

THE BELHAVEN UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
Dr. Stephen W. Sachs, Chair

presents

Mrs. James R. Preston
Memorial Chamber Music Series:
An Evening of Diamonds II
Messiaen

Mrs. Sarah Elias, Piano
Mr. Jesse Christerson, Cello
Mr. Kenneth Graves, Clarinet
Mr. Vincent Massimino, Violin
Dr. Stephen W. Sachs, Piano

Tuesday, February 10, 2015 • 7:30 p.m.
Belhaven University Center for the Arts • Concert Hall

*There will be a reception after the program. Please come and greet the performers.
Please refrain from the use of all flash and still photography during the concert
Please turn off all cell phones and electronics.*

PROGRAM

Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jésus

Olivier Messiaen • 1908 - 1992

XV. The Kiss of the Infant Jesus

XVI. Gaze of the prophets, shepherds, and Magi

Mrs. Sarah Elias, Piano

A Brief Introduction to Quartet for the End of Time

Dr. Stephen Sachs

INTERMISSION

Quartet for the End of Time

Olivier Messiaen

I. Liturgy of Crystal

II. Vocalise, for the Angel who announces the end of Time

III. Abyss of the birds

IV. Interlude

V. Praise to the Eternity of Jesus

VI. Dance of fury, for the seven trumpets

VII. Cluster of rainbows, for the Angel who announces the end of Time

VIII. Praise to the Immortality of Jesus

Mr. Vincent Massimino, Violin; Mr. Kenneth Graves, Clarinet;

Mr. Jesse Christeson, Cello; Dr. Stephen Sachs, Piano

PROGRAM NOTES

Messiaen's *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jésus* is a collection of twenty gazes or "contemplations" on the birth of Jesus Christ and consequently God's relationship to mankind. The collection is bound together by seven themes.

"Le baiser de l'Enfant-Jésus" (The Kiss of the Infant Jesus) contains two of these themes, the "Thème de Dieu" (Theme of God) and the "Thème d'accords" (Theme of Chords). Listen for the lullaby presentation of the Thème de Dieu at the beginning of the movement, followed by sections depicting "the garden" and "arms outstretched to love." In a glorious and rich segment, "the kiss" is illustrated. Finally, the piece closes with "the shadow of the kiss." All the movements appear with poetic subtitles; this movement's subtitle is translated here from

its original French: "At each communion, the Infant Jesus sleeps with us near the gate; then he opens the gate into the garden and in His shining glory rushes to embrace us."

In contrast to the rather lyrical "Le baiser de l'Enfant-Jésus," "**Regard des prophètes, des bergers et des Mages**" is a dramatic and almost frightful attack of sound. The subtitle is translated: "Drums and oboe, a huge concert and nasal." Listen for the crash of the drums, a slightly shrill oboe, and blasts of large brass. Snippets of the second movement, (The Star) are found here. You can imagine the Magi following the star and the shepherds terrified of the angels' appearance as the Messiah the prophets foretold arrives.

Olivier Messiaen (1908 – 1992) is one of the twentieth century's most individualistic composers. He was a teacher of composition, but he had no "followers", he founded no "school" of composition. He considered ALL of his music to be an expression of his Christian faith. A student of Greek poetry and Hindu rhythms, these rhythmic patterns find their way into his writing. Instead of dividing a beat into smaller subdivisions, Messiaen added small notes or rests to change the rhythmic pattern. Birdsong also fascinated him, and we see him use it first in the Quartet. Messiaen saw colors in connection with hearing sounds (known as synesthesia); his interesting choices of harmonic chord clusters come from the colors they evoked for him. He called them "rainbows" or "stained-glass windows" and connected them directly to his worship experience. During WWII, Messiaen was a prisoner at Görlitz, Silesia where he composed *Quartour pour le fin du temp (Quartet for the End of Time, 1940)*. It depicts events of the Apocalypse and the eternity and immortality of Jesus. Each player participates in six of the eight movements. The following notes are translated from his own preface to the score.

"I saw a mighty angel descending from heaven, clad in mist, having around his head a rainbow. His face was like the sun, his feet like pillars of fire. He placed his right foot on the sea, his left on the earth, and standing thus on the sea and the earth he lifted his hand toward heaven and swore by Him who liveth for ever and ever, saying: 'There shall be time no longer, but at the day of the trumpet of the seventh angel the mystery of God shall be consummated.'" (Revelation 10: 1 - 2 & 5 - 7). Conceived and written in the course of my captivity, the Quartet for the End of Time was performed for the first time in Stalag 8-A on January 15, 1941, by Jean Le Boulaire, violinist; Henri Akoka, clarinetist; Étienne Pasquier, cellist, and myself at the piano. It is directly inspired by this excerpt from "The Revelation of St. John". Its musical language is essentially transcendental, spiritual, catholic. Certain modes, realizing

melodically and harmonically a kind of tonal ubiquity, draw the listener into a sense of the eternity of space or time. Particular rhythms existing outside of the measure contribute importantly toward the banishment of temporalities. (All this is mere striving and childish stammering if one compares it to the overwhelming grandeur of the subject!) This quartet contains eight movements. Why? Seven is the perfect number, the creation of six days made holy by the divine Sabbath; the seventh in its repose prolongs itself into eternity and becomes the eighth, of unfailing light, of immutable peace.

