Death staged a musical duel using instruments from the popular music video game Guitar Hero. One can hardly imagine old-school maestros like Masur or Maazel doing such a thing (though Bernstein might have). In truth, Gilbert has been omnipresent in the media: he told the New York Times where he buys his bagels, and has begun writing “Curiously Random,” an entertaining and informative blog that appears irregularly at www.musicalamerica.com.

The young music director is a New York Philharmonic insider; both his parents played violin in the orchestra, and his mother, Yoko Takebe, still does (his father retired a few years ago). A child violinist, Gilbert studied music both at Juilliard in New York and Curtis in Philadelphia. At Juilliard, he had his first chance to conduct during a reading session of the first movement of Dvořák’s Sixth Symphony. “That was a crucial experience, a powerful experience, an eye-opening experience,” he says; Ronald Braunstein, the conductor of the pre-college orchestra, told him, “I think you have something.” Today, Gilbert is director of conducting and orchestral studies at Juilliard.

In college, Gilbert joined the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra and concentrated in music, even though “there were still people in the department who paradoxically believed that music should be seen and not heard,” he recalls. “I gravitated toward the faculty who were active in composition and performance—Earl Kim, Leon Kirchner, and Peter Lieberson.” As a senior, he conducted the Bach Society Or-

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**Open Book**

**On Behavioral Ethics**

**Could the financial crisis** have been solved by giving all individuals involved more ethics training? If the training resembled that which has historically and is currently being used, the answer to that question is no. Ethics interventions have failed and will continue to fail because they are predicated on a false assumption: that individuals recognize an ethical dilemma when it is presented to them. Ethics training presumes that emphasizing the moral components of decisions will inspire executives to choose the moral path. But the common assumption this training is based on—that executives make explicit trade-offs between behaving ethically and earning profits for their organizations—is incomplete. This paradigm fails to acknowledge our innate psychological responses when faced with an ethical dilemma.

Findings from the emerging field of behavioral ethics—a field that seeks to understand how people actually behave when confronted with ethical dilemmas—offer insights that can round out our understanding of why we often behave contrary to our best ethical intentions. Our ethical behavior is often inconsistent, at times even hypocritical. Consider that people have the innate ability to maintain a belief while acting contrary to it. Moral hypocrisy occurs when individuals’ evaluations of their own moral transgressions differ substantially from their evaluations of the same transgressions committed by others. In one research study, participants were divided into two groups. In one condition, participants were required to distribute a resource (such as time or energy) to themselves and another person and could make the distribution fairly or unfairly. The “ allocators” were then asked to evaluate the ethicality of their actions. In the other condition, participants viewed another person acting in an unfair manner and subsequently evaluated the ethicality of this act. Individuals who made an unfair distribution perceived this transgression to be less objectionable than did those who saw another person commit the same transgression. This widespread double standard—one rule for ourselves, a different one for others—is consistent with the gap that often exists between who we are and who we think that we should be.

Traditional approaches to ethics, and the traditional training methods that have accompanied such approaches, lack an understanding of the unintentional yet predictable cognitive patterns that result in unethical behavior. By contrast, our research on bounded ethicality focuses on the psychological processes that lead even good people to engage in ethically questionable behavior that contradicts their own preferred ethics. Bounded ethicality comes into play when individuals make decisions that harm others and when that harm is inconsistent with these decision-makers’ conscious beliefs and preferences. If ethics training is to actually change and improve ethical decision-making, it needs to incorporate behavioral ethics, and specifically the subtle ways in which our ethics are bounded. Such an approach entails an understanding of the different ways our minds can approach ethical dilemmas and the different modes of decision-making that result.