

*Presents*

# Modern Music Ensemble

## Inverted Space

January 31, 2014

7:30 PM

Meany Studio Theater

### PROGRAM

*QUATRAIN II* (1977) ..... TORU TAKEMITSU (1930-1996)

Angelique Poteat, *clarinet*; Luke Fitzpatrick, *violin*;  
Sonja Myklebust, *cello*; Brooks Tran, *piano*

*CHANGING LIGHT* (2002) ..... KAIJA SAARIAHO (b. 1952)

Luke Fitzpatrick, *violin*; Kristin Vogel-Lindenmuth, *soprano*

*QUATUOR POUR LA FIN DU TEMPS* (1940) ..... OLIVIER MESSIAEN  
(1908-1992)

Angelique Poteat, *clarinet*; Sol Im, *violin*;  
Sonja Myklebust, *cello*; Brooks Tran, *piano*

CLASSICAL

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**KING FM 98.1**

Originally composed for clarinet, violin, cello, piano with orchestra in 1975—then titled *Quatrain*—TAKEMITSU reworked the piece for the chamber ensemble unaccompanied in 1977. *QUATRAIN II* displays the obvious hallmarks of Takemitsu’s style—the spirit of nature and Japanese art, harmonies reminiscent of Debussy as well as the Second Viennese School, and most notably, the influence of Messiaen, particularly his *Quartet for the End of Time*; Takemitsu was inspired to compose the first *Quatrain* after meeting with Messiaen for a lesson and hearing Messiaen play his *Quartet*. Not only does *Quatrain II* call for the same instrumentation, Takemitsu also makes heavy use of octatonic and whole-tone gestures as well as recurring motifs that almost replicate those found in Messiaen’s *Quartet*. But the resemblance between the works goes beyond concrete similarities and into philosophical and metaphysical realms. Takemitsu referred to Messiaen as his “spiritual mentor,” and both the *Quartet* and *Quatrain II* convey this bond, each piece expressing the composers’ conception and exploration of time and eternity.

~Brooks Tran

KAJJA SAARIAHO’S *CHANGING LIGHT* was first performed on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2002, set to a poem by Rabbi Jules Harlow. The music emphasizes the gradual shift of tone coloration. These shifts occur in many different forms: from the extreme realms of *sul ponticello* (on the bridge) to *sul tasto* (over the fingerboard), the slides between two different pitches, and the juxtaposition of pitched to harmonic notes through trills. Saariaho chooses to accentuate the space between these shifts, as opposed to the beginning and the end of the notes. These changing colors, or lights, weave around the soprano line that expresses the poem through the high end of the register. This leads to the culminating message: renewal through change.

~Luke Fitzpatrick

### *CHANGING LIGHT*

*Light and darkness, night and day.  
We marvel at the mystery of the stars.  
Moon and sky, sand and sea.  
We marvel at the mystery of the sun.  
Twilight, high noon, dusk and dawn.  
Though we are mortal, we are Creation’s crown.  
Flesh and bone, steel and stone.  
We dwell in fragile, temporary shelters.  
Grant steadfast love, compassion, grace.  
Sustain us, Lord; our origin is dust.*

*Splendor, mercy, majesty, love endure.  
We are but little lower than the angels.  
Resplendent skies, sunset, sunrise.  
The grandeur of Creation lifts our lives.  
Evening darkness, morning dawn.  
Renew our lives as You renew all time*

Rabbi Jules Harlow

MESSIAEN composed his *QUATUOR POUR LA FIN DU TEMPS* (*Quartet for the End of Time*) in 1940 while a prisoner of war at the Stalag 8A camp, in Görlitz, Germany. *QUATUOR* finds inspiration from texts in the Bible, specifically from the Revelation of St. John the Divine in the Apocrypha, passage 10.1-7:

I saw a mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in cloud, with a rainbow round his head. His face was like the sun, his feet like pillars of fire. He planted his right foot on the sea, his left on the land and, standing on the sea and on the earth, he raised his hand to heaven and swore by Him who lives for ever and ever, saying: There shall be no more time; but on the day the seventh angel sounds the trumpet, the hidden purpose of God will have been fulfilled.

*QUATUOR* contributes several firsts to the field of composition. Messiaen's use of isorhythmic patterns (a rhythmic sequence overlaid on a melodic shape, each reoccurring continuously but independently from one another), the use of non-retrogradable rhythm, that is to say a rhythmic palindrome, and the notation of actual birdsong, which can be heard in the first movement.

Messiaen himself prepared a detailed and colorful description of the eight movements:

~Sonja Myklebust

*I. Liturgy of Crystal:* Between the hours of three and four in the morning, the awakening of the birds: a thrush or a nightingale soloist improvises, amid notes of shining sound and a halo of trills that lose themselves high in the trees. Transpose this to the religious plane: you will have the harmonious silence of heaven.

*II. Vocalise, for the angel who announces the end of time:* The first and third parts evoke the power of that mighty angel, his hair a rainbow and his clothing mist, who places one foot on the sea and one foot on the earth. Between these sections are the ineffable harmonies of heaven. From the

piano, soft cascades of blue-orange chords, encircling with their distant carillon the plainchant-like recitativo of the violin and cello.

*III. Abyss of the birds-Clarinet solo:* The abyss is Time, with its sadnesses and tedium. The birds are the opposite of Time; they are the desire for light, for stars, for rainbows and for jubilant outpourings of song!

*IV. Intermezzo-Scherzo:* Of a more outgoing character than the other movements but related to them, nonetheless, by various melodic references.

*V. Praise to the Eternity of Jesus:* Jesus is here considered as one with the Word. A long phrase, infinitely slow, by the cello expatiates with love and reverence on the everlastingness of the Word, mighty and dulcet, "which the years can in no way exhaust." Majestically the melody unfolds itself at a distance both intimate and awesome. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

*VI. Dance of fury for the seven trumpets:* Rhythmically the most idiosyncratic movement of the set. The four instruments in unison give the effect of gongs and trumpets (the first six trumpets of the Apocalypse attend various catastrophes, the trumpet of the seventh angel announces the consummation of the mystery of God). Music of stone, formidable sonority; movement as irresistible as steel, as huge blocks of livid fury, of ice-like frenzy. Listen particularly to the terrifying fortissimo of the theme in augmentation and with change of register of its different notes, toward the end of the piece.

*VII. Clusters of rainbows, for the angel who announces the end of time:* Here certain passages from the second movement return. The mighty angel appears, and in particular the rainbow that envelops him (the rainbow, symbol of peace, of wisdom, of every quiver of luminosity and sound). In my dreamings I hear and see ordered melodies and chords, familiar hues and forms; then, following the transitory stage, I pass into the unreal and submit ecstatically to a vortex, a dizzying interpenetration of superhuman sounds and colors. These fiery swords, these rivers of blue-orange lava, these sudden stars: Behold the cluster, behold the rainbows!

*VIII. Praise to the Immortality of Jesus:* Expansive violin solo balancing the cello solo of the fifth movement. Why this second glorification? It addresses itself more specifically to the second aspect of Jesus—to Jesus the man, to the Word made flesh, raised up immortal from the dead so as to communicate His life to us. It is total love. Its slow rising to a supreme point is the ascension of man toward his God, of the Son of God toward his Father, of the mortal newly made divine toward paradise.