound

JOHN HARBISON: ULYSSES
COMPLETE BALLET



JOHN HARBISON b. 1938

ULYSSES

COMPLETE BALLET 1984, rev. 2003

BOSTON MODERN ORCHESTRA PROJECT

GIL ROSE, CONDUCTOR



ACT I ULYSSES' RAFT

- | | | | |
|------|---------------|---------------------------------|-------|
| [1] | PRELUDE | Ulysses' voyage begins | 02:07 |
| [2] | SCENE I | Polyphemus | 04:50 |
| [3] | INTERLUDE I | Aeolus' winds released | 02:07 |
| [4] | SCENE II | Circe | 06:23 |
| [5] | INTERLUDE II | Penelope at her weaving | 01:28 |
| [6] | SCENE III | The Land of Shades | 06:37 |
| [7] | INTERLUDE III | Sea perils and shipwreck | 03:20 |
| [8] | SCENE IV | Calypso | 06:25 |
| [9] | INTERLUDE IV | Ulysses' raft | 03:37 |
| [10] | SCENE V | Nausicaa | 08:34 |

ACT II ULYSSES' BOW

- | | | | |
|------|---------------|-----------------------------------|-------|
| [11] | PRELUDE | Premonitions | 01:35 |
| [12] | SCENE I | Ulysses' return | 05:36 |
| [13] | INTERLUDE I | Ulysses and Argos | 00:34 |
| [14] | SCENE II | The Suitors | 04:54 |
| [15] | INTERLUDE II | While the Suitors sleep | 01:09 |
| [16] | SCENE III | Penelope | 07:46 |
| [17] | INTERLUDE III | Penelope's dream | 00:39 |
| [18] | SCENE IV | The trial of the bow | 05:31 |
| [19] | INTERLUDE IV | The ritual of purification | 02:47 |
| [20] | SCENE V | Reunion | 04:40 |

TOTAL 80:32

ACT I **ULYSSES' RAFT****[1] PRELUDE Ulysses' voyage begins**

The music introduces two prominent strands, associated later with the travels of Ulysses and his crew, and with Penelope waiting at Ithaca.

[2] SCENE I Polyphemus

Ulysses' sailors explore Polyphemus' cave. The monster appears (characterized by the tuba) and rolls a stone in front of the cave entrance, trapping the sailors. When the monster finally subsides, having devoured some of Ulysses' crew, they get him drunk. Then they blind him with a huge stake, and he rages helplessly. Hanging upside down beneath Polyphemus' sheep, the sailors escape (the monster releases the sheep, feeling their backs as they pass). Realizing the deception, he flings a giant boulder into the sea (final chord).

[3] INTERLUDE I Aeolus' winds released

The overly curious sailors open a leather bag containing winds confined there by the god Aeolus. They are blown off course, then becalmed.

[4] SCENE II Circe

The enchantress Circe is discovered among her animals. Her song (ondes Martenot and tuned percussion) attracts the sailors, who are transformed into animals by her spell. The men-beasts languish in confusion until Ulysses appears. Her charms are pitted against his will. The men are translated back, but Ulysses becomes enchanted with Circe.

[5] INTERLUDE II Penelope at her weaving

Penelope weaves, and secretly unweaves, a shroud for Ulysses' father as a way of putting off her suitors. Superimposed: Ulysses continuing his voyage.

[6] SCENE III **The Land of Shades**

To communicate with Ulysses the departed must drink the sacrificial blood. This ritual precedes each of four encounters. Tiresias, the seer, predicts Ulysses' fate and that of his followers. Then follows the procession of great women (violins and contrabasses) and the procession of heroes (brass dominating). Finally Agamemnon enacts his homecoming — his murder by his wife and her lover (long viola-cello melody).

[7] INTERLUDE III **Sea perils and shipwreck**

The sailors continue their journey, passing the Sirens and their seductive song (saxophone and ondes Martenot), the swallowing and regurgitating monster Charybdis (horn), and the six-headed yelping Scylla (trumpets and trombones), but are finally destroyed by Zeus' thunderbolt, Ulysses alone surviving.

