

Carnegie Mellon Philharmonic

Juan Pablo Izquierdo, conductor

Olivier Messiaen
Turangalîla Symphony
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Jean Laurendeau, ondes martenot

John Root, piano

Carnegie Music Hall, Pittsburgh
Friday, April 4, 1997 8 p.m.

Symphony Hall, Boston
Friday, April 11, 1997 8 p.m.



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Olivier Messiaen Turangalîla Symphony

for piano, ondes martenot, and large orchestra

1. Introduction
2. Chant d'amour I
3. Turangalîla I
4. Chant d'amour II
5. Joie du sang des étoiles
6. Jardin de sommeil d'amour
7. Turangalîla II
8. Développement de l'amour
9. Turangalîla III
10. Final

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PROGRAM NOTES

by Riccardo Schulz

Olivier Messiaen

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992) was one of the most important composers of the twentieth century, as well as a virtuoso organist, devoted teacher, writer, scholar, mystic, and naturalist. He was born in Avignon, France to a superbly educated family. His mother, Cécile Sauvage, was a poet, and his father, Pierre, a scholar in the field of English literature, was known for translating the complete works of Shakespeare into French. Olivier took his intellectual place in the family from early childhood: he began composing at the age of seven, entered the Paris Conservatory at age eleven, and won, over the next ten years, the *premier prix* in counterpoint, piano accompaniment, history, and composition. During World War II, while captive in a Silesian prison camp, he wrote *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* (*Quartet for the End of Time*), now one of his most famous works, which was performed for 5,000 fellow prisoners in 1941.

Messiaen was a devout Roman Catholic, and many of his works reflect his unshakable faith and devotion to Christian theological and mystical experiences. In 1931 he was appointed organist at La Sainte Trinité, Paris, and except for the war years, held that post for more than forty years. His interest in religion and mysticism led him to investigate other cultures and earlier civilizations as well.

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In addition to his Catholic faith, two other influences were essential to the development of Messiaen's unique musical language and compositional techniques. The first is the highly evolved tradition of Hindustani music of northern India and Carnatic music of southern India. The rhythms of both of these traditions, based largely on a syllabic foundation, were catalogued by the thirteenth century Hindu theorist, Sharngadeva (Çârngadeva), who wrote the most extensive system of classification of Indian rhythmic practice in history. In this system he organized the known rhythms into one hundred twenty *deçî-tâlas* (rhythmic cycles) with each cycle made up of a certain number of *matras* (beats). Many of Messiaen's compositions use a specific *tâla*, often identified by name, in its original form, in augmentation, and in diminution, with the various segments appearing both sequentially and simultaneously. Messiaen discovered Sharngadeva's catalog while still a teenager, and it became his own personal compositional bible.

The other influence comes not from the work of man, but—as Messiaen would have it—from the work of God. Messiaen was fascinated by birdsong, and he cataloged the melodic and rhythmic content of hundreds of different species of birds from practically every continent, making a significant contribution to the field of ornithology in the process. Examples of birdsong in Messiaen's works are legion, and from 1953 on he stated the names of the birds whose melodies he included in his compositions so that analysts would have an easier time comparing his music to the source material; his catalog of bird songs has been published for anyone who cares to make additional studies. (No book on Messiaen is complete without at least one picture of the composer trudging intrepidly through the woods with his note pad, ready to take melodic dictation from a songful feathered creature.)

Messiaen was also an ardent admirer and supporter of other composers whose intellectual and musical processes challenged the conventional norms of the day—notably Iannis Xenakis (b. 1922), and he paved the way for such innovators as Pierre Boulez and Karlheinz Stockhausen, two of his more illustrious students. Among his other influences, the pianist Yvonne Loriod must also be mentioned. Many of Messiaen's works were written with her prodigious technique in mind. Loriod in turn often astonished audiences by playing the most complex pieces, sometimes more than an hour in duration, entirely from memory.

Messiaen was also one of the first composers to introduce an electronic instrument (as opposed to electronic sounds) in his compositions. The instrument that he included most often was the *ondes martenot*, designed by the engineer-musician Maurice Martenot, and patented in April 1928. The instrument has a keyboard and a 'ribbon' or 'wand'—pressing a key generates a basic note which can then be changed continuously, allowing for vibrato and glissando effects, while a bank of 'expression keys' (electronic filters) allows the performer to change the timbre of the sounds.

