

University of Washington
THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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presents the

CONTEMPORARY GROUP
Joël-François Durand, *director*

DAI 13,277
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FRENCH
MUSIC
IN THE 20TH
CENTURY

School
of
Music
University
of
Washington

8:00 PM
June 4, 1998
Meany Theater

PROGRAM

DAT
101 Quatuor pour la Fin du Temps, V: "Louange à l'Éternité de Jésus", 11:13
for Cello and Piano (1940).....Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)
Cello: Rajan Krishnaswami
Piano: David Kopp

102 Mémoriale, for flute and 8 instruments (1985).....4:57 Pierre Boulez (b. 1925)
Flute solo: Sarah Bassingthwaite Violin 3: Julie Chapman
Horn 1: Ryan Stewart Viola 1: Michael Lieberman
Horn 2: Annika Dragovich Viola 2: Lisa Killinger
Violin 1: Eric Rynes Cello: Ching-Shin Ko
Violin 2: Yu-Ling Cheng Conductor: Jonathan Shames

103 Petites esquisses d'oiseaux, for piano (1985).....14:43 Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)
I. Le Rouge-gorge (The Robin)
II. Le Merle noir (The Blackbird)
III. Le Rouge-gorge (The Robin)
IV. La Grive musicienne (The Musical Thrush)
V. Le Rouge-gorge (The Robin)
Piano: David Kopp

104 par le feu recueilli, for flute (1984-97).....8:54 Joël-François Durand (b. 1954)
Flute: Felix Skowronek

INTERMISSION

Cass A
B

105 Density 21.5, for flute (1936).....3:58 Edgar Varèse (1883-1965)
Flute: Lucas Robatto

106 Mémoriale, for flute and 8 instruments.....5:01 Pierre Boulez (b. 1925)
Second audition

107 String Quartet (1893).....27:13 Claude Debussy (1862-1918)
1. Animé et très décidé
2. Assez vif et bien rythmé
3. Andantino doucement expressif
4. Très modéré; Très mouvementé et avec passion; Très animé

BRECHEMIN SCHOLARSHIP STRING QUARTET

Violin I: Lorenz Gamma Viola: Nathan Medina
Violin II: David Lawson Cello: Ching-Tzy Ko

ABOUT THE MUSIC:

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992): from the "*Quatuor Pour la Fin du Temps*" (*Quartet for the End of Time*), No. V: "*Louange à l'Éternité de Jésus*" (1940), for cello and piano.

The point of departure for the "*Quatuor Pour la Fin du Temps*" was the vision of the Angel in the Apocalypse "who lifted up his right hand towards heaven, and swore an oath ... that there should be no more Time." Messiaen emphasizes that, in spite of its initial connection with the Apocalypse, the work is not intended to be a commentary on it. He also points out that the title "*Pour la Fin du Temps*" has a double meaning, for it also expresses his desire for the end of musical time based on the equal durational divisions of classical music. Indeed, more than a simple illustration of a sacred text, the Quartet is a meditation, an experiment and an exercise on time, its dimensions and its limits. The work was written during WWII, while Messiaen was in captivity in a stalag in Silesia, for three captive musician friends and himself. It was premiered on 15 January 1941 in the stalag in front of an audience of 5000 from all walks of life - peasants, workers, intellectuals, doctors, priests and many others, all prisoners like him. "Never," says Messiaen, "have I been listened to with such attention and understanding."

The movement performed tonight is the fifth of the seven-movement work, "*Louange à l'Éternité de Jésus*": "*Here Jesus is thought of as the Word..., the powerful and sweet Word, whose years will never end*". This transcription of a movement from the *Fête des Belles Eaux* (1937) is a majestic melody, spread in a very slow tempo marked by an inexorably steady pulse. These pages invite an inner and meditative hearing, on the path to the sacred.

Pierre Boulez (b. 1925): *Mémoriale* (1985), for solo flute and 8 instruments.

