

New Music Concerts presents

## Chou Wen-chung and the Varèse Story

New Music Concerts Ensemble — **Robert Aitken** flute and direction


**Accordes** string quartet — **Teri Dunn** soprano

January 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008 | Betty Oliphant Theatre

NMI

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New Music Concerts  
Robert Aitken, director

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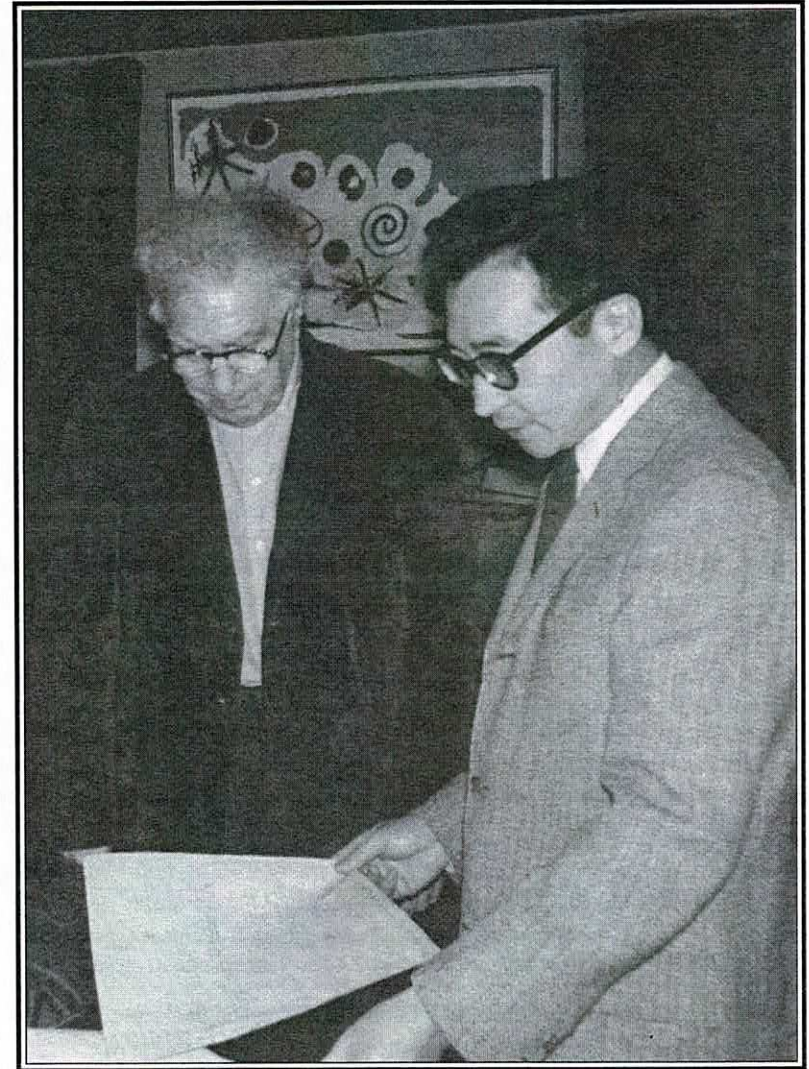
Varèse is born in Paris on 22 December. He grows up with his mother's family in the Burgundian village of Le Villars. 1890 Returns to Paris. 1892 Moves with his family to Turin; earliest attempts at composition. 1897 Death of his mother. 1900 Receives private lessons in harmony and counterpoint from Giovanni Bolzoni. 1904 Break with his father; returns to Paris and enrolls at the Schola Cantorum. 1906 Studies at the Conservatoire; founds a workers' chorus; his works are performed in private settings. 1907 Meets Claude Debussy; marries the actress Suzanne Bing on 5 November; moves to Berlin shortly thereafter. 1908 Meets Ferruccio Busoni; several trips to Paris, where he meets Maurice Ravel. 1909 Artistic contacts with Romain Rolland and Hugo von Hofmannsthal; receives support from Richard Strauss; founds the Symphonic Chorus in Berlin. 1910 Birth of his daughter, Claude, in October; death of his grandfather; premiere of *Bourgogne* on 10 December. 1911-12 Works on his opera *Œdipus und die Sphinx* and various orchestral pieces. 1913 Divorces Suzanne Bing; returns to Paris in the summer. 1914 Conducts concert of the Czech Philharmonic on 4 January. 1915 Drafted into the French army for several months; moves to New York in late December. 1916 Automobile accident; meets Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray, and the artistic circle associated with Walter Arensberg. 1917 Conducts the Berlioz *Requiem* in New York's Hippodrome on 1 April; meets Francis Picabia and contributes articles to his journal *391*. Meets his future wife Louise Norton in the fall. 1918 Conducts the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra on 17 March; begins work on *Amériques*. 1919 Founds the New Symphony Orchestra. 1920 Works as an extra in two films by John S. Robertson at the side of John Barrymore. 1921 Begins to receive patronage from Gertrude Whitney; founds the International Composers' Guild (ICG) on 31 May. 1922 Marries Louise Norton on 17 January; completes the score of *Amériques*; first concerts of the ICG; premiere of *Offrandes* on 23 April; visits Berlin from July to November, where he founds the Internationale Componisten-Gilde. 1923 Premiere of *Hyperprism* on 4 March; signs contract with music publisher Kenneth Curwen. 1924 Premiere of *Octandre* on 13 January; visits Paris from March to December; travels to London. 1925 Finishes *Intégrales*, which is premiered on 1 March; begins work on *Arcana*; another visit to Paris from August to December; purchases house at 188 Sullivan Street, where he resides until his death. 1926 Premiere of *Amériques* on 9-10 April. 1927 Premiere of *Arcana* on 8-9 April; obtains American citizenship; stays in Antibes from July to October; ICG disbands; begins multi-media project *The One-All-Along*, a.k.a. *L'Astronome*. 1928 Founds the Pan-American Association of Composers; moves to Paris (until 1933) with plans to establish a musical laboratory and *département de composition*. 1929 French premieres of *Intégrales* and *Amériques*; contacts with Joan Miró, Heitor Villa-Lobos, Thomas Bouchard, and Brassai. 1930 André Jolivet becomes Varèse's pupil; spends summers in Garnes near Paris. 1931 Completes *Ionisation* on 13 November. 1932 French and German premieres of *Arcana* (25 February in Paris, 5 March in Berlin); initial plans for *Espace* project.