Turangalila Symphony

The *Turangalila Symphony* comes at the apex of Messiaen's early career as a composer. This piece, calling for large orchestra and soloists (piano and *ondes martenot*) pushes the conventional notions of melody, harmony and rhythm—and the technical mastery of all the instruments—to unimaginable limits. It took more than two years to write, from the middle of 1946 to the end of 1948, and reached a state of maximum complexity in terms of superposition of rhythms and melodic and harmonic structures. *Turangalila Symphony* is the second of three works in Messiaen's 'Tristan Trilogy.' (The others are the one-hour song cycle for soprano and piano, *Harawi*, and *Cinq rechants*, for twelve unaccompanied voices.) Neither *Turangalila* nor the other works in the trilogy have any real connection to the Celtic legend, nor narratively to Wagner's dramatization of it, but they are instead an epic celebration of the symbolism of love in all its psychological and physical manifestations. Although Messiaen disregards purely Christian symbolism in these works, the concept of love-death is central to Christianity in the sense that all true love involves sacrifice, whether the love is of God for Man (sacrifice on the cross) or human (sacrifice of individual desire for God or for the human love-partner). The mythological meaning of love-death is the death or rejection of one's own desires for those of the loved one, and the awakening to a new life through the physical and emotional union of love.

The word *Turangalila* is a union of two Sanskrit works—*lila*, which connotes love through the act of creation, destruction, and the intriguing interplay of life and death; and *turanga*, which connotes the passage of time, slowly or swiftly, as well as movement and rhythm. The combined word, then personifies time, movement, rhythm, life and death in 'a song of love.' And the love (*lila*) is a fatal, irresistible love, transcending all things, and suppressing everything outside itself, a love symbolized by the love-potion shared by Tristan and Isolde. *Turangalila* is also one of the Hindu Sharnagadeva rhythmic formulas, a pair of dotted note values, followed by the same note values, undotted. The entire work bears this relationship on the macro-level, but basically the Symphony relates more to *Turangalila* the word rather than *Turangalila* the rhythm. It is a work that exposes many aspects of Messiaen's musical personality: exuberance, joy, passion, and also the exalting and the negation of time.

For *Turangalila*, Messiaen divides the enormous orchestra into two groups which he has described as a small orchestra within the large, the sonority and function of which are reminiscent of the Balinese gamelan. This smaller group (in number, not necessarily in sound-level) consists of the pitched percussion instruments, the metal percussion (triangle, cymbals, tam-tam, bells), the ondes martenot, and the piano. (The piano also functions on its own, having a number of cadenzas at various points in the work, usually preceding an important climactic event.)

The work consists of ten movements, and lasts about an hour and fifteen minutes. The movements fall into three groups, distinguished by common characteristics in their depiction of the love-death theme. The first group consists of Movements 2, 4, 6, and 8—movements associated with the growth and development of love; the second group consists of movements 3, 7, and 9—movements which are more brooding and sinister and associated with the love-death theme. The third group consists of movements 5 and 10, which conclude the two halves of the symphony, and are associated with the more joyous aspects of love. The first movement, *Introduction*, stands alone. It consists of two sections linked by a piano cadenza. The first section is devoted mainly to the statement of the first two cyclic themes; the second is one of the most complex examples of superposition of rhythmic patterns in Messiaen's music. (With its constantly repetitive motivic ideas and expanding and contracting rhythmic cells, it is reminiscent of the Sacrificial Dance in Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*.)

Scant mention is made in the Messiaen literature of the musical reference to the Tristan-theme from Wagner's opera, but a particular melodic motif in *Turangalila* is too similar to Wagner's Tristan-theme and too ubiquitous in Messiaen's work to be merely an accident. Where Wagner's foreboding theme is outlined by the interval of a minor sixth followed by a chromatic descent, Messiaen's more luminous version outlines an interval of a major sixth followed by a chromatic descent.

Turangalila was commissioned by Serge Koussevitzky and had its first performance in Boston Symphony Hall on December 2, 1949. The pianist in that performance was Messiaen's future wife, Yvonne Loriod; the ondes martenot was played by Jeanne Loriod; Leonard Bernstein conducted.