I. Liturgy of crystal: Between the morning hours of three and four, the awakening of the birds: a thrush or a nightingale soloist improvises, amid notes of shining sound and a halo of trills that lose themselves high in the trees. Transpose this to the religious plane: you will have the harmonious silence of heaven.

II. Vocalise, for the angel who announces the end of Time: The first and third parts (very short) evoke the power of that mighty angel, his hair a rainbow and his clothing mist, who places one foot on the sea and one foot on the earth. Between these sections are the ineffable harmonies of heaven. From the piano, soft cascades of blue-orange chords, encircling with their distant carillon the plainchant-like recitativo of the violin and cello.

III. Abyss of the birds (Clarinet solo): The abyss is Time, with its sadness and tediums. The birds are the opposite of Time; they are our desire for light, for stars, for rainbows and for jubilant outpourings of song!

IV. Interlude (Scherzo): Of a more outgoing character than the other movements but related to them, nonetheless, by various melodic references.

V. Praise to the eternity of Jesus: Jesus is here considered as one with the Word. A long phrase, infinitely slow, by the cello expatiates with love and reverence on the everlastingness of the Word, mighty and dulcet, "which the

years can in no way exhaust.” Majestically the melody unfolds itself at a distance both intimate and awesome. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

VI. Dance of fury, for the seven trumpets:

Rhythmically the most idiosyncratic movement of the set. The four instruments in unison give the effect of gongs and trumpets (the first six trumpets of the Apocalypse attend various catastrophes, the trumpet of the seventh angel announces the consummation of the mystery of God.) Use of extended note values, augmented or diminished rhythmic patterns, non-retrogradable rhythms – a systematic use of values which, read from left to right or right to left, remain the same. Music of stone, formidable sonority; movement as irresistible as steel, as huge blocks of livid fury or ice-like frenzy. Listen particularly to the terrifying fortissimo of the theme in augmentation and with change of register of its different notes, toward the end of the piece.

VII. Cluster of rainbows, for the angel who announces the end of Time: Here certain passages from the second movement return. The mighty angel appears, and in particular the

rainbow that envelops him (the rainbow, symbol of peace, of wisdom, of every quiver of luminosity and sound). In my dreamings I hear and see ordered melodies and chords, familiar hues and forms; then, following this ecstatically to a vortex, a dizzying interpenetration of superhuman sounds and colors. These fiery swords, these rivers of blue-orange lava, these sudden stars: Behold the cluster, behold the rainbows!

VIII. Praise to the immortality of Jesus:

Expansive violin solo balancing the cello solo of the fifth movement. Why this second glorification? It addresses itself more specifically to the second aspect of Jesus – to Jesus the man, to the Word made flesh, raised up immortal from the dead so as to communicate His life to us. It is total love. Its slow rising to a supreme point is the ascension of man toward his God, of the son of God toward his Father, of the mortal newly made divine toward paradise.

And I repeat what I said above: All this is mere striving and childish stammering if one compares it to the overwhelming grandeur of the subject! --Olivier Messiaen

BIOS

Mr. Jesse Christeson: Hailing from Daytona Beach, Florida, Jesse Christeson is excited to be serving his second year as Principal Cellist of the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra. Most recently, Mr. Christeson received a master’s degree in performance from Rice University (studio of Norman Fischer), and completed his third consecutive summer at the prestigious Tanglewood Music Center. Since Spring of 2014, he has been a member of the Tanglewood New Fromm Quartet, specializing in the performance of contemporary music. The quartet will feature in April 2015 in *The Intimacy of Creativity*, a new-music festival in Hong Kong, for the second consecutive year.

Mr. Christeson’s other recent summer engagements include the festivals of Aspen, Brevard, and the National Orchestral Institute. He received his bachelor’s from Stetson University in DeLand, FL, where he studied cello (studio of David Bjella), voice, and philosophy. Mr. Christeson has served as a substitute cellist for the Alabama Symphony and Orlando Philharmonic orchestras.

Mrs. Sarah Elias serves as an adjunct professor in music at Belhaven University and the Director of Music and Worship Ministries at Lakeside Presbyterian Church in Brandon, MS.

Additionally, she teaches private piano lessons and works as a professional accompanist in the area. Mrs. Elias received her Bachelor of Arts in Music degree from Belhaven University, studying under her father, Dr. Stephen W. Sachs, and her Masters of Music in Piano Performance and Pedagogy from University of Southern Mississippi. She is currently pursuing her Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in Piano Performance and Pedagogy at USM under the instruction of Dr. Elizabeth Moak. She has performed and competed in a number of venues, winning concerto and solo competitions, and has appeared in Master Classes with piano greats including Anton Nel, Melvin Chen, and Alon Goldstein. She has also studied with Petronel Malan and Pilar Leyva. Mrs. Elias resides in the Reservoir area with her husband, Mike, stepsons, Tyler and Carter, and son, Reed.

