

Saint Mark's

2020-21
MUSIC
SERIES

presents

Olivier Messiaen's

Quatour pour la fin du temps
Quartet for the End of Time

Rose Bellini, cello
Luke Fitzpatrick, violin
Jesse Myers, piano
Rachel Yoder, clarinet

Sunday, March 28, 2021, 4:30 P.M.
Livestreamed from Saint Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, Seattle

Program

I. Liturgy of crystal

II. Vocalise, for the angel who announces the end of time

III. Abyss of the birds

IV. Interlude

V. Praise to the eternity of Jesus

VI. Dance of fury, for the seven trumpets

VII. A mingling of rainbows for the angel who announces the end of time

VIII. Praise to the immortality of Jesus

About the artists



Cellist **Rose Bellini** is an adventurous musician accomplished in traditional, experimental, and interdisciplinary performance. She regularly performs with classical music ensembles, modern dance companies, bands, and chamber and orchestral groups across the country.

Currently based in Seattle, cellist Rose Bellini performs with Seattle Modern Orchestra, and collaborates with the top active performers of 21st century music in the Pacific Northwest. A founding member of mixed chamber ensembles REDSHIFT and Hotel Elephant, Rose's career has included appearances in venues ranging from neighborhood bars to Carnegie Hall. She has performed with the Wordless Music Orchestra, Ensemble Signal, FLUX Quartet, Orchestra of St. Luke's, East Village

Opera Company, folk and rock bands, and in venues from ranging from neighborhood bars to Carnegie Hall.

Rose frequently collaborates with living composers and songwriters from around the world and often premieres and records new works with cello. Over the past few years, NPR's Performance Today has regularly featured her live recording of Steve Reich's Cello Counterpoint. A graduate of Indiana University-Bloomington, her primary teachers were Emilio Colón and Janos Starker. Rose leads a dual career as a non-profit professional, and volunteers her time to local arts organizations to provide fundraising strategy and leadership.

Luke Fitzpatrick is a violinist, composer and artistic director of Inverted Space, a Seattle-based new music collective. Recent solo violin performances include the complete Sonatas and Partitas by J.S. Bach, Freeman Etudes by John Cage, and Luigi Nono's La Lontananza Nostalgica Utopica Futura with both André Richard and Marcin Pačzkowski. As a soloist, he has performed Astor Piazzolla's Four Seasons of Buenos Aires with Helios Symphony Orchestra, Luciano Berio's Chorale with Seattle Philharmonic, Earle Brown's Centering and Giancinto Scelci's Anahit with Inverted Space and Ralph Vaughn William's Violin Concerto with Seattle Philharmonic Strings. For the past 4 years, Luke has been incredibly involved with the Harry Partch Ensemble residing in Seattle. In 2017, he gave the world premier of the Complete Works for Adapted Viola and Intoning Voice by Harry Partch and was selected as an Artist-In-Residence by the Jack Straw Foundation to record it in its entirety. He has performed Partch's music over the world, including residencies at The University of Illinois, The University of Missouri-Kansas City, Beyond Microtonal Festival in Pittsburgh, PA, and at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He has worked personally with composers such as Brian Ferneyhough, Helmut Lachenmann, Ben Johnston, Kerrith Livengood, Charles Corey and Qasim Naqvi. He is currently concertmaster of Seattle Philharmonic Orchestra, Seattle Festival Orchestra and NW Mahler Festival.



Jesse Myers is an adventurous explorer of music that expands the possibilities of the piano. With a strong interest in performance that pushes piano music into new realms, Myers frequently performs music for prepared piano, new music for piano and electronics, as well as traditional classical literature in nontraditional settings. His solo concerts have been featured on King FM, Seattle Magazine, City Arts Magazine, Second Inversion, Seattle Weekly, The Live Music Project, and regularly

appear in The Stranger's curated best concerts. His recent work with the prepared piano and electroacoustic music has led to tours across the country including artist residencies and solo guest performances at universities, conservatories, and music festivals.

Mr. Myers has chosen the vocation of being a lifetime student of the piano and tireless teacher of its techniques and repertoire. He is on the faculty at Holy Names Academy and runs a thriving studio from his home in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood comprised primarily of adult classical pianists making a return to the piano. He has piano performance degrees from the University of Washington and Bowling Green State University.

Based in the Seattle area, clarinetist **Rachel Yoder** performs in a variety of solo, chamber and large ensemble roles, including with the Seattle Modern Orchestra and Odd Partials clarinet/electronics duo. Recent projects include the premiere of William O. Smith's Evening Ritual (2019) and a video production of Steve Reich's New York Counterpoint at the Classical KING-FM studios. Rachel Yoder currently serves as editor of The Clarinet, journal of the International Clarinet Association, and adjunct professor of music at the DigiPen Institute of Technology (Redmond, WA).



