



White Rock Concerts *Presents*

Da Camera



Friday, October 17, 2003

Da Camera

In 1984 four prominent soloists were drawn together by the desire to study and perform one of the monumental works of the 20th century, Olivier Messiaen's Quartet for the End of Time.

This work, written during Messiaen's internment in a prisoner camp during the Second World War, requires the long-term commitment of four musicians possessing the personality and virtuosity of a soloist and the sensitivity of an experienced chamber musician.

For the next eight years Da Camera, clarinetist James Campbell, violinist Moshe Hammer, cellist Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi and pianist William Tritt, presented Messiaen's masterwork dozens of times throughout North America and at the Wigmore Hall in London.

Following William Tritt's untimely death in 1992, the remaining members kept in close touch, but felt little desire to explore the wide emotional breadth of their repertoire until 1999, when they collaborated with Rian de Waal, the Dutch virtuoso.

Truly an international ensemble, Da Camera's musicians hail from Canada, Japan, Israel and the Netherlands. Each a soloist, a virtuoso, and a well-seasoned chamber musician, Da Camera interprets repertoire they love and perform it with the unity of a long association.

Da Camera has commissioned several quartets and trios and has perfected a repertoire of standard and rarely performed works.

Concert Etiquette

For your enjoyment, and the enjoyment of others, please remember concert etiquette. Talking, coughing, leaning over the balcony railings, unwrapping cellophane-wrapped candies, and the wearing of strong perfume may disturb the artists as well as other audience members. Also, please turn off cell phones and please ensure that digital watches do not sound during performances.

DA CAMERA

Rian de Waal, Piano
James Campbell, Clarinet
Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi, Cello
Moshe Hammer, Violin

Programme

Brahms, Johannes
(1833-1897)

Trio for Piano, Clarinet & Cello in A minor,
Op. 114

- i. Allegro
- ii. Adagio
- iii. Andantino grazioso
- iv. Allegro

Glick, Srul Irving

Klezmer's Wedding

Intermission

Messiaen, Olivier
(1908-1992)

Quartet for the End of Time

- i. Liturgy of Crystal
- ii. Vocalise, for the Angel who announces the End of Time
- iii. Abyss of the Birds
- iv. Intermezzo
- v. In Praise of the Eternity of Jesus
- vi. Dance of Fury, for the Seven Trumpets
- vii. Cluster of Rainbows, for the Angel who announces the End of Time
- viii. In Praise of the Immortality of Jesus

PROGRAM NOTES

Brahms Trio for Piano, Clarinet & Cello

The Clarinet Trio was first heard at the Herzogliches Schloss, Meiningen, on November 24th, 1891. Brahms was at the keyboard, and the wind player was Richard Mühlfeld. In a letter dated December 11th, 1890 to his publisher, Simrock, Brahms had intimated that he intended to make the String Quintet Op. 111 his last work. Yet the following year during a visit to Meiningen he was so impressed with the playing of Mühlfeld, the clarinetist in the duke's orchestra, that he found himself compelled to compose again. The immediate result was not only the Trio performed here, but the Clarinet Quintet Op. 115, followed in 1894 by the two Clarinet Sonatas Op. 120.

All these pieces show a profound understanding of the instrument, and it is a pity the Trio has been overshadowed by the Quintet. The cello spends a lot of its time in the tenor clef dialoguing with the clarinet, and in the outer movements, both marked *Allegro*, these two instruments introduce the second subjects in canon by inversion. Contrapuntal ingenuities had long since become second nature to Brahms, of course, and such features typify the concentration of thought which shapes so much of his later music. This piece suffers a great deal if, as sometimes happens, a viola replaces the clarinet, for so many subtle mixtures of colour are lost. Perhaps this is above all the case in the romantic first movement, particularly in its coda. Hardly less striking in this respect, however, are the *Adagio* and *Andantino grazioso*. The latter takes the form of an A major minuet with two trios, in F-sharp minor and D major. Here especially thematic invention and instrumental colouring go hand in hand.