[8] SCENE IV **Calypso**

Ulysses has been long on Calypso's island, and wishes to travel on (horn solo). She is unable to fascinate him any more (high strings, oboe solo). Hermes, the messenger God, brings his release (violins with flutes) and all three build the raft for his departure.

[9] INTERLUDE IV **Ulysses' raft**

Ulysses embarks alone and begins his struggle with the sea-god Neptune. Neptune finally destroys the raft and Ulysses is washed up on a beach on the island of the Phaiakians.

[10] SCENE V **Nausicaa**

Nausicaa, the Phaiakian princess, plays ball on the beach with her friends. Their errant toss rolls to the sleeping Ulysses, all flee but the princess. Ulysses and Nausicaa get acquainted, she reticent, he less so. She summons her friends, they bathe and clothe the stranger. The king and his court appear. Ritual games begin (percussion), culminating in a race. Then the Harper brings the chronicle of the Trojan War (woodwinds and harp), which so moves Ulysses (cello) that he reveals himself. All consecrate his final voyage, offering a hymn to Zeus.

ACT II **ULYSSES' BOW**

[11] PRELUDE **Premonitions**

The motive of the Bow, with which Ulysses will take back Penelope and destroy the suitors, will dominate scenes IV and V. It is introduced in this Prelude.

[12] SCENE I **Ulysses' return**

The despondent English horn solo suggests that Ulysses' return, after such a struggle, still opens a long road ahead. To better carry toward his purposes, he disguises himself as a beggar (oboes and bassoons). He tests this disguise on the Shepherd, who has not seen his master for twenty years. Finally Ulysses' son, Telemachus, his crucial ally in his struggle to reclaim his own, joins his father. This string music suggests the sea voyages from which both have just returned. The conclusion of the scene is their oath (woodwind concertino with dark final punctuations).

[13] INTERLUDE I **Ulysses and Argos**

Ulysses' old hunting dog, Argos, recognizes his master with his last breath.

[14] SCENE II **The Suitors**

In the absence of their king, the suitors have made free with everything belonging to Ulysses except, so far, his wife Penelope, who holds them off. They have taken over his great hall. They dance a crude tarantella, which is a dance of death, a pre-image. Ulysses, in his beggar disguise, is among them. Midway through their dance, Penelope appears to show herself to them, apparently promising some resolution. They are momentarily subdued, but their mania rebuilds, and with it, mockery of Ulysses-beggar.

[15] INTERLUDE II **While the Suitors sleep**

While the suitors sleep, Ulysses and Telemachus bear their arms out of the hall (slow, cycling, wide-spaced chords).

[16] SCENE III **Penelope**

Penelope, alone, weaves and unweaves the shroud of Ulysses' father. The upper strings are shadowed by sustaining woodwinds. Her delaying tactic is ending; she must complete the shroud and decide on a suitor. She has summoned the beggar. Does she know it is Ulysses? The music of this meeting, a long violin melody, suggests that she does, but the forms must be observed; she must first furnish him the means for his revenge. While she departs for this purpose, Ulysses' old nurse Erakleia recognizes him (a sudden scherzo) and must be sworn to secrecy. Penelope returns with Ulysses' longbow (solo trumpet). The solution is ready.

[17] INTERLUDE III **Penelope's dream**

Penelope dreams of an avenging eagle.

[18] SCENE IV **The trial of the bow**

The suitors again dominate the great hall. With great solemnity, Penelope and Telemachus bring in Ulysses' bow. He that strings it will marry her. Three of the leading suitors try and fail. Ulysses-beggar emerges from the crowd. Telemachus bolts the doors. The pace of action stretches like the bow as he takes it, strings it, and measures his next move. His first shot kills the principal suitor. With Telemachus he takes vengeance on all.

[19] INTERLUDE IV **The ritual of purification**

Ulysses and Telemachus wash off the suitors' blood and are invested with new robes (steady string chords alternate with a unison woodwind melody).

