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**POST-CLASSICAL ENSEMBLE AWARDED \$200,000 BY MELLON
FOUNDATION FOR THEMATIC PROGRAMING INITIATIVES**

Post-Classical Ensemble, of Washington, D. C. has been awarded \$200,000 by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The award, announced by the Ensemble today, supports thematic programming initiatives, including touring programs and a Naxos DVD, through the 2012-2013 season.

Co-founded by Artistic Director Joseph Horowitz and Music Director Angel Gil-Ordóñez, the Ensemble has presented more than 50 events, mainly in the DC/Baltimore area, since its debut in 2003. Pursuing the conviction that inter-disciplinary humanities content will prove crucial to the institutional future of classical music, all P-CE programming is thematic, with linkage to film, theater, dance, and vernacular music; and to area colleges and universities.

The Mellon grant specifically targets an ongoing partnership between P-CE, the Music Center at Strathmore (Bethesda, Maryland), Georgetown University, and the Film Division of the National Gallery. As an "Educational Partner," Georgetown University integrates P-CE programs and themes into its Performing Arts curriculum, hosts academic conferences related to the programming, and busses students to Ensemble events at Strathmore. As an "Artistic Partner," P-CE collaborates with Strathmore Vice President of Programming Shelley Brown on multi-day festivals; it will also interface with Maryland Youth Orchestra concerts at Strathmore. The National Gallery Film Department, under Margaret Parsons, has since the Ensemble's inception hosted film events linked to P-CE concerts.

The planned P-CE festivals supported by the grant include “The Stravinsky Project,” “Celebrating Ives,” and “Mexican Revolution,” all at Strathmore; and “Falla/Stravinsky,” “Schubert Uncorked,” and “Interpreting Shostakovich,” all at Georgetown University. The participating artists include the pianists Jeremy Denk and Alexander Toradze, the flamenco singer Esperanza Fernandez, the Shostakovich scholar Solomon Volkov, the choreographer Igal Perry, and the film-maker Tony Palmer.

Both the Ives project, including a scripted program culling readings from Ives’s essays and letters, and a new production of Manuel de Falla’s *El Amor Brujo* choreographed by Igal Perry, are intended to tour. (In recent seasons, P-CE has presented programming at the University of Chicago and the Brooklyn Academy of Music.) The planned Naxos DVD will complete a trilogy of P-CE Naxos releases presenting classic films with newly recorded soundtracks. The Ensemble’s previous Naxos DVDs, with music by Virgil Thomson and Aaron Copland, showcased *The Plow that Broke the Plains*, *The River*, and *The City*. The new DVD will present the 1936 Mexican classic *Redes* with the Silvestre Revueltas score -- one of the greatest ever composed for film -- newly recorded.

In a joint statement, Horowitz and Gil- Ordóñez commented, “The conductor Theodore Thomas, who inspirationally propagated symphonic culture throughout the US in the late nineteenth century, preached: ‘A symphony orchestra shows the culture of the community.’ In many communities, large and small, Thomas’s prophecy proved true. In the course of the twentieth century, however, many American orchestras lost influence – in the community; in the culture at large. Post-Classical Ensemble is conceived in the conviction that if orchestras are to regain impact as agents of cultural identity, a broader humanities mandate would vitally enhance both their mission and their capacity. We are thrilled to have obtained this generous support from the Mellon Foundation, which conveys the imprimatur and helps provide the means to realize projects that do not rely upon standard repertoire and familiar formats to generate income. We see ourselves as cultivating a new and adventurous audience: our patrons expect from us the unexpected. And we inspire to impact nationally, at a crucial moment, on what orchestras and classical-music presenters can do to maintain a lively and significant cultural presence.”

Horowitz and Gil- Ordóñez said Post-Classical Ensemble looks forward to maintaining its long relationship with the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland at College Park, and other DC-area venues. Its Lou Harrison festival, this Spring, is hosted by George Washington University, with linked events at the National Gallery and the Indonesian Consulate.

