

# THE PIERRE MONTEUX SCHOOL



*for Conductors and Orchestra Musicians*

NEWSLETTER • SPRING 2013

29 May 1913

## *Pierre Monteux and The Rite of Spring*

29 May 2013

*by Michael Luxner*

The year was 1913. The developed world stood on the brink of the great conflagration that would bring down the social, political, and power structures that had governed life for centuries. Revolutions in knowledge of the physical laws of the universe, the workings of the human mind, and relationships between science and religion and between capital and labor, shook people's inner and outer lives to their foundations and to their very core. Out of this great schism in the affairs of humanity was born the tumultuous world we live in today. And the Arts, as always, were in the forefront of the uproar of the times. Many of the flashpoints in the history of modernism date from 1913, from the celebrated Armory Show of painting and sculpture in New York, to Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*. But one event overshadows all others: the premiere, in Paris, on May 29, 1913, of *The Rite of Spring*.

It has been called the most important single moment in the history of twentieth-century music. The evening began in conventional fashion, as Diaghilev's celebrated *Ballet Russes* danced *Les Sylphides* to the approval of the belle-époque audience. But during Intermission, a huge orchestra filed into the pit. And shortly thereafter, the curtain came up for the first time on *Rite of Spring*. The sweet Chopin of *Sylphides* gave way to Stravinsky's revolutionary score: raw, dissonant, unprecedented in rhythmic complexity, almost oppressive in its ritualistic obstinacy. In place of the graceful elegance of classic ballet, Nijinsky's

savage choreography had an old man kiss the earth and young people stomp, pound, fling each other across the stage, and ultimately force a sacrificial victim to dance herself to death. Protests from the audience started at once and quickly escalated to full-scale revolt. Fights broke out. Police were called. Backstage, Nijinsky stood on a chair, shouting cues to the dancers, who were unable to hear the orchestra over the din.

At the center of it all was one man, Pierre Monteux. Calm, collected, and professional, he had already brought the most complicated music anyone had ever seen, through seventeen careful rehearsals,

*At the center of it all was  
one man, Pierre Monteux*

to the level of clarity and transparency for which he would always be known, and at the premiere, under impossible conditions, guided it safely to its conclusion. And though *Rite of Spring* will always be the most famous of Monteux's premieres, he did the same for many other challenging masterpieces of the early modernist period: Stravinsky's *Le rossignol* and *Petrushka*, Debussy's *Jeux*, and Ravel's *Daphnis e Chloe*, to name a few. The French use the word *creation* as a synonym for "premiere," and thus would say that the conductor of a first performance "creates" the work. English-speaking composers find this usage startling, but there is a strong element of truth to it, because the birth of a new work of art can be as important to its ultimate health and success as the birth

of a new human being. And Monteux's gift for bringing new and difficult music to life, revealing its essence with clarity and confidence at first hearing, is a crucial part of his legacy.

2013 is the centennial of *Rite of Spring*, and as anyone even remotely attuned to the worlds of classical music and ballet are aware, this landmark is being widely observed and celebrated. Orchestras everywhere are programming *The Rite* this season. Commemorative books and recordings are being released. The Paul Sacher Foundation is publishing a facsimile of the autograph full score, and a major academic conference on *The Rite of Spring at One Hundred* has already been held. Here at the Monteux School, the centennial observations will include orchestral performance, public events, and exhibitions during the 2013 summer season. Most importantly, we will gather for the 70<sup>th</sup> year of the Pierre Monteux School for Conductors and Orchestra Musicians, devoted exclusively to perpetuating the art of symphonic performance according to the values, integrity, and professionalism of its founder, the man in the hot seat on that incredible evening one hundred years ago.

*(Michael Luxner is Music Director and Conductor of the Millikin-Decatur Symphony Orchestra and Professor of Music at Millikin University. Maestro Luxner attended the Monteux School from 1972-81 and was Assistant to Maestro Charles Bruck in 1977-78 and 1980-81. He has served as a Trustee of the Pierre Monteux Memorial Foundation since 2008.)*

*In Memoriam*

## *Nancie Monteux Barendse*

*January 8, 1917 – April 30, 2013*

**Nancie Monteux Barendse**, 96, died April 30, 2013, in Ellsworth. She was born Jan. 8, 1917, in Boston, Mass., to Edward Purslow of Boston and Doris (Hodgkins) Purslow of Hancock.