[20] SCENE V **Reunion**

Ulysses and Penelope are brought together by Erakleia and Telemachus. In the final sequence they are alone.

By John Harbison

Ulysses was composed in 1983. Ten years after the completion of my first large piece, the opera *Winter's Tale*, I became very excited to do another evening-length piece for the stage, after seeing Monteverdi's *Return of Ulysses*. The scene where Ulysses, disguised, strings his bow, after his traitorous suitors have failed, thus winning back his kingdom and his wife, struck me (above and beyond its conclusive force in the story) as the most visually compelling theatrical scene I had ever witnessed.

Its presence as pure movement suggested treatment of the subject as a full-length ballet, a medium that had newly reached me through George Balanchine's choreography of Stravinsky's *Apollo*.

The problem was (and has been) that no ballet company or orchestra was willing to produce the piece. By parceling out different segments of the ballet to three members of a commission consortium I was able, in 1983–85, to hear all of the music.

The first complete performance, by the Boston Modern Orchestra Project on October 3, 2003, makes possible an evaluation of the score. The theatrical viability of the piece is still an open question which I hope the musical representation will pose.

The musical metaphor for Ulysses' journey is heard immediately, recurring often as a kind of *idée fixe*, but also forming a substructure for many variations. Often persistent motives appear later, representing Ulysses' raft, his bow, his beggar-disguise, his image of Penelope, the Suitors' rowdiness, and so forth, woven in a quasi-Wagnerian way with the fundamental journey-emblem.

I noticed in the ballet music I knew that phrases and reactions tended to be short, in recognition of the athletic challenge of dance. There are many short scenes, and I hope a generous number of scenic colors. It was challenging to integrate these characteristics into a large comprehensive design.

I was happy to discover later that in the same years Nicholas Maw wrote his epic treatment of the same subject, his *Odyssey*. Maw's piece, one of the masterpieces of the twentieth century, is a grand philosophic commentary on the journey of the outcast. My piece is not ruminative and philosophical. It is more exploration of the unpredictable flux of the voyage, its cyclical, hallucinatory eventfulness, its picaresque digressive strangeness. Only as it progresses to the stringing of the bow must it add, finally, the sum of its parts.

The full-length ballet *Ulysses* consists of two acts, entitled *Ulysses' Raft* and *Ulysses' Bow*. Each act is composed of five scenes, preceded by interludes. The interludes are intended to be rendered as friezes or shadow plays.

Ulysses was composed in 1983 as a full-length ballet consisting of two acts: *Ulysses' Raft* and *Ulysses' Bow*. Though the work had several partial performances, it was not until October 3, 2003 that *Ulysses* received its first complete world premiere performance by the Boston Modern Orchestra Project conducted by Gil Rose in Jordan Hall at New England Conservatory. *Ulysses* is scored for full symphony orchestra, including saxophone and ondes Martenot.

By Richard Dyer

John Harbison is a meticulous, self-aware composer who is continually surprised by the directions his music tells him to take. In 1983, when he was 44, he embarked on a quixotic project — to compose an evening-length ballet score. There were reasons for this. He was always determined to compose music in every genre, and he has — opera, oratorio, motet, symphony, concerto, song, string-quartet, instrumental, and vocal chamber music. Several major composers from earlier in the 20th century had written ballet music — Ravel, Bartok, Prokofiev, Britten, Shostakovich. Even Schoenberg had produced a suite of baroque dances for piano and a ballet sequence in his great, unfinished operas *Moses und Aron*. And of course, the collaboration of Stravinsky with Diaghilev, and later Balanchine, changed the history both of dance and of music. Harbison himself has written a fair amount of music in dance forms and rhythms in his instrumental and orchestral music, and dance is an important element in his one-act Yeats opera *Full Moon in March* (1977).