Briefly, the ten movements of the *Turangalila Symphony* are as follows:

1. Introduction. The main themes or motives of the symphony are stated: the bold thrust in the brass (the statue theme, or masculine love), and more gentle undulations in the woodwinds (the flower theme, or feminine love). A piano cadenza links a second section, a complex construction of simultaneous rhythmic processes, challenging the notions of change and uniformity.

2. Chant d'amour I (Song of Love). The principal key is F-sharp major, the form is verse-refrain (the verse is the love-theme), the tempo is fast.

3. **Turangalila I.** There are two alternating sections, with the musical material and instruments in accumulation. The first section is scored for clarinet and ondes martenot in dialogue, with occasional intervention by bells, vibraphone, and double bass (*pizzicato*). The tempo is slow, the harmony abstract; events are successive and evolve toward simultaneity.

4. **Chant d'amour II (Song of Love).** The principal key is A major, the pace is moderate through the alternation between verse and refrain, with the material growing in density as the sections are repeated; birdsong is apparent throughout.

5. **Joie du sang des étoiles (Joyous Blood of the Stars).** This movement is one of the most advanced and difficult rhythmic entities in the entire orchestra repertoire—Messiaen's 'African dance.' The middle section develops six rhythmic entities: from a basic rhythmic pattern, two cells remain stationary, two are in augmentation, and two are in diminution. The complexity of the procedure is compounded by the superposition of the same process in retrograde motion.

6. **Jardin de sommeil d'amour (Garden of the Dream of Love).** The slowest movement in the symphony is a respite from the climactic end of the previous movement; the structure is a three-part form, in the key of F-sharp major.

7. **Turangalila II.** This movement forms an explosive contrast with the preceding one, and has more to do with the horrors of death than with the joys of love. The movement is episodic, beginning with a piano cadenza, followed by the main theme. Further episodes feature only percussion instruments, and a converging and diverging passage for trombones and ondes martenot which Messiaen compares to the opening and closing of a fan.

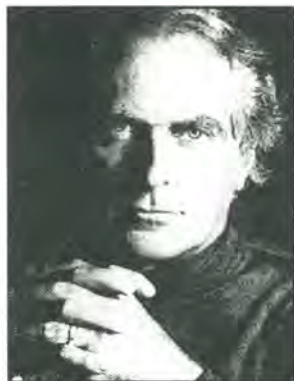
8. **Développement de l'amour (Development of Love).** A three-chord ostinato supports a free-moving exhilarating and passionate toccata; an ecstatic melody is heard successively in the keys of C major, D major, and F-sharp major. In addition to an introduction and coda, these two sections alternate, leading to a powerful finale.

9. **Turangalila III.** An accumulating set of choruses evolves on a theme announced by clarinet and ondes martenot. At the same time, the entire percussion section embarks on a rhythmic process, joined eventually by a subtly colored shower of thirteen solo strings.

10. **Final.** The last movement is an exuberant summation, with strong musical references to the love theme of earlier movements. There is a powerful feeling of momentum and drive, unleashing a wall of sound and orchestral crescendo previously unknown in the concert hall.

References: Olivier Messiaen: *Music and Color; Conversations with Claude Samuel*. trans. E. Thomas Glasow (Amadeus Press); *Olivier Messiaen* by Carla Huston Bell (Twayne Publishers); *Messiaen* by Roger Nichols (Oxford University Press); *Conversations with Olivier Messiaen* by Claude Samuel, trans. by Felix Aprehmanian (Stainer & Bell); *Messiaen* by Robert Sherlaw Johnson (University of California Press).

Juan Pablo Izquierdo, conductor



JUAN PABLO IZQUIERDO was born in Santiago, Chile and enjoys an international career, having conducted, among others, the major orchestras in Berlin, Buenos Aires, Dresden, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Jerusalem, Leipzig, Lisbon, Santiago, Madrid, Mexico City, Munich, Paris, Tel Aviv, and Vienna. In December 1990 he inaugurated the new Claudio Arrau Symphony Orchestra in Santiago, Chile before a stadium audience of 15,000. He continues as music director of that orchestra, which he was instrumental in founding.

