

"Masterworks of the 20th Century"
Distinguished Visitor
Michel Lethiec, clarinet
with
Guillaume Tardif, violin
Tanya Prochazka, cello
Patricia Tao, piano

Friday, February 13, 2004 at 8:00 pm



Arts Building
University of Alberta

Program



DEPARTMENT OF
MUSIC

Program

Première Rhapsodie for Clarinet and Piano (1910) Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

Suite from *L'Histoire du Soldat*

for Clarinet, Violin and Piano (1918)

Igor Stravinsky
(1882-1971)

- I. Marche du Soldat
- II. Le violon du Soldat
- III. Petit concert
- IV. Tango-Valse-Ragtime
- V. Danse du Diable

Intermission

Quatuor pour la fin du temps for Clarinet,
Violin, Cello and Piano (1940-41)

Olivier Messiaen
(1908-1992)

- I. Liturgie de crystal
- II. Vocalise pour l'ange qui annonce la fin du temps
- III. Abîme des oiseaux
- IV. Intermède
- V. Louange à l'éternité de Jésus
- VI. Danse de la fureur, pour les sept trompettes
- VII. Fouillis d'arcs-en-ciel, pour l'ange qui annonce la fin du temps
- VIII. Louange à l'immortalité de Jésus

Program Notes

Claude Debussy

b. 22 August 1862~ St. Germain-en-Laye

d. 25 March 1918~ Paris

Rhapsodie for Clarinet and Piano (1910)

Intended as a competition piece at the Paris Conservatoire where Debussy adjudicated wind examinations for wind instruments; the Rhapsodie for clarinet and piano was written in 1910. The exquisitely conceived piece was first performed by P. Mimart, the French clarinetist who likely inspired the work. On the occasion of the performance, Debussy spontaneously declared it to be "one of the most pleasing pieces I have ever written."

The initial marking, *Rêveusement lent* (dreamlike, slow), is later cast aside as the extended movement gathers surprising force. Constant changes of tempo and mood that are poetic in one moment and capricious in the next, provide moments for rich expressivity, virtuosity and considerable technical difficulty.

Although the small-scale work is inevitably dwarfed by other works Debussy wrote at the time such as the orchestral *Images* and the piano Preludes, the Rhapsodie is a thoroughly characteristic product of Debussy's best period. So delighted by the piece; Debussy prepared an orchestral version in 1911, which heightens its sensuous impact.

Igor Stravinsky

b. 5/17 June 1882~Oranienbaum [now Lomonosov] near St. Petersburg

d. 6 April 1971~ New York

Suite from *L'Histoire du Soldat* (arr. 1919)

In an attempt to overcome the considerable effects of World War I, which left Stravinsky on the brink of financial ruin, the composer and his friend Ramuz (also suffering the consequences of the war) decided to form a small traveling theatre company.

The result was *L'Histoire du Soldat*, a story adapted from Alexander Afanasyev's fantastic tales about 19th century army life. The story depicts a devil in disguise, who trades a magic book for a soldier's fiddle. The hero meets his doom when he tries to go back home to his former life while keeping the Princess he has met during his travels. The soldier, about to cross the frontier into his home country, looks back at his princess, and is recaptured by the devil. In this final gesture Stravinsky realizes his first treatment of the Orpheus myth (the connection of which is reinforced by the fact that the soldier's soul is represented by a musical instrument, his violin). The piece, however is also a Faust story, in which the soldier is duped into selling his soul to the devil in exchange for earthly riches.

Technically, *L'Histoire du soldat* is a compendium of rhythmical and metrical devices similar to those Stravinsky had developed since *Fireworks* (1908). Aesthetically, Stravinsky admits the outside influence of jazz, which he had recently discovered. Stravinsky's assimilation of this fresh musical element heralded the process of widening and enlarging his musical language, which would continue to progressively mark his work.

In 1919 Stravinsky arranged a suite based on *L'Histoire du Soldat* for violin, clarinet and piano. Curiously, Stravinsky, here violates two principles upon which he had based the original work: he omits one of the *Histoire's* characteristic sounds, "the punctuation of the drums," and introduces the piano that had initially been absent both to avoid pianistic virtuosity, but also to prevent the work from sounding like a reduction or arrangement.

The Suite was likely a gesture of friendship to Werner Reinhart, who was not only an excellent clarinetist, but also had financed the premiere of the theatre work. Arranged for clarinet, violin and piano, the work premiered at a concert series put on by Reinhart in December of 1919. Although the more familiar Concert Suite (arranged by Stravinsky for trombone, bassoon, bass, and percussion) includes eight movements of the original work, the smaller Suite has only five: The Soldier's March (with which the theatre production begins), The Soldier's Violin, The Little Concert (scene change music), Tango-Waltz-Ragtime (the sequence to which the princess rises from her sickbed), and The Devil's Dance.