Harbison's decision to write a big ballet score was nevertheless quixotic. He didn't know any choreographers back then, didn't have connections in the ballet world. He didn't know that story ballets had become unfashionable — although he has never followed

fashion and has often deliberately taken a contrarian course. Nor had he thought much about how many prominent contemporary choreographers preferred to make dances to older music, often works not originally intended for ballet. It also didn't occur to him that scoring a ballet for large orchestra, as Ravel and Stravinsky did, wasn't a very practical proposition any more — Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloe*, the big Stravinsky ballets, and Bartok's *The Miraculous Mandarin* are heard far more often in the concert hall than in the theatre for that reason. In hindsight, he has remarked that he would warn younger composers not to do what he did.

Nevertheless none of the obstacles stopped him. He convinced orchestras that had commissioned him to accept pieces of his ballet-in-progress; the New Haven, Hartford, and Albany symphonies commissioned parts of what became the first half of the new ballet, *Ulysses' Raft*; André Previn and the Pittsburgh Symphony commissioned and premiered the second half, *Ulysses' Bow*, during Harbison's Exxon-Mobil Meet the Composer residency.

There was a Pittsburgh recording, on Nonesuch, of *Ulysses' Bow*, but until Gil Rose and the Boston Modern Orchestra Project scheduled the ballet in 2003, there had never been a complete performance of the entire score. For that performance, and this subsequent recording, Harbison made a few cuts and substantially revised the final scene of *Ulysses' Raft*, "Nausicaa."

Harbison had known for some time that he wanted to write a ballet, but settled on the subject of Ulysses only after watching a production of Monteverdi's opera *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* on television. Of course he had read Homer and various reflections on Ulysses' legend by Tennyson, James Joyce and others; one of his beloved teachers, Luigi Dallapiccola, had written an opera about Ulysses. What struck Harbison as he watched Monteverdi's opera was the gestural quality of the action; the essence of the story was "bodies doing things," he said.

Before composing the music, he created a scenario based on the strongest images Homer's epic of Ulysses' wanderings and homecoming left on his mind — his many vocal works and text-settings show what an alert and inquisitive reader Harbison is. In developing a scenario, Harbison also created an unusual structure for the ballet — each act includes five scenes for dancing, connected by other music, "interludes," that he thought of as dumb-shows, or friezes. The musical and dramatic possibilities of this unusual form or technique — familiar in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and in Thomas Middleton's *The Changeling* — have long fascinated Harbison. Dumb-shows are a significant feature of his first opera, based on Shakespeare, *Winter's Tale* (1974).

The interludes in *Ulysses* represent, in the composer's words, "a more compressed form of continuity" than the dance music.

In an interview with this writer published in connection with the 1984 recording of *Ulysses' Bow*, Harbison spoke of the differences between symphonic music and dance music.

"Music for dance has a different density. Think of Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony and then *Swan Lake*. Some musical ideas demand symphonic development; others want simply to be stated. Distinguishing between such options is what composition is all about. *Ulysses' Bow* contains some musical ideas, which wish only to be declared, for a brief time, until the dancers are out of breath. But even those ideas tend to be connected, through melodic family relationships, to the more far-flung structural designs."

The dance music is not there for the purposes of psychological characterization of the iconic figures of this story. In that same interview, Harbison said, "I was interested in Ulysses as a person who experiences big things but doesn't rationalize them. I was in an anti-psychological posture. Always in my mind there was an internal choreography."

Hearing *Ulysses* complete for the first time, one is struck by its abundance, its variety, and its sheer story-telling physicality. From the beginning the characters and their ac-

tions spring to vivid musical life. The first example is the lumbering giant Polyphemus, with his galumphing rhythms and baroque trills (are they an indirect homage to Handel's Polyphemus in *Acis and Galatea*?); his voice is the sound of the tuba (one of the instruments the young Harbison learned to play) [2]. Or Circe, whose seductive song woozily wails on the ondes Martenot, accompanied by tuned percussion [4]. (The ondes are early electronic instruments much favored in the religio-erotic works of Olivier Messiaen, and they reappear in Harbison's depiction of the Sirens, this time colored by the alto saxophone). How different she is from Calypso (oboe and strings) [8]. Even the longbow has an instrumental association (the trumpet).

