



MONTREAL

CITY OF MUSIC 2004

Wednesday, November 24, 2004 8:00 p.m. (EST)

Thursday, November 25, 2004 7:00 p.m. (UTC)

SALLE WILFRID-PELLETIER, PLACE DES ARTS

ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE DE MONTRÉAL

Louis Lortie, piano - Chantal Juillet, violin - Antonio Lysy, cello - Conductor : Jacques Lacombe

PROGRAM NOTES

Please note there has been a change in the program. Here is the new program :

Bedrich Smetana

The Moldau

Denys Bouliane

Tetrapharmakos, quatre remèdes d'après Épicure, triple concerto pour violon, violoncelle et piano (création)

I - « Chute des atomes et froissements du *clinamen* »

II - « Ronde des dieux qui n'ont qu'à aller leur chemin »

III - « Une douleur qui s'abolit... au Jardin du *clinamen* »

IV - « Cette mort qui ne nous concerne guère : marches, dé-marches et vrilles de vie »

INTERMISSION

Leos Janacek

(arr. Talich/Smetacek)

La Petite Renarde rusée (The Cunning Little Vixen), suite

I - *Andante*

II - *Andante*

Igor Stravinski

L'Oiseau de feu (The Firebird), suite no 2 (1919)

Introduction

The Firebird and Her Dance

Variation of the Firebird

The Princesses' Round Dance

Infernal dance of King Kastchei

Lullaby

Finale

OSM : www.osm.ca

Jacques Lacombe : www.colbertartists.com

Denys Bouliane : <http://composers21.com>

Louis Lortie : www.cramermarderartists.com

Chantal Juillet : www.c7m.co.uk

Antonio Lysy : www.antoniolysy.com

Denys Bouliane
Grand-Mère (near Trois-Rivières), May 8, 1955
Now living in Montreal

***Tetrapharmakos* (The Fourfold Remedy of Epicurus), Triple Concerto for piano, violin and cello**

- I. The fall of atoms and the rustling of clinamen
- II. Round dance of the gods, who remain blithely unconcerned
- III. A pain that dissipates ... into the Garden of the clinamen
- IV. This death that worries us not in the least: marches, countermarches and the stirrings of life.

DENYS BOULIANE: Born in Grand-Mère, near Trois-Rivières, May 8, 1955; now living in Montreal and Cologne

Denys Bouliane is one of Canada's leading composers of international acclaim. He is also highly active as a teacher, conductor and organizer of new-music events. His compositions are commissioned and widely performed by numerous European and Canadian ensembles. Bouliane's musical studies were undertaken principally with György Ligeti in Hamburg (1980-1985) during the period he lived mainly in Cologne (1980-1991). He has been composer-in-residence with the Orchestre symphonique de Quebec, the Heidelberg Orchestra, the West-German Radio Orchestra, and recently at the Salzburg Festival. Since 1995 he has been on the faculty of McGill University where he teaches composition and directs the Contemporary Music Ensemble. He is presently composer-in-residence with the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa as well as artistic coordinator of *MusiMars*, co-artistic director with Walter Boudreau of the biennial international *Montréal/Nouvelles Musiques* and co-director of the *Recontres de musique nouvelle* at the Domaine Forget.

Bouliane has won a number of prizes, including grand prize for Radio-Canada's Young Composers' Competition (1982), the Förderpreis from the City of Cologne (1985), the Serge Garant Prize from the Émile Nelligan Foundation (1991), the Opus Prize for "Personality of the Year" (1999) and "Directeur musical de l'année" from the Conseil québécois de la musique (2003).

Tetrapharmakos was commissioned by the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal and the Canada Council for the Arts. It is dedicated to Chantal Juillet, Antonio Lysy and Louis Lortie as well as to the French philosopher Michel Onfray. The composer explains his 25-minute work as follows:

Our millennium has opened under somewhat muddled conditions. The ideological conflicts of the twentieth century now appear to be giving rise to an old form of radicalization, namely, religious conflicts. It would be futile to imagine that a piece of music could change anything here, but let's simply say that this terrible sensation of impotence leads us to look at history for the roots of our present-day conflicts, and perhaps even to see in it reflections bearing hope for the future.

At the core of western philosophy lurks a peculiar concept, that of suppressing bodily concerns so that intellectual concepts may flourish (Plato), or of a "divine" faculty that allows us to move from feeling to reasoning (Aristotle). From the ancient Greeks to monotheistic religions, the suppression of bodily concerns might well be the source of the difficulty these religions have in accepting our existence as finite, and consequently, of coming to terms with human life.

Within the world of philosophy, the reputation of Epicurus is commonly besmirched, and he has been depicted as a beast wallowing in the mud of earthly pleasures. The truth is otherwise. Epicurus proposed a truly human ethical paradigm of pleasures as a gauge of our feelings and way to knowledge. Of all his teachings, the concept of *Tetrapharmakos* (the fourfold remedy) is the best known. It consists of four precepts that carry manifold ramifications: 1) "We have nothing to fear from the gods" (they are not the guiding principle

behind everything, but rather projections of ourselves, and in this regard he recalls Voltaire); 2) "We need not worry about death" (it is beyond our means of understanding, so there is nothing to be gained in speculation); 3) "One can bear pain" (if we give it meaning); and 4) "One can attain happiness" (if we accept our finite existence as well as the measure of freedom and responsibility allotted to us.

