

Carnegie Mellon

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Concert

Kenneth A. Keeling, Sr., Head

PATRIMONIO UC

Carnegie Mellon Philharmonic

Juan Pablo Izquierdo, conductor

Carnegie Music Hall

Saturday, November 13, 1999 • 3 pm

CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS, SCHOOL OF MUSIC PRESENTS

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PROGRAM

Symphony in D Minor

Cesar Franck (1822-1890)

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Intermission

Hurqualia

Giacinto Scelsi (1905-1988)

Excerpts from *Ala et Lolli*, Op. 20

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

Adoration of Velas and Ala
Dance of the Spirits of Darkness

Symphony in D Minor

César Franck, like a number of other composers, has been periodically and posthumously dragged into some pointless squabble over his true nationality. During World War II, the German musicologist Wilhelm Mohr produced a “life and works” of Franck that could be more aptly characterized as a “race, life and works” as the main thesis of the book seemed to be that Franck was not French, the secondary thesis being that he was German. Not all the ponderous weight of Mohr’s genealogical tables and charts, however could undo Franck’s birth on December 10, 1822 in the very Belgian city of Liège. On the other hand, Belgium didn’t exist until 1830. Perhaps it’s best to let the Flemings and the Walloons sort it out some day, when they will no doubt proclaim him to be a post-Burgundian composer in the tradition of Machaut, Dufay and Josquin des Prez, perhaps even using the Symphony in D Minor as evidence.

Franck was a child prodigy who won the first prize for piano at the Liège Conservatory when he was only twelve. Seven years later, he enrolled at the Paris Conservatory, where he studied piano with Pierre Zimmerman, organ with François Benoist and theory with A. A. Leborne. At the age of 36, he became organist of the brand-spanking-new “Gothick” church of Sainte-Clotilde in Paris, a position he retained until his death, serving also as professor of organ at the Paris Conservatory from 1872. The Symphony in D Minor was composed in 1886-88; it premiered on February 17, 1889 in Paris to mixed reviews.

—Kenneth Langevin

Hurqualia

Italian composer **GIACINTO SCELSI** (1905-1988) was one of the creative geniuses of our time—one whose legacy and artistry will continue to inspire, impress, and mystify appreciative listeners and critics well into the next century.

Although Scelsi died fairly recently, little is known about his life. He forbade anyone to photograph him, and purposely and routinely changed or concealed details about his personal and public life even from those with whom he had daily contact. Born in La Spezia (Liguria) to an ancient aristocratic family, Count Giacinto Scelsi d’Ayala Valva was courtly and engaging as a person, but with neurotic episodes that darkened long periods of his life.

Scelsi was not a composer who fit any previous historical model of the profession. He was independently wealthy, and thus able to create without the need to satisfy any segment of the public, no matter how common or esoteric. His social milieu was a strange assembly of wealthy friends in high society, Tibetan monks with whom he meditated, and the most famous musicians, poets, and painters of his day, with whom he collaborated. Although a description of ‘avant-garde’ would not be inaccurate, he had little to do with and did not seek entry into any other current of avant-garde music or art that was exploding in every direction from the intellectual and social adventure of the 1960s. Above all, he was a visionary who knew that his message would at first be comprehended by very few and that many years would pass before even the connoisseur could assimilate his intent. But the time has come, and the history of contemporary music will have to be rewritten, for the second half of this century is now unthinkable without Scelsi.

One characteristic of Scelsi’s music is his use of quarter tones. These micro-intervals color and shape the intent of the sound, revolving around a pulsating sphere whose center, in Scelsi’s own words, was always his destination. In aural and spiritual dimensions, there are clear parallels with oriental music, especially Tibetan chant.

Hurqualia (1960) was the first of the Scelsi pieces for orchestra written at the height of the composer’s maturity. As with *Hymnos* (1963) Scelsi obsesses on a single note—in this case a different note for each of the four

movements. The overall impression of the piece corresponds somewhat to the traditional notion of symphonic construction. Scelsi's subtitle, which is not likely to find contradiction with anyone who ventures within listening distance of the work, is "A Different Realm." *Hurqualia* (the h is silent) reveals a shocking Scelsi: the music is violent, impulsive, loud, and fast.

The first movement is centered on the note *c* with gradual extensions to the distance of a minor third, or, occasionally, a tritone. The percussion takes an active part, and the drums are struck *con la mano*—by hand—instead of with sticks, much in the manner of Indian *tabla*. The end is sudden, on a single drum stroke.

The second movement introduces tension of another sort, within a self-contained structure and under a surface of quiet expression. The central focus is on *b*-natural, with branches up to a minor third (*d*-natural) and shrinking to a conflicting and unresolved *c*-sharp. A melodic element, with violent rhythmic accents, is stressed in the third movement. The fourth movement begins (like the first) on *e*-flat, but the true pole emerges as *b*-flat. This movement is the richest and most complex of the work. The drums are again used as *tabla*, and enormous groups of clusters bring the piece to a violent climax.