37<sup>th</sup> season | 309<sup>th</sup> and 310<sup>th</sup> events

January 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008 | Betty Oliphant Theatre

New Music Concerts presents

## Chou Wen-chung and the Varèse Story



New Music Concerts Ensemble — Robert Aitken flute and direction  
Accordes string quartet — Teri Dunn soprano



**Concert One | Saturday January 12, 2008**

7<sup>15</sup> Chou Wen-chung talks about his life with Varèse

8<sup>00</sup> Concert

*Programme:*

**Edgard Varèse** (France/USA 1883–1965) *Octandre* (1923) 7'

Douglas Stewart, flute/piccolo; Keith Atkinson, oboe; Max Christie, clarinet  
Kathleen McLean, bassoon; Joan Watson, horn; Stuart Laughton, trumpet;  
Ian Cowie, trombone; Peter Pavlovsky, bass; Robert Aitken, conductor

**Chou Wen-chung** (China/USA, 1923) *String Quartet No. 2 "Streams"* (2003) 19'

*Accordes:* Fujiko Imajishi, Carol Lynn Fujino, violins;  
Douglas Perry, viola, David Hetherington, cello

**Varèse** *Density 21.5* (1936, rev.1946) 4'

Robert Aitken solo flute

**Chou** *Twilight Colors* (2007) 17'

Dianne Aitken, flute/alto flute; Keith Atkinson, oboe/english horn;  
Max Christie, clarinet/bass clarinet; Fujiko Imajishi, violin;  
Douglas Perry, viola; David Hetherington, cello; Robert Aitken, conductor

**Varèse** *Offrandes* (1921) 8'

Teri Dunn, soprano; Douglas Stewart, Dianne Aitken, flutes; Keith Atkinson, oboe;  
Max Christie, clarinet; Kathleen McLean, bassoon; Joan Watson, horn; Stuart Laughton, trumpet;  
Ian Cowie, trombone; Rick Sacks, Trevor Tureski, Ryan Scott, Russell Hartenberger,  
Robin Engelman, Mark Duggan, John F. Thompson, Richard Moore, percussion;  
Erica Goodman, harp; Fujiko Imajishi, Carol Lynn Fujino, violins, Douglas Perry, viola;  
David Hetherington, cello; Peter Pavlovsky, bass; Robert Aitken, conductor

9<sup>30</sup> Frank Scheffer's new Varèse film "The One-All-Along"

Paul Hodge, technical co-ordinator

New Music Concerts' presentation of Chou Wen-chung and the Varèse Story  
is generously supported by the Spiralis Music Trust and funded in part  
by a grant from The Amphion Foundation, Inc.

**Concert Two | Sunday January 13, 2008**

7<sup>15</sup> — Introduction and Interview with Chou Wen-chung

8<sup>00</sup> — Concert

*Programme:*

**Varèse** *Intégrales* (1925) 11'

Douglas Stewart, Dianne Aitken, piccolos; Keith Atkinson, oboe;  
Max Christie, Micah Heilbrunn, clarinets; Joan Watson, horn; Stuart Laughton,  
Anita McAlister, trumpets; Ian Cowie, Herb Poole, Mark Bonang, trombones;  
Rick Sacks, Trevor Tureski, Ryan Scott, Robin Engelman, percussion; Robert Aitken, conductor

**Varèse** *Déserts* (1950-54, rev.1961) 18'

Introduced by Chou Wen-chung

Douglas Stewart, Dianne Aitken, flutes; Micah Heilbrunn, clarinet; Max Christie, bass clarinet;  
Joan Watson, Bardhyl Gjevori, horns; Stuart Laughton, Anita McAlister, Ira Zingraff, trumpets;  
Ian Cowie, Jan Owens, Herb Poole, trombones; Mark Bonang, Scott Irvine, tubas  
Rick Sacks, Trevor Tureski, Ryan Scott, Robin Engelman, Mark Duggan, percussion;  
David Swan, piano; Robert Aitken, conductor

— Intermission —

**Chou** *Echoes from the Gorge* (1989) 20'

Rick Sacks, Mark Duggan, Nick Coulter, Graham Hargrove, percussion; Robert Aitken, conductor

**Varèse** *Hyperprism* (1922-23) 5'

Douglas Stewart flute/piccolo; Max Christie, clarinet; Kathleen McLean, bassoon; Joan Watson,  
Bardhyl Gjevori, Gary Pattison, horns; Stuart Laughton, Anita McAlister, trumpets; Ian Cowie, Herb  
Poole, trombones; Rick Sacks, Trevor Tureski, Ryan Scott, Russell Hartenberger, Robin Engelman,  
Mark Duggan, Richard Moore, Andy Morris, Romano DiNillo, percussion; Robert Aitken, conductor

**Varèse** *Ionisation* (1929-31) 6'

Trevor Tureski, Ryan Scott, Russell Hartenberger, Robin Engelman, Mark Duggan,  
John F. Thompson, Richard Moore, Andy Morris, Nick Coulter, Graham Hargrove,  
Romano DiNillo, Devon Fornelli, David Swan, percussion; Rick Sacks, conductor



radio 2

Sunday's concert is being recorded for future broadcast on **CBC Radio 2**. Enjoy the  
concert again on *The Signal*, heard evenings from 10pm–1am, with hosts Laurie  
Brown & Pat Carrabre; & on *Sunday Afternoon In Concert*, heard each Sunday  
afternoon from 1–5pm, with host Bill Richardson. CBC Radio 2 is 94.1 FM in Toronto.



## Concert One | Saturday January 12, 2008

Chou Wen-chung's earliest work, *Landscapes* for orchestra (finished in 1949 and premiered by Leopold Stokowski with the San Francisco Symphony in 1953), is often cited as the first composition that is independent of either Western or Eastern musical grammar. Subsequently, his research for integration of musical concepts and practices led to his ever-evolving theory on his *pien* (variable) modes, influenced by concepts found in *yin-yang* and *I Jing* theories, *Dao* philosophy, brush calligraphy, and *qin* (Chinese zither) music, as well as early and modern European theories. It began with two works for wind orchestra, *Metaphors* (1959) and *Riding the Wind* (1964), but evolved steadily through such works as *Pien* (1966) for chamber ensemble, *Echoes from the Gorge* (1989) for percussion quartet, the *Cello Concerto* (1992), and most recently, the two string quartets, *Clouds* (1996) and *Streams* (2003).

Chou was introduced to Edgard Varèse by Colin McPhee in 1949, and became Varèse's student and assistant during the years when Varèse was composing his last works, including *Déserts* (1949-1954), the manuscript of which is, in fact, in Chou's handwriting. His decades-long task of editing and correcting Varèse's scores began under Varèse's supervision, but was mostly undertaken after his death, including both versions of *Amériques*. Chou has also completed two of Varèse's unfinished scores.

Chou did his graduate work at Columbia University under Otto Luening, 1952–1954, and served as his assistant and Vladimir Ussachevsky's at the predecessor of the historic Electronic Music Center. Among Chou's other teachers were Nicholas Slonimsky, Bohuslav Martinu, and the musicologist Paul Henry Lang at Columbia.

Chou taught composition to an increasingly international student body at Columbia University from 1964 to 1991. He succeeded Luening in 1969 and developed the composition program into an internationally renowned institution. He was responsible for the design and coordination of the curriculum for doctoral candidates in music composition. He designed the one-year course "Twentieth-century Styles and Techniques" as a basic required course for doctoral and master candidates in musical composition (1965) and the graduate course "Chinese Music" (1969). Chou also designed the course content on East and Southeast Asian music for the course "Asian Humanities in Music" as well as coordinating the overall design of the course, including the music of South and West Asia (1982). Concurrently, he was also in charge of academic affairs at Columbia's School of the Arts. He supervised curricular planning and the revision for the Master of Fine Arts programs in film, theater, visual arts and writing (1975 to 1987). In the 1980s, he discovered many young Chinese talents and brought them to the United States to study at Columbia.

