

17
june

SUNDAY

5 PM

Barry Shiffman, *artistic director*
Osvaldo Golijov, *composer-in-residence*

FREDERIC CHIU, *piano*
ANDRÉS DÍAZ, *cello*
TODD PALMER, *clarinet*

Percussion: Dave Burns, Matt Sharrock,
Aaron Trant, Michael Williams

Pre-concert talk, 4 PM

GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY DIANNE ANDERSON

Snow in June

"ERBARMEDICH, MEIN GOTT" FROM *ST. MATTHEW PASSION*, BWV244
(ca. 1727) (TRANSCR. 2007)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), (Transcr. Frederic Chiu)

PIANO SONATA NO. 7, IN B-FLAT, OP. 83 (1939-42)

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

Allegro inquieto
Andante caloroso
Precipitato

Frederic Chiu

:: INTERMISSION ::

ABYSS OF THE BIRDS FROM *QUARTET FOR THE END OF TIME* (1940-41)

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)

Todd Palmer

ELEGY: SNOW IN JUNE, FOR CELLO AND FOUR PERCUSSIONISTS (1991)

Tan Dun (b. 1957)

Andrés Díaz, Matt Sharrock, Dave Burns, Aaron Trant, Michael Williams

PRAISE TO THE ETERNITY OF JESUS FROM *QUARTET FOR THE END
OF TIME* (1940-41)

Olivier Messiaen

Andrés Díaz, Frederic Chiu

GLOVSKY

Counselors-at-Law

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Christian Friedrich Henrici (1700-64), better known by the pseudonym Picander

Erbarme dich, mein Gott,
Have mercy, my God,
for the sake of my tears.
See here before thee,
heart and eyes weep bitterly

“ERBARME DICH, MEIN GOTT,” FROM *ST. MATTHEW PASSION*, BWV 244

Johann Sebastian Bach (b. Eisenach, Germany, March 21, 1685;
d. Leipzig, Germany, July 28, 1750)

Composed ca. 1727; 7 minutes

Originally scored as a duet between alto voice and violin, this infinitely poignant plea for mercy is one of the most moving moments in Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*. Peter’s plea for forgiveness is represented through a short prayer written by Picander, the pseudonym of the German poet Christian Friedrich Henrici, who collaborated closely with Bach for more than two decades. Frederic Chiu’s 2007 piano transcription is in the tradition of the great 19th- and early 20th-century pianist-composers like Liszt, Busoni and Rachmaninoff.

PIANO SONATA NO. 7, IN B-FLAT, OP. 83

Sergei Prokofiev (b. Sontzovka, Russia, April 11/23, 1891;
d. Moscow, U.S.S.R., March 5, 1953)

Composed 1939-42; 20 minutes

Inquieto (restless), *caloroso* (warm), and *precipitato* (impetuously) are the descriptive tempo markings that Prokofiev provides for this, the most popular of his nine piano sonatas and they reflect the uncertainty of the times when the Russian composer wrote it. Prokofiev completed the sonata in 1942 in Tbilisi, Georgia, where he and many other Soviet artists had been evacuated to escape the Nazi advance and the “Great War of the Fatherland.” It is one

of his three so-called “War Sonatas,” Nos. 6, 7 and 8, which represent the composer at the peak of his skill. He worked on all ten movements of the three sonatas concurrently between 1939 and 1944 and they were his first piano sonatas in sixteen years. The three movements of No. 7 contain all the hopes and aspirations of a nation struggling for victory. The great Russian pianist Sviatoslav Richter was eager to give the first performance of the sonata, after learning it in just four days. At the time he said: “The sonata immediately throws one into the anxious situation of a world losing its equilibrium. Disorder and uncertainty reign. Man observes the raging of death-dealing forces. Full of the will for victory, he makes a headlong running attack, clearing away all obstacles. He will become strong through the struggle, expanding into a gigantic and life affirming force.”



Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

On March 19, 1943, Prokofiev was awarded his first Stalin Prize, for the Sonata No. 7. He was to complete nine piano sonatas, with two more, numbered and assigned opus numbers, sadly unfinished at his death.