This short work is a sequence taken from the revised version of *...explosante-fixe...* (a title borrowed from André Breton's *Nadja*). The musical substance is derived from a single sonority, a harmonic block of seven notes, the transpositions of which are centered on the symmetrical axis of E flat. If *Mémoriale* breathes an elegiac atmosphere, it is not only because the initial version of *...explosante-fixe...* was a farewell to Stravinsky, but because *Mémoriale* in turn was dedicated to the memory of Lawrence Beauregard, a flautist with the Ensemble Intercontemporain. From a formal point of view, the work adopts the principle of alternative interruptions, a principle deriving, inter alia, from Stravinsky's *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*, written in memory of Debussy. Developments that are fantastic and light in character are contrasted with the gravity of the refrains which break up the musical development, culminating in a unisono E flat, as sound is absorbed in silence.

[from Robert Piencikowski]

Messiaen (1908-1992): *Petites esquisses d'oiseaux* (Little Bird Sketches) (1985), for piano.

"Among the artistic hierarchy, the birds are probably the greatest musicians to inhabit our planet," says Messiaen in his conversations with Claude Samuel. The impulse to write pieces consisting exclusively, or almost exclusively, of birdsong stems from the composer's love of nature and from many years of research into the songs of many different species. Messiaen first began to note down birdsong when he was on holiday on a farm in the French countryside, at the age of about fourteen or fifteen, although the first specific use of identifiable birdsong does not appear in his compositions until the *Quatuor pour la Fin du Temps*.

[from Robert Sherlaw Johnson]

"These short pieces...are simultaneously very similar and very different. They are similar in their harmonic style, which evolves from sound complexes into changing colors. Blues, reds, oranges, and violets from chords of transposed inversion predominate. Chords of contracted resonance and chords of the total chromatic add their own colors to these, more violent or more subtle. In contrast, melodic and rhythmic movement is different from one piece to another, since each bird has its own sensibility. The three pieces devoted to the robin contain pearly descending arpeggios, almost glissandos, followed by slow notes and more intricate patterns. The blackbird sings several sunny strophes somewhat victoriously. The musical thrush makes itself known by its incantory repetitions... The piano writing is full of ornamentation. The piece was written in 1985 and dedicated to (my wife), Yvonne Loriod."

[Olivier Messiaen]

Joël-François Durand (b. 1954): *par le feu recueilli* (1984-97), for flute.

Of the composers present in this program, *par le feu recueilli* owes probably more to Varèse than to any other: constant transformations of the melodies into new melodic shapes, relentless push forward of the musical discourse, use of "extended" instrumental flute techniques (such as "pizzicato," breathy sounds, or "artificial" harmonics) which Varèse initiated with the percussive key clicks of his *Density 21.5*, are some of the most characteristic similarities.

There are basically two different categories of musical ideas: one characterized by rapid runs throughout the whole range of the instrument, either in legato lines (as in the very beginning), or in short staccato outbursts of fast notes. In these sections, a few pitches act as "anchors," compensating for the constantly changing intervallic content of the melodic shapes.

In the other main category, the range of the instrument is divided into four different registers so that a sort of linear polyphony emerges as lines in these registers dialog with each other. In comparison to the first category, the melodic lines in these sections appear to go through timbral as well as intervallic distortion through the use of extended instrumental techniques as well as quarter tones. The form of the piece is therefore an interaction between these two main categories, each developing in its own direction. The last page is the only calm and restful moment as the music "collects" itself in a final gesture of peace.

Another structural level of unification between these seemingly disparate elements is created by a complex system of temporal proportions. All the rhythms and metric units are derived, in their microscopic as well as macroscopic proportions, from a basic rhythmic pattern which appears toward the beginning. This is, at least, what I had designed when I originally wrote the piece in 1984. After 13 years of dissatisfaction with that version (and withdrawal from performance), I finally saw a solution to the problems last year, and re-wrote it entirely without much consideration for the earlier structural constraints. Most of the temporal grid remained however intact, except for a large section in the middle; but many pitches were changed, altering radically the original construction. Obviously these changes involved the destruction of the delicate and complex balance of relationships that had been devised originally (but ultimately didn't work!), and their replacement by new ones, creating new relations with themselves as well as with the few remaining old ones.