As the first Fritz Reiner Professor of Musical Composition, Chou established the Fritz Reiner Center for Contemporary Music at Columbia in 1984 to foster new music and encourage young composers. He revitalized Columbia's Electronic Music Center by converting it to the present Computer Music Center. He has worked continuously on behalf of many cultural institutions, most notably as President of Composers Recordings, Inc. from 1970 to 1975.

To undertake crucially needed cultural projects throughout East and Southeast Asia, where he has been visiting since 1966, Chou established the Center for United States-China Arts Exchange in 1978 at Columbia University, which has since conducted many sustained projects in diverse cultural fields, involving thousands of professionals at a time. Some examples of the Center's projects are the Pacific Music Festival and the Pacific Composers Conference in Sapporo, Japan, in collaboration with Leonard Bernstein and the London Symphony Orchestra, 1990; the decade-long arts education program in China, begun in 1980, funded by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund; and the ongoing comprehensive program on conservation and development of indigenous cultures of Yunnan, China, begun in 1990, funded by the Ford Foundation. Chou and the Center also collaborated with Isaac Stern on his first visit to China and the filming of *From Mao to Mozart* in 1979; and with Arthur Miller on the historic Asian premiere of *Death of a Salesman*, in Beijing, 1983. In 1994, at the invitation of the Nationalities Institute of Yunnan, he designed the fundamental concept for a four-track (indigenous minority, majority Chinese, pan-Asian, and modern Western) curriculum for a new arts department (music, dance and visual arts) in consultation with José Maceda.

Chou Wen-chung was born in Yantai, China in 1923 to a family steeped in the wenren tradition. He came to the United States in 1946. Chou is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and honorary member of the International Society for Contemporary Music and of the Asian Composers League. He was honored in 2001 by the French government with the order of Chevalier des Arts et Lettres. Chou's latest work, the Second String Quartet "Streams", premiered in New York City in April 2004. Most recently, he was awarded the 2005 Robert Stevenson Prize for research on the relationship between ethnomusicology and composition.

Chou lives in New York City with his wife Yi-an. He has two grown sons, Luyen and Sumin, and two grandchildren.



**M**y greatest lesson came in 1950. I had just discovered some early Webern scores: *Six Bagatelles for string quartet*, Op. 9, and *Five Pieces for orchestra*, Op. 10. They overwhelmed me because I thought they showed an amazing affinity to some very refined types of Chinese zither (ch'in or qin) music, so I spent a lot of time experimenting with integrating the material. Varèse, never very patient, could usually smell something foul in music pretty quickly. This time he was patient and allowed my experiment to continue. Perhaps he thought I was genuinely groping toward something. Finally one day, with both of us at the piano, he turned to me ferociously and said, "Wen-chung, you want to be a composer? Then you have to have courage. Sometimes you have to burn your music! Sometimes you have to piss on it!" And he stood up, pointing to my score, saying, "Piss now!" and walked out.

— Chou Wen-chung



**Edgard Varèse** (b. Paris, 22 Dec 1883; d. New York, 6 Nov 1965) studied with d'Indy at the Schola Cantorum (1903-5) and Widor at the Paris Conservatoire (1905-7), then moved to Berlin, where he met Strauss and Busoni. In 1913 he returned to Paris, but in 1915 he emigrated to New York; nearly all his compositions disappeared at this stage, with the exception of a single published song and an orchestral score, *Bourgogne* (1908), which he took with him but destroyed towards the end of his life. His creative output therefore effectively begins with *Amériques* for large orchestra (1921), which, for all its echoes of Debussy and of Stravinsky's early ballets, sets out to discover new worlds of sound: fiercely dissonant chords, rhythmically complex polyphonies for percussion and/or wind, forms in continuous evolution with no large-scale recurrence.

In 1921 he and Carlos Salzedo founded the International Composers Guild, who gave the first performances of several of his works for small ensemble, these prominently featuring wind and percussion, and presenting the innovations of *Amériques* in pure, compact form: *Hyperprism* (1923), *Octandre* (1923) and *Intégrales* (1925). *Arcana* (1927), which returns to the large orchestra and extended form with perfected technique, brought this most productive period to an end.

There followed a long stay in Paris (1928-33), during which he wrote *Ionisation* for percussion orchestra (1931), the first European work to dispense almost entirely with pitched sounds, which enter only in the coda. He also took an interest in the electronic instruments being developed (he had been calling for electronic

means since his arrival in the USA), and wrote for two theremins or ondes martenot in *Ecuatorial* for bass, brass, keyboards and percussion (1934). The flute solo *Density 21. 5* (1936) was then his last completed work for nearly two decades.

During this time he taught sporadically and also made plans for *Espace*, which was to have involved simultaneous radio broadcasts from around the globe; an *Etude pour Espace* for chorus, pianos and percussion was performed in 1947. Then, with electronic music at last a real possibility owing to the development of the tape recorder, he produced *Déserts* for wind, percussion and tape (1954) and a *Poème électronique* (1957-8), devised to be diffused in the Philips pavilion at the Brussels Exposition of 1958. His last years were devoted to projects on themes of night and death, including the unfinished *Nocturnal* for voices and chamber orchestra (1961).

— The Grove Concise Dictionary of Music © Macmillan Publishers Ltd.

## Edgard Varèse

## *Octandre*

So often inspired by the physical sciences, Varèse here pays tribute to the biological, the adjective *octandre* (octandrous) referring to flowers that have eight distinct stamens. Similarly eightfold, and perhaps similarly male in Varèse's imagination, the requisite ensemble comprises one each of the orchestral woodwind and brass instruments plus double bass. Among Varèse's ensemble pieces, the absence of percussion is unique, and perhaps contributes a sense of loss, most particularly near the start where the music goes through gestures recalling the recent *Hyperprism* but deprived of that work's febrile percussive activity. On the other hand, the concentration on pitched instruments provides for a richness of thematic and motivic relationships not approached again until *Déserts*. Another unusual feature is the division into movements, though these do not follow any conventional pattern, nor are they greatly differentiated in speed or character. Indeed, they allude to one another freely, and could be regarded as stages in the development of a single idea, that of having a soloist introduce an interplay of instrumental choirs.

The first movement starts with an oboe theme composed simply of a four-note descending chromatic scale with the second note slipped down an octave — yet this elementary idea gains, through rhythm and dynamic change, an unmistakably Varèsian profile. It climbs up to a sequence of blistering dissonances, broken off for an antiphony of wind quintet and brass trio, both supported by the double bass. At the end it returns, up a tritone.



In another typical gesture, the piccolo opens the second movement insisting on one note. Again there is a dialogue of ensembles, this time with the E-flat clarinet stepping forward. The final climax comes on a searing discord, out of which the double bass begins the finale. Here the main soloist is the bassoon, followed soon, as the marking changes from *Grave* to *Animé et jubilatoire*, by the oboe once more. A moment of canonic imitation is unexpected, as is a return to the tempo and material of the second movement. But then the brass recover the steadier speed of lively jubilation and roll round the same notes to press the work home.