The ferocious first movement contains some of Prokofiev’s finest, most uncompromising music. Its nervous intensity and bitonality dramatically contrast with the warm lyricism of the slow movement. Here, a disarmingly simple melody seems to be drawn straight out of the opera *War and Peace*, on which Prokofiev was working at the time. It is, in fact, closely related to the song “Wehmuth” (Sadness), by Robert Schumann. The driving, motoric, *moto perpetuo* finale, with its thrilling seven-beats-to-the-bar, propels the sonata to a decisive end. The composer Nikolai Miaskovsky, who was also evacuated to Tbilisi, described it as “superbly wild.”

ABYSS OF THE BIRDS (ABÎME DES OISEAUX)

PRAISE TO THE ETERNITY OF JESUS (LOUANGE À L'ÉTERNITÉ DE JÉSUS) FROM *QUARTET FOR THE END OF TIME*

Composed 1940–41; 8 minutes/6 minutes

Olivier Messiaen (b. Avignon, France, December 10, 1908; d. Paris, France, April 28, 1992)

One of the seminal chamber works of the 20th century, French composer Olivier Messiaen's eight-movement, fifty-minute *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* (*Quartet for the End of Time*), for violin, clarinet, cello and piano, began life in inauspicious circumstances. Messiaen had been a prisoner of war since the summer of 1940 in the chillingly named Stalag VIII A, a camp in Silesia, about seventy miles east of Dresden, for prisoners of enlisted rank. On his morning watch, Messiaen would listen to the dawn chorus, noting down individual bird songs with a precision that would soon blossom into a skill unmatched by any composer. Using these notated bird songs as inspiration, he began to write a piece for the solo clarinet of Henri Akoka, a Jewish prisoner in Stalag VIII A. Being a French rather than East European Jew, Akoka was incarcerated under the same terms as his non-Jewish French fellow prisoners. Messiaen titled his solo soliloquy, "Abyss of the Birds" and it became the starting point for his Quartet.

The instrumentation grew when Messiaen met two string players, a violinist and a cellist. Remarkably, Messiaen was not only allowed, but encouraged to compose music. A German officer named Karl-Albert Brüll gave him a regular supply of manuscript paper, pencils, erasers ... and bread. In his ground-breaking quartet, Messiaen was to deal with the challenges of blend and balance throughout by subdividing the quartet and using the full potential of all four instruments sparingly. The work is anchored by two ecstatic paeans. "Praise to the Eternity of Jesus" is the first of them, for cello and piano. Its slow tempo and feeling of finality disorients our expectations of how a piece of chamber music should unfold. "This is the subject of the Quartet," Messiaen's second wife, the pianist Yvonne Loriod, said after his death. "At the end of Time, when the universe is no more, it will drift into Eternity. And this is the riddle that fascinated my husband."

ELEGY: SNOW IN JUNE, FOR CELLO AND FOUR PERCUSSIONISTS

Tan Dun (b. Simao, Hunan Province, China, August 18, 1957)

Composed 1991; 26 minutes

"*Elegy: Snow in June*," the Chinese-American composer Tan Dun says, "sings of pity and purity, beauty and darkness, and is a lament for victims everywhere." Although Tan links the work to a 13th-century Chinese drama by Kuan Han-Ching, his initial inspiration for the work has long been taken as the Tiananmen Square crackdown, June 4, 1989. After weeks of anti-government protests, hunger strikes, martial law and a ban on foreign press cameras, Chinese troops infamously ended the demonstrations by shooting civilians and students in and around Tiananmen Square. *Snow in June* is Tan's elegy for the tragedy—"initially inspired by Tan's reaction to the Tiananmen Square riots," in the words of the booklet of a CD produced by the composer. The Tiananmen Square crackdown resulted in many violent deaths; the official death toll has never been released.



Invitation to the premiere of Messiaen's Quartet for the End of Time in the prisoner-of-war camp Stalag VIII A, Görnitz. Rehearsals lasted two months. The performance, in an enclosed military barrack, was packed with somewhere approaching 400 German officers and prisoners from all walks of life, many of whom had never before heard classical music. "Never was I listened to with such rapt attention and comprehension," Messiaen recalled.



"If there is a conservatory on the Moon, I will definitely apply to go there and learn Moon melodies."