“Strathmore is pleased to solidify our ongoing artistic partnership with Post-Classical Ensemble,” comments Shelley Brown. “The Stravinsky Project this April will introduce Stravinsky anew, emphasizing his Russian roots and challenging conventional wisdom about how his music should be performed. In eight hours of programming over two days, we’ll present an orchestra, four pianists, a chorus, a pianola version of *Les Noces*, and a photography exhibit including film. One DC premiere will be a four-piano version of the “Danse Sacrale” from *The Rite of Spring*. By organizing educational programs alongside

significant musical presentations, Strathmore and Post-Classical Ensemble will strive to convene a national musical conversation of new depth.”

“The Mellon Foundation lent support to a new national template for performing arts programming when they awarded this grant to Post-Classical Ensemble,” comments Anna Celenza, professor of music at Georgetown University. “Over the last three years, we have joined forces with Post-Classical Ensemble on a series of interdisciplinary conferences and multimedia performances: *Defining Mexico, Copland and the Cold War, Interpreting Liszt*. In each of these events, student actors and singers performed with Post-Classical Ensemble’s professional musicians, and faculty from various departments put the music into a historical/cultural context via public talks and classroom discussions. The Mellon grant will enable a leading professional ensemble to continue its deep engagement with one of the nation’s finest liberal arts universities. We’re looking forward to our future collaborations: *The Stravinsky Project, Celebrating Ives, Falla/Stravinsky, Schubert Uncorked, Interpreting Shostakovich, and Mexican Revolution*.”

Margaret Parsons, head of the National Gallery’s acclaimed film program, underscores the significance of the new partnership: “The rich accumulation of historic and artistic film production is often neglected as an essential source for understanding many aspects of cultural history, especially music. This new opportunity to work with Post-Classical Ensemble under the aegis of the Mellon grant will help us to stage an entire day of “Stravinsky and Film” on Saturday, April 9 -- with the premiere of a new restoration of Richard Leacock’s celebrated 1966 cinema-verite *A Stravinsky Portrait*, a piano performance by Alexander Toradze, and an appearance by director Tony Palmer as he introduces the Washington premiere of his 1982 masterwork *Stravinsky: Once at a Border* with footage of Nadia Boulanger and Jean Cocteau, among others.”

Program details and biographies follow. For further information: jh@josephhorowitz.com (telephone 917 209 4923) or agilordonez@post-classicalensemble.org (telephone 202 321 5795).

2010-2011:

The Stravinsky Project (April 8-9-10: Georgetown University, the National Gallery, Strathmore)

This festival explores the “Russian Stravinsky,” contradicting the composer’s own strictures against interpretation and his self-interpretation as a cosmopolitan exile. Components include the American premiere of the pianola version of *Les Noces*, the DC premiere of a major Richard Leacock Stravinsky documentary (part of a six-hour Stravinsky film festival including live music and the participation of Tony Palmer), a Stravinsky photograph exhibit, filmed interviews with Stravinsky descendants, a critical examination of Soulema Stravinsky’s revisionist edition of his father’s Piano Sonata, a Stravinsky improvisation, a GU Stravinsky conference, historic recordings, and much more. All five participating pianists are Soviet-born. The core P-CE program, exploring

Stravinsky's "Russian accent", includes the Symphonies for Wind Instruments, the Concerto for Piano and Winds, *Les Noces*, and the Danse sacrale from *The Rite of Spring* (arr. for four pianos and percussion – DC premiere). For full program information for all three days: www.post-classicalensemble.com. (With further support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the D.C. Commission on the Arts)

2011-2012:

"Celebrating Ives" (Nov. 3-4-5: Strathmore)

This festival, comprising two concerts and a conference, uses scripted excerpts from Ives' own writings, and from the writings of Emerson and Thoreau, to contextualize songs, piano, and orchestral music by a great American composer still too little known (and understood) by American audiences. Components include a one-man playlet about Thoreau, historic recordings, contributions by leading Ives scholars. Performers include pianist Jeremy Denk (performing and discussing the *Concord* Sonata; offering a lecture/performance on "Ives and Beethoven"), baritone William Sharp (in songs by Ives; in a lecture/performance on the popular sources of Ives' songs). Orchestral repertoire includes "The Unanswered Question," "In the Inn," Largo Cantabile, "Over the Pavements," and five Ives songs for baritone and orchestra, as orchestrated by John Adams. (With further support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Charles Ives Society.)