The score was composed in 1923 and first performed at an International Composers Guild concert in New York on January 13, 1924. The conductor was E. Robert Schmitz, a fellow immigrant from Paris and an enthusiastic colleague in presenting new music. Varèse dedicated the piece to him.

— Paul Griffiths

### Chou Wen-chung

### Second String Quartet “Streams”

My second string quartet is meant to be a humble tribute to the universality of the genius of Bach. When I was commissioned by the Brentano String Quartet for a short work in response to the *Art of Fugue*, I immediately decided to follow the commissioned fugue with ensuing movements on the same subject, as a quartet. It is intentionally concise in view of the monumental dimensions of the *Art of Fugue*. It bears the subtitle of “Streams,” suggesting the ebb and flow of distinct ideas sprung from a single source or the confluence of currents from different sources into a single intermingling entity.

The first movement is a strict fugue. Where it is different from a conventional fugue is that its theme undergoes radical transformations throughout the fugue according to the elasticity central to the Chinese theories of *yin/yang* and *I-ching*. If the western transformation of a fugal theme can be characterized as viewing oneself in a mirror—exact reverse image—then the transformation in this quartet is more like seeing one’s own face undulating in a running brook or a rippling pond. Another difference is in the emphasis on the gradual “process” of change as against a single “instance” of change. This characteristic is found throughout the quartet.

The second movement is an elegy, set as a canon in two pairs, based on the *yin/yang* forms of the fugal theme. The Chinese subtitle, *Zhaobun*, refers to a millennia old poetic form, meaning literally “calling for the spirit of the deceased.” It is in turn mournful, tender, explosive and delirious but always constrained, and often in juxtaposition of each other. This wide range of emotion is expressed by the strings with mutes, in imitation of each other. This movement reminds me of the

extraordinary a cappella polyphonic singing of villagers from an isolated locality in southwest China that I heard some years ago, which employed flexible but complicated imitation that is remarkably in spirit with that of this elegy. The Elegy is dedicated to the memory of my brother, Wen-tsing, who died unexpectedly shortly before I began to sketch out this movement.

The next is an extremely brief scherzo-like movement in the character of a “perpetual motion,” although technically again a double canon. The interest here is the process of a relentless drive towards an ever increasing tension by means of a constant expansion of the number of notes within each phrase, and of repeated bowing attacks within each beat. This steadily tightening mood is however counteracted by the ebb and flow in the tempo and the fluctuation in the dynamics. All of these means of expression in sound are in accordance with the same esthetic principles in Chinese calligraphy, where a single brushstroke in action can suggest an increasing mobility and tension while at the same time exhibiting fluctuations in texture and density. In short, this movement appears to be all about how a single calligraphic stroke completes its course of action. For a long time after the movement was composed, I was puzzled as to why I chose to depict such a theme. It only dawned on me recently that over the many months when I was composing this quartet, I was suffering a severe recurrent pain in my body that would intensify mercilessly to an unbearable climax when it would suddenly subside, very much in the manner of the arpeggio that abruptly concludes the movement.

The last movement is a recapitulation of the three principal expositions of the fugue. It opens with a canonic imitation in double-stops, making it practically a canon in eight parts. The superposition of double-stops on the strings made me feel sublimated while composing the movement. It is followed by a cadenza-like section leading to another eight part section which is now homophonic with a strong sense of searching for the meaning of life—to be one with nature. A brief coda brings the music back to where it started in the beginning, reminiscent of the introduction to the fugue—and perhaps of Bach’s own unfulfilled search.

— Chou Wen-chung

### Edgard Varèse

### Density 21.5

21.5 is the density in standard measure (grams per cubic centimetre) of platinum; Varèse wrote the piece for a new flute made for Georges Barrère, one of his New York French acquaintances — though Barrère’s instrument, produced by the still prominent firm of Wm. S. Haynes of Boston, was in fact of an alloy with one-tenth iridium, which would imply a density of 21.6. Barrère had been in the U.S. longer than Varèse, since coming in 1905 to be principal flutist of the New York Symphony,



and he was nearing sixty when he asked his friend to write the first piece specifically for platinum(-iridium) flute, to be introduced at Carnegie Hall on February 16, 1936.

The choice of metal was not entirely a gimmick, for the new instrument was said to produce a wider range of upper partials. Varèse wrote the piece quite quickly, in January 1936, taking as his model Debussy's flute solo *Syrinx*. The crucial opening four-note pattern of that work is crucial here, too, though quite differently interpreted, and *Density 21.5* unfolds almost as an alternative to *Syrinx*, a lament instead of a pastoral. Beyond that, the material is very much Varèse's own, tracing a sketch of ideas from other compositions and not excluding some remnant of his vital percussion at those moments where the player is asked to tap the keys audibly.

Varèse revised the work, doubling it in length, before publishing it ten years later.

— Paul Griffiths

### Chou Wen-chung

### *Twilight Colors*

*Twilight Colors* is a double trio for woodwinds and strings, specifically for flute, oboe and clarinet in one trio; and violin, viola and cello in the other. The woodwind trio is by itself a double trio with some movements written for alto flute, English horn and bass clarinet played by the same performers as a separate entity. Therefore the movements of the work consist of a string trio with combinations of one of the two woodwind trios, which offers changing color combinations from movement to movement.

This piece is inspired by the exceptional colors of the changing sky over the Hudson River Valley which attracted American painters who initiated a school of true landscape painting not dominated by the human figure. The texture of the twilight sky, with its rich monochromatic hues, tranquility devoid of sharp contrasts and streaks of parallel yet non-parallel lights, undergoes a subtle and continual change. This process of transformation in nature is reflected in the multi-linear texture, timbre, harmony and rhythm of the music, and became apparent only after the composition was well underway.

In conceiving the piece, I was influenced by the Chinese brush painters of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century who adopted fundamental brush stroke technique from Chinese calligraphy to develop a landscape painting technique based on subtle brushstrokes and their sophisticated organization. "The result was an extremely terse and abstract expression of the subject portrayed, and conceivably anticipated much of the abstract and the expressionist development in Western painting of the 20th century, which presumably evolved out of a different esthetic orientation."

*Twilight Colors* is a series of vignettes in four movements and a coda, each with a descriptive phrase: "in the darkness, a thread of light," "through the clouds, colors of dawn," "trees and rocks in the mist," and "over the horizon, mountain peaks rising." There is also a coda, "their silhouettes neither parallel nor contrary".

*Twilight Colors* was commissioned by the Koussevitsky Foundation and dedicated to the fond memory of Olga Koussevitzky.

— Chou Wen-chung

### Edgard Varèse

### *Offrandes*

*Offrandes* (1921) for soprano and chamber orchestra sets two surrealist poems by Latin American writers, *Chanson de là-haut* (Song from on high) by the Chilean poet Vicente Huidobro and *La croix du sud* (The southern cross) by the Mexican poet José Juan Tablada. The première of the work in New York on 23rd April 1922 was the first performance of any music by Varèse since the première in 1910 of his symphonic poem *Bourgogne* in Berlin (a work which he subsequently destroyed). In its orchestration *Offrandes* clearly shows the influence of Debussy, although its focus on solo wind instruments was to become a trait of the small ensemble works written during the next few years.