Olivier Messiaen

b. 10 December 1908~ Avignon

d. 28 April 1992~ Paris

Quatuor pour la fin du temps (1940)

Quatuor pour la fin du temps (*Quartet for the end of time*) was written while Messiaen was a prisoner of war in the Nazi camp of Görlitz, Silesia. The work was composed for three musicians Messiaen met while in the camp: violinist, Jean Le Boulaire; clarinetist, Henri Akoka, and cellist, Etienne Pasquier.

The work was first performed at Görlitz in January of 1941 for 5000 French, Belgian, and Polish prisoners. While Le Boulaire and Akoka were strangely permitted to keep their instruments; the piano and cello had to be supplied by the Germans. The piano, played by Messiaen, had failing keys and the cello only three strings and yet "never," said the composer, "have I been heard with as much attention and understanding."

Although the vision of the Angel of the Apocalypse who "lifted up his right hand towards heaven and swore an oath. . . that there should be no more Time" (Apoc. 10: 5-6) serves as the point of departure, Messiaen emphasized that the work was not intended to be a commentary upon the Apocalypse. Rather, he drew attention to the double meaning of the title, *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*, which also expressed his desire for the end of musical time based on the equal durational divisions of classical music—a tendency already discernable in previous works.

The instrumental combination is doubtless not one which Messiaen would have chosen had it not been for the extraordinary circumstances and yet he obtains from the instruments maximum variety not only through the capabilities of the individual instruments, but also through the use of instrumental subgroups.

While only four of the work's eight movements are for the entire ensemble, the inter-relational nature of the work's movements provides cohesion to the piece as a whole. With the exception of *Liturgie de cristal* (*Liturgy of crystal*), all the movements share some degree of thematic, textual, tonal, stylistic, or theological relationships.

The opening idea of *Vocalise, pour l'Ange qui annonce la fin du Temps* (*Vocalise for the Angel who announces the end of Time*), which conjures the power of the strong angel returns to be developed in *Fouillis d'arcs-en-ciel, pour l'Ange qui annonce la fin du Temps* (*Jumble of rainbows for the Angel who announces the end of Time*). *Abîme des oiseaux* (*Abyss of the birds*), which simultaneously conveys time as the abyss of sadness and weariness and "our longing for light, stars, rainbows and jubilating vocalizes" is thematically related to the more extroverted scherzo, *Intermède* (*Interlude*).

Louange à l'Éternité de Jésus (*Praise to the Eternity of Jesus*) and *Louange à l'Immortalité de Jésus* (*Praise to the immortality of Jesus*) are theologically related. In *Praise to the Eternity of Jesus*, the long and infinitely slow phrase of the cello magnifies the eternity of the powerful and mild Word—here, Jesus. The broad violin solo with piano accompaniment in *Praise to the immortality of Jesus* addresses the second aspect of Jesus: "Jesus the Man, to the word that has become flesh, the immortal reborn one who imparts us his life."

Notes by Deanna Davis

Born in Poitiers, France, **Michelle Lethiec** grew up in Bordeaux, studying at the university and the music conservatory. He went on to the prestigious Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris, and made his New York debut in 1981 in Carnegie Hall with pianist Denis Weber performing the Copland *Concerto*. As an enthusiastic performer of contemporary music, Mr Lethiec has premiered many new works in France, including the Ballif *Concerto* in the Centre Pompidou in Paris (in the Pierre Boulez IRCAM series).

As soloist, he has performed concertos under the baton of Philippe Entremont, Philippe Bender and Paul Sacher, and has performed with ensembles such as the Scottish Baroque Ensemble, the Zurich Collegium Musicum, the Israel Chamber Orchestra and the English Chamber Orchestra. His impressive discography includes over twenty CDs, two of which have been awarded the Grand Prix du Disques (*Asceticisms* of Jolivet and *Contrasts* of Bartok).

Michel Lethiec is artistic director of the Casals Festival in Prades. He looks forward to each summer in the wonderful Catalan city, and in the Abbaye Saint Michel de Cuxa, where world-renowned artists join over one hundred students and teachers in an international chamber music academy. A distinguished and sought-after teacher, Mr Lethiec teaches at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris and at the Conservatoire de Nice. He was the first Western European clarinetist to be invited to the Shanghai Conservatory and is regularly invited to give master classes in such important Conservatories as Moscow and Leningrad. This year he will be a guest teacher at the Britten School, the University of Jerusalem and the Conservatories of Shanghai, Beijing, Hong Kong and Lausanne.

Violinist **Guillaume Tardif** has appeared as soloist with many orchestras, including the Lima Philharmonic (Peru), the Remenyi Orchestra (Hungary), the Eastman Virtuosi (NYC), the New Eastman Symphony (Rochester, NY), and the Amadeus Ensemble (Toronto). He has collaborated with leading artists such as fortepianist Malcolm Bilson, violinist Moshe Hammer, and vocalist Bobby McFerrin, and has performed for broadcast on radio and television in Canada, Europe and South America. A busy recitalist, his

recent concerts have included the Paganini 24 Caprices -playing a 1714 Stradivarius loaned by the Eastman Collection, and the original programs 'Paganini with Guitar', 'Music for Solo Violin', 'A Romantic Evening' and 'Virtuoso Encores' (upcoming CD in October, on Dell'Arco label). A graduate of the Eastman School of Music (*Doctor of Musical Arts*) and Conservatoire du Québec (*Premier Prix de Violon avec Grande Distinction*), Guillaume Tardif now teaches at the University of Alberta. Guillaume Tardif's recent compositions include solo violin transcriptions and cadenzas for concertos by Mozart and Paganini. A sought-after pedagogue, Dr Tardif has recently presented masterclasses across Canada and Hungary (Bela Bartok Institute, Zoltan Kodaly Conservatory, National Academy of Sciences). Plays for this concert a Joseph Panormo violin (1801).