Falla/Stravinsky (Dec. 3-4: Georgetown University, the residence of the Spanish Ambassador)

These fully staged productions include a famous flamenco cantaora from Spain (Esperanza Fernandez) and a leading New York choreographer (Igal Perry) working alongside professional dancers and student actors. P-CE plans to tour its *Amor Brujo* -- conceived as a fresh alternative to both the concert suite and the (unwieldy) original version. In other words, we are taking a famous work that has only held the stage as a non-narrative concert suite, and aiming to create a reconceived staging, restoring the dance component and narrative dimension. With the participation of Antonio Muñoz-Molina (one of Spain's leading contemporary novelists). (With further support from the National Endowment for the Arts.)

"Schubert Uncorked" (March 31, 2012: Georgetown University; The National Gallery: date TBA)

This concert revisits one of P-CE's edgiest adventures: the unclassifiable bass trombone virtuoso David Taylor playing late Schubert songs with chamber orchestra accompaniment. Taylor's improvisations unforgettably seize on the harrowing existential content of this music; he has made Schubert/Taylor his own. P-CE is commissioning from him a trombone/chamber orchestra version of Schubert's *Arpeggione* Sonata, which we believe will become the first "classical" bass trombone concerto to enter the repertoire. The program also includes Schubert/Webern: Six German Dances; Bruckner: Adagio from String Quintet (arr. for string orchestra); Schubert/David Taylor: Three Songs for Bass Trombone and String Orchestra (PCE commission/world premiere). A linked program at the National Gallery presents Taylor in additional Schubert song

performances, plus the 1986 revisionist Schubert film biography *Notturmo* in juxtaposition with Hollywood's *The Melody Master* (1941).

(To see David Taylor play Schubert: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=copzIC4W278> and forward to 5:50.)

2012-2013 (Tenth Anniversary Season)

“Interpreting Shostakovich” (Georgetown University, the National Gallery)

Following a template Horowitz has used in DC and for Stanford Lively Arts, this festival interprets Shostakovich the man, and also his music, with recourse to biography, historic recordings, lecture/recital, and live performance. A central participant -- in a rare public appearance -- will be the cultural historian Solomon Volkov, who knew Shostakovich. The participating pianists will be Alexander Korsantia and George Vatchnadze. A multi-day Shostakovich film festival at the National Gallery will explore Shostakovich's work as a film composer; also included will be Tony Palmer's film version of Volkov's *Testimony* (with Ben Kingsley as Shostakovich, and Palmer and Volkov on hand to comment). Embedded in GU, the festival will ambitiously explore the relationship of music and politics. There will be two concerts - one with chamber and piano works, the other an orchestral program including the First Piano Concerto and the Eighth String Quartet (as arranged for string orchestra by Rudolf Barshai).

“Mexican Revolution” (Strathmore, Georgetown University, the National Gallery)

In celebration of its tenth anniversary, PC-E revisits its inaugural program, and realizes its long-planned *Revueltas* DVD project. *Redes* (1936) is an acknowledged masterpiece of the Mexican cinema, with cinematography by Paul Strand, direction by Fred Zinnemann, and music by Revueltas. For its marriage of music and the moving image, it ranks with the Eisenstein/Prokofiev *Alexander Nevsky*. It is also a vivid cameo of the Mexican Revolutionary cultural moment of Kahlo and Rivera. The first half of the main program will present Revueltas's complete songs. The second half: *Redes*, with live music. Linked to a Mexican film festival at the National Gallery.

ABOUT JOSEPH HOROWITZ

Joseph Horowitz has long been a pioneer in classical music programming, beginning with his tenure as Artistic Advisor for the annual Schubertiade at the 92nd Street Y. As Executive Director of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra, resident orchestra of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, he received national attention for “The Russian Stravinsky,” “American Transcendentalists,” “Flamenco,” and other festivals exploring the folk roots of concert works. Now an artistic advisor to various American orchestras, he has created more than three dozen interdisciplinary music festivals since 1985 – including the annual American Composers Festival presented by the Pacific Symphony Orchestra. In Fall 2008, he inaugurated the New York Philharmonic's “Inside the Music” series, writing, hosting, and producing a program about Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* Symphony; his subsequent and pending Philharmonic productions explore Dvorak,

Brahms, and Stravinsky.

