

Orchestra 2001
James Freeman, Artistic Director
and
Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia
Alan Harler, Artistic Director

Northern Lights & Mystical Masterpieces

PROGRAM

Totus Tuus, Op. 60 Henryk Górecki

Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia
Alan Harler, conductor

Shaker Loops John Adams

- Part I. Shaking and Trembling
- Part II. Hymning Slews
- Part III. Loops and Verses
- Part IV. A Final Shaking

Orchestra 2001
James Freeman, conductor

Intermission

Messagesquisse..... Pierre Boulez

Philadelphia premiere
Lori Barnet, solo cello

Orchestra 2001
James Freeman, conductor

Adam's Lament..... Arvo Pärt

Philadelphia premiere
Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia
Orchestra 2001
Alan Harler, conductor

Saturday, October 22, 2011
8:00 pm
The Church of the Holy Trinity
Rittenhouse Square

Sunday, October 23, 2011
7:30 pm
Lang Concert Hall
Swarthmore College

*The use of recording or photographic equipment during this concert
is strictly prohibited. Please turn off audible cell phones and alarms.*

PROGRAM NOTES

Totus Tuus

If you only know Henryk Górecki from his immensely popular *Third Symphony (Symphony of Sorrowful Songs)*, you may be surprised to learn that he was something of an *enfant terrible* and the most acclaimed of Poland's avant garde composers of the 1960's. Górecki (1933-2010) came somewhat late to his musical training, entering the Academy of Music in Katowice in 1955, but he achieved remarkable success as a composer while still a student. His orchestral work *Scontri (Collisions)* established his reputation as a major composer when it was premiered at the 1960 Warsaw Autumn Festival, an important venue for contemporary music. His 1959 *Symphony No. 1*, another student work, won First Prize at the UNESCO Youth Biennale and enabled him to study in Paris, where he came into contact with composers like Pierre Boulez and Karlheinz Stockhausen, who greatly influenced his music. His early style was aggressively atonal and serial and featured abrupt, almