M. Elizabeth Martignetti, horn

Dorothy Chan, piano

*Appel interstellaire* from *Des Canyons aux étoiles* (1971-74) Olivier Messiaen

(1908-1992)

*Du bist die Ruh* D. 776 (1826) Franz Schubert

(1797-1828)

*Schöne Wiege meiner Leiden* op. 24 no. 5 (1840) Robert Schumann

(1810-1856)

*Zueignung* op. 10 no. 1 (1885) Richard Strauss

(1864-1949)

Sonata No. 2 in F major (1802) Luigi Cherubini

*Largo – Allegro moderato* (1760-1842)

INTERMISSION

*Lamento d’Orfeo* (1986) Volker David Kirchner

(b. 1942)

*Scherzo Concertante* (1966) Václav Nelhýbel

(1919-1996)

Sonata for Horn and Piano (1939) Bernhard Heiden

*Moderato* (1910-2000)

*Tempo di Minuetto*

*Rondo. Allegretto*

**Notes on the Program**

**Olivier Messiaen** (1908–1992)’s “**Appel interstellaire**” (Interstellar Call) is an enigmatic movement for solo horn calling out from within his long-form symphonic poem *Des Canyons aux étoiles (From the Canyons to the Stars*). The movement was among the first written following commission by Alice Tully in 1970, but the call may not have actually been written with the commission in mind. Rather the call was first heard as a piece for solo horn in memorial concert for a former student and colleague Jean-Pierre Guèzec in 1971 in Royen, France. The composer decided to incorporate the solo in *Des Canyons* and requested return of the part from soloist Daniel Bourgue well in advance of the New York City premiere in 1974.[[1]](#footnote-1) Yet there is a long history of performers taking the liberty to consider the call as a stand-alone work, performing the work in recital and competitions (and, even more provocatively, in the canyonlands that inspired it) to become well-established in the horn repertoire, even as the larger work itself is not as often performed.

Like many of Messiaen’s works, *Des Canyons* evinces the composer’s deep spirituality; unique to the work, perhaps, is the depth of the celebration of the natural world, the trajectory from the earth to the heavens. In the midst of the larger work’s sweeping evocation of nature, the “Appel interstellaire” can be understood as a very *human* soliloquy—the movement is prefaced with quotations from Psalms and, more provocatively, Job—a sonic bridge from below the canyon’s rim to the plentitude of the starry vault. The richly-colored movement is divided into contrastive sections of disassociated effects (including stopped horn, lip trills, and flutter tongue), intensely lyrical song, and a distinct regression of the horn “to its natural state” (the glissandi on the untempered valveless horn) and the evocation of the calls of the canyon wren native to Utah and the hoamy bird. The major sections of this palindromic movement are articulated by a unique “son détimbré”—literally “a sound that has lost its sound”: an otherworldly effect created by only partially depressing the valves on the horn and oscillating pitch—but are also marked by the protracted silences that follow.

“He heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds. He determines the number of the stars and gives to all of them their names.” (Psalm 146: 3-4)

“O earth, cover not my blood, and let my cry find no resting place!... ” (Job 16:18)

The angst of the wounded Job is answered here by the ultimate peace found in the embrace of the beloved in **Franz Schubert** (1797–1828)’s simple yet exquisite setting of Friedrich Rückert’s “**Du bist die Ruh**” (Op. 59, No. 3, D. 776). The piano introduction lulls the listener into a sense of calm: the steadiness of gently rocking sixteenth notes subdivides the prevailing triple-based meter, which is in turn indicative of a lullaby or cradle-song. Rückert’s balanced rhyme scheme (*abab*) is presented over repeated phrases: the two halves of the first stanza are set to the same ascending melody. The second stanza unfolds as a complement: the material is lightly contrastive—more active and primarily descending in contour—but corresponds to the parallel phrasing of the first, repeating the last line to achieve harmonic closure. (The third and fourth stanzas repeat this setting.) To continue this balance, the final lone verse is repeated in total, but the melodic line changes: it ascends for the duration of the stanza, voyaging through several chromatic horizons as the narrator’s sight is ultimately filled with the light of the beloved.