She spent her childhood in Milton, Mass., and in Waldoboro. In 1924, she and her older brother, Donald, late of Hancock, relocated with their mother and stepfather, Pierre Monteux, near Waterloo, Belgium, south of Brussels. In Brussels, she attended the Dalcroze School, where she studied modern dance and later, ballet. In 1930, the family moved to Paris, France, where Monteux conducted the Paris Symphony. In 1935, Nancie debuted as a dancer with the Orchestra Symphonique under her stepfather's baton. Later in that same year the family left France for San Francisco, where Monteux had assumed the directorship of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra.

Nancie's American debut took place in Los Angeles, also in 1935, dancing to programs by Bach, Schubert, Brahms and Debussy, all with her father conducting the Los Angeles Philharmonic. At home in San Francisco she had a variety of roles in theater and also as a nightclub singer at the Palace Hotel. In the several years that followed Nancie pursued her career in entertainment, performing and socializing with friends and fellow professionals including violinist Yehudi Menuhin and the columnist Herb Caen as well as Merv Griffin, with whom Nancie performed as a USO volunteer.

Nancie preferred her singing voice to her speaking voice and though she auditioned for roles in theater and film it was modern dance and cabaret that she enjoyed more. By this time Nancie had developed a serious interest in fashion and she began in earnest to sketch and fabricate her own costumes and clothes. This soon became a passion and in time her ambitions as a performing artist gave way to her interests in design and in the visual arts and literature.



Though she had traveled widely and though she was bilingual and knew music and dance, a traditional education had eluded her and she now sought to make up for this.

In 1941, she met and married Simon Barendse of Paris, France. While her husband served in the U.S. Army, Nancy lived in the Washington, D.C., area and then in Hancock. Over

the next several years she had four sons and in 1946 the family moved to Westchester County, from where her husband commuted to his new business in New York City. Nancie and Simon purchased a summer home in Arlington, Vt., in the late 1950s and in 1960 the family moved full time to nearby Manchester, Vt. There they opened a country inn, which, in the course of a decade and aided by reviews in *The New York Times* and *Holiday* magazines, earned a loyal following.

In 1970, after 10 years of innkeeping and with her children now on their own, Nancy left Vermont to take up her mother's offer to return to Hancock to help with the music school founded by her stepfather. When Doris Monteux died in 1984, Nancie became director of the school. In the years she presided, the campus grew by several buildings including dormitories and cabins for students as well as a major renovation and expansion of the music hall. She retired in 2002.

Nancie was a voracious reader of biographies and mysteries. She also loved to travel (Russia, France, many times and Italy) and she loved, as ever, entertaining. Invitations to her roast chicken suppers were highly sought.

Nancie leaves four sons, Pierre, Henry, Jan Paul and Robert; and four grandchildren. Arrangements in care of Jordan-Fernald, 113 Franklin St., Ellsworth. Condolences may be expressed at [www.jordanfernald.com](http://www.jordanfernald.com). In lieu of flowers, contributions in memory of Nancie can be made to the Pierre Monteux School, P.O. Box 457, Hancock, ME 04640.

*(from [www.fenceviewer.com](http://www.fenceviewer.com))*

## *From Our Archives*



*A few of the items displayed at the Monteux Archives in Hancock. Close-up views of the photo and medal are shown below.*



*WWI infantry photo*



*One of Monteux's most prized possessions*

## Overture

### 29 May 1913

As the reedy, somewhat sleazy high-pitched sound of what might be a bassoon resonates from the orchestra pit, soon to be joined by other wind instruments quietly playing in mild cacophony, a feeling of unrest begins to spread over the assembled audience, most of whom have come to watch rather than listen. A loud high-pitched muted trumpet adds to the general confusion. For two minutes, silence from the crowd.