#### Chanson de la-haut

#### Song From On High

La Seine dort sous l'ombre  
de ses ponts.

The Seine is asleep in the shadow  
of its bridges.

Je vois tourner la terre

I watch Earth spinning,

Et je sonne mon clairon

And I sound my trumpet

Vers toutes les mers.

Toward all the seas.

Sur le chemin de ton parfum

On the pathway of her perfume

Toutes les abeilles et les paroles s'envent.

All the bees and all the words depart,

Reine de l'Aube des Pôles,

Queen of the Polar dawns,

Rose des Vents que fane l'Automne!

Rose of the Winds that Autumn withers!

Dans ma tête un oiseau

In my head a bird

chante toute l'année.

sings all year long.



### La Croix du Sud

Les femmes aux gestes de madrepore  
Ont des poils et des lèvres  
rouges d'orchidée.  
Les singes du Pôle sont albinos,  
Ambre et neige et sautent  
Vêtus d'aurore boréale.  
Dans le ciel il y a une affiche  
D'Oléo margarine.  
Voici l'arbre de la quinine  
Et la Vierge des douleurs.  
Le Zodiaque tourne dans la nuit  
de fièvre jaune.  
La pluie enferme tout le Tropic  
Dans une cage de cristal.  
C'est l'heure d'enjamber  
Le crépuscule  
Comme un zèbre vers l'Île de jadis  
Où se réveillent les femmes assassinées.

### The Southern Cross

Women with gestures of madrepores  
Have lips and hair  
as red as orchids.  
The monkeys at the pole are albinos,  
Amber and snow, and frisk  
Dressed in the aurora borealis.  
In the sky there is a sign,  
Oleomargarine.  
Here is the quinine tree  
And the Virgin of the Sorrows.  
The Zodiac revolves in the night  
of yellow fever.  
The rain holds the tropics  
in a crystal cage.  
It is the hour to stride  
over the dusk  
Like a Zebra toward the Island of Yesterday  
Where the murdered women wake.

## **Concert Two | Sunday January 13, 2008**

### Edgard Varèse

### Intégrales

This is in many ways the quintessential Varèse composition: the smoothest in form, most confident in utterance, and most characteristic instrumentation. *Hyperprism*, two years before, had been laid out for a similar ensemble of wind and percussion, but here the dimensions are much broader and the wind scoring is more various, with the brass at similar strength (six players) and the woodwinds increased to a shrill quintet of two piccolos, oboe, E-flat clarinet, and standard B-flat clarinet. The percussion activity, meanwhile, is somewhat lessened, and meshes more with the powerful succession of fanfares, chorales, and laments coming from the winds.

There are three distinct sections, of which the first is occupied mainly with the figure of an upward arrival on a reiterated note, a figure introduced by the E-flat clarinet and soon imitated by trumpet and oboe. While each of these wind soloists is anchored to a fixed note, the percussionists correspondingly fret at a regular pulse, and the result of both obsessions is an increase of tension that is released in acute discords. Following the most colossal of these, the omnipresent motif drops down to the horn, where its action is different but no less cataclysmic.

The second section opens with the piccolos stranded in a high minor ninth, but its main components are much more vigorous. There is a grueling, heavy-footed dance from the brass sextet and a warning signal from a trumpet. Another huge discord brings all this to an end, after which the tempo suddenly slackens and the percussion are left alone to introduce a song from the oboe. Reminiscences of earlier material are then brought in as the piece aims toward its final burst of the seams of existing instrumental possibility: a chord stretching over six octaves, from the trombone's depths to the piercing upper reaches of the piccolo. This is just one of the signs that Varèse was struggling with a medium no longer adequate to his purposes; much later he cherished a plan to recompose the piece for electronic sounds on tape. But perhaps this is music that has to strain and bridle.

Begun on a return visit to Paris in the summer of 1924, the score was finished the following January in New York, where Leopold Stokowski conducted the first performance just a few weeks afterward, on March 1, once more at an International Composers Guild concert. Varèse dedicated the score to Juliana Force, who had lived up to her name in making the International Composers Guild possible.

— Paul Griffiths

### **Friday February 8, 2008 – Timo & Magnus: Finland Today**

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#### **New Music Concerts Ensemble**

**Robert Aitken**, flute/direction; **David Hetherington**, cello

**Magnus Lindberg** – *Mano a Mano*\*\* (2004) solo guitar

**Kimmo Hakola** (Finland, 1958) – *12 Etudes for Guitar*\* (2005)

**Magnus Lindberg** (Finland, 1958) – *Linea d'ombre* (1981)  
flute, alto saxophone, guitar, percussion

**Magnus Lindberg** – *Konzertstück*\*\* (2006) cello & piano

**Magnus Lindberg** – *Kiri*\*\* (1996) clarinet, cello, percussion, guitar

\*World premiere / \*\*Canadian premiere — Introduction 7<sup>15</sup> | Concert 8<sup>00</sup>



Varèse composed only for himself, but who can blame him for being obsessed with the insults hurled at him and feeling the need to prove himself at every turn? The first performance of *Déserts* at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris in 1954 was a tragic blow to him. Nevertheless, despite the magnitude of that scandal, it was only one in a long series of disappointments that had dogged his life. And it is a lesson in understanding Varèse. He belonged to no one, no country, culture, school, or trend. His legacy belongs to the world. Any assessment of his music and influence based on national and stylistic considerations does him a disservice.

— Chou Wen-chung

Varèse's first work with electronic sound was *Déserts* (1949–54), whose title the composer intended to connote “not only physical deserts of sand, sea, mountains and snow, outer space, deserted city streets, but also this distant inner space...where man is alone in a world of mystery and essential solitude.” The atmosphere is strikingly different from that of *Amériques*, which was all about the discovery and conquest of new worlds, and indeed the music is strikingly different from what had been in Varèse's mind 30 years before: thrust and havoc give way to a generally slow, subdued, interior landscape. The “essential solitude,” implicitly melancholy, is surely the composer's own. He had spent two long periods in New Mexico in 1936–37, and had completed nothing that satisfied him since *Density 21.5* just before. He may have had in his mind, too, the technologically enabled disasters of the Second World War.

*Déserts* is a continuous orchestral movement broken by three [optional] “interpolations” composed from factory noises and the sounds of percussion instruments. Varèse collected these with his own Ampex tape recorder, in 1953, and though they provide windows onto a new musical world, the outlook is of a piece with the work's beautifully maneuvered bleakness. The ensemble is similar to that of *Intégrales*, with flutes and clarinets in pairs, ten brass, piano and percussion group. Its use, however, is quite different. Though ejaculatory motifs still occur, they lack propulsive energy and remain subsidiary to sustained chords or single tones, whose orchestration is highly sophisticated. Pitched percussion — principally the piano, but also vibraphone, glockenspiel, xylophone, and tubular bells — are used almost always to double the wind in a subtle assembling and dismantling of sonorities, while the role of the unpitched percussion, paramount in *Hyperprism* and *Ionisation*, is considerably curtailed.