There is spinning music and sailing music and shipwreck music and begging music and playfully waltzing ballgame music; there is festivity and ritual solemnity. The orchestra is sometimes in full cry; more often Harbison treats it as a kaleidoscope of chamber ensembles, full of unusual and freshly imagined timbres and textures. (It is astonishing to remember that Harbison's first orchestral work, *Diotima*, was composed only seven years earlier.) And there is even one sequence of real psychological complexity — the scene in *Ulysses' Bow* when Penelope seems to recognize Ulysses but realizes that she must not, yet; the music conveys both hesitancy and the rush of rapture [16].

In addition to the main-story telling dance music and the interludes — more transparent as well as more compressed — there are dances within the dance, not divertissements, as in 19th century ballet, but as an integral part of the story — the processions of great women and heroes in "The Land of Shades," or sequence of ritual dances in at the end of *Ulysses' Raft* [6,10]. *Ulysses' Bow* ends in an ecstatic *pas de deux* by the reunited Ulysses and Penelope [20].

The ballet opens with a gently swaying hazily harmonized melody in the strings that repeatedly recurs — it suggests the lapping of waves against a boat, the weariness and melancholy of a traveler on a long voyage [1]. For awhile it appears that Harbison is using

it like the famous, coiling violin solo in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sheherazade* that connects the various tales that the immortal storyteller told on 1001 Arabian nights.

But Harbison's opening music has a way not just of connecting different episodes; intervals, rhythms, and harmonies invade all of the surrounding territory — the composer has described his music in this piece "as variations upon variations," and what can at first appear as a series of disjunct episodes is in fact full of internal connections, and this score is built upon a Berliozian *idée fixe* that twists and drills through the whole far-flung structural design. Closer examination reveals a Wagnerian web of related leitmotifs that suggest things that are never explicitly stated — Harbison wonders, in the music itself, if all the women in the story are in fact different aspects of Penelope, for example.

In a sense, every piece of Harbison's proves a preparation for the next one. Each work is pivotal because it both sums up what he has learned how to do and also probes into his future. Sometimes with full awareness, sometimes subconsciously, he uses every piece to teach himself how to do something he is going to need to do later. The narrative and the dances in his opera, *The Great Gatsby*, could not be more different than those of *Ulysses*. *Gatsby* is all ambiguity, and *Ulysses* may be the most boldly unambiguous piece in the composer's catalogue. But *Gatsby* would not be what it is if Harbison had not composed the ballet first, just as *Winter's Tale* and *Full Moon in March* were preludes to *Ulysses*. He was giving himself lessons in how to tell a story in music — and he was a very apt pupil. Until the Boston Modern Orchestra Project's performance in Jordan Hall in 2003 and this recording, *Ulysses* was the sleeping beauty among Harbison's major works; that night it awoke, full of life.

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John Harbison is among America's most prominent artistic figures. He has received numerous awards and distinctions, including two of the most prestigious: the MacArthur Foundation's "genius" award, and the Pulitzer Prize.

Harbison has composed music for most of this country's premiere musical institutions, including the Metropolitan Opera (for whom he wrote *The Great Gatsby*), the New York

Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Born in New Jersey in 1938, he received an undergraduate degree from Harvard University and a MFA from Princeton University before joining the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he currently occupies an Institute Professorship, the highest academic distinction MIT offers to resident faculty. He also serves as President of the Aaron Copland Fund for Music. His works include four string quartets, four symphonies, a ballet, three operas, and numerous chamber and choral works, more than sixty of which have been recorded on leading labels such as Albany, Naxos, Harmonia Mundi, New World, Deutsche Grammophon, Decca, and Koch. Harbison has been composer-in-residence with the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the American Academy in Rome, and numerous festivals, including the Tanglewood Music Festival, the Marlboro Music Festival, and the Aspen Music Festival. He is currently principal guest conductor of Emmanuel Music in Boston.