Maestro Izquierdo studied with the renowned German conductor Hermann Scherchen and is a first-prize winner of the Dimitri Mitropoulos International Competition for Conductors; he was subsequently named Assistant Conductor to Leonard Bernstein with the New York Philharmonic.

Maestro Izquierdo is Director of Orchestral Studies at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and founder of the Institute for Orchestral Studies "in Memory of Hermann Scherchen."

Jean Laurendeau, ondes martenot

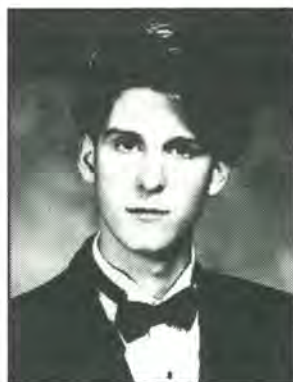
JEAN LAURENDEAU is one of only a handful of professional ondes martenot players in the world. He has been a guest artist of the most important North American orchestras including the major orchestras in Boston, New York, Montreal, Philadelphia, Chicago, Cleveland, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Toronto. In Europe he has played with the Concertgebouw and the Orchestre National de France. He has performed with many renowned conductors including Michael Tilson Thomas, Karel Ancerl, Charles Dutoit, Seigi Ozawa and Kurt Masur. He can often be heard on North American radio and television.



Mr. Laurendeau studied the ondes martenot in Paris with Jeanne Loriod, sister-in-law of Olivier Messiaen and the first leading exponent of the instrument, at the Ecole Normale de Paris, and with Maurice Martenot, inventor of the instrument, at the Conservatoire de Paris. In September 1995 conductor Charles Dutoit invited Jean Laurendeau to premiere the *Concerto for ondes martenot* by Canadian composer Jacques Hetu with the Orchestre National de France. He is also the author of a book (1990) titled *Maurice Martenot, luthier de l'électronique*, published by Louise Courteau Editrice in Montreal and by Editions Magnard in Paris. Mr. Laurendeau teaches both clarinet and ondes martenot at the Conservatoire de musique de Québec in Montreal.

John Root, piano

The American pianist JOHN ROOT is one of the most exciting pianists before the public today. He is a winner of the highly competitive Juilliard Concerto Competition and performed Prokofiev's *Piano Concerto No. 2* with the Juilliard Symphony Orchestra at Alice Tully Hall in April 1994. In addition to performing the standard classical and romantic repertoire, Mr. Root has a special affinity for contemporary music and has featured works of Arnold Schönberg, Olivier Messiaen, and Luciano Berio, among others, on his programs. During the summer of 1996 he gave two recitals of modern French works on the Museum of Modern Art's Summer Garden series.



John Root is a graduate of the Peabody Conservatory and of the Juilliard School, where he is currently a doctoral candidate. At Peabody and later at Juilliard Root studied with Yoheved Kaplinsky.

Carnegie Mellon Philharmonic

The CARNEGIE MELLON PHILHARMONIC is an ensemble of the Department of Music at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Under the direction of Juan Pablo Izquierdo the orchestra presents concert seasons with an emphasis on the standard orchestra repertoire and rarely performed masterpieces, including works by twentieth-century composers. Among the orchestra's highlights was the celebrated performance in April 1995 of *Amériques* (1922) by Edgar Varèse at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. and a festival of the music of Iannis Xenakis with performances in Pittsburgh and at Carnegie Hall in New York, celebrating the 75th birthday of the composer.

The Carnegie Mellon Philharmonic appears in works on two compact discs: *Escenas Borrascosas* by Leonardo Balada, with large orchestra, choir, and soloists (New World 80498-2) and *Four Movements for String Orchestra* by Iranian composer Reza Vali, with Cuarteto Latinoamericano (New Albion NA 077 CD). Due for release is a CD on the Mode label of three works by Iannis Xenakis and *Amériques* by Edgar Varèse. Other rarely-performed large-scale works mounted in recent concert seasons include *Mandú Çárará* by Heitor Villa-Lobos and *Les Choéphores* by Darius Milhaud.

The Carnegie Mellon Philharmonic is heard in broadcasts on WQED-FM in Pittsburgh, and throughout North and South America on public radio networks of several countries, and world-wide through Internet broadcasts. The orchestra is a resident ensemble of Carnegie Music Hall, Pittsburgh.

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