At first blush, **Robert Schumann** (1810-1856)’s setting of Heinrich Heine of seems to musically reference a similar cradle-song type, perhaps drawing upon the image of the “schöne Wiege” (“fair cradle”) of the title (“**Schöne Wiege meiner Leiden**,” Op. 24, No. 5). However, this is in fact a song of farewell—a common theme in Heine’s poetry—as the narrator takes leave of the town where his happiness was both born and was ultimately laid to rest (for the place is simultaneously a “cradle of sorrows” and a tomb for peace). The first two stanzas are fairly peaceful as the narrator bids goodbye to this place where he experienced love, but as the poem continues, he becomes more fraught and agitated, and the setting appropriately more dramatic, eventually eliding between stanzas in the poetic declamation. Schumann’s return to the first stanza to close the work invites a final opportunity to say farewell. Indeed, the very word “Lebewohl” is a motto here, functioning both as a rhythmic motif and as a refrain added to the end of at the end of several stanzas.

Despite its brevity, Hermann von Gilm’spoem (titled “**Zueignung**” in musical publication)maps a progression from the anguish of separation to abiding blissfully in the state of “dedication” to the beloved. **Richard Strauss** (1864-1949)’s apparently simple setting—a modified strophic form—is similarly able to affect such emotional transformation. Here, the notion of “having thanks” (“habe Dank”) is used as a refrain to close each stanza. The apparent irony of the statement is reflected in its harmonic inflection: in the first two stanzas, rather than resolving immediately to the tonic, it introduces a non-diatonic note, the flattened seventh over the tonic, which results in a dominant seventh chord that prolongs the harmonic journey. At the close of the third and final stanza—which is more ecstatic and imagistic in its registral emphasis of blessing and the heart’s sinking—the motto is a more emphatic gesture of thanks, the ultimate devotion to the beloved.

Following his training in Florence, **Luigi Cherubini** (1760-1842) settled in Paris in the 1780s, where he became not only a well-established composer, but also a conductor, music publisher, theorist, and teacher before heading the Paris Conservatoire in his final two decades. He is best known for the operas from early in his career, including the rescue opera *Lodoïska* (after which Beethoven would model his own contribution to the genre, *Fidelio*) and the psychologically powerful *Médée*. His compositional attention was diverted from opera at the end of the Revolutionary period, and critics note a simplification and lightening of his style.

Composed in 1802, the **Sonata No. 2 in F major** (originally for horn and orchestra) stems from this period, and is an interesting musical outlier in several respects. Prior to his appointment at the Conservatoire in 1822, Cherubini composed very little instrumental music except for military band commissions and the occasional *romance* for pianoforte, and this is the only work in his catalog for solo instrument and ensemble in his oeuvre. The work was originally published as an *étude*, and this is perhaps a more appropriate genre designation, for the work does not demonstrate many features that one would expect from a late Classical sonata: it is a single movement (rather than three or four movements) and, following a wandering *Largo* introduction, the body of the work is a simple binary (material is presented once, moving from tonic to dominant, and then, following a brief retransitory diversion, the same material is repeated, with alterations so as to remain in the tonic), rather than the more complex sonata-allegro form that is typical of the genre. With this designation of *étude*, it may be more productive to consider the work as prefiguring Romantic concert pieces in the vein of Rossini, Saint-Saens, and Weber than as an exemplar of contemporaneous Viennese instrumental compositional ideals, against which the cosmopolitan Cherubini was and is often found lacking. Rather, the introduction can be heard as an extension of the characteristic declamatory arioso style of his dramatic works; the jaunty *Allegro* which follows is quite idiomatic in its rhythmically varied arpeggios and fluid scales, and charming in its own right as an example of Classical ideals of balance and phrasing.