Program Notes

In 1940, Olivier Messiaen was interned in a German prison camp after being captured while serving as a medic in the French army. While imprisoned in Stalag VIII A, he discovered among his fellow prisoners a clarinetist, a violinist, and a cellist. Messiaen, a fine pianist as well as a composer and aided by the kindness of a German guard who smuggled in music paper, pencils and erasers for him to compose with, set about creating a quartet for the instruments at hand and in so doing, composed one of the most endearing and far-reaching works of chamber music of the 20th century. The premiere of the Quartet for the End of Time took place on 15 January 1941 in front of several hundred malnourished prisoners in the freezing cold with a piano that had several broken keys. Messiaen later recalled of the occasion, "Never was I listened to with such rapt attention and comprehension."

If the plain facts of the work's origins are simple, the spiritual facts are far more complex. Messiaen, a deeply religious man who considered himself as much a theologian as a composer, found a point of departure for the Quartet in a passage in the 10th chapter of the Book of Revelation:

And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire ... and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth.... And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever ... that there should be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished....

According to the composer, the Quartet was intended not to be a commentary on the Apocalypse, nor to refer to his own captivity, but to be a kind of musical extension of the Biblical account and of the concept of the end of time as the end of past and future and the beginning of eternity. For Messiaen there was also a musical sense to the angel's announcement. His development of a varied and flexible rhythmic system, based in part on ancient Hindu rhythms, came to fruition in the Quartet, where, more or less literally, Messiaen put an end to the equally measured "time" of western classical music.

The architecture of the Quartet is both musical and mystical. Of the former you will hear many thematic relationships between movements where snippets of melodies and gestures surface and resurface like familiar birdsong. Of the mystical, the very structure of the work in eight movements is a commentary on the eternal. In Messiaen's own words: "This Quartet comprises eight movements. Why? Seven is the perfect number, the Creation in six days sanctified by the divine Sabbath; the seventh day of the repose extends into eternity and becomes the eighth day of eternal light, of unalterable peace."

Messiaen created a Preface to the original score of *Quatour pour la fin du temps*, which is printed below. The community of Saint Mark's Cathedral invites the listener to contemplate these words on this Palm Sunday, the traditional entry into Holy Week, a culminating time in the liturgical year. We encourage you to treat the performance not only as a concert but also as a time of reflection and contemplation: of the present and the eternal.

-James Falzone, Music Department Chair, Cornish College of the Arts, Seattle

Preface to *Quatour pour la fin du temps*

I. Liturgy of crystal

Between three and four o'clock in the morning, the awakening of the birds: a blackbird or a solo nightingale improvises, surrounded by efflorescent sound, by a halo of harmonics lost high in the trees...

II. Vocalise, for the Angel who announces the end of Time

The first and third parts (very short) evoke the power of this mighty angel, a rainbow upon his head and clothed with a cloud, who sets one foot on the sea and one foot on the earth. In the middle section are the impalpable harmonies of heaven. In the piano, sweet cascades of blue-orange chords, enclosing in their distant chimes the almost plainchant song of the violin and violoncello.

III. Abyss of the birds

Clarinet alone. The abyss is Time with its sadness, its weariness. The birds are the opposite to Time; they are our desire for light, for stars, for rainbows, and for jubilant songs.

IV. Interlude

Scherzo, of a more individual character than the other movements, but linked to them nevertheless by certain melodic recollections.

V. Praise to the Eternity of Jesus

Jesus is considered here as the Word. A broad phrase, infinitely slow, on the violoncello, magnifies with love and reverence the eternity of the Word, powerful and gentle, ... "In the beginning was the Word, and Word was with God, and the Word was God."

VI. Dance of fury, for the seven trumpets

Rhythmically, the most characteristic piece in the series. The four instruments in unison take on the aspect of gongs and trumpets (the first six trumpets of the Apocalypse were followed by various catastrophes, the trumpet of the seventh angel announced the consummation of the mystery of God). Use of added rhythmic values, rhythms augmented or diminished... Music of stone, of formidable, sonorous granite...

VII. A mingling of rainbows for the Angel who announces the end of Time

Certain passages from the second movement recur here. The powerful angel appears, above all the rainbow that covers him... In my dreams I hear and see a catalogue of chords and melodies, familiar colors and forms... The swords of fire, these outpourings of blue-orange lava, these turbulent stars...

VIII. Praise to the Immortality of Jesus

Expansive solo violin, counterpart to the violoncello solo of the fifth movement. Why this second encomium? It addresses more specifically the second aspect of Jesus, Jesus the Man, the Word made flesh... Its slow ascent toward the most extreme point of tension is the ascension of man toward his God, of the child of God toward his Father, of the being made divine toward Paradise.

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