



Hérodiade

Paul Hindemith



inscape*

richard scerbo, director

Hérodiade

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)

Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge was an influential benefactor and patron of music, especially chamber music, during the first half of the twentieth century. In the early 1940s, Coolidge commissioned ballet scores from Aaron Copland and Mexican composer, Carlos Chávez, to be choreographed by Martha Graham. The resulting work by Aaron Copland came to be known as *Appalachian Spring*. Its clear and open score may be one of the most recognizable pieces in the concert hall today. Due to disagreements and delays with Chávez in finishing in his score, Coolidge and Graham decided to commission another piece to take its place. They selected the composer Paul Hindemith who had immigrated to the United States from Germany and was currently teaching at Yale University. After rejecting Graham's first idea for a script, the trio of Coolidge, Graham, and Hindemith opted on an exploration of the "Scene" from Stéphane Mallarmé's enigmatic poem *Hérodiade*.

Hindemith drew upon the recitative nature of the poem and the rhythm of the French language in constructing his piece. He details this in a descriptive preface he wrote in the score:

With Hérodiade an attempt was made to mould into one single concentrated form words, poetic idea, lyric expression, and music, without using the most commonly used and most natural means for such a fusion: Song. Since the music was written for the stage—Martha Graham has performed it in the form of a dance many times—the omnipotent factor of the singing voice would only have distracted the spectator's attention from the scene. Hence the desired congruence of poetry and music could only be achieved by giving the melodic lines that a singer would have sung to the instruments of the orchestra. Such an "orchestral recitation" could follow the text literally, even to the point of using the typical cadences of French poetry as a stimulant for the musical structure—it furthermore would free the composer from the limitations of the human voice without renouncing its power of declamation and articulation. And finally the melodies could be colored in ever changing tints, and the entire range of from the double bass' lowest tones to the flute's highest could be used. Such a many-sided expansion of musical melody, although lacking the human directness of vocal expression but adorned with the polished and brittle artificiality of instrumental motion, would it not be the adequate means of accompanying Mallarmé's wonderfully exalted but likewise polished, brittle, and artificial creation?

The text is a dialogue; the music tries to emphasize and to intensify its effects. A dialogue in which a woman, Hérodiade, facing unknown (and perhaps unknowable) emotions strives at an articulate expression of her reactions, supported and contradicted by her old nurse. [...] Throughout the piece the Nurse is characterized by a soft tune of the string instruments while Hérodiade's extremely erratic, expressive, and symbolistic sentences are given to all the instruments, either in soloistic or ensemble form.

Hindemith continues by outlining the eleven “sections” that make up the work, which is played without interruption:

1. A short Prélude prepares for the general mood of the composition. Several introductory measures of the strings are followed by a wide-spun melody, after which the opening measures are repeated by the wind instruments.
2. The piece proper begins with the two initial sentences of the Nurse...
3. a somewhat longer piece, Modéré, in which the flute and the oboe are the dominating instruments...
4. Again a short citation of the Nurses music...
5. Hérodiade's outburst...(Vif, all instruments)
6. The Nurse
7. Hérodiade's scene before the mirror...played as an Aria for the Clarinet using iniits short course a very wide range of the expression and the pitch of this instrument.
8. Agité. An exalted and energetic piece for all the instruments, interspersed with timid remarks of the Nurse.. leading to
9. a triumphant, valse-like Vif et passioné, the heart-piece of the composition...
10. Aria for the Bassoon...followed by a quiet Refrain of the woodwinds...
11. A brief, pathetic Finale...

Hérodiade was premiered on October 30, 1945 at the Coolidge Auditorium at the Library of Congress under Graham's dance title *Mirror Before Me*, with Graham dancing the lead role of Hérodiade. Also premiered on the same program were Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring*, and Darius Milhaud's *Jeux de Printemps*.

inscape*

- * n. 1. the essential, distinctive, and revelatory quality of a thing
2. a chamber orchestra

Founded in 2004, Inscape performs concerts that aim to engage audiences and provide a compelling way to explore both standard and non-standard works. With its flexible roster of musicians, Inscape programs explore a variety of styles. Praised by The Washington Post for their “guts and musicality,” Inscape’s energetic concerts are well-established in the Washington DC region and continue to garner praise from audiences and critics alike. Inscape has worked joyously and often with emerging American composers and has a commitment to presenting concerts featuring the music of our time. Since its inception, Inscape has commissioned over twenty works, including those heard on this album. Inscape members regularly perform with the National, Philadelphia, Virginia, Richmond, and Delaware symphonies, the Washington Opera Orchestra, and are members of the premiere Washington service bands. Former Inscape performers are currently members of orchestras across the United States and abroad. Inscape regularly performs at the The Episcopal Church of the Redeemer in Bethesda, Maryland, the National Gallery of Art, Strathmore Music Center, as well as other local and national venues. Inscape records exclusively for Sono Luminus.



