

LETTER FROM DAVID KATZ

October 2016

Dear Friends:

I am delighted to share with you MUSE of FIRE, my unique one-man play about conducting.

I am so very grateful to Roberta Carpenter, music director of the Oconomowoc Chamber Orchestra, for inviting me. Roberta and I studied together under the same conducting teacher—the man who is the antagonist in tonight’s play. She will be able to confirm that much of what I share with you from the stage really happened!

MUSE of FIRE is a true story about learning the conductor’s art, featuring a terrifying, old European maestro and his young pupil, and about how that student learns the power of great music to transform the heart and touch the soul.

First, we meet The Sorcerer, overwhelming in his fury, uncompromising in his standards—his brutal comments might make you laugh (or wince.) Then we encounter The Apprentice, innocent and terrified, eager and courageous—his ultimate success might make you smile (or even cry.)

Although there is only one actor onstage, MUSE of FIRE is actually a two-character drama, as I shift from teacher to student and back again. From the moment the young apprentice first experiences the wrath of the man who would become his sorcerer, until he last visits him on his deathbed, years later, MUSE of FIRE forms several arcs: from hatred to love, failure to triumph, life to death, and even beyond.

I am delighted to be here with you. Thanks for coming and please do stay afterward, if you wish to say hello.

David Katz

www.museoffiretheplay.org

Upcoming OCO Organization Events:

Sunday, October 23 Lake Country Orchestra 2 pm OAC

Sunday, January 8 OCO Spotlight – Film Showing, Fanfare Theme
Music Release and Basket Night 6:30 pm OAC

For more information:

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Saturday, October 8, 2016 at 7:30pm | Oconomowoc Arts Center



Hat City Music Theater, Inc.
presents

David Katz

in his 58th performance of

MUSE of FIRE

or "The Sorcerer's Apprentice"

a new play by David Katz

original production directed by **Charles Nelson Reilly**

"**Fireworks Music**" created by Mr. Katz and realized by
Audio Engineering Services, LLC

In the play Mr. Katz portrays these characters:

The Apprentice—Someone like his younger self

The Sorcerer—Maestro Charles Bruck, Master of the Monteux School

Conducting Students—Mr. Albatross, Miss Winterhazel, Mr. Stein

A Former Teacher—Maestro Vytautas Marijosius

Madame Bruck (Gaby)

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SCENES & MELODRAMAS*

*The use of the word *melodrama* in *MUSE of FIRE* refers to its original, musical meaning: when spoken text is accompanied by—or contrasted with—music.

ACT I — SORCERER

Overture

**Melodrama*: Sorcerer & Apprentice

The Thirty Bs

Colloquy/Anxiety

**Melodrama*: The Wagner & the Shouting

“I have a Thschool”

Maine Idyll

**Melodrama*: 3 Conductors and No Answers

Surgery

Intermission (15 minutes)

THE 2016 CHATFIELD AWARD honoring Tom Snyder (in memorium)

Chatfield Award video | Scott Sleider interview

Tom Snyder Tribute video

Dr. Pat Neudecker / Maureen Stapleton / Randy Otto as Winston Churchill

Presentation of the Chatfield Award

Oconomowoc Mayor, Mr. David Nold & OCO Music Director, Roberta Carpenter – Presenting

Joan Snyder, Luly Snyder, Maureen Stapleton, Ramon Aguirre – Receiving the Award

ACT II — APPRENTICE

Bastille Day

**Melodrama*: The Schumann & the Sorrow

Imitations—but all of them

**Melodrama*: A Survivor from Hancock

DeGaulle’s Tempo

**Melodrama*: Fireworks Music

Coda

STORY

ACT I

After the overture, anticipation: tonight, secrets are revealed. So much music—a lifetime of music. So many composers—which pieces hold the beauty we need to know?

The Apprentice is alone, remembering his Sorcerer, the man who would become his Muse: How, at first, he hated him and didn’t want to be his student. How he was captured by him, and then freed. How he learned to love him—and what happened on the last day. The Apprentice conjures the ghost of his Muse, but the Sorcerer expresses little interest, except to berate his ambitions and scold him for attending the wrong school. How did the Apprentice change from horrified observer, to unwilling participant, to eager disciple?

Years ago, in Maine, while the orchestra played Wagner, the Apprentice watched in awe as the Sorcerer turned a lesson into a student’s funeral. Back in the present, the Sorcerer appears again, as if from the dead. He is angry. Some facts the Apprentice got wrong. Now, the Muse insists, he will watch everything that happens, and correct his student, just as he did years before.

The scene shifts to events in the past: Backstage at the opera, the Apprentice rejects an invitation. At dinner, the Apprentice fails a test. But the invitations continue. Finally, drawn to Maine by its beauty, the Apprentice is introduced to the moon that lies.

STORY CONT

At the school, the Sorcerer makes a grand entrance. Hapless conducting students suffer his wrath. Soon, the Apprentice himself is the victim on the podium, punished for his superficiality. The notes and rhythms are not enough.

Music demands more. The cymbals crash. There must be a day of reckoning. When it comes, the Sorcerer proves so powerful that he takes control of everything, even wresting control of the play itself.

ACT II

The Sorcerer is alone, remembering a special performance from long ago. Soon, the Apprentice returns, and with the help of his Muse, reveals the musical experience that forever changed him. Epiphany. After a great composer arrives to help heal every loss, the Apprentice's future is revealed.

The scene shifts. Did the Sorcerer know his students imitated him? And what about the composers who were his friends (or his enemies)? Lessons. An encounter with music from the Holocaust is a harrowing experience for both men, one that illuminates the Sorcerer's character and the Apprentice's love.

Now old and sick, the Sorcerer can no longer leave his house; the orchestra goes to him. On his deathbed, a fantastic symphony of orchestral music overwhelms the scene. At the climax of the Fireworks Music, one conductor stands for all.

The Apprentice reflects on the awesome power of music. How does it transcend ages and oceans? But the Muse of Fire does not answer questions. The answers are to be found only in the music itself.

BIOGRAPHIES



David Katz **(playwright and actor)**

is an award-winning composer, conductor, writer, actor and arts entrepreneur. Originally from Danbury, Connecticut, Katz

attended the Hartt School of Music in Hartford, where he earned baccalaureate and masters degrees in composition and conducting, as well as the school's first artist's diploma in conducting. From 1984 to 1988, he studied under Maestro Charles Bruck at the Pierre Monteux School for Conductors and Orchestra Musicians in Hancock, Maine, and later founded and conducted there the Monteux Opera Festival and Opera Maine. He formed Hat City Music Theater in his home city in 2002 and the Candlewood Symphony in 2004. He serves both as artistic director. Katz is also founder and chief judge of The American Prize national nonprofit competitions in the performing arts, which

has awarded more than \$40,000 to musicians nationwide. Last spring, Katz celebrated his 30th season as the founding music director of the Chicago Bar Association Symphony Orchestra when he led nearly 300 lawyer-musicians in a gala performance of the music of Rodgers & Hammerstein at Symphony Center, Chicago.

In Chicago, Mr. Katz was Margaret Hillis's assistant conductor with the Elgin Symphony. Then, for twelve seasons, he was music director and artistic director of Michigan's Adrian Symphony Orchestra, where he founded Opera!Lenawee and created the Friedrich Schorr Memorial Performance Prize in Voice international competition. Honored in 2000 by the Governor of Michigan for his service to the arts, Katz has guest conducted all over the U.S., Canada and Mexico, including concerts with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Corpus Christi Symphony, the Mississippi Symphony, the Oregon Mozart Players, the Regina Symphony (Saskatchewan) and the Bellas Artes Chamber Orchestra (Mexico City), among scores of

others. He has partnered such artists as Itzhak Perlman, William Warfield and Misha Dichter in concert, and has collaborated with some of the greatest composers of the age, including Elliott Carter, William Schuman, Hans Werner Henze and Milton Babbitt.

As an actor, Katz's experience includes major and supporting roles in both drama and opera, as well as many appearances as narrator with orchestra. Honored by ASCAP and the National Federation of Music Clubs for his music, David Katz's compositions include works premiered by members of the Chicago Symphony; his music may be found in the catalogs of G. Schirmer and Carl Fischer, among others. Katz's first opera, *Light of the Eye*, was awarded special recognition in the Brooklyn College opera competition and has been performed many times. In addition to a planned off-Broadway engagement for *MUSE of FIRE*, Katz has toured the play internationally since 2007.



Charles Nelson Reilly (original director) was a Tony Award-winning actor and Broadway stage director, and an acclaimed opera director and teacher.

Far more than the zany television personality by which he was most often identified, Reilly nurtured the creation of a whole series of unique one-person stage plays. Most famously, he directed Julie Harris in her Tony Award-winning star turn in *The Belle of Amherst*, on the life and poetry of Emily Dickinson. Among his many Broadway directing credits were Ira Levin's *Break a Leg*, Larry Shue's *The Nerd*, and the revival of *The Gin Game*, starring Miss Harris and Charles Durning, for which Mr. Reilly was the sole American director to be nominated for a Tony in 1997. Mr. Reilly's career as an opera director included productions for Chicago Opera Theater, Dallas Opera, San Diego Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Toledo Opera, Milwaukee Opera and Opera Pacific. David

Katz and Charles Nelson Reilly were friends for three decades, first meeting through their mutual Hartford voice teacher, Mrs. Friedrich Schorr. Charles Nelson Reilly died in May 2007. *MUSE of FIRE* was his last play.



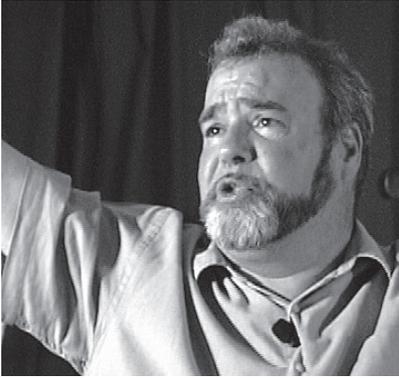
Charles Bruck (1911-1995) was for twenty-six years Master Teacher of the Pierre Monteux School for Conductors and Orchestra Musicians in Hancock, Maine, where he

mentored hundreds of conductors who now lead orchestras, choruses and opera companies all over the world.

Born in Timisoara, Hungary (now Romania), Bruck studied at the Vienna Conservatory and then in France, where he was one of Pierre Monteux's first conducting students in Paris. In 1936, simultaneous to earning the degree Doctor of Laws from the University of Paris, he was appointed associate conductor of the Paris Symphony Orchestra. Bruck went on to lead the Netherlands Opera, the Strasbourg Radio Symphony and the Paris Radio Philharmonic (ORTF). Following World War II, he was made an officer in the French Legion of Honor for his work in the Resistance.

A noted champion of contemporary composers and their music, Bruck conducted worldwide, leading over seven-hundred premieres by such diverse composers as Prokofiev, Poulenc, Martinu, Xenakis and Stockhausen. Bruck recorded for Columbia, Deutsche Grammophon, Erato and EMI. Most famous among his many discs are the historic first recording of Prokofiev's opera, *The Flaming Angel*, and Gluck's *Orfeo*, with the legendary Kathleen Ferrier.

Bruck made his U.S. conducting debut in 1936 and later guest-conducted many American orchestras, including the New Jersey Symphony. He served as Director of Orchestral Activities at the Hartt School of the University of Hartford in the early 1980s and was a visiting professor at Princeton University in 1992. Charles Bruck died in Hancock, Maine on July 16, 1995. He was buried in Jerusalem.



“Conducting. It’s not at all what you think it is. No—it’s not about waving your arm. It is a secret art. To learn the magic you need a Sorcerer, and you must become that Sorcerer’s Apprentice.”