1988 Max Harrison

Glick's Klezmer's Wedding

Written in Klezmer style, it was premiered at Festival of the Sound in 1996, and dedicated to Srul Irving Glick's wife Sarah.

Messiaen's Quartet for the End of Time

Olivier Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* is among the most significant compositions of the twentieth century. Written in 1940-41, after the fall of France, when Messiaen was imprisoned in Stalag VIII A in Gorlitz, Silesia, the *Quartet* was first performed there in January 1941. Messiaen himself took the piano part, with Jean Le Boulaire playing violin, Henri Akoka clarinet, and Etienne Pasquier cello.

A profoundly mystical and Catholic work, the *Quartet* is inspired by a passage

from the Christian Bible's *Revelation of Saint John*:

I saw a mighty angel descending from heaven, clad in mist, having around his head a rainbow.
His face was like the sun, his feet like pillars of fire. He placed his right foot on the sea, his left on the earth, and standing thus on the sea and the earth he lifted his hand toward heaven and swore by Him who liveth for ever and ever, saying, "There shall be Time no longer, but at the day of the trumpet of the seventh angel the mystery of God shall be consummated."

Revelation, Chapter X

The book of *Revelation* is filled with frightful apocalyptic images, but these are not Messiaen's inspiration; rather he works towards expressing the perfect peace when Time, as the angel foretells, is no more. How will it sound, that ensuing great silence of eternity? From his prisoner-of-war camp Messiaen reaches out, in hope, to an answer.

In his own commentary on the *Quartet*, Messiaen writes of hearing colours, seeing sounds, of mystical experiences surpassing our ordinary senses. On one level the piece is paradoxical, uttering the humanly unutterable: harmonious silence. Messiaen was the first to note that his composition is only an attempt, a trial, a stuttering. Here, sound conveys silence, and mystery resonates. Messiaen wrote the *Quartet* in eight movements. Why? "Seven is the perfect number, the creation of six days, hallowed by the divine Sabbath; the seventh in its repose prolongs itself into eternity, and becomes the eighth of unfailing light, of unalterable peace."

1. Liturgy of Crystal

Early dawn: violin and clarinet celebrate the awakening of the birds. The nightingale solo and the cello five-note harmonic motif translate on the religious plane to « the harmonious silence of heaven. » Messiaen is trying to make us hear what our mortal senses cannot know.

2. Vocalise, for the Angel who announces the End of Time

The short, powerful, first and third parts call up "that mighty angel, dressed in mist, his hair a rainbow." The middle part evokes "the unutterable harmonies of heaven. From the piano, soft cascades of blue-orange chords, with a plainchant-like recitative of the violin and cello."

3. Abyss of the Birds

Solo clarinet. The slow sections represent "the abyss that is Time, with its sadness and weariness. The birds (in the faster sections) are the antithesis of Time; the desire for light, stars, rainbows, spiritual joy."

4. Interlude

Scherzo for violin, cello and clarinet. "Less introspective than the other movements, but related to them nevertheless by some melodic echoes," writes Messiaen. The piano, the composer's own instrument, remains silent.

5. Praise for the Eternity of Jesus

Here the composer meditates on Jesus as the Word of God. "The cello sounds with infinite slowness a long phrase to worship the immortality of this sweet and powerful Word everlasting." The melody flows on majestically as if from a tender, all-powerful, distant presence. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God." The mood is one of ecstatic contemplation.

6. Dance of Fury, for the Seven Trumpets

Messiaen calls this the most rhythmically characteristic movement of the *Quartet*, and here his idiosyncratic rhythmic technique is at its most striking. Messiaen intends his rhythmic innovations to "distance us from the temporal" we ordinarily experience. The four instruments "playing in unison evoke gongs and trumpets (the first six trumpets of the apocalypse, each followed by its own disaster, the trumpet of the seventh angel announcing the consummation of God's mystery)." Messiaen describes this movement as "music solid as stone, formidable sonorous granite, the irresistible movement of steel, enormous blocks of purple rage, frozen intoxication." Listen particularly for the terrible fortissimo of the theme, toward the end of the movement.