Mainz-born and -based composer **Volker David Kirchner** (b. 1942) spent the first portion of his career primarily as a professional violinist and violist in chamber ensembles and orchestras, including the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra. He began composing incidental music for theatre in the 1970s while working in Wiesbaden as the co-founder of Ensemble 70 before turning to composition full time in the 1980s. The *Lamento d’Orfeo* for horn and piano demonstrates his theatrical predilections in other genres: the title alone references one of the earliest and most moving subjects of the operatic tradition.

In the Greek myth, the grief-stricken bard laments the ultimate loss of his wife Euridyce to the underworld. This setting for instrument and piano proposes an interesting reading: in the face of this soul-shattering, irreversible separation, there are ultimately no words with which the gifted poet could adequately describe his anguish. Rather, he is left with only material sounds: cage-rattling shouts, echoes and whispers, snippets of melody that devolve to sighing. From the opening, the horn sound is captured by the strings of the open pedal, as if the horn is emanating as much from the piano as from the bell, creating an uncanny, mirrored presence echoing through the sympathetic resonance. (Interestingly, some of musical material for the horn is remarkably similar to that of the previously heard “Appel Interstellaire,” such as the use of untempered horn glissandi and eerie echo effects, and some performances of Messiaen’s work have included an open-pedal piano to imagine echoing canyon walls or the vastness of space.)

The work was composed in 1986 for performance by German hornist Marie Luise Neuneker (who would become a frequent collaborator) for her debut with the Concert Artists Guild. Orpheus was clearly haunting Kirchner at the time: not long after the premiere of the work, he completed work on a substantial song cycle on Rilke’s sonnets about the legendary Greek hero, for baritone, horn, and piano, which folds in this Lament.

“There the tree rises. Oh pure surpassing!

Oh Orpheus sings! Oh great tree of sound!

And all is silent, And from this silence arise

New beginnings, intimations, changings.”

(from *The Sonnets to Orpheus*,

Rainer Maria Rilke, trans. Robert Hunter)

Czech-born American composer **Vaclav Nelhybel** (1919–1996) wrote prolifically for symphonic band and wind instruments, but is little known today. His music is characterized by modal melodic writing and driving rhythms, both of which are evident in his **Scherzo Concertante**. Where the previously heard *Lamento* is sparce, Nelhybel’s Scherzo hums with potential and kinetic energy despite similar registral interplay of the horn and piano—while they are at the same pitch D, the sharp attacks of the piano subdivide the sustained crescendo of the horn. Thus the two instruments are placed into productive tension that drives the work not from underneath but from within—the tension builds until the pitch seems to fracture: upward by a half step to E-flat after the first sustained D, then again at a shorter duration, followed by a movement from D *downward* to C at yet a shorter duration before splintering into arpeggios highlighting D, F, A, and C. The brief work is propelled by rhythmic variations within and against the meter and by tight interaction between the horn and piano, alternating and juxtaposing highly rhythmic and accented motifs with more lyrical lines. The work ends with a *Vivace* section that again examines the opening D-F-A-C arpeggio, exhausting its rhythmic possibilities, before an emphatic E-flat to D downward gesture (a reverse of the impetus of the opening) snaps the work shut.

There are many parallels in the lives of **Bernhard Heiden** (1910–2000) and that of his greatest influence and teacher Paul Hindemith. Heiden was born Bernhard Levi in Frankfurt-am-Main (close to Hindemith’s birthplace) in 1910, and began composing at a very young age. At 19, Heiden enrolled in the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin where he began his studies with Hindemith, who was himself only a recent appointment to the institution; Heiden would ultimately win the Mendelssohn Prize in Composition his final year there. Both men left Germany during the rise of the Third Reich, attained American citizenship, and ultimately settled into careers as noted pedagogues of composition and music at some of the US’s finest musical institutions. While Hindemith assumed a post teaching at Yale upon immigrating to the US in 1940, Heiden arrived five years earlier, teaching first in Detroit, and then serving as a bandmaster in the Army during the War. Following completion of a master’s degree at Cornell, Heiden was appointed to the faculty of the Indiana University School of Music. While Hindemith would return to the continent (however, never to Germany), Heiden remained in Bloomington, Indiana, composing music until his 2000.