–TAN DUN

Snow in June, one of Tan's most successful early chamber works, takes its title from the events that followed the death of a 13th-century young woman, Dou Eh, executed for crimes she did not commit. "Even nature cries out for her innocence," Tan says. "Her blood does not fall to earth but flies upward, a heavy snow falls in June, and a drought descends for three years." The events and the composer's reactions play out in the three sections—or "free variations" as Tan refers to them—of his score for solo cello and four percussionists. After an eloquent opening cello soliloquy, which is keening and intensely emotional, the percussion becomes an increasingly present force. They override the cello for a while, entering into dialogue at other points. They allow a lyrical cello theme to be established during a second soliloquy at the mid-point of the piece, but quickly turn sonorous accompaniment into aggressive confrontation to snuff out further dialogue. After cadenzas from the four percussion groups, the cello again shares in the dialogue with both rhythmic and, especially, timbral-driven development. Whistles and thunderous drumming result in a final, agonized soliloquy and a brief recall of the theme from the cello, while the sounds of torn paper and struck rocks stand as visceral images of an injustice brutally delivered.

– Program notes © 2018 Keith Horner. Comments welcomed: khnotes@sympatico.ca

TAN DUN TIMELINE

- 1957 Born in rural Hunan province to professional parents
- 1974 Sent to plant rice during Mao's Cultural Revolution. Discovers (the then forbidden) traditional folk songs and sets them to Maoist texts
- 1978 One of 30 students chosen to attend the reopened Central Conservatory in Beijing, encountering Western classical music for first time
- 1986 Fellowship, Columbia University, U.S.A.
- 1998 Grawemeyer Award for the opera *Marco Polo*
- 2000 *Today: A World Symphony for the Millennium* broadcast internationally by more than 55 television networks
- 2000 Academy Award for Best Original Score, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*
- 2001 Grammy Award for Best Soundtrack, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*
- 2006 Metropolitan Opera commissions and premieres *The First Emperor*, with Placido Domingo
- 2008 Logo music and award ceremony music for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games
- 2008 Internet Symphony *Eroica* for the YouTube S.O., audience of 23 million+
- 2013 Named UNESCO Global Goodwill Ambassador
- 2017 Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement, Venice Biennale

DAVE BURNS, *percussion*



Percussionist David Burns has founded several groups in his native Canada with the purpose of commissioning and performing new works from around the world. He has performed with members of NEXUS, Steven Schick and Canadian Brass, and was recently appointed Principal Timpani/

Percussion of the Hyogo Performing Arts Centre Orchestra in Japan. Additionally, he has performed with members of the Royal Concertgebouw and the Vienna and Berlin philharmonics. Mr. Burns received his training at the Glenn Gould School at The Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto.

FREDERIC CHIU, *piano*



Frederic Chiu's intriguing piano-playing and teaching springs from a diverse set of experiences and interests: his Asian/American/European background, his musical training, and an early and ongoing exploration of artificial intelligence and human psychology, especially

the body-mind-heart connection. With more than 25 recordings, he has received recognition as Record of the Year by *Stereo Review*, "Top 10 recordings" by *The New Yorker*, with rave reviews from the *Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*. His most recent recordings demonstrate his wide range: Beethoven/Liszt Symphony V, *Carnival of the Animals* with David Gonzalez, and *Hymns and Dervishes*. Mr. Chiu has toured Europe and the U.S. with the Orchestre de Bretagne and Stefan Sanderling, and has performed as a soloist with the world's major symphonies. He has collaborated with Joshua Bell, Pierre Amoyal and Gary Hoffman, as well as the St. Lawrence, Shanghai and Daedalus string quartets. He was the recipient of an Avery Fisher Career Grant and the Petscheck Award of The Juilliard School and was a fellow of the American Pianists Association. Mr. Chiu also co-directs artistic activities at Beechwood Arts, a non-profit in Connecticut. He is well-known as the "non-winner" of the 1993 Van Cliburn Competition, where his elimination from the finals caused an uproar in the press. He enjoys spending his free time divided between writing, painting and cooking.