Called "our nation's leading scholar of the symphony orchestra" by Charles Olton, former President of the American Symphony Orchestra League, Mr. Horowitz is also the award-winning author of eight books mainly dealing with the institutional history of classical music in the United States. Both his *Classical Music in America: A History* (2005) and *Artists in Exile: How Refugees from 20th Century War and Revolution Transformed the American Performing Arts* (2008) were named best books of the year by *The Economist*. As Project Director of an NEH National Education Project, he is the author of a book for young readers on Dvorak in America, linked to a state-of-the-art DVD. For the National Endowment for the Arts, Mr. Horowitz serves as Artistic Advisor to an annual national institute for music critics, based at Columbia University. A former *New York Times* music critic, Mr. Horowitz writes regularly for the *Times Literary Supplement* (UK) and contributes frequently to scholarly journals. He lectures widely in the United States and abroad. His many honors and awards include a Guggenheim Fellowship, two NEH fellowships, and a commendation from the Czech Parliament for his many festival projects exploring "Dvorak in America."

Website: www.josephhorowitz.com; Blog: www.artsjournal.com/uq

ABOUT ANGEL GIL- ORDÓÑEZ

The former Associate Conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra of Spain, Angel Gil-Ordóñez has conducted symphonic music, opera and ballet throughout Europe, the United States and Latin America . In the United States, he has appeared with the American Composers Orchestra, Opera Colorado, the Pacific Symphony, the Hartford Symphony, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, and the Orchestra of St. Luke's. Abroad, he has been heard with the Munich Philharmonic, the Solistes de Berne, at the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, and at the Bellas Artes National Theatre in Mexico City . In summer of 2000, he toured the major music festivals of Spain with the Valencia Symphony Orchestra in the Spanish premiere of Leonard Bernstein's *Mass*.

Born in Madrid , he worked closely with Sergiu Celibidache in Munich for six years. He also studied with Pierre Boulez and Iannis Xenakis in France . Currently the Music Director of Post-Classical Ensemble in Washington , D.C. , Mr. Gil-Ordóñez also holds the positions of Director of Orchestral Studies at Wesleyan University in Connecticut and Music Director of the Wesleyan Ensemble of the Americas .

A specialist in the Spanish repertoire, Mr. Gil-Ordóñez has recorded four CDs devoted to Spanish composers, in addition to Post-Classical Ensemble's Virgil Thomson and Copland CD/DVDs on Naxos .

In 2006, the King of Spain awarded Mr. Gil-Ordóñez the country's highest civilian decoration, [the Royal Order of Queen Isabella](#) (the equivalent to a knighthood) for his missionary work in the US, advocating and teaching Spanish music in its cultural context.

ABOUT POST-CLASSICAL ENSEMBLE

Co-founded by Joseph Horowitz and Angel Gil-Ordóñez, Post-Classical Ensemble has presented more than 50 events since its debut in 2003. Its tagline, “More than an Orchestra,” refers both to the thematic scope and unusual formats of its concerts, and its aspiration to enlarge its institutional mission to embrace collaborative and educational activities not normally associated with orchestras. In effect, P-CE is conceived as a radical experimental laboratory, testing the limits of possibility and impacting nationally and even internationally. A *Washington Post* feature on P-CE called the Ensemble “the most thought-provoking music group in town,” and continued:

It's certainly one of the most innovative, using its concerts as laboratories for musical thought experiments. Often focusing on a single piece -- or even a single movement from a single piece -- the group probes a work's cultural "back story," pulling away layer after layer of context to expose its innermost core. Their performances can be demanding -- but they're invariably beautiful, and never dull.

Anne Midgette's *Washington Post* announcement of the Ensemble's 2010-2011 season read in part: “This group, directed by Joe Horowitz and Angel Gil-Ordóñez, has carved out its niche by doing events other institutions don't, and this season is an excellent example of the benefits of ‘festival thinking.’”