Richard Scerbo

artistic director

In 2004, Artistic Director Richard Scerbo founded Inscape with the intent of introducing audiences to diverse chamber and ensemble repertoire. This unique brand of programming has made Inscape one of the most exciting ensembles in the Washington Metropolitan area. Under Mr. Scerbo's leadership, Inscape has commissioned and premiered numerous new works. In 2012, Mr. Scerbo conducted members of Inscape in a performance of Dominick Argento's opera *A Water Bird Talk* for the composer as part of a month-long festival celebrating his music at the University of Maryland. In 2013, he led Inscape in multiple performances at the National Gallery of Art, including a program highlighting the music of the Ballets Russes featuring Igor Stravinsky's *Renard* and Manuel de Falla's *El corregidor y la molinera*.

Mr. Scerbo co-founded his first orchestra, The Philharmonia Ensemble, in 2000 with violinist Dale Barltrop while studying at the University of Maryland. As Music Director, he led the orchestra in a series of diverse and exciting programs that included collaborations with artists such as pianist Rita Sloan, soprano Carmen Balthrop, and the Prism Brass Quintet. In 2003, he made his operatic debut conducting Dominick Argento's *A Water Bird Talk* with The Philharmonia Ensemble and G.F. Handel's *Xerxes* with the Maryland Opera Studio. That same year he conducted Igor Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du soldat* in a fully staged production at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center. Mr. Scerbo helped launch the Londontowne Symphony Orchestra (Maryland) in 2003 when he was invited to conduct their inaugural concert, and returned again in 2004 to conduct their season opening concert.

Mr. Scerbo is a graduate of the University of Maryland where he studied conducting with James Ross and bassoon with Daniel Matsukawa, Sue Heineman, and Linda Harwell. He has attended conducting programs in Austria and the Czech Republic working both with the International Festival Orchestra, Kromeriz, and the Bohuslav Martinu Philharmonic. He has also been guided in his studies by classes with Leonard Slatkin, Heinz Fricke, Gustav Meier, and with Johannes Schlaefli at the Musikhochschule Zurich.

In addition to his work with Inscape, Mr. Scerbo is the Associate Artistic Director and General Manager of the National Orchestral Institute, a training program for orchestra musicians on the threshold of their professional careers. He serves concurrently as Assistant Director for Artistic Planning and Operations at the University of Maryland School of Music.





Evan Ross Solomon

executive director &
associate artistic director

Evan Ross Solomon is widely-known for his versatility, depth of tone, and technical brilliance on both clarinet and bass clarinet. He has performed in recital at the Kennedy Center, Strathmore, National Gallery of Art, The Smithsonian Institute, and Montgomery College. He is a freelance artist in the Washington DC area and appears frequently with the Delaware Symphony Orchestra. He has also performed with The National Symphony Orchestra, The Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra, and the Mid-Atlantic Symphony. Mr Solomon has performed under such conductors as Valery Gergiev, Leonard Slatkin, Eri Klas, and Michael Stern. Last season, Mr. Solomon appeared as soloist in John Adams' Gnarly Buttons. He has worked with eminent composers such as Dominick Argento and Bruce Adolphe.

Mr. Solomon holds the BM degree from The Peabody Conservatory of Music, and the MM from the University of Maryland. His principal teachers include Anthony Gigliotti, Loren Kitt, and Paul Cigan. He is currently on the faculty of Montgomery College in

Rockville, MD.

Since 2005, Mr. Solomon has served as Executive Director of Inscape. During this tenure, he has worked exhaustively to commission, promote, and perform new works by emerging American composers. This has resulted in over 20 world premieres.

Violin 1 - Daniel Sender
Violin 2- Sarah D'Angelo
Viola - M. Bryce Bunner
Cello - Kacy Clopton
Bass - David George
Piano - R. Timothy McReynolds



Flute - Susanna Loewy
Oboe- Bethany Slater
Clarinet- Evan Ross Solomon
Bassoon - Benjamin Greanya
Horn - Mark Wakefield

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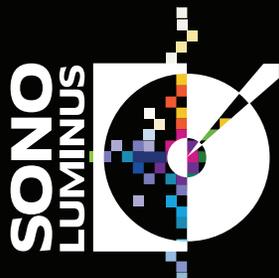
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