Wind Ensemble

Cliff Colnot, conductor

Saturday, November 11, 2017 • 8:00 P.M.

DePaul Concert Hall
800 West Belden Avenue • Chicago
Program

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809); later attributed to Paul Wranitzky
Octet in F Major, Hob. II F7

Emil Harmann (1836-1898)
Serenade, Op. 43 (1890)

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)
Oiseaux Exotiques (1956)
Franz Joseph Haydn/Paul Wranitzky
Octet in F Major, Hob. II F7
Duration: 16 minutes
Published in 1802, this work dates from the final year of Haydn’s life, a time when he was primarily focused on composing liturgical works such as the oratorio, The Seasons (1799-1801) and the late Harmoniemesse (1802). It was originally published under Haydn’s name, but later attributed to Czech composer and conductor, Paul Wranitzky, who was an acquaintance and colleague of Haydn’s. Although the attribution of this work to Haydn is thought to be apocryphal, it nonetheless has a charm and simplicity of construction that was typical of many works of the late 18th - early 19th century.

The four-movement structure follows the expectations generally associated with the Classical symphonic model. The first movement is a lively Sonata-Allegro, followed by a theme and variations in the second movement featuring soloists from throughout the ensemble. The third movement is a minuet with two trios. The piece concludes with a compact, rollicking finale that has a number of unexpected harmonic twists, and is reminiscent of some of Haydn’s rapid finales from his piano sonatas and chamber works.

Emil Hartmann
Serenade, Op. 43
Duration: 21 minutes
Danish composer, Emil Hartmann came from a family of musicians, including his father, Johan Peter Emilius Hartmann who was a noted composer of the time. Emil Hartmann composed works in both theatrical and instrumental genres, including opera, ballet, symphonies, concertos and chamber music. Roughly contemporaneous with Brahms, Hartmann’s work often employed nationalistic themes, with inspiration coming from Scandanavian literature and folklore.

Although Hartmann composed a number of chamber works, the Serenade Op. 43 seems to be unique in its focus on woodwinds and horns. Composed around 1885, Hartmann’s Serenade Op. 43 is one of two serenades he produced. Unlike earlier Classically-oriented four-movement structures, this piece exchanges the slow movement and scherzo such that the latter immediately follows the opening sonata-allegro. The slow third movement is a song-like intermezzo, while the finale has an unusual structure that includes a surprising Andantino Religioso before the brisk coda.
Olivier Messiaen
Oiseaux Exotiques

Duration: 16 minutes

Composed in 1955-1956, Olivier Messiaen’s Oiseaux Exotiques is one of a number of works by the composer for piano soloist with an ensemble of winds, brass and percussion instruments. This piece was commissioned by Pierre Boulez for the “Domaine musical” concerts, and was premiered in March of 1956 with the composer’s wife, and the dedicatee of the work, Yvonne Loriod as soloist.

Always self-consciously transparent about the construction of his music (and ever the teacher), Messiaen offers the following analysis of the 13 sections of the piece in a preface to the score:

1. Introduction
2. Piano cadenza (on the Hindu mynah and the wood thrush)
3. Intermezzo on four birds: Malaysian verdin, Baltimore oriole, Chinese leiothrix and Californian thrush (woodwinds, glockenspiel, xylophone)
4. Short piano cadenza on the Virginia cardinal
5. Continuation of the intermezzo on the four aforementioned birds
6. Third piano cadenza on the Virginia cardinal
7. Storm, thunder over the Amazon jungle: tam-tam crescendo – the tetras cupido inflates is air sacs and emits a fearsome cry, first clear, then dark
8. Central tutti: all birds sing together in large-scale counterpoint based on four rhythmical strophes, led by the percussion instruments developing Hindu and Greek rhythms. Some of the Hindu rhythms decrease with each strophe by one sixteenth-note (semitone) per time unit, whereas the Greek rhythms remain inexorably the same. This stubborn intractability of the rhythms – both in the changes and the immutability – continually contrasts with the extreme freedom of the birdsongs superposing them.
9. After the tutti, fourfold roaring of the tetras cupido, followed by the storm.
10. Fourth, very long piano cadenza on the catbird and bobolink, radiantly played in all the instrument’s registers.
11. Great final tutti. The Indian shama is the main soloist: highly colourful counterpoint through all the instruments.
12. Short piano cadenza on the wood thrush and the Virginia cardinal.
13. Coda, closing the piece with the clamour of the white-crested laughing thrush, conjuring up the notion of a mountain giant.

(Translation by Grant Chorley)
From the composer’s own analysis, three important features are apparent. First, the prominence of color in the overall scheme of the piece: Messiaen refers not only to specific combinations of instruments but also provides in the score a comprehensive list naming the birds whose calls are heard, and describing the colors of their plumage. Messiaen synesthetically associated colors with specific pitches or sonorities, and often embedded these associations in his music.