The tones subside, and again there is that strange-sounding instrument from the opening, the player straining to produce the notes. Boos and catcalls begin to be heard, first from the gallery, then from the lower floors. In a moment loud, repeated, oddly pulsating string chords, eight horns adding their irregular accents. Further shouts of dismay. Bedlam in the auditorium. Fist fights break out between those who approve of the proceedings and those who do not. At first this derision is directed at the dancers, but the musicians producing these strange and discordant sounds are soon the principal target of anger and ridicule. Various objects are tossed in their direction, yet the orchestra continues to play. The police are called in.

Incredibly, this din, this confusion, much worse than the performance that incited it, continues for the better part of half an hour, disrupting a historic musical and choreographic event. The dancer's can barely hear the orchestra; the choreographer shouts the beats from the wings; and the composer, fearful of bodily harm, escapes through a backstage window. Through it all, the imperturbable conductor continues to direct his musicians, even though at times he cannot hear them at all—he keeps track of where they are in the score by watching the players, where their bows are placed at any given moment, which wind instruments are playing or not playing—players he has already led through seventeen rehearsals. Since the work being performed contains some of the loudest music ever written up to that time, as well as the most complex, the audience's achievement in drowning out most of it is truly impressive. A final crashing chord and it is all over, save for additional protests mixed with applause. The most significant event in twentieth-century music is now history.

And what of that imperturbable conductor, that little round man with the large moustache? How did he come to be involved in this *scandale*? The event, the *scandale*, was, of course, the world premiere of Igor Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. The date was 29 May 1913. The conductor was Pierre Monteux.

from John Canarina, *Pierre Monteux, Maître*,  
Amadeus Press, LLC (2003)

reprinted by permission of the author

THE TIMES THURSDAY MAY 30 1963



Mr. Igor Stravinsky (left) with M. Pierre Monteux after the performance of *The Rite of Spring* last night.

## 50 Years on . . . Ovation for M. Monteux

It takes a rather special occasion to pack the Albert Hall with cheering music lovers, and a special occasion is precisely what last night's concert was. Fifty years ago to the night, at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, M. Pierre Monteux, unperturbed by the mounting fracas behind him, had steered the orchestra of Diaghilev's Russian Ballet through the first performance of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. Last night, at an age when most of us will be only too glad to take it easy, he performed the almost incredible feat of directing the London Symphony Orchestra in this same immensely taxing score.

Nor was this all, for *The Rite* came in the second half of a concert that had begun with the overture to *Die Meistersinger*—a beautifully balanced performance this, combining mellow tone and phrasing with a springy rhythmic gait that banished every trace of ponderousness—and then gone on to Brahms's B flat piano concerto.

This was a real meeting-point of the generations, for M. Monteux had chosen a soloist young enough to be his grandson, Mr. Van Cliburn. It was an affectionate, easy-going performance that they gave together—perhaps a little too much so, if the truth be told, for the

grace and strength of Mr. Cliburn's playing were so effortless as to seem at times almost lazy. But although the first two movements have more sinew in them than we heard last night, there was some exquisite quiet playing in the andante and the good-humoured final rondo was altogether charming.

Welcome as Mr. Cliburn is whenever he chooses to visit us (and on this occasion he was very generously giving his services in aid of the London Symphony Orchestra Trust), the evening really belonged to M. Monteux. We have heard this orchestra give more brilliant performances of *The Rite of Spring*, and for that matter more precise ones, for not all last night's divergences from the printed score could be explained by the fact that we were hearing the specially obtained original version.

But it was a magisterial account of the work for all that, with absolutely none of the meaningless virtuosity which some conductors inflict upon it. "Monteux . . . has never cheapened *Le Sacre* or looked for his own glory in it": it is Stravinsky's own tribute, and last night he was there to endorse it with his presence. It was a moving experience to watch these octogenarian partners in a 50-year-old crime receiving their ovation for it together.