Coincidentally, both Hindemith and Heiden composed their sonatas for horn and piano in 1939, and the younger composer’s style and form demonstrates considerable influence from his teacher. Heiden’s **Sonata for Horn and Piano** is in three movements, a classic fast–slow–fast form, and exhibits the modally-inflected tonality, balanced form and phrasing, and contrapuntal frameworks that also characterize Hindemith’s work. The first movement *Moderato* presents two closely related, lyrical themes interspersed with more rhythmic material, before presenting them again in new settings: new keys, expanded durations, or more active or more still figurations. Incidentally, the initial melody in the horn begins on a D that warms upward into an E-flat, thus placing this sonata into a pitched and motivic relation with Nelhybel’s *Scherzo* heard just before. Yet, where Nelhybel’s work is combustive, Heiden’s sonata is cool: there is no urgency or rush to closure, but rather an altogether more detached sense of inevitability in the musical logic.

The second movement *Tempo di Minuetto* moves with a bit of a limp. While technically written in the triple-based meter that typifies the minuet, the melody in the horn regularly extends over the bar lines in five-, four-, and only eventually three-beat gestures; yet, the charm of the melody and its ultimate balance mitigates any jarring effect. The final *Allegretto* is a lively rondo that also features a good deal of rhythmic interplay, this time foregrounded in the repeated notes that subdivide the recurring theme and in the regular mixing between duple- and triple-based meters, which now appear to dance.

**Texts and Translations**

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| **Du bist die Ruh**  Text by Friedrich Ruckert | Translation by Walter A. Aue |
| Du bist die Ruh,  Der Friede mild,  Die Sehnsucht du  Und was sie stillt.  Ich weihe dir  Voll Lust und Schmerz  Zur Wohnung hier  Mein Aug und Herz.  Kehr ein bei mir,  Und schliesse du  Still hinter dir  Die Pforten zu.  Treib andern Schmerz  Aus dieser Brust!  Voll sei dies Herz  Von deiner Lust.  Dies Augenzelt  Von deinem Glanz  Allein erhellt,  O füll es ganz! | You are my rest,  my calm and peace:  my longing's best  that makes it cease.  To you I give  for laugh or cry  as place to live  my heart and eye.  Come in to find  and quiet close  the doors behind  your kind repose.  All other grief  drive from my breast:  my heart reprieve  and fill with zest.  My eye's whole sight,  so much in thrall  to your own light,  oh, fill it all! |

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| **Schöne Wiege meiner Leiden**  Text by Heinrich Hein | Translation by Louis Untermeyer |
| Schöne Wiege meiner Leiden,  Schönes Grabmal meiner Ruh’,  Schöne Stadt, wir müssen scheiden, –  Lebe wohl! ruf’ ich dir zu.  Lebe wohl, du heil’ge Schwelle,  Wo da wandelt Liebchen traut;  Lebe wohl! du heil’ge Stelle,  Wo ich sie zuerst geschaut.  Hätt’ ich dich doch nie geseh’n,  Schöne Herzenskönigin!  Nimmer wär’ es dann geschehen,  Daß ich jetzt so elend bin.  Nie wollt’ ich dein Herze rühren,  Liebe hab’ ich nie erfleht;  Nur ein stilles Leben führen  Wollt’ ich, wo dein Odem weht.  Doch du drängst mich selbst von hinnen,  Bittre Worte spricht dein Mund;  Wahnsinn wühlt in meinen Sinnen,  Und mein Herz ist krank und wund.  Und die Glieder matt und träge  Schlepp’ ich fort am Wanderstab,  Bis mein müdes Haupt ich lege  Ferne in ein kühles Grab.  [Schöne Wiege meiner Leiden,  Schönes Grabmal meiner Ruh’,  Schöne Stadt, wir müssen scheiden, –  Lebe wohl! ruf’ ich dir zu.] | Lovely cradle of my sorrow,  Lovely tomb where peace would dwell,  Smiling town, we part to-morrow;  I must leave, and so farewell.  Farewell threshold, where still slowly  Her beloved footstep stirs;  Farewell to that hushed and holy  Spot where first my eyes met hers.  Had you never caught or claimed me,  Fairest, heart’s elected queen,  Wretchedness would not have maimed me  In its toils—as you have seen.  Never have you found me grieving  For your heart with loud despair;  All I asked was quiet living,  Quietly to breathe your air.  But you drove me forth with scourging,  Bitter words and lashing scorn;  Madness in my soul is surging,  And my heart is flayed and torn.  And I take my staff and stumble  On a journey, far from brace;  Till my head droops and I tumble  In some cool and kindly grave.  [Lovely cradle of my sorrow,  Lovely tomb where peace would dwell,  Smiling town, we part to-morrow;  I must leave, and so farewell.] |