Epicurus also proposed a theory of physics based on the discontinuous flow of particles, which takes shape in the extraordinary and poetic concept of *clinamen*, defined by Lucretius as follows: "Atoms falling straight into the void, borne by their own weight, at indeterminate moments and unspecified points show infinitesimal deviations, just enough so that one can speak of a change of equilibrium." It is through these infinitesimal deviations, this *clinamen*, that matter is formed. In this "play of atoms," the artist Paul Klee, playwright Alfred Jarry and authors Georges Perec and Jacques Roubaud and others have found an inexhaustible source of delight and inspiration.

In this spirit, I set about composing my Triple Concerto *Tetrapharmakos*. The idea of *clinamen* suggested to me misty clouds of notes that dissolve in the process of falling, and from which emerge short episodes often played by the three soloists. The brief first movement articulates this idea. It is found again in the third movement, on which are superimposed dramatic outbursts of almost painful intensity that vanish in a shower of *clinamen*. The second movement is, to me, a kind of "whirlwind music," highly kinetic, a bit irreverent, rather like a dance in wildly unstable meter that might perhaps accompany the gait of the "gods" in whom we take such delight in inventing. The fourth movement is unquestionably the most serious. Two types of music are found here: one by the orchestra, doggedly playing a sort of weighty funeral march, not unlike those of Beethoven and Chopin; the other by the soloists, who seem to be off in another world with their grandiose Lisztian flourishes, overblown yet tinged with nostalgia. These contributions from the three soloists gradually get transferred to the orchestra, which becomes less domineering and participates in their flourishes. The end remains unresolved; I knew no other way to do it ...

Leoš Janáček
Hukvaldy, Moravia, July 3, 1854
Ostrava, August 12, 1928

Suite from *The Cunning Little Vixen* (arr. Talich/Smetaček)

Janacek's seventh opera, *The Cunning Little Vixen* (*Příhody Lišky Bystroušky*, 1922-1923), was set to the composer's own libretto based on the novella *Liška Bystrouška* by the Moravian poet Rudolf Těsnohlídek. The book, which originally appeared in serial form to accompany a comic strip by Stanislav Lolek, relates the adventures of a clever little vixen (female fox).

The twenty-minute suite was arranged by the conductor Václav Talich in 1936 and revised by Václav Smetaček in 1965. Consisting of two large sections, each beginning with an *Andante* passage, it contains essentially all the music of Act I minus a few cuts. There are two scenes: "A forest in the heat of day" and "In the Forester's farmyard." The first begins with an evocation of the mysterious rustling of the forest. A Forester falls asleep while a cricket and a grasshopper prance about to a gentle waltz. A frog pursued by the vixen lands on his nose. The Forester wakes up, catches the vixen and carries it home with him. In a melancholy dance, the despondent dragonfly searches in vain for her friend the vixen. In the second scene, the Forester's sons torment the poor vixen. When night falls, she goes to sleep in tears and, to music of melancholic beauty, imagines that she has metamorphosed into a girl. When dawn breaks, the vixen tries to rouse the other animals to revolt, but they pay no attention, so she bites all their heads off.

These pages unequivocally reveal Janáček's melodic and harmonic invention. His language is vaguely impressionistic, a result to some extent derived from his recent discovery of Debussy. Although the music is hardly a piece of descriptive realism, Janáček evokes the sounds of insects and forest animals, which are incorporated as fleeting allusions.

Igor Stravinsky
Oranienbaum (near St. Petersburg), June 17, 1882
New York City, April 6, 1971

The Firebird, Suite No. 2 (1919)

The Firebird was Stravinsky's first extended ballet score and the first work to bring him international acclaim. The premiere on June 25, 1910 at the Théâtre national de l'Opéra in Paris was an enormous success, and catapulted Stravinsky into the international spotlight. It was almost inevitable that a suite be extracted from the 45-minute work, and within a year, Stravinsky had done just that. This first concert suite was published in 1912, made from the same plates as the original full-length score with only slight modifications. A second suite, somewhat different from the first, and with slightly reduced orchestral forces, was prepared in 1919. This 1919 version - the one we hear tonight - is the most popular of the three *Firebird* suites, and one of the most frequently performed works in the entire orchestral repertory.

Stravinsky poured his utmost creative talents into *The Firebird*, resulting in music of sumptuous hues, exotic fantasy and orchestral enchantment. Its powers to seize and fix a mood can be found at every turn: in the opening bars an atmosphere of night, mystery and evil are conjured up by the vaguely hypnotic ostinato pattern in the double basses; the riotous colors of the Firebird herself are depicted by the woodwinds, celesta and percussion in her dance; and a glorious Finale, replete with massive, gleaming brass chords, leaves no doubt as to the happy outcome of the story - a Russian fairy tale which involves the hunter Ivan, the Princess he saves from the terrifying monster Kastchei, and the fabulous Firebird - half bird, half woman.

Source : OSM