Mr. Kenneth Graves, Principal Clarinet of the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra, has collaborated with leading musicians of today including Sir Neville Marriner, Leon Fleisher, James Conlon, John Williams and Leonard Slatkin. He has performed chamber music with members of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and has appeared with the Colburn Chamber Music Society. Ken has attended music festivals including the Music Academy of the West, the National Repertory Orchestra, Spoleto Festival USA, and the National Orchestral Institute. He received his Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music where he was a student of Richie Hawley and his Master of Music degree from the University of Southern California where he was a student of Yehuda Gilad. He has also attended The Colburn School in downtown Los Angeles. In addition to playing with the MSO, Ken enjoys teaching and is an adjunct clarinet professor at Mississippi College and Belhaven University. He also maintains an active private studio in the Jackson, MS area.

Mr. Vincent Massimino has been Assistant Concertmaster and member of the String Quartet of the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra since 1994, having joined the orchestra in 1989. Raised in Maryland, he appeared with the Baltimore and Annapolis Symphonies in his late teens. He received a Bachelor of Music from the University of North Texas in 1987 and has coached with members of the esteemed Guarneri Quartet. He has performed with the Mobile Opera, Gulf Coast Symphony, Tuscaloosa Symphony and the Alabama Symphony, and was the Concertmaster of the orchestra serving the International Ballet Competition in 2014.

Dr. Stephen W. Sachs is Professor of Piano and Music Chair at Belhaven, a post he has been privileged to hold since August, 2004. Dr. Sachs performs with the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra both as soloist and as a member of the Symphony. He also performs regularly as piano soloist, duo-pianist and chamber musician. Dr. Sachs and his wife Carolyn lead the music ministry at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Jackson, MS.

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC MISSION STATEMENT

The Music Department seeks to produce transformational leaders in the musical arts who will have profound influence in homes, churches, private studios, educational institutions, and on the concert stage. While developing the God-bestowed musical talents of music majors, minors, and elective students, we seek to provide an integrative understanding of the musical arts from a Christian world and life view in order to equip students to influence the world of ideas. The music major degree program is designed to prepare students for graduate study while equipping them for vocational roles in performance, church music, and education. The Belhaven University Music Department exists to

multiply Christian leaders who demonstrate unquestionable excellence in the musical arts and apply timeless truths in every aspect of their artistic discipline.

The Music Department would like to thank our many community partners for their support of Christian Arts Education at Belhaven University through their advertising in "Arts Ablaze 2014-2015." It is through these and other wonderful relationships in the greater Jackson community that makes many of our concerts possible at Belhaven. We praise God for our friends and are truly thankful for their generosity. Please mention The Arts at Belhaven University when you visit our community partners.

For a complete listing of Music Department scheduled spring semester programs, please visit our website at <http://www.belhaven.edu/music/recitals.htm>. A complete listing of major Belhaven University arts events may be found at <http://www.belhaven.edu/arts/schedule.htm>.

Thank you to those working behind the scenes to make today's program a success: music faculty supervisor, Dr. Sachs; student workers –house manager, Jessica Schmidt; ushers, Maddi Jolley & Andrew Horton; stage manager, Hannah Wilson; stage hands, Constance Prince & Rachel Gari; recording/sound, Cory Smith; lighting, Zakary Joyner; videographer, Rachael McCartney; reception hosts, Kate Ray & Mariah Taylor.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, February 24, 7:30pm, Concert Hall

Best of Belhaven II

Saturday, February 28, 7:30pm, Concert Hall

Sauerwein Faculty Composition Recital

Wednesday, March 4, 7:30pm, Concert Hall

Shellie Brown Alumni Violin Recital

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC, FACULTY AND STAFF

Dr. Stephen Sachs, pianist, chair • Dr. Paxton Girtmon, director of bands, woodwind specialist • Dr. Andrew Sauerwein, composer, theorist • Dr. Christopher Shelt, coordinator of vocal activities, director of choral ensembles and Singing Christmas Tree • Song Xie, violinist, director of string ensembles • Nancy Bateman, cello adjunct • Dennis Bonds, jazz guitar adjunct • Richard Brown, string bass adjunct • Sybil Cheesman, flute adjunct • Dr. Dennis Cranford, music theory adjunct • Carol Durham, organ adjunct • Sarah Elias, piano and music theory adjunct • Doug Eltzroth, worship arts adjunct • Gena Everitt, vocal adjunct • Dr. Rebecca Geihlsler, vocal and music history adjunct • Kenneth Graves, clarinet adjunct • Christina Hrivnak, vocal adjunct • Andrew Lewis, jazz and music theory adjunct • Amanda Mangrum, harp adjunct • Randy Mapes, double reed adjunct • Dr. Marlynn Martin, music ed adjunct • Maggie McLinden, staff accompanist • Dr. Tanja Miric, classical guitar adjunct • Christopher Phillips, vocal and choral adjunct • Dr. Owen Rockwell, percussion adjunct, director of percussion ensembles • Carolyn Sachs, piano adjunct • Margaret Sprow, music ministries adjunct • Dr. Carla Stovall, low brass adjunct • Lloyd Turner, trumpet adjunct • Grace Anna Randall, administrative assistant

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