Naturally, such wildly different music demands a new approach in learning and playing for both the conductor and the musicians. There is no precedent for learning or teaching Scelsi's music; experimentation guides progress; perfection is elusive. At the very least, every technical and musical skill in terms of color and intonation that the musicians have achieved in their conservatory training is demanded in full measure; at the same time the listening mechanisms and parameters which musicians rely on innately to play accurately and musically are stretched to new limits; in the end the musicians have to use and simultaneously abandon the very skills that are needed to play any music—and to make that leap into the soundscape that is Scelsi's mind and music.

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—Riccardo Schulz

Ala et Lolli

Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* and Prokofiev's *Ala and Lolli* both are redolent of the good old pre-war fin-de-siècle days back when people still knew how to build a nice solid piece of barbaric futurism that would last. As the writer K. Chukovsky described it, "poets wore themselves out trying to roar like wild animals. The craze for the savage, the primitive and the beast of the forest became the outstanding feature of the epoch." If politics makes strange bedfellows, history has made even stranger ones, with both the Fauvists and the Futurists pursuing the same agenda until World War I, would prove them both right.

The idea for *Ala and Lolli* can be traced back to the enigmatic, omnipresent impresario Sergei Diaghilev, who originally wanted to present Prokofiev's *Second Piano Concerto* as a ballet, but changed his mind and commissioned the composer to write a new work on a "prehistoric" theme. *Ala and Lolli* was begun in 1914, with Sergei Gorodetsky writing the scenario. Gorodetsky, who was a member of the so-called "Acmeists", concocted names for the pagan gods, such as Chuzhbog, Ala, Lolli and Veles. Ala was the god of the creative energy of nature, personified as a wooden idol; Chuzhbog worked on behalf of the destructive energy of evil; Lolli was a Scythian warrior who attempts to rescue Ala from the clutches of Chuzhbog, but is himself saved by the intervention of Veles, the god of the sun.

Unfortunately, the project dragged on from the autumn of 1914 on into the winter of 1915. More unfortunately, neither one knew anything about writing a ballet, a truth acknowledged by Diaghilev when he rejected the work upon hearing it. Prokofiev salvaged much of the material, recasting it in 1915 as the Scythian Suite.

—Kenneth Langevin

Carnegie Mellon Philharmonic

Violin I

Jason Posnock *
Joanna Bello *
Mary Beth Glasgow
Blythe Teh
Milene Moreira
Sara Enns
Maria Lorcás
Leena Gilbert
Jennifer Ho

Violin II

Ines Voglar *
Virginia Gonzalez
Mariana Aguilera
Caroline Krause
Danijela Zezelj
Karen Strittmatter
Rodolfo Mellado
Douglas Yung
Clarence Cheung

Viola

Cesar Suarez *
Carlos Boltes
Luis Casal
Shawn Somerville
Christopher Dir
Carlos Guadarrama
Juliana Rufail
Gabriel Mateos

Cello

Elisa Kohanski *
Nicole Myers
Nate Shannon
Jessica Hays
Alison Hicks
Sandra Park

Bass

Robert Skavronski *
Marcie Solomon
Walter Guerrero
Mark Gentile
Susan Chudd
Matthew Aronoff

Flute

Jessica Hull *
Katie Schott *
Sharon Juby
Nicole Esposito
Julie Seftick
Meredith Veysey

Oboe

Sarah Lume *
Angela Caceres *
Erin Lutz *
Kathi Smith *

Clarinet

Julieta Ugartemendia *
Jorge Rodriguez *
Dana Howell
Lauren McCoy

Bassoon

Hana Lee *
Jessica Garduno *
Jacob Smith
Cara Whetstone

Saxophone

Richard Mansfield

Trumpet

Herman Arenas *
William Hughes *
Brian Neibauer
Patrick McDermott
Stephen McGough

Horn

Mariela Rodriguez-Bohannon *
Chung-Chieh Hsaio
Elizabeth Doherty
David Romberger
Craig Matta
Scott Bohannon
Tiffany Zarker

Trombone

Gonzalo Fernandez *
Ross Garin *
Robert Tupper
Chris Balas

Tuba

Eric Zacherl *
Robert Shelton

Percussion

Gerardo Salazar *
Leonardo Soto *
Hiroko Okada
Andre-Anne Gingas-Roy
Bobbie Overton
Brandon Barnes
Jeff Luft
I-Jen Fang
Sergio Carreno

Keyboard

Rodrigo Ojeda

Harp

Anne Dickey
Francis Duffy

Celeste

Jeremy O'Dell

* denotes principal player

Upcoming Musical Events at Carnegie Mellon

Sunday, November 14 • Mellon Institute Auditorium • 2 pm
Carolyn Huebl's Violin Studio Recital

Sunday, November 14 • Alumni Concert Hall • 8 pm
Beethoven Cycle Concert
Second in a series of three concerts

Wednesday, November 17 • Mellon Institute Auditorium • 8 pm
Herman Arenas, trumpet
Graduate Recital

Friday, November 19 • Alumni Concert Hall • 8 pm
Carnegie Mellon Chamber Singers and Orchestra

Saturday, November 20 • Mellon Institute Auditorium • 3 pm
Gretchen Thiemecke, harp
Senior Recital

Saturday, November 20 • McConomy Auditorium • 4 pm
Carnegie Mellon Jazz Ensembles

Saturday, November 20 • Mellon Institute Auditorium • 5:30 pm
Jong Mi Kim, piano
Artist Diploma Recital

Concert Line • 268-2383

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