Great conductors are like wizards with magic wands, wielding enormous power and perfect control, seemingly at will. Silently, apparently with baton alone, they “play” the one hundred musicians of a symphony orchestra with the same ease others handle a single instrument, while the greatest of them can make the experience of listening so profound, they bring whole audiences to tears.

How do great conductors learn to make great music? What powers become theirs to command? The answers are to be found in *MUSE of FIRE*, a play which lifts the veil on the conductor’s secret life, to reveal that masters of the baton are not born: they must be forged—in *fire*.

Based on true events

MUSE of FIRE is the story of a modern-day sorcerer and apprentice. Based on true events, it dramatizes the playwright’s experiences studying the art of conducting with Charles Bruck (1911-1995), the notorious Master Teacher of the Pierre Monteux Conducting School in Hancock, Maine, who ruled godlike over that world-renowned institution for more than twenty-five years.

Bruck was a maestro from the “old school,” tyrannical, demonic in his fury. He intimidated students, insulted them, screamed at them, even hit them—going to any lengths to forge them in the flames of his passion for the art. Even as his rages became legendary, so too his acerbic wit and cutting humor, and his uncompromising belief in the power and importance of music. Undeniably one of the 20th century’s greatest teachers of conducting, Charles Bruck was also one of the most feared, imitated and admired.

Charles Bruck is not as well known in the U.S. and Canada as some other conducting mentors, but his students certainly are. Among those who may be familiar to audiences are Hugh Wolff, former music director of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and the New Jersey Symphony, Ludovic Morlot, the newly-appointed music director of the Seattle Symphony, John Morris Russell, conductor of the Cincinnati Pops, Marc David, Enrique Diemecke, Neal Gittleman, Apo Hsu, Dennis Keene, Enrique Barrios, Marc Minkowski, Carlos Prieto, Emmanuel Plasson, and of course, David Katz.

Although there is only one actor onstage, *MUSE of FIRE* is actually a two-character drama in which Katz shifts from teacher to student and back again. From the moment the young apprentice first experiences the wrath of the man who would become his sorcerer, until he last visits him on his deathbed, years later, *MUSE of FIRE* forms several arcs: from hatred to love, failure to triumph, life to death. Along the way, Katz plays a host of other characters, including teachers, conducting students and observers, helping to complete a complex portrait of a brilliant, funny and difficult maestro at the height of his powers.

Great orchestral music

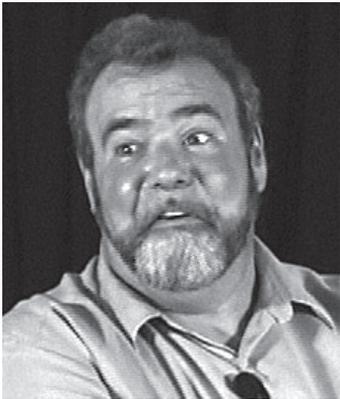
Integral to the drama of MUSE of FIRE is orchestral music by more than a dozen composers, including compositions by Wagner, Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky, and Schumann. The Fireworks Music, with which MUSE of FIRE climaxes, weaves excerpts from eighteen orchestral compositions into a unique aural quilt.

Performance History

The premiere of MUSE of FIRE in Maine in July 2005 coincided with the tenth anniversary of the death of Maestro Bruck. First performances took place at Oceanside Meadows Theater Barn in Prospect Harbor and Acadia Repertory Theater in Bar Harbor, both very close to where many of the original events depicted in the play took place. MUSE of FIRE has since been seen in an extended engagement in Chicago, in Baltimore, in Boston and Halifax, on tour in New York, Connecticut, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, and New Jersey, and in Canada, under the auspices of the Maine Center for the Arts. In addition to touring the U.S. and Canada in 2016-17, an off-Broadway production is in negotiation.

THOUGHTS ON THE “FIREWORKS MUSIC” | BY GORDON JONES

“That night, there were fireworks over the bay...As I had so many times before, but never would again, I named the shells as they exploded and opened so beautifully over my head...”