The work was completed in Paris, where the composer finalized the tape at the French Radio's *musique concrète* studio (though he was to work on it again in New York in 1960–61). The first performance was conducted by Hermann Scherchen in Paris on December 2, 1954, when this was the first music broadcast by French radio in stereo.

— Paul Griffiths

## Chou Wen-chung

## *Echoes from the Gorge*

*Echoes from the Gorge* (1989), subtitled *A Quartet for Percussion*, is the magnum opus of Chou: it represents a summation of all the concepts, East and West, acquired throughout his career. This work deploys vast timbral resources, yet is unprecedented in the thoroughness with which it codifies certain Western percussion practices according to 1) timbres, 2) sticks with regards to articulation and, 3) contact location on the instruments. Such extensive codification results in a vast network of intrinsic structures comparable to Chinese ideograms.

The concept of calligraphy, in which, according to Chou, “the desired contour and texture of a character are achieved by the flow of ink through a coordination of pressure, direction, speed and viscosity,” is also at work. The predetermined form in this piece emerges as the spontaneous manifestation of a continual directional change, as in the movement of a brush under the calligrapher's control. And *The Fallen Petals*, the orchestral work employing this same principle, prompts historian H.H. Stuckenschmidt to call Chou a “musical calligrapher.”

The *yinyang* concept of interaction controls the way the instruments relate to one another. The four parts, each with its own distinct rhythm derived from a single source, along with such elements as timbre and register, interact continually to create a totality in motion.

Rather than assuming a Western form, this work employs an elaborate design derived from “the preeminent musical form in East Asia, wherein all sections of a composition are elaborations or reductions of one and the same nuclear idea,” Chou explains. *Echoes From the Gorge* contains an introduction followed by twelve sections, each being subtitled with an evocative imagery as in *cb'in* music, including “echoes from the gorge,” “clear moon,” “falling rocks and flying spray.”

As with Varèse's *Ionisation*, *Echoes from the Gorge* explores the structural value of musical elements other than that of pitch. Perhaps it is more than a coincidence that Chou regards *Ionisation* as the most representative work of Varèse wherein all the composer's concepts are revealed. Without any conscious intention by Chou, his piece is a fitting tribute to Varèse.



On Sunday evening, 4 March 1923, in New York City's Klaw Theatre, pandemonium suddenly broke out after the closing piece of contemporary music concert. Giggles, guffaws, and catcalls were mixed with thunderous applause, and the house "divided into two frantic camps, one of which hissed the music, the other hissed the hissers." Carlos Salzedo, "jumped to his feet and after calling to the audience to be quiet, cried, 'This is serious!'" While most of the audience demanded an encore, a few headed for the door, and at least two men channeled their volatility into a fistfight in the rear of the hall. After the work was repeated, Carl Ruggles "called out from the stage, 'People who don't like this should stay away.'"

— R. Allen Lott, "New Music for New Ears": *The International Composer's Guild Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Summer, 1983), pp. 266-286

Varèse's music blows the world completely to smithereens. Everybody talks about Stravinsky's 'Rite of Spring' as the beginning of Modernism, but I don't see it. To me, 'Rite' is a terribly Modernistic piece, but it owes a great deal to Rimsky-Korsakov. But in the Varèse [*Hyperprism*], composed only five years after Debussy's death, you have a big caterwauling baby, with a big rattle, making great noises and ultimately leading to Frank Zappa. It's another kettle of fish entirely.

— Paul Zukofsky

When new instruments will allow me to write music as I conceive it... the movement of sound-masses, of shifting planes, will be clearly perceived. When these sound-masses collide the phenomena of penetration or repulsion will seem to occur. Certain transmutations taking place on certain planes will seem to be projected onto other planes, moving at different speeds and at different angles... In the moving masses you will be conscious of their transmutations when they pass over different layers, when they penetrate certain opacities, or are dilated in certain rarefactions.

— Edgard Varèse

*Ionisation is not only the first serious composition for an all-percussion ensemble, it is a study of the structure, grammar, and expression of musical communication beyond the conventional realm of pitch. It is not without pitches, but without definite pitches, having associate and relative pitches that are not part of the Western European tradition. But it is much more than a work illustrating a novel theoretical concept. It is an exciting, vital masterpiece that has gripped audiences. Yet few musicians recognize the historic role of this piece. Varèse was a generation ahead of his time when he wrote it. Beyond pitches and other parameters, it is a composition fundamentally conceived for primarily non-Western instruments, organized with rhythms derived from the performance techniques of each such instrument. We have yet to find a more intercultural composition.*

— Chou Wen-chung

Varèse wrote this work in 1929–31, when he was back in Paris, intending it for a flamenco dancer; the choreographic contribution then passed briefly to Martha Graham, before being abandoned. The piece was not quite the first in the western tradition for percussion alone: there are percussion-only movements in Alexander Tcherepnin's First Symphony (1927) and Shostakovich's opera *The Nose* (1927–28), and the Cuban composer Amadeo Roldán finished his two *Ritmicas* for percussion ensemble in 1930. Moreover, all of these were predated by Milhaud's incidental music for *The Choephoroi* (1915–16), scored for speaking chorus with percussion. *Ionisation*, however, has gone down as the classic, perhaps partly because it is so classical in form and demeanor, unlike the composer's eruptive earlier pieces. Among the themes are a small side-drum solo and an energetic charge in quintuplets from five players together. Such materials, defined only in rhythm, color, and dynamic shape, are masterfully worked into a process of constant evolution, until the surprise of the ending.

The work was first performed on March 6, 1933, in New York, with Nicolas Slonimsky conducting. Varèse was still in Paris, from where he dashed off some fascinating notes on the piece to Salzedo: "In terms of character: a merciless pace — that never changes (in terms of unit of measure) — very high voltage — The work is very stressful — tragic... *Ionisation* represents today — and the mystery of the skies of America —"

— Paul Griffiths



**Accordes** evolved out of a string quintet that was formed in 1975 to perform a composition by John Beckwith, commissioned by the Toronto Symphony Women's Committee. Frequently heard on CBC radio, they have performed on the Roy Thomson Hall Chamber Music Series and constitute the core string players of the New Music Concerts Ensemble. Always searching for new repertoire, Accordes has commissioned works, as well as regularly premiering new compositions on the New Music Concerts series. This concentration on contemporary music has allowed them to give the Canadian, and sometimes world premieres, of works by such composers as Elliott Carter, Ben Johnson, Peter Paul Koprowski, Brian Cherney, Peter Michael Hamel, Ann Southam and Hope Lee. They have recorded extensively for the Canadian Music Centre label, Centrediscs, including discs devoted to the music of Harry Freedman (*Spirit Song*), Harry Somers (*Somers String Quartets*) and Alexina Louie (*Dénouement*). Their recoding of NMC co-founder Norma Beecroft's *Amplified String Quartet with Tape* was nominated for a Juno award in 2004.