## Pierre Monteux School

PO Box 457 · Hancock, Maine 04640

### OUR 2013 SEASON SYMPHONY CONCERTS

Adults \$20 **Sundays at 5 PM** Students \$5  
**June 23 & 30**

**July 7** – Tchaikovsky's *Violin Concerto*  
(Jeffrey Thayer, soloist)

**July 14**

**July 21** – Annual Memorial Concert

**July 28** – “POPS” Concert

### WEDNESDAYS at MONTEUX

#### Small Instrumental Ensembles

organized and performed by members of the

PIERRE MONTEUX SCHOOL ORCHESTRA

Adults \$12 **Wednesdays at 7:30 PM** Students \$5

**June 26; July 3, 10, 17 & 24**

 **FREE CHILDREN'S CONCERT** 

**Monday, July 8 at 10 AM**

FULL ORCHESTRA FOLLOWED BY A “PETTING ZOO”

#### The Forest Studio

Off US 1 in Hancock – down Old Track Rd  
(across from the monument lot)

*Season Tickets and Information: 207-422-3280*

Nonprofit Org.  
US Postage  
PAID  
Bangor, ME  
Permit #76

## Pierre Monteux Memorial Foundation, Inc. Contributions September 1, 2012–May 10, 2013

### ORCHESTRA CIRCLE (\$5000+)

Monique Giroux &  
Peter Doehring **a**

### PATRONS (\$2,000+)

Doug Kimmel & Ron Schwizer  
H. M. Payson & Co. **b**  
John & Lee-lee Schlegel **c**  
Mr. & Mrs. Philip Standel **d**  
Beverley & Dyer Wadsworth  
Dr. & Mrs. Sam J. Williams

### BENEFACTORS (\$1,000+)

Ensemble Tremblay **e**  
Neal Gittleman & Lisa M. Fry  
Jerome D. Goodman MD  
Sara Jobin **f**  
Maine Community Foundation  
Jean C. O'Meara  
Roberta M. Scott  
Hugh Wolff & Judith Kogan

### SPONSORS (\$500+)

David and Barbara Bristol  
Bill & Polly Ceckler  
Joseph P. Day & Anne Nelson  
Anne P. Reed Dean **g**  
Mr. & Mrs. James M. Kellogg  
Alexandra B. Knox **h**  
Gerard Monteux & Beth Aduabato  
Ellen O'Meara & Ken Emerson  
Dr. John R. O'Meara  
James M. Orent & Marianne Gray

Jean-Andre & Vicki Rougeot  
Katharine A. Thompson  
Mr. Charles Wiggins

### SUSTAINERS (\$250+)

Devenish Wines  
Kenneth and Barbara Kelly **i**  
Alice J. Souther  
Susan K. & Stephen L. Weber  
Sandra and Larry Zellner

### SUPPORTERS (\$100+)

B. Allen Benson & Nancy Hill  
Virginia & Frederick Berrien  
Ed & Louise Buschmann  
Thomas Cannard **j**  
Nancy Colter  
Crosby Consolidated Fund  
Sheila & Bruce Denny-Brown  
Eva S. Devenish  
Ross & Rosmarie Dinyari  
Dr. Richard Faust  
David & Lorna Goodrich  
Frank and Ada Graham  
Carle G. Gray **k**  
Drs. Harriet & Douglas Heath  
Richard W. Heely  
Elizabeth Hinebauch  
Joan & Harry Little  
Eileen Kleinman & Peter A. Lurye  
Ann & Dick Luxner

Alexander Macgillivray &  
Shona Crabtree  
The Honorable Bruce &  
LeeAnne Mallonee  
C. Dwight Oltman  
Pete & Katie Pattee  
Robert & Terry Rohe  
Henry S. & Patty J. Russell  
Leigh Anne Smith &  
James W. Gicking **j**  
Virginia Suyama  
David & Celeste Ward  
Dr. Douglas G. Weeks  
Mr. & Mrs. Bradford Wellman  
Winston & Thelma White  
Alvin M. Younger, Jr.