Second, this piece employs a block-like construction that characterizes many of his compositions. Each section is characterized by a particular instrumentation and texture, with one following another without transition. Particularly noteworthy in this piece are the brilliantly dense and extended polyphonic moments in the tutti sections (number 8 and number 11).

Lastly, Messiaen exposes the breadth of his influences through his use of Hindu and Greek rhythms. Use non-Western and ancient European musical materials was long of interest to Messiaen. These interests stemmed from his exposure to Balinese music at the 1931 Exposition Coloniale, and his earlier encounter with Maurice Emmanuel, an expert in Greek poetic metres with whom Messiaen studied music history. In his analysis, Messiaen cites his use of these rhythms, played by the percussion section in the eighth section in particular, and contrasts the strict composition processes he used in employing them with the free nature of the birdsong, creating a juxtaposition the earthly and human with the natural and divine.
In the past decade Cliff Colnot has emerged as a distinguished conductor and a musician of uncommon range.

One of few musicians to have studied orchestral repertoire with Daniel Barenboim, Colnot has served as assistant conductor for Barenboim's West-Eastern Divan Workshops for young musicians from Israel, Egypt, Syria, and other Middle Eastern countries. Colnot has also worked extensively with the late Pierre Boulez and served as assistant conductor to Boulez at the Lucerne Festival Academy. He regularly conducts the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), with whom he recorded Richard Wernick's *The Name of the Game* for Bridge Records, and he collaborates with the internationally acclaimed contemporary music ensemble *eighth blackbird*. Colnot has been principal conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's contemporary MusicNOW ensemble since its inception and was principal conductor of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, an orchestra he conducted for more than twenty-two years. Colnot also conducts Contempo at the University of Chicago, and the DePaul University Symphony Orchestra and Wind Ensemble. He has appeared as a guest conductor with the San Antonio Symphony Orchestra, the American Composers Orchestra, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Utah Symphony, and the Chicago Philharmonic.

Colnot is also a master arranger. His orchestration of Shulamit Ran's *Three Fantasy Pieces for Cello and Piano* was recorded by the English Chamber Orchestra. For the chamber orchestra of the Jerusalem International Chamber Music Festival, Colnot has arranged the Adagio from Mahler's *Symphony No. 10*, Schoenberg's *Pelleas and Melisande* (both published by Universal) and Manuel De Falla's *Three Cornered Hat*. For ICE, Colnot arranged Olivier Messiaen's *Chants de Terre et de Ciel* for chamber orchestra and mezzo-soprano, also published by Universal. For members of the Yellow Barn Music Festival, Colnot arranged Shulamit Ran's *Soliloquy for Violin, Cello, and Piano*, to be published by Theodore Presser. Colnot re-orchestrated the Bottesini *Concerto No. 2 in B Minor for Double Bass*, correcting many errors in existing editions and providing a more viable performance version. He has also been commissioned to write works for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Percussion Scholarship Group. His orchestration of Duke Ellington's *New World Coming* was premiered by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra with Daniel Barenboim as piano soloist in 2000, and Colnot also arranged, conducted, and co-produced the CD *Tribute to Ellington* featuring Barenboim at the piano. He has also written for rock-and-roll, pop, and jazz artists Richard Marx, Phil Ramone, Hugh Jackman, Leann Rimes, SheDaisy, Patricia Barber, Emerson Drive, and Brian Culbertson.
Colnot graduated with honors from Florida State University and in 1995 received the Ernst von Dohnányi Certificate of Excellence. He has also received the prestigious Alumni Merit Award from Northwestern University, where he earned his doctorate. In 2001 the Chicago Tribune named Cliff Colnot a “Chicagoan of the Year” in music, and in 2005 he received the William Hall Sherwood Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Arts. Most recently, Colnot has been awarded the 2016 Alice M. Ditson Conductor’s Award of Columbia University in recognition for his excellent commitment to the performance of works by American Composers. He has studied with master jazz teacher David Bloom, has taught jazz arranging at DePaul University, film scoring at Columbia College, and advanced orchestration at the University of Chicago. As a bassoonist, he was a member of the Lyric Opera Orchestra of Chicago, Music of the Baroque, and the Contemporary Chamber Players.
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Sunday, November 12 • 3:00 P.M.
Concert Hall
DePaul Chamber Choir and Baroque Ensemble

Sunday, November 12 • 8:00 P.M.
Concert Hall
String Chamber Showcase II

Monday, November 13 • 7:00 P.M.
Recital Hall
Jazz Combos IV

Tuesday, November 14 • 8:00 P.M.
Concert Hall
DePaul Concert Orchestra

Sunday, November 19 • 3:00 P.M.
Concert Hall
DePaul Community Chorus

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