The energy of creativity which allowed the new version to come to life is alluded to by the (new) title ("by the fire collected"), since the old piece had to go through a radical destruction to be assembled again in its new form. This process of re-writing created a dialog between old and new, another polyphony, across time.

[Joel F. Durand]

Born in Orléans, France, **Joël-François Durand** studied musicology in Paris, then composition with Brian Ferneyhough in Freiburg, Germany. He obtained his Ph.D. in composition at the University of New York, Stony Brook, NY. He has received scholarships (DAAD, Fulbright), and international prizes, including the "Kranichsteiner Musikpreis" (from the Summer Courses in Darmstadt, Germany) in 1990. Since Fall 1991 he has been teaching at the University of Washington in Seattle. He is Associate Professor of Composition and Theory since Fall 1996. In August-September 1993 he was co-director of the Master Classes in Composition at the "Centre de la Voix" in Royaumont, France. In the Fall 1994, he was Visiting Assistant Professor in Composition at the UCSD in San Diego. In September 1998 he will be teaching at the Brandenburg Colloquium for New Music in Rheinsberg, Germany. His music has been performed throughout Europe as well as in the US and in South Korea. He has received numerous commissions from European institutions, including the "Ensemble InterContemporain" (Paris), the French Ministry of Culture, the "I.R.C.A.M." (Paris), the "Ensemble Contrechamps" (Geneva), the "European Community Youth Orchestra" (London), the Strasbourg Festival "Musica." A CD of his music (Concerto for piano and orchestra, String Trio, "Die innere Grenze") will be released in June 1998 under the label Auvidis-Montaigne.

Edgar Varèse: Density 21.5 (1936), for flute; version with piano.

"In his lifetime, Varèse was never part of the mainstream. Yet when Stravinsky was preoccupied with neoclassicism, when Schoenberg was formulating the twelve-tone system, when Webern was revealing new dimensions beyond the pitch-duration relationship, and when Bartók was teaching the values of non-Western music, Varèse was advocating and demonstrating a totally new, but

fundamental concept. He talked about music being 'spatial', as 'sound set free' yet 'organized'. He spoke of the entire composition as a 'melodic totality', flowing 'as a river flows' - the result of a continuous process of expansion, interaction and transformation of layers of sound. Thus he compared form to the phenomenon of 'crystallization': 'the result of a process' rather than a 'mold to be filled'."

[Chou Wen-Chung]

Density 21.5 was written in January 1936, at the request of Georges Barrère for the inauguration of his platinum flute; 21.5 is the chemical density of the platinum. The basic material for the piece is exposed in the first phrase, in the form of a little melodic cell which can be found in many ways throughout the piece, sometimes clearly recognizable, but mostly hidden behind the surface and controlling long-range progressions. This cell is also varied and modified through contractions and expansions as it moves in the highest register of the instrument. Varèse introduces one novel instrumental effect, the percussive clicks, in the middle section of the piece, which are produced by the player hitting the keys with his fingers while blowing into the mouthpiece, instead of gently depressing them as is done ordinarily.

The last measures of the work have puzzled analysts for many years because, whereas all the elements found up to that point can be considered in some relation with each other, these last measures introduce new intervals which are not found in the rest of the piece.

The reason for that particularity comes to light in the following anecdote: In 1950, the flutist René LeRoy recorded *Density 21.5* in the presence of the composer. A former student of LeRoy, Claude Dorgueille, related that at the end of the piece Varèse asked LeRoy to play in the strings of the piano while Varèse himself depressed the sustaining pedal. The strings of the piano were thereby allowed to resonate freely under the influence of the flute tones.

This anecdote is striking because in these last measures the structural constraints one can observe at work in the rest of the piece seem to disappear: new types of intervals are introduced, and the low C, which was the lowest note of the instrument at the time of the composition and which had not been used yet in the piece, is finally reached. It is very remarkable that, while the basic structural elements on which most of *Density 21.5* rests seem to disappear at that point, the notes played then all belong to the harmonic series of a low C (two octaves below the low C of the instrument). So while the ending of the work breaks down the compositional "rules" established so far, these "artificial" rules are now replaced by the "natural" constraints of the harmonic series. In a final metaphorical gesture, Varèse offers the music to "nature," by giving up his role of Composer/organizer and letting the sound reveal itself.