### FRIENDS (Up to \$100)

Elizabeth Wright **j**  
Robert & Lorna Blount **j**  
Edward & Roberta Williams  
Evelyn S. Carpenter **l**  
Heidi Welch  
William & Ruth Snell **j**  
Theodora Moyer  
Helen & Gary Moskowitz **j**  
Timothy & Beverly Stone  
Dwight & Sally Michael **j**  
Dennis and Linda King  
Betsy Hewlett  
Beth Hassel  
Sara C. George **j**

The Grohoski Family **i**  
Smoller, Jason  
Rees, Peter  
Edwards, Jeanne and Gary **l**  
Mr. & Mrs. Harold Evans  
Celeste Paolizzi **j**  
Margaret L. Cruikshank **l**  
Karen Pinoci  
Leon & Lesia Shmorhun  
Eleanor N. Ames **j**

**a** In Memory of Maureen  
McNally-Giroux  
**b** To support two 2013 H. M.  
Payson Scholars  
**c** Support for 2013 conducting  
scholarship  
**d** To support two 2013 Carl Dean  
Griffith Scholars  
**e** Support for two 2013 instrumental  
scholarships  
**f** To Scholarship Endowment  
**g** In memory of Daphne Crocker  
**h** In memory of Van William  
Knox III  
**i** In memory of Sylvia McElDowney  
**j** In memory of Gwendoline  
Winifred Good  
**k** In memory of Freda  
Gray-Masse  
**l** In memory of Christopher Smith

# THE PIERRE MONTEUX SCHOOL

FOR CONDUCTORS AND ORCHESTRA MUSICIANS

*Sponsored by The Pierre Monteux Memorial Foundation*

Spring 2013

Michael Jinbo  
*Music Director*

Dear Monteux Friends,

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Margaret B. Amstutz  
Charles C. Collison  
Philip Devenish, *President*  
James Hanna, *Treasurer*  
Michael Jinbo, *ex officio*  
Michael Luxner  
Bruce Mallonee  
Gerard Monteux  
Jean C. O'Meara, *emerita*  
Mary E. O'Meara  
\*Claude Monteux, *emeritus*  
\*Nancie Monteux-Barendse,  
*President emerita*  
Katharine Thompson,  
*Vice President*  
Dyer S. Wadsworth *Secretary*  
Ginia Davis Wexler, *emerita*  
Flo Wilder  
Joann Williams  
Kurt Wray

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ronald W. Schwizer

## HONORARY ADVISORY BOARD

Michael Charry  
Enrique Diemecke  
Leon Fleisher  
Neal Gittleman  
Lorin Maazel  
Hugh Wolff  
David Zinman

\* *deceased*

Phoebe and I had just returned to Maine from New Zealand to learn of our dear Nancie's death. How often over the years did she tell us what a wonderful life she had—and she did! Now, it is for us to carry on in her spirit. After nearly thirty years on the Board, I have never been more enthusiastic about the annual miracle that is the School season. I'm sure many of you feel this way as well.

### We have made great strides recently:

- The wonderful Monteux Associates have provided the sort of small town hospitality to our students that makes our program special.
- Most concerts are sold out, and season ticket sales have soared.
- Our Children's Concerts have become a 'can't miss' phenomenon—packed with kids and parents and with an instrument 'petting zoo.'
- Many conductors and players return season after season.
- With grants from the Home Depot Foundation, we have renovated the kitchen in our cabins and will do the same in our barn this August.
- MPBN has broadcast four Sunday concerts this year.
- Wireless access is available in three campus locations. (Where would a young person be without the internet??!!)
- Our office in Tamarack Place has museum-quality displays of Pierre Monteux archival material and memorabilia.
- We have a new website.

Above all, our conductors continue to experience that personal growth that comes from hands-on podium time and intensive Socratic teaching by Maestro Michael Jinbo, praised year after year as a teacher of unique gifts.

As always, we need your financial support, and now more than ever. The key is to provide scholarship aid to get the best conductors and the best orchestra musicians in an increasingly competitive market. Only YOU can make this happen! Please contribute generously for another great season!

As ever,



Philip E. Devenish  
President