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| **Zueignung**  Text by Hermann von Glim | Translation by Edward Lein |
| Ja, du weißt es, teure Seele,  Daß ich fern von dir mich quäle,  Liebe macht die Herzen krank,  Habe Dank.  Einst hielt ich, der Freiheit Zecher,  Hoch den Amethysten-Becher,  Und du segnetest den Trank,  Habe Dank.  Und beschworst darin die Bösen,  Bis ich, was ich nie gewesen,  heilig, heilig an's Herz dir sank,  Habe Dank. | Indeed, thou knowest, dearest soul,  How I suffer far removed from thee;  Love can make the sore heart break,  Have my thanks.  Once I grasped of freedom’s chalice,  I held high that amethyst cup,  And thou didst bless that which I drank,  Have my thanks.  And the evil therein was purged  Till I became as I’d never been:  Blest—into my heart thus blest I sank,  Have my thanks. |

**About the Artists**

Hornist **Elizabeth Martignetti** is an active chamber musician and orchestral player in New York City. She premiered Ke-Chia Chen’s *The Silent Flame*, a new concerto for horn and chamber orchestra with Ensemble 212, and has appeared as soloist with the Doctor’s Orchestral Society of New York. Elizabeth regularly performs with contemporary music vehicle ensemble mise-en, the Albany Symphony Orchestra, and in several chamber projects. Recent notable performances include Thomas Adès’ *Sonata da Caccia* onthe Music Mondays series on the Upper West Side, as a fellow at the Atlantic Music Festival in Waterville, ME, and with the Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra and the jazz composition collective this, now.

Elizabeth has taught horn at Yale College and at the University of Bridgeport (CT), and has served as instructor of music at Southern Connecticut State University, where she taught music appreciation and world music. She has also given presentations and performances at regional conferences of the International Horn Society, and, recently, a lecture-recital on emplaced performance of Messiaen’s “Appel interstellaire” at the 2016 Ecomusicologies conference.

She holds Master of Musical Arts and Master of Music degrees from the Yale School of Music and the Bachelor of Music degree from the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati. Her principal teachers have included Richard Deane, Randy Gardner, William Purvis, and David Jolley. Elizabeth is currently a Graduate Center Fellow and Humanities Fellow pursuing a doctorate in music performance at the CUNY Graduate Center, where she studies with Ann Ellsworth.

**Dorothy Chan** is a New York-based pianist, improviser and educator. She began her piano studies at the age of four, and has performed in Asia, America and Europe as a solo artist, a chamber music player and accompanist. Dorothy performs a wide variety of styles ranging from Baroque to contemporary classical, and frequently performs in various formations including chamber ensembles such as the Zafron Trio, [kla], ensemble mise-en, InnoVox, and Contemporaneous. Her playing is described as “expressive and sensitivity infused”. Dorothy received her Masters in Music at Manhattan School of Music, and her Bachelors of Music at University of Urbana-Champaign. Her primary teachers include the late Zenon Fishbein, and Timothy Ehlen; her coaches include Jeffrey Cohen, Alan Kay, Julie Gunn, Charles Neidich and Ian Hobson.

1. Harraman, Elizabeth. “Des canyons aux étoiles…” *The Horn Call* XLI, no. 2 (February 2011): 71-74. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)