[Joel F. Durand]

Claude Debussy: String quartet (1893).

Debussy's quartet belongs to that deliberately old-fashioned period of the ending 19th century: d'Annunzio, rich tapestry and whispered confidences in atmospheres rich in aromas and sensual feelings. Melancholy is the decadent

sentiment "du jour", a decayed image of the romantic "Sehnsucht". The longing is for death, and things which belong to that realm, as can be assessed from the fashion devoted to spiritualism.

Composed in the four-movement traditional mold, Debussy's quartet doesn't offer as firm a construction, as tight developments as other compositions for the same model. A cyclical theme which appears at the beginning of the first movement, reappears under different guises throughout the whole piece. In general, these constant modifications of the thematic material give a remarkable flexibility to the melodic discourse; the themes tend to become more melodic schemes (models) than to remain fixed intervallic and rhythmic entities. Thus, two sections of the second movement are built on an augmentation of the cyclical theme. If the aesthetic success of the piece, or at least of its two middle movements, cannot be denied, it still remains bound to the influences which Debussy has not yet freed himself from. Nevertheless, among the works of his youth, the Quartet is the only one with more than just a historical value. It indicates a turning point, perhaps timid, but decisive, which would lead the young composer to the composition of his first masterpiece: *the Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*. (the flute, again...).

[Jean Barraqué]

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS:

Sarah Bassingthwaight is a professional flutist, composer, and teacher in Seattle and recently has been featured as a soloist on KING-FM and National Public Radio's "Performance Today". She has received degrees from Indiana University in Bloomington and Central Washington University, and has studied with Carol Wincenc, Julius Baker, Hal Ott, James Pellerite, Peter Lloyd, Bonnie Blanchard, and presently studies with Felix Skowronek. She has received many honors, including a grant to study the tribal music of Eastern Africa, being a winner of the Northwest Young Artist's Festival, graduating with Honors from both I.U. and C.W.U., and has been a featured author in Flute Talk magazine. Her interest in contemporary music is complimented by an interest in early music as well; she has performed recitals of Baroque and Renaissance flute and recorder. Presently, Sarah is President of the Seattle Flute Society, and is pursuing a Doctorate in Flute Performance and Master's in Composition at the University of Washington.

David Kopp, pianist, has performed as soloist and with chamber groups in the United States and Europe, and has premiered numerous works by composers of his generation. He has recorded twentieth-century music with cellist Rhonda Rider of the Lydian Quartet on the CRI label and is currently at work on a disk of American neoclassic four-hand piano music with composer/pianist Rodney Lister to be issued this fall by New World Records, supported by grants from the *Aaron Copland Fund for Music* and the *Virgil Thomson Foundation*. For many years he was co-director of the Music Production Company, a Boston-area ensemble mixing new music with standard repertory. Before joining the theory

faculty of the UW School of Music, Professor Kopp taught theory at Yale, Harvard, M.I.T., and at Brandeis, where he was also a long-time member of the piano faculty. His teachers include Charles Rosen, Luise Vosgerchian, Evelyne Crochet, Jules Gentil, and Nadia Boulanger. His book, *Chromatic Tonality and Nineteenth Century Music*, is forthcoming from Cambridge University Press, and his articles appear in the *Journal of Music Theory* and *Music Theory Online*.

Rajan Krishnaswami maintains an active schedule of solo and chamber music concerts in the U.S. and Canada, collaborating with many of those countries' finest artists. In 1992, he performed a New York debut recital at Merkin Hall. As soloist, he has appeared with a number of orchestras in China and the United States. He has recorded chamber music for Island and Opus One Records, and will release his first solo album in the fall of 1998. Equally devoted to the arts of teaching and performing, he has rapidly become established as an important learning resource for cellists in the Northwest. He has served on the cello faculties of the Music Center of the Northwest and the Washington Academy of the Performing Arts, has taught master classes in this country and in China, and is currently on the faculty of the University of Washington, Cornish College of the Arts, and head of the lower strings department at the Seattle Conservatory of Music. He has received many prestigious awards and scholarships. He is also a regular substitute with the Seattle Symphony and Opera.