Harbison's music is distinguished by its exceptional resourcefulness and expressive range. He has written for every conceivable type of concert performance, ranging from the grandest to the most intimate pieces that embrace jazz along with pre-classical forms. He is considered

to be “original, varied, and absorbing — relatively easy for audiences to grasp and yet formal and complex enough to hold our interest through repeated hearings — his style boasts both lucidity and logic” (*Fanfare*). Harbison is also a gifted commentator on the art and craft of composition and was recognized in his student years as an outstanding poet. (He wrote his own libretto for *The Great Gatsby*.) Today, he continues to convey, through the spoken word, the multiple meanings of contemporary composition.

Recent premieres include *Umbrian Landscape* (Chicago Chamber Musicians), *Milosz Songs* (New York Philharmonic and Dawn Upshaw), *But Mary Stood: A Sacred Symphony* (Cantata Singers, Boston), *Concerto for Bass Viol* (for fifteen orchestras), *Crane Sightings* (Tanglewood), and *Abu Ghraib* (Rockport Chamber Music Festival). Other recent works are the overture *Darkbloom*, for James Levine’s inaugural season with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, *Songs America Loves to Sing* (Atlanta and DaCapo Chamber Players), *Symphony No. 4* (the Seattle Symphony), *Piano Trio No. 2* (Amelia Trio), the motet “Abraham” (commissioned for the Papal Concert of Reconciliation in Rome), *Requiem* (the Boston Symphony Orchestra), *Piano Sonata No. 2* (for Robert Levin), and *String Quartet No. 4* (Orion Quartet). Upcoming premieres include chamber works for horn quartet and percussion ensemble, and *Symphony No. 5* for the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

In recent years, Harbison has revived his career as a jazz pianist, composer, and arranger. After founding and leading the Harbison Heptet (1952-1956) and appearing as a sideman in many other groups, he took a jazz sabbatical for four decades, returning in 2003 to found the Token Creek Jazz Ensemble. The quartet and guests perform exclusively for the Token Creek Chamber Music Festival in Wisconsin, for which Harbison and his wife, violinist Rose Mary Harbison, serve as artistic directors.



Gil Rose is recognized as one of a new generation of American conductors shaping the future of classical music. His orchestral and operatic performances and recordings have been recognized by critics and fans alike. In 1996, Gil Rose founded the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), the leading professional orchestra in the country dedicated exclusively to performing and recording music of the 20th and 21st centuries. Under his leadership, BMOP's unique programming and high performance standards have attracted critical acclaim and earned the orchestra nine ASCAP awards for adventurous programming and the John S. Edwards Award

for Strongest Commitment to New American Music. Since 2003 Mr. Rose has also served as Music Director of Opera Boston, an innovative opera company in residence at the historic Cutler Majestic Theatre.

As a guest conductor, Mr. Rose made his Tanglewood Festival debut in 2002 conducting Lukas Foss' opera *Griffelkin*, a work he recorded for Chandos and released in 2003 to rave reviews. In 2003 he made his guest debut with the Netherlands Radio Symphony conducting three world premieres as part of the Holland Festival. He has led the American Composers Orchestra, the Warsaw Philharmonic, the National Symphony Orchestra of the Ukraine, the Cleveland Chamber Symphony, and the National Orchestra of Porto, as well as several appearances with the Boston Symphony Chamber Players.

In June 2003, BMOP and Opera Boston together launched the much-celebrated Opera Unlimited, a ten-day contemporary opera festival featuring five operas and three world premieres. Mr. Rose led the world premiere of Elena Ruehr's *Toussaint Before the Spirits*, the New England premiere of Thomas Ades' *Powder Her Face*, as well as the revival of John Harbison's *Full Moon in March* with "skilled and committed direction" according to *The*

Boston Globe. In 2006 the Opera Unlimited Festival presented the North American premiere of Peter Eötvös' *Angels in America* to critical acclaim.

