

NICHOLAS ROERICH MUSEUM

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Sunday, February 17, 2019

PinkNoise

Nana Shi, piano Issei Herr, cello Eric Umble, clarinet

Johnna Wu, violin Simon Kanzler, electronics

presents:

Quartet for the End of Time

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)

- I. Liturgie de cristal*
- 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*

Intermission about 10 min

Electronics improvisation (~ 15 min)

The recital ends at about 6:25 p.m.

Program notes

“My faith is the grand drama of my life. I’m a believer, so I sing words of God to those who have no faith. I give bird songs to those who dwell in cities and have never heard them, make rhythms for those who know only military marches or jazz, and paint colors for those who see none.” — *Olivier Messiaen*

The legend follows that on a bitterly cold January evening in 1941, at the Stalag VIII A prisoner-of-war camp in Görlitz, Germany, the “Quartet for the End of Time” was heard for the first time. The composer Olivier Messiaen played an upright piano with three other musicians performing on broken instruments, including a three-stringed cello. Over five-thousand people sat shivering in the dimly lit space, listening with complete silence.

The title “Quartet for the End of Time” is not a hyperbole of the scope and ambition of the work. An inscription by the composer marks the dedication inspired by the Book of Revelation, “In homage to the Angel of the Apocalypse, who lifts his hand toward heaven, saying, ‘There shall be time no longer.’”

The Apocalypse is heralded in the sixth movement by an elegant yet diabolical dance with rhythms that are mirrored, compressed, and stretched. The arrival of the cataclysm is flanked by two “Louanges” or songs of praise that offer moments of hypnotic serenity. The first is stated “infinitely slow”, and the second, “tender, ecstatic”, “with love”.

After the performance of the Quartet, the space of the performance will be altered through electronics, seeking to maintain the subliminal sounds from Messiaen’s work. The members of the ensemble will improvise within an electronic environment inspired by material from the Quartet, in which samples from the live performance are transformed by a software instrument designed by Simon Kanzler, creating an interactive dialogue and homage to Messiaen and his work.

PinkNoise members:

JOHNNA WU, founder of PinkNoise, is an active performer and improviser in North America, Europe, and Asia. In 2015, she was the only artist awarded the Fulbright scholarship to study in Germany, and was sponsored by the State Department of the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany. She graduated from Columbia University with a Bachelor of Arts with double degrees in Biology and Musicology, She obtained a Masters of Music degree in violin performance at The Juilliard School under the tutelage of Joseph Lin. The study of improvisation has allowed her to fuse her strong interests in contemporary music, East-Asian folk music, jazz, tango, and musical theatre with classical music. Her most recent appearances include performances for the Secretary General of the United Nations Antonie Guterres at the General Assembly Hall, the Berlin Philharmonie, Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, Paris Philharmonie, the Banff Centre in Canada, and Carnegie Hall in New York.

SIMON KANZLER is a composer, electronic artist, and vibraphonist based in New York and Berlin. He seeks to transcend boundaries by integrating multifarious idioms of music and other art forms within his work. His involvement in Berlin’s jazz and contemporary music scene, have led to projects working with a broad range of musicians including contemporary ensembles, jazz bands, improvisers, heavy metal and rock musicians. He has studied both contemporary composition with Mauro Lanza at the UdK Berlin and jazz vibraphone with David Friedman at the Jazz-Institute Berlin. His most recent band project Nodia Es combines a heavy metal band and a female vocal ensemble. The „hardcore opera“ project was recorded at the rbb studios Berlin in 2017, produced by Wolf Kampmann, and will soon be released on CD. His contemporary works have been performed by the ensemble mosaik and the modern art ensemble among others. He has released two albums with his long-term band Talking Hands which has been touring throughout Germany, Austria and Switzerland and performed at the Festival Jazzdor Berlin in 2015. His project Double Identity, that combines a jazz quintet and a chamber ensemble, was premiered at the Konzerthaus Berlin and a recording of the music was released on the Berlin-based label WhyPlayJazz. The project was funded by the ElsaNeumann Stipendium Berlin. Kanzler is also the founder of the KIM collective Berlin that organizes a yearly festival for experimental music, the KIM Fest.