World renowned Canadian flutist, composer and conductor **Robert Aitken** has been honoured with the Order of Canada and is a Chevalier de l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres (France). In 1970, having previously served as principal flute for both the Vancouver and Toronto Symphony Orchestras, Aitken embarked on a solo career that has taken him to virtually every corner of the globe. He has more than 40 recordings to his credit and such notables as John Cage, George Crumb, Elliott Carter, Toru Takemitsu, Gilles Tremblay, John Beckwith and Bruce Mather have dedicated works to him. In 2003 he was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Flute Association (USA). In 2004, he retired as Professor für Flöte at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg, Germany, a position he had held for 16 years. As a composer, he holds Bachelor and Masters degrees from the University of Toronto and all of his works are published by Universal Edition, Salabert, Ricordi and Peer Music. Robert Aitken was founder and artistic director of Music Today, Music at Shawnigan and co-founder, with Norma Beecroft, of New Music Concerts which he has directed since its inception in 1971.

Originally from Ottawa, soprano **Teri Dunn** holds a Master of Music from the University of Toronto, where she studied with Mary Morrison. She was a prizewinner in the 1999 Eckhardt-Grammatté Competition. Ms. Dunn brings a wide expressive palette to her oratorio appearances, ranging from Bach's *Matthäuspassion* to Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*. As a chamber music performer, she has scored triumphs in the performance of several Bach cantatas, and numerous contemporary works, including George Crumb's *Ancient Voices of Children* and *Federico's Little Songs for Children*, the latter of which she recorded with New Music Concerts for the Naxos CD **George Crumb — Vox Balaenae**.

On the operatic stage, Ms. Dunn has appeared as the Queen of the Night in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and Galatea in Handel's *Acis and Galatea*. In addition to her singing endeavors, Ms. Dunn is an active conductor and teacher. A winner of the Leslie Bell Prize in Choral Conducting, she is on the Faculty of the Royal Conservatory of Music and is a member of the Artistic Staff of the Toronto Children's Chorus.

**Frank Scheffer** (born 1956 in Venlo) is a Dutch cinematographer and producer of documentary film, mostly known for his work *Conducting Mabler* (1996) on the 1995 Mahler Festival in Amsterdam with Claudio Abbado, Riccardo Chailly, Riccardo Muti and Sir Simon Rattle. Scheffer was schooled at the Academy for Industrial Design (Eindhoven), the "Vrije Academie" Art College in Den Haag, where he studied with the famous experimental filmmaker Frans Zwartjes and is a graduate from the Dutch Film Academy (Amsterdam).

Early films include *Zoetrope People* (1982), a documentary on Francis Ford Coppola and his studio as well as documentaries on the Dalai Lama and various socio/cultural subjects. 1987 saw his short experimental films *Wagner's Ring*, a distillation of The Ring in 3'50" conceived with John Cage; and *Stoperas 1/2* which was created to be shown with Cage's *Europeras 1 & 2*. Collaborations with Cage continued with the conceptual film *Cbessfilmnoise* (1988), a documentary on Cage and on Elliott Carter, *Time Is Music* (1988), and *From Zero* (1995) in collaboration with Andrew Culver. Further documentaries include films on Arnold Schönberg, Louis Andriessen, Luciano Berio, Pierre Boulez and Karlheinz Stockhausen.

Scheffer is also working on several in depth films on specific composers: *The Present Day Composer Refuses to Die* on Frank Zappa, in cooperation with the Zappa Family Trust (2000, featuring The Mothers of Invention, Pierre Boulez and Ensemble Modern), and the 90-minute Zappa feature *Phaze II, The Big Note* (2002), to be followed by a third film which will complete his Zappa trilogy.

Scheffer has been following and filming Elliott Carter for 25 years; this culminated in *A Labyrinth of Time* (2005), a portrait on the composer as well as a view of the history of modernism in the 20th century, presented by New Music Concerts in 2006. The making of *The One-All-Along* was generously supported by the Spiralis Music Trust. This world premiere screening was made possible thanks to the cooperation of director Frank Scheffer.



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Renowned German composer and electronic music pioneer **Karlheinz Stockhausen** passed away December 5 2007 at his home in K rten, Germany. He was 79. Born August 22, 1928 in a village near Cologne, Stockhausen rose to prominence in the 1950s with a number of pieces that broke decidedly with convention. Across a career that extended into this century, he invoked both awe and controversy with his unorthodox works, noted for their innovation and complexity. The 362 works Stockhausen composed include the world's longest opera cycle (*Licht*, completed in 2003), the first annotated and published piece of electronic music (1954's *Electronic Study II*), and a piece for string quartet that also called for four helicopters (1993's *Helicopter String Quartet*). Like John Cage, he demonstrated a fascination with aleatory composition, that which accounts for an element of chance. Early in his career he was also a proponent of serialism, composition based on mathematical formulas.

In friendship and gratitude for everything that he has given to us personally and to humanity through his love and his music, wrote longtime collaborators Suzanne Stephens and Kathinka Pasveer, we bid farewell to Karlheinz Stockhausen, who lived to bring celestial music to humans, and human music to the celestial beings, so that Man may listen to God and God may hear His children. Stockhausen himself said on September 25, 2007 My life is extremely one-sided: what counts are the works as scores, recordings, films, and books. That is my spirit formed into music and a sonic universe of moments of my soul.

New Music Concerts has presented Stockhausen's music on a number of occasions over the years, most notably the concert length *Mantra* for two pianos and electronics with Aloys and Alfons Kontarsky in January 1979, *In Friendship* with Heinz Holliger in Novmeber 1980 and an entire concert of solo works in December 1991. We will pay tribute to his memory in our 2008-2009 season with a concert featuring Lise Daoust, Genevi ve Deraspe, Chlo Labb , Fran ois Duval and Marie-H l ne Breault all of whom worked with Stockhausen at his summer courses in K rten for many years.



## Hommage à Stockhausen

Invention, découverte : *Zeitmasse*, *Gruppen* pour trois orchestres, le *Chant des adolescents* (un chef-d'œuvre électroacoustique), *Kontakte*, *Hymnen*, *Refrain*, *Momente*, les *Klavierstücke*, *Inori*, *Stimmung* (Accord), *Mantra*, *Zyklus*, *Spiral*, *Sirius*, un *Helikopter-Quatuor* à cordes, *Licht* (opéra en 7 jours) *Ora prima/Ascension*. Ces quelques titres évoquent un esprit, celui d'un explorateur d'une rare audace.

Stockhausen est venu trois fois à Montréal, invité par Musique de notre temps, puis par la Société de Musique Contemporaine du Québec (SMCQ). Je l'avais rencontré quelquefois auparavant, notamment en 1957 et 1960 à Darmstadt. Nous assistions à ses cours donnés en allemand. Heureusement ils étaient illustrés de nombreux exemples musicaux ce qui nous permettait d'en saisir les points saillants. De plus, il avait généreusement offert aux étudiants de langue française de leur faire l'après-midi un résumé en français, ce qui avait lieu assis dans l'herbe, décor propice aux échanges conviviaux.