With these words, playwright David Katz, in the guise of the character he calls The Apprentice, begins the **Fireworks Music**, what might be the most memorable and unique part of his one-man play, MUSE of FIRE.

Fireworks were a regular part of summer celebrations in Maine during the years Katz attended the Pierre Monteux School. Young music students would gather on lawns or in parking lots in Bar Harbor or elsewhere along the coast to enjoy the show as it erupted out over Frenchman Bay. As each shell exploded, the playwright and his friends would call out the name of the composer whose music they thought best matched the color, shape, or force of each fusillade. A huge shimmering

chrysanthemum, all gold and glitter, might elicit a call of “Ravell!”; a ground-shaking explosion, “Beethoven!” At the end, during the finale, name upon named joined shell after shell as they ignited in the darkened sky at a furious pace, seeming to add a whole other canopy of temporary stars to the real ones that much more distant.

In MUSE of FIRE, Katz conflates the memory of the sights and sounds of those evenings of fireworks with the actual music of the composers he names. One after another, the music of each composer is heard on the soundtrack. Sometimes, the quotation is obvious, even to the most casual classical music listener. At other times, the excerpts are less easy to identify by name, but the emphasis is always on pieces that were the backbone of musical studies at the Monteux School in those years: the great romantics, French composers, early twentieth century classics. Sometimes, the works are heard

THOUGHTS ON THE “FIREWORKS MUSIC” CONT.

in juxtaposition, as at the beginning, when compositions by Ravel, Rachmaninoff and Beethoven collide with one another and then recede, in much the same way a firework opens, flares, and then expires, followed by another.

At other times, the music of one piece spills into the next, more likely connected by tempo or energy rather than by period, style or nationality. These links are often subjective, the result of Katz’s nearly forty years of listening, conducting and remembering. Surely only a conductor/composer could hear in pieces as diverse as Ravel’s *Daphnis and Chloe*, Smetana’s *Bartered Bride*, Reznicek’s *Donna Diana* and Mendelssohn’s *Scotch Symphony* a thread that binds them all. But in performance the results of these juxtapositions can sound somehow inevitable.

The **Fireworks Music** can also be understood in a different way. Within sight and hearing of the display, a great conductor lies dying. In the delirium of his illness, memories of a lifetime of music—of literally thousands of concerts played and conducted—are jumbled together in his mind: Janacek, Franck, Saint-Saens, Berlioz, Bartok—their music enters or recedes, is clearly recognized or barely audible. At the climax, the *Fireworks Music* weaves music from the Nielsen “Inextinguishable” Symphony, the Mahler 4th Symphony and the Sibelius 5th into an audible fabric. At last, one final new voice is heard. As the great man dies, a few seconds of purity in the cleansing G major of Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro* brings the *Fireworks Music* to a gentle close.

Is the **Fireworks Music** a new composition? It is surely more than mere pastiche: the selections have been chosen with too much care. Certainly the technique of its creation is not new. One need only remember the first flowering of so-called “electronic” music in the 1950s to find a precedent, when composers such as Vladimir Ussachevsky and Otto Luening combined pre-recorded elements on tape to create new compositions. That technique was called “musique concrete”, and although Katz does not manipulate his materials by adjusting the speed or direction of the excerpts, as those composers did, the *Fireworks Music* is surely some sort of latter-day relative.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This performance is possible because of the stellar support of the OCO Board of Directors.

Paraphrase of a line from the libretto of *Death in Venice*, opera by Benjamin Britten, text by Myfawnwy Piper.

Paraphrase of the words spoken by Mr. Chris Frosheiser, in memory of his son, Kurt Frosheiser, PV2, U.S. Army.

A Survivor from Warsaw, text and music by Arnold Schoenberg, used by permission of Belmont Music, copyright holder.

The playwright offers thanks, in absentia, to my dear friend, Charles Nelson Reilly, to Ruth Draper, Spalding Gray, Uta Hagen, Abe Burrows and the “Beloved Celestials,” for their shining example, always to Julie Harris, and to Diane Kern.

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