Pianist **NANA SHI** is a sought-after performer, collaborator, and music educator. Based in New York City, her recent engagements include solo and chamber music performances at Carnegie Hall, Merkin Hall, Roerich Museum, Tenri Cultural Institute, Hunter College, and Chelsea Music Festival, among others. Her recent solo recital for piano and electronics at SUNY New Paltz has been praised for having “both a sense of serene beauty and striking intensity” by New Paltz Oracle. An avid chamber musician, Ms. Shi has performed in summer festivals such as Kneisel Hall Chamber Music Festival, Tanglewood Music Center, Banff Music Centre, and Interlochen Arts Camp, among others. Along with her husband and violinist Alex Shiozaki, she often performs on both the East and West Coast. The Shiozaki Duo also teaches at Interlochen Arts Camp during the summer and continues to bring thoughtful and refreshing programs to communities around them. Ms. Shi holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano Performance from SUNY Stony Brook under the tutelage of Gil Kalish, and Bachelor and Master of Music degrees at University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music. She serves as an adjunct faculty at SUNY New Paltz and a staff accompanist for the Preparatory Division at the Juilliard School. www.nanashipiano.com

Cellist **ISSEI HERR** is committed to a diverse array of music both old and new. Past highlights include concerts in Mexico and New York with violinist Rolf Schulte featuring the music of Milton Babbitt, recital programs centered on the works of Robert Schumann, and a recording of the complete cello suites of Johann Sebastian Bach. An advocate for the music of our time, Issei has worked closely with composers such as Mario Davidovsky and Kaija Saariaho, and has premiered works by Eric Nathan, Roberto Sierra, and Kenji Sakai, among others. In 2016, he performed the New York premiere of Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky’s Hearing Solution with Joel Sachs and the New Juilliard Ensemble. He has performed as a member of the Orchestra of the League of Composers, AXIOM, and the New Juilliard Ensemble, working with musicians such as Thomas Adès, Daniel Barenboim, David Fulmer, Louis Karchin, Fred Lerdahl, Vasco Mendonça, Jeffrey Milarsky, Shulamit Ran, Chou Wen-chung, and Du Yun. Born into an artistic family, Issei began musical studies at the age of five. He recently completed studies at The Juilliard School, where he was a student of cellist Fred Sherry.

ERIC UMBLE is a versatile, award winning clarinetist hailed as “lovely”, (New York Arts) and known for his “... nuanced and coloristic playing.” (The Clarinet). Eric enjoys a diverse international career as a soloist, chamber musician, orchestral player, and music educator. An advocate for and avid performer of contemporary music, he is founding member of SoundMind, sTem, and DuoHelix ensembles; all champion music by living composers. Eric served as clarinetist in residence at Chamber Music Silicon Valley, the Annapolis Chamber Music Festival, and New Music on the Point. He has performed with renowned ensembles including the Orchestras of the Lucerne Festival Academy and Alumni, the WindScape Quintet, American Modern Ensemble, LoftOpera, ECCE, Tenth Intervention, Cantata Profana, Ensemble Echappee, Tactus, Contemporaneous, and Ensemble Mise-en. Eric has performed in the world’s major venues including Carnegie’s Stern Auditorium, Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall, and National Sawdust in New York; as well as the Kölner Philharmonie, Hamburg’s Elbphilharmonie, Berlin Philharmonie, and the Cultural and Congress Center of Lucerne, Switzerland. Eric has participated in residencies at Princeton, Cornell, Millersville, Miami, and Sul Ross State, Universities.

We would like to give special appreciation to the donors of PinkNoise who made today’s concert possible:

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