ANDRÉS DÍAZ, *cello*



Since winning first prize in the 1986 Naumburg International Cello Competition, Andrés Díaz has exhilarated both critics and audiences with his intense and charismatic performances. He was awarded a prestigious Avery Fisher Career

Grant and was nominated for a 2009 Latin Grammy. He regularly performs with orchestras throughout North America and at major festivals like Banff, La Jolla, Ravinia, Marlboro and Tanglewood. He is a member of the Díaz String Trio with violinist Andrés Cárdenes and violist Roberto Díaz. His debut solo recording on MusicMasters was acclaimed by the *Boston Globe* as "strong and subtle; everything Díaz does has personality and, better than that, character." His most recent release features the six Bach Suites on the Azica Records label. Born in Chile, Mr. Díaz graduated from the New England Conservatory, where he worked with Laurence Lesser and Colin Carr. He is a professor at Southern Methodist University and holds the Koerner Chair in Cello at the Glenn Gould School of The Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. He plays a 1698 Matteo Goffriller cello and a bow made by his father, Manuel Díaz.

TODD PALMER, *clarinet*



The clarinetist Todd Palmer has appeared as a performance artist, concerto soloist, recitalist, chamber music collaborator and educator. In addition to solo recital and chamber work, he has shared the stage with the world's most renowned artists

and ensembles such as sopranos Kathleen Battle and Renée Fleming, as well as the St. Lawrence and Brentano string quartets. Mr. Palmer has collaborated with numerous composers, and has championed Golijov's klezmer clarinet quintet *The Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind*. He gave the world premiere of David Bruce's *Gumboots* at Carnegie Hall with the St. Lawrence Quartet. Mr. Palmer has collaborated with numerous directors and choreographers, including Mark Morris, for whom he gave the world premiere of *Crosswalk*, a new work for clarinet and dance especially created for him in 2013. He was the first wind player to be awarded the grand prize in the Ima Hogg Young Artist Auditions and later won the Young Concert Artist International Auditions. In addition to a wealth of

chamber music and festival performances, he has also held principal clarinet positions in the Minnesota Orchestra and Orpheus Chamber Orchestra.

MATT SHARROCK, *percussion*



Hailed as one of “Boston’s best percussionists” by *I Care if You Listen*, Matt Sharrock is a versatile marimbist, percussionist and conductor. Since 2013, he has served as Music Director for the Equilibrium Ensemble and is a founding member of the Boston

Percussion Group. Mr. Sharrock has performed with some of New England’s finest arts organizations, including Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Boston Landmarks Orchestra and the Chameleon Arts Ensemble. He is currently on faculty at the Boston Conservatory at Berklee.

AARON TRANT, *percussion*



Deemed as a “sure, adept, and nuanced” percussionist by *The Boston Music Intelligencer*, Aaron Trant is an active musician in the Boston area and beyond. His eclectic knowledge of classical, jazz, rock, contemporary and improvised music has made him

an asset to many ensembles throughout the U.S. Mr. Trant has received great acclaim for his original score and solo percussion performance of the Chris Marker film *La Jetée* and is the cofounder, performer and composer for the After Quartet, one of the few groups dedicated to the art of live musical accompaniment of silent film. He is the assistant director, percussionist and composer for the Firebird Ensemble and Primary Duo, as well as founding his percussion trio, Spiral. Mr. Trant’s playing can be heard on the Tzadik, Mode, New World, Red Chook and BMOP Sound labels.

MICHAEL WILLIAMS, *percussion*



Hailed by *The Boston Globe* as “one of the city’s best percussionists,” Mike Williams has performed throughout North America and Europe and is a regular performer in Boston. An advocate for contemporary music, he is a member of Sound Icon, the

Callithumpian Consort, and is the percussionist and artistic director of Guerilla Opera. Mr. Williams has worked with many of the leading composers of our time including Pierluigi Billone, Philippe Leroux, Gunther Schuller and Roger Reynolds, and he has been involved in numerous recordings on labels such as Cantaloupe, BMOP/sound, Albany, and Northwest Classics. He was a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center and has performed at festivals including Festival de Mexico, Gaudeamus Music Week, Festival Internacional Cervantino, Monadnock Music, New Hampshire Music Festival, and SICPP at New England Conservatory. Mr. Williams studied at the Boston Conservatory, winning top prize in the concerto competition, and the Amsterdam Conservatory. He is on the music theory faculty at the Boston Conservatory at Berklee.