A complete list of P-CE's major concerts may be found at www.post-classicalensemble.org (go to “News and Reviews”). Some highlights:

1. P-CE enjoys an exceptional relationship with the largest and best promoted/distributed classical music label: Naxos. P-CE's first, best-selling Naxos DVD (*The Plow that Broke the Plains* and *The River*, with newly recorded soundtracks) returned to general circulation two iconic American documentaries. Reviewers were amazed by the films; the restored Virgil Thomson soundtracks were called “revelatory.” A sequel DVD (*The City*, with music by Aaron Copland) was the subject of an hour-long documentary produced for national circulation by WFMT/Chicago. P-CE anticipates that the planned *Redes* DVD will impact on the international reputation of Silvestre Revueltas even more than Stokowski's historic 1949 recording of *Sensemaya*. Naxos has also issued a CD with P-CE performing *The Plow that Broke the Plains* and *The River* (complete scores). The Revueltas project will include a CD with *Redes* plus the complete Revueltas songs, sung by Eugenia León.

2. P-CE vigorously promotes Spanish and Mexican music in the conviction that these are repertoires drastically underserved by American orchestras and presenters. Silvestre Revueltas is by far the composer most performed by P-CE. Of Manuel de Falla, P-CE has presented the American stage premiere of *El Corregidor y la Molinera* (a full production by a major Spanish choreographer), two productions of Falla's *Master Peter's Puppet Show*, and (on half a dozen occasions) a contextualization of the otherwise esoteric Falla Keyboard Concerto (incorporating motets by Tomas Luis de Victoria, poetry by St. John

of the Cross, harpsichord works by Soler and others, and Spanish popular songs). In DC/Baltimore, New York, and Chicago, Post-Classical Productions has presented local and American premieres of many other Spanish works. Montsalvatge, Gerhard, and late Falla are special P-CE causes.

P-CE spearheaded a week-long Revueltas/Chavez festival for the Library of Congress in 2008; this included an all-Revueltas concert at the Coolidge Auditorium.

Post-Classical Production's advocacy of contemporary Mexican composers has included a program of works by Mario Lavista in DC, and premieres of music by Lavista and Ana Lara as part of a four-hour "Mexican Odyssey" marathon with interpolated visuals and commentary.

3. P-CE's Educational Partnership with GU is nationally unique. It takes four forms:

--P-CE engages students and faculty members, and student ensembles, as participants in public programming.

--P-CE furnishes performers and speakers for GU's Friday Afternoon Music Series – which in effect preps the GU community for upcoming P-CE events.

--GU (with three concert halls) hosts a variety of P-CE programs, including both concerts and conferences.

--GU students attend P-CE concerts, whether on campus or off. Busses and free tickets are furnished. They are prepped for these events, and also write reviews.

4. All P-CE concerts incorporate lighting design; the Ensemble has acquired a unique expertise in this department. A few examples:

-- Our recent Gershwin concert at Clarice Smith began in darkness. The audience heard Gershwin speaking, then performing his Second Prelude (from a radio broadcast). As a spotlight gradually identified Genadi Zagor, Zagor seamlessly supported Gershwin's final cadence and launched an improvisation on the Second Prelude. He then modulated into *Rhapsody in Blue*. The beginning of the clarinet solo was the lighting cue to bring up the lights on the band. There were gasps in the house.

-- For David Taylor's Schubert song improvisations in 2009, each of three songs was first performed by the baritone William Sharp (stage left, with piano). The house was black. A spotlight segregated Sharp and his accompanist, then faded as a second light faded up onto Taylor and the ensemble (stage right). This process was repeated three times.

-- For P-CE's "Falla and Flamenco" performances of *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*, Paul Bartlett created subtly changing colored washes for each movement.

5. As it targets specific composers (Falla, Revueltas, Montsalvatge, Gerhard) for repeated attention, P-CE targets specific post-classical artists (David Taylor, Genadi Zagor, the pipa performance artists Min Xiao-Fen). As a result of Zagor's *Rhapsody in Blue* with P-CE (with improvised solos), Zagor was engaged by Valery Gergiev to perform Gershwin with the Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra in St. Petersburg. From Taylor, P-CE will commission a trombone concerto arrangement of Schubert's *Arpeggione* Sonata; we are confident it will become the first "classical" trombone concerto to infiltrate the repertoire.