On a trop souvent associé Darmstadt à la Mecque du « sérialisme » issu de l'École de Vienne (Schoenberg, Berg, Webern), mais après la seconde guerre mondiale, ce fut aussi, on ne le dira jamais assez, un haut lieu de réconciliation franco-allemande et de partage international. Parmi les invités de la première heure, ne trouve-t-on pas Varèse, et Messiaen dont le *Mode de valeurs et d'intensités* pour piano fut un point tournant pour Stockhausen? Et l'amitié Boulez Stockhausen ne manifeste-elle pas un nouvel état d'esprit? Après une telle guerre, il fallait tourner la page : rupture non pas avec le passé mais avec des habitudes séculaires? « Il ne faut pas confondre tradition avec mauvaise habitude », disait Varèse. À cette nouvelle donne furent associés les noms de Nono, Berio, Maderna, Pousseur, Cage, Ligeti, auxquels, avec plusieurs autres, je joins celui de Serge Garant.

Stockhausen m'a toujours enthousiasmé, mais je ne le suivais pas toujours dans ses fascinations ésotériques. Malgré cela la Musique, portée par une énergie peu commune, garde toujours la priorité.

Après la première de *Kontakte* à Montréal, une réception avait été organisée à la maison où l'on retrouvait entre autres Pierre Mercure, Clermont Pépin, François Morel, Bruce Mather, Jean Papineau-Couture, Istvan Anhalt, Claude Champagne, David Tudor, et Maryvonne Kendergi. L'accueil à Montréal avait été chaleureux et nous trinquâmes tous à cette fraternité conquérante. Aujourd'hui, en reconnaissance, je me dis qu'il faut continuer cette libation. Plus tard quelques québécois allèrent étudier avec lui à Cologne. Entre autres Claude Vivier et Michel Gonville, ainsi que la flûtiste Lise Daoust.

Fin mars 1958 : création des *Gruppen*, pour trois orchestres, au Palais des expositions, le Rheinsaal de Cologne. Quelques camarades de la classe de Messiaen (dont Gilbert Amy, compositeur, Daniel Charles, philosophe, et moi-même) décidèrent de faire le voyage afin d'assister à une création sans précédent et surtout aux répétitions. Le public était entouré par trois orchestres. Celui de gauche était dirigé par Stockhausen, celui de face au centre par Bruno Maderna, celui de droite par Pierre Boulez. À la suite des antiphonies de Gabrieli et de Monteverdi quatre siècles auparavant, une véritable joute spatiale s'organisait, les sons s'interpellant d'un orchestre à l'autre, ou glissant de façon continue au-dessus de nos têtes. Pendant les repos des musiciens, les trois chefs, assis les uns en face des autres, répétaient leur gestique silencieuse avec des changements fréquents de tempi indépendants, véritables défis pour la coordination. Au concert, l'œuvre fut jouée deux fois. Entre les deux, Boulez interpréta lui-même sa troisième sonate pour piano. Moments en mémoire.

La dernière oeuvre dont j'ai pu entendre l'enregistrement s'intitule : *ORA PRIMA*, pour orgue, soprano et ténor, commande de la cathédrale de Milan pour la fête de l'Ascension. Le compositeur a écrit qu'à sa mort, il s'imaginait monter ainsi vers les cieux... À l'audition, je fus fortement ému : de la totale complexité des enchevêtrements chromatiques se dégageait par moments une résultante extrêmement simple. Métaphore? Une sérénité fraîche que ne peut voiler aucune catastrophe.

On ne peut tirer une conclusion : une telle œuvre semble encore en évolution. Il reste simplement à dire mille fois MERCI, cher Karlheinz Stockhausen, pour une démesure qui est également générosité. Au-delà de la Mort elle manifeste la Vie.

Gilles Tremblay



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1933 Premiere of *Ionisation* on 6 March; visits Spain and Portugal in summer with plans for a "Quatrième Internationale des Arts"; returns to New York on 27 September. 1934 Premiere of *Ecuatorial* on 15 April; first gramophone recording (*Ionisation*). 1935 Continues work on *Espace*; beginning of years of crisis in his life and work. 1936 Composes *Density 21.5*, which is premiered on 16 February; visits Santa Fe from June to November; lecturing activity. 1937 Meets André Malraux; second visit to Santa Fe from April to November; lecture series *Music as Living Matter*; founds a Schola Cantorum. 1938 Visits San Francisco and temporarily lives in Los Angeles (until 1940); attempts to find foothold in Hollywood film music scene. 1939 Lectures at University of Southern California. 1940 Writes "Organized Sound for the Sound Film"; returns to New York in October; meets Henry Miller and Saint-John Perse. 1941 Founds the New Chorus. 1942 Continues work with the reorganized Greater New York Chorus; first concerts. 1943-44 Concerts with Greater New York Chorus; lecture series *The Evolution of Musical Form* at Pius X School of Liturgical Music. 1945 Further concerts with Greater New York Chorus. 1946 Disbands Greater New York Chorus; commissioned to compose *Tuning Up*. 1947 Premiere of *Etude pour Espace* on 20 April. 1948 Lecture series *Twentieth-Century Tendencies in Music* at Columbia University. 1949 Chou Wen-chung becomes Varèse's pupil; composes *Dance for Burgess*; begins work on *Déserts*. 1950 Visiting lecturer at Darmstadt Holiday Courses on New Music (12-27 August), followed by lectures in Frankfurt, Berlin, and Munich; first LP recording with Varèse's works (EMS 401); compiles music for Bouchard's film portrait of Kurt Seligmann. 1951 Plans to set to music Henri Michaux poem *La Nuit*; Stefan Wolpe dedicates *Seven Pieces for Three Pianos* to Varèse. 1952 Meets Pierre Boulez in late December. 1953 Chou Wen-chung writes fair copy of score to *Déserts*, planned premiere falls through; Varèse receives an Ampex tape recorder as a present. 1954 Works on tape interpolations for *Déserts* with Pierre Schaeffer in Paris; premiere of *Déserts* on 2 December. 1955 Records radio interviews with Georges Charbonnier; composes *La Procession de Verges* for Bouchard's film *Around and About Joan Miró*; American premiere of *Déserts* on 30 November. 1956 Begins work on *Poème électronique*; visits Paris in December to collaborate with Le Corbusier and Iannis Xenakis. 1957 Stays in Eindhoven to complete *Poème électronique* (September 1957 to May 1958). 1958 Premiere of *Poème électronique* at Brussels World Fair on 2 May; returns to New York in July. 1959 Lectures at Princeton University and Sarah Lawrence College. 1960 *Déserts* performed with revised tape interpolations. 1961 Works on *Nocturnal*, premiered in New York on 1 May; premiere of revised version of *Ecuatorial*. 1962 Lectures at Yale University; receives Creative Arts Award from Brandeis University; shows increasing signs of illness. 1963 First Koussevitzky Recording Award for Varèse recordings on Columbia Records (conductor Robert Craft). 1964 Leonard Bernstein and New York Philharmonic perform *Déserts* on 23-6 January. 1965 Lectures at University of Chicago; receives medal from Edward MacDowell Association; delivers the funeral address for Le Corbusier at Columbia University on 18 October. Varèse dies in New York on 6 November.