7. Cluster of Rainbows, for the Angel who announces the End of Time

Messiaen's preface to the *Quartet* explains, "Here certain passages from the second movement recur. The mighty Angel returns, and particularly the rainbow that crowns it (the rainbow, the symbol of peace, of wisdom, luminous and sonorous in its reverberations). In my dreams I hear and see the usual chords and melodies, familiar colours and shapes, then after a transitional stage, I cross over into hallucination, experiencing in sublime ecstasy a turning, swirling interpenetration of superhuman sounds and colours. These swords of fire, these outpourings of blue-orange lava, these abrupt appearances of stars: here is the revelation of the rainbows!"

8. Praise for the Immortality of Jesus

The *Quartet* concludes with a violin solo with piano accompaniment, corresponding to the cello solo of the fifth movement. It is marked "extremely slow and tender, ecstatic", and praises "Jesus the man, the Word made flesh, resurrected for eternity to give life to us." The slow ascent of the melodic line and the fortissimo is "the ascension of the creature made divine towards Paradise."

Quotations from Messiaen's original French commentary on his score (*Quatuor pour la Fin du Temps*, Paris : Editions Durand S.A. Editions musicales, n.d.).
Anna Lamb

A Message from the Artistic Director:

Welcome to our 2003-2004 season. Unfortunately, I am not able to be with you tonight...I'm off on tour in PEI, but my thoughts are with you on the occasion of the start of another exciting series.

We have some splendid news for all of our subscribers. Our final event, on Friday April 2, features Alain Trudel conducting a programme of Mozart and Richard Strauss wind Serenades. I am pleased to tell you that White Rock Concerts has arranged to co-present this concert with the CBC. The wind players will be from the celebrated Vancouver CBC Radio Orchestra. The performance will be recorded for national broadcast at a later date.

I'm particularly sorry not to be here to greet DA CAMERA tonight. With the exception Rian de Waal, all the members are long time colleagues of mine. Jim Campbell and I have toured extensively with OCTAGON, and also trekked across the Northwest Territories together, playing one day for Inuit children and another night for the Governor General in a special Rideau Hall concert. Tsuyoshi and I played together in Banff many years ago, and Moshe and I have worked together since his days of playing in a Trio with the intriguing name of "One Third Ninth".

I'll be here for the November concert, however, when we will be hosting the first White Rock appearance by the celebrated Penderecki String Quartet. They are playing Brahms, Beethoven, Hugo Wolf and - yes, a 7-minute fireworks display by their celebrated Polish namesake!

In January, come back with us in time, to great glories of the Baroque and classical era, with Vancouver's Burney Ensemble, and the brilliant trumpet of Bui Peterson, a name, and a sound to be remembered!

Irish pianist Ronan O'Hora is here in February. He's an old friend of mine, and a pianist who I have wanted to present for many seasons. It is always amazing to me that the Irish have such an affinity for the works of Frederick Chopin.... Were there leprechauns on the Island of Majorca?

In March join us for an evening of Mayumi Seiler and VIA SALZBURG. You certainly don't have to travel to Austria to enjoy their music. Tenor, Benjamin Butterfield will be soloist with the orchestra.

And then comes the wind-up with our first broadcast concert, right from our own "concert hall" here in the White Rock Baptist Church. And on that note, I take the opportunity to wish you much pleasure with tonight's concert, and I look forward to being with you for the remainder of the season.

Sincerely, George Zukerman

The Season Ahead:

November 14, 2003 The Penderecki String Quartet

January 23, 2004 The Burney Ensemble

February 20, 2004 Ronan O'Hora

March 12, 2004 Via Salzburg

April 2, 2004 A Wind Serenade With Alain Trudel

Our Next Concert:

The Penderecki String Quartet

Friday, Nov. 14, 2003