Born in Salvador-Bahia, Brazil, **Lucas Robatto** received a DAAD scholarship from the German government in 1986 to study at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik - Karlsruhe with Renate Greis -Armin. He graduated in 1990 with the Orchestermusiker Diploma, and in 1992 received the Künstlerische Abschlussprüfung (M. M.). In the same year he became principal flute at the Bahia State Symphony and joined the faculty of the Bahia Federal University, where he is currently Assistant Professor for flute. Mr. Robatto is an active soloist and chamber musician and has received prizes and awards in competitions such as Eldorado Competition and St. Marcelina Competition (Brazil), and the Buenos Aires Festival Competition (Argentina). He is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Washington studying with Felix Skowronek. Mr. Robatto has a scholarship from the CAPES - Brazilian government.

Jonathan Shames became the Music Director and Conductor of the Seattle Youth Symphony Orchestras and the Marrowstone Festival in September, 1994. Mr. Shames' work as musical assistant to Sarah Caldwell of the Opera Company of Boston (at age 19) led to his first conducting engagements, and he has frequently appeared with the company, as well as Opera New England. In 1994, Mr. Shames was invited by Seiji Ozawa to become a Conducting Fellow of the Tanglewood Music Institute, where he also worked with Bernard Haitink and Lorin Maazel. As a pianist, Mr. Shames has performed and recorded with such ensembles as the Moscow Chamber Orchestra, Cologne Radio Symphony, Radio and Television Orchestra of Belgrade, Seoul Sinfonietta, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, and Boston Pops Orchestras, since winning a finalist-diploma in the 1982 Moscow International Tchaikovsky Competition. Guest conducting through the last year has included the Richmond Symphony, Louisiana Philhar-

monic, and Olympia Symphony, which has recently appointed Mr. Shames as Music Director and Conductor.

Felix Skowronek was principal flute with the Seattle, Puerto Rico, and St. Louis Symphonies before joining the faculty of the School of Music at the University of Washington in 1968. He was Founding President of the Seattle Flute Society (1979-82), President of the National Flute Association (1986), and served for two years (1994-96) as Associate Director for Performance and Public Affairs at the UW School of Music. From 1982-1991 he was Music Director of Belle Arte Concerts, a suburban Seattle chamber music series. Since 1962 he has been the flutist of the Soni Ventorum Wind Quintet, of which he was a co-founder and with which he has traveled and recorded extensively. Through his travels and research he has become an authority on the use of foreign and domestic hardwood species for flute and woodwind-instrument manufacture.

Scholarship String Quartet:

Lorenz Gamma, first violinist, was born in 1971 in Switzerland. He is currently enrolled in the University of Washington School of Music in the Master of Music program, is a teaching assistant in violin. In 1996 he joined the Northwest Sinfonietta as concert master. His violin teachers include Steven Saryk at the University of Washington, Franco Gulli at Indiana University, Gunars Larsens at the Conservatory in Lucerne, Switzerland, and for the first ten years, his father Martin Gamma.

Violinist David Lawson is also a student of Steven Saryk. He was concertmaster of the University Symphony this past winter, and its principal second violin during the 1996-97 season. He graduated from Seattle's Lakeside School in 1994.

Violist Nathan Medina is a native of Portland, Oregon. His principal teachers have included Robert Hirtzel, Kelly Farris, Alan Bodman, Helen Callus and Steven Saryk. Nathan was granted a full scholarship at Eastern Washington University where he received a Bachelor of Music with honors. While attending Eastern, he also performed frequently with the Spokane Symphony. He is now completing a master of Music degree at the University of Washington.

Cellist Ching-Tzy Ko is from Taiwan. She studied at the Hochschule fuer Musik und Theater, Hannover, Germany, from 1989-1995, receiving the Kuenstlerische Abschlusspruefung and Diplom Musiklehrerin in 193 and 1995. She is currently a doctoral student studying with Professor Toby Saks. She has performed in master classes given by Ralph Kirshbaum, Zara Nelsova, Wolfgang Boettcher, David Geringas, and Klaus Storck.