Originally Australian, **Tanya Prochazka** studied at the Paris Conservatoire with Andre Navarra (cello), Jean Hubeau (chamber music) and Indiana University with Janos Starker. International soloist, recitalist and chamber musician. She was cellist of Ensemble I, Vienna; principal cellist of Scottish Baroque Ensemble, London Mozart Players, English Sinfonia; taught at the Royal Academy and Guildhall School, London, Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne, Australian National Academy of Music. Ms Prochazka gives regular masterclasses and orchestra clinics. She records for Atma and Arktos featuring French, American, English and Czech music.

Hot off the press is her world premier recording of the "New Goldberg Variations", with pianist Jacques Despres, of variations composed by leading American composers Frazelle, Rouse, Lieberson, Corigliano, Schickele and Danielpour on the Goldberg Aria theme by Bach. This adds to her growing discography of CDs: "American Cello Masterpieces", "Poulenc, Fauré and Saint-Saëns", "Landsmal", Canadian Solo Cello works by Fisher and Ho, and "The Passionate Englishman". Soon to be released is "Bohemian Woods", music by Dvořák, Janáček and Martinu, with pianist Milton Schlosser.

Patricia Tao Joined the U of A faculty in 2002. Performed for 10 years as pianist of the Guild Trio. Tours in Europe as "Artistic Ambassador" for the United States and throughout the U.S. for Columbia Artist's Community Concert series. Residencies at the Tanglewood Music Center and the University of Virginia. Live radio broadcasts on NPR's "Performance Today," WNYC's "Around New York," WQXR's "The Listening Room," and the St. Louis public television series "Premiere Performances." Commissions and premieres of new works by leading American composers, including William Bolcom, Harvey Sollberger, and Sheila Silver. Has recorded on the CRI label. Solo CD of works by Schubert, Liszt and Corigliano, recently released by Arktos.

Bachelor of Arts from Harvard University, Master of Music with Distinction from Indiana University, and Doctor of Musical Arts from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Principal teachers were Leonard Shure, Gyorgy Sebok, and Gilbert Kalish. Chamber music studies with Bernard Greenhouse, Leon Fleisher, Julius Levine and Timothy Eddy. Has also taught at Western Washington University and the University of Virginia.

Upcoming Events

February

14 Saturday, 8:00 pm

Faculty and Friends

Aaron Au, violin

Russell Whitehead, trumpet

Janet Smith, soprano

Marnie Giesbrecht, organ

Sylvia Shadick-Taylor, piano

Program will include works by

Handel, Deegan, Tiefenbach and Ewazen

Admission: \$10/student/senior, \$15/adult

20 Monday, 4:00-6:00 pm

Cello Masterclass

with Visiting Artist **Denise Djokic, cello**

Studio 27, Fine Arts Building

General admission: \$15 at the door

For more information, please call

492-8112

23 Monday, 12:00 pm

Noon Hour Organ Recital

A variety of organ repertoire played by students, faculty and guests of the University of Alberta.

Free admission

25 Wednesday, 8:00 pm

Doctor of Music Recital

Magdalena Adamek, piano

Free admission

29 Sunday, 3:00 pm

The University of Alberta

Jazz Choir: *Happin'*

Holy Trinity Anglican

10037 - 84 Avenue

Free admission

29 Sunday, 8:00 pm

Music at Convocation Hall

Martin Riseley, violin

Janet Scott-Hoyt, piano

Works by Debussy, Prokofiev and Strauss

Admission: \$10/student/senior, \$15/adult

March

1 Monday, 12:00 pm

Music at Noon, Convocation Hall

Student Recital Series

Featuring students from the Department of Music

Free admission

1 Monday, 3:30 pm

Workshop

with Visiting Artist

Clemens Merkel, violin

Studio 27, Fine Arts Building

Free admission

1 Monday, 8:00 pm

University of Alberta and Grant

MacEwan Jazz Bands

Ken Klause and Raymond Baril,

Directors

1 Monday, 8:00 pm

Visiting Artist Recital

Clemens Merkel, solo violin

Works by Berio, Sciarrino, and others

Studio 27

Please donate to Campus Food Bank



Unless otherwise indicated

Admission: \$10/adult, \$5/student/senior

Convocation Hall, Arts Building, University of Alberta

Please note: All concerts and events are subject to change without notice. Please call 492-0601 to confirm concerts (after office hours a recorded message will inform you of any changes to our schedule).