Also recognized for interpreting standard operatic repertoire from Mozart to Bernstein, Mr. Rose's production of Verdi's *Luisa Miller* was hailed as an important operatic event. *The Boston Globe* recognized the production as "the best Verdi production presented in Boston in the last 15 years." Mr. Rose's recording of Samuel Barber's *Vanessa* for Naxos has been hailed as an important achievement by the international press. He was chosen as the "Best Conductor of 2003" by *Opera Online*. He made his Chautauqua Opera debut in 2005 with a production of *Lucia de Lammermoor* and in the 2006-07 season conducted performances of Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito*, a revival of Weill's *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* as well as Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers*. In October 2007 he led the Boston premiere of Osvaldo Golijov's *Ainadamar* with Dawn Upshaw and directed by Peter Sellers.

Gil Rose's discography includes recordings of music by Arthur Berger, Eric Chasalow, Shih-Hui Chen, Lukas Foss, Charles Fussell, Michael Gandolfi, John Harbison, Lee Hyla, Tod Machover, Steven Mackey, Stephen Paulus, Bernard Rands, George Rochberg, Elena Ruehr, Gunther Schuller, and Evan Ziporyn. His world premiere recording of the complete orchestral music of Arthur Berger was chosen by *The New York Times* as one of the "Best CD's of 2003."

The **Boston Modern Orchestra Project** (BMOP) is widely recognized as the premiere orchestra in the United States dedicated exclusively to commissioning, performing, and recording music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Founded in 1996 by Artistic Director Gil Rose, the orchestra's mission is to illuminate the connections that exist naturally between contemporary music and contemporary society by reuniting composers and audiences in a shared concert experience. In its first ten seasons alone, BMOP programmed over 50 concerts of contemporary orchestral music; presented over 40 world premieres, including over 20 commissioned by the orchestra; recorded more than 50 works and released 13 world premiere recordings; and collaborated with Opera Boston to produce staged performances of contemporary operas including the Opera Unlimited festival of contemporary chamber opera.

In Boston BMOP performs at Jordan Hall and Symphony Hall, and the orchestra travels to New York and other cities nationwide. A nine-time winner of the ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming of Orchestral Music and recipient of the prestigious John S. Edwards Award for Strongest Commitment to New American Music, BMOP has appeared at the Tanglewood Music Festival, the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), and Music on the Edge (Pittsburgh, PA). BMOP recordings are available from Albany, New World, Naxos, Arsis, Oxingdale, and Chandos, and are regularly reviewed by national and international publications including *Gramophone*, *Fanfare*, *BBC Music*, *American Record Guide*, *The Chicago Tribune* (Best CD's of 2004), *Time Out New York* (Best CD's of 2004), *The Boston Globe* (Best CD's of 2003), and *The New York Times* (Best CD's of 2003).

Composers are at the core of BMOP's mission, and BMOP has hosted a Composer in Residence each season since 2000. In recognition of the importance of this position, Meet the Composer and the American Symphony Orchestra League awarded BMOP one of six Music Alive grants for a three-year collaboration with composer Lisa Bielawa.

Since its founding, BMOP has sought to discover and advocate for the next generation of composers and audiences, and has dedicated itself to encouraging and extending the new

music community. Beyond the concert hall, BMOP's trend-setting Club Concerts bring "the music formerly known as classical" to downtown venues. Further afield, BMOP presents informal concerts in downtown clubs, and provides mentors and workshops for teenage composers in underserved communities.

BMOP's greatest strength is the artistic distinction of its musicians and performances. Each season, Gil Rose gathers together an outstanding orchestra of dynamic and talented young performers, and presents some of the world's top vocal and instrumental soloists. *The New York Times* says: "Mr. Rose and his team filled the music with rich, decisive ensemble colors and magnificent solos. These musicians were rapturous—superb instrumentalists at work and play."

John Harbison

Ulysses, Complete Ballet

Gil Rose, producer

Recording and editing by Joel Gordon

Ulysses was recorded at Jordan Hall at New England Conservatory on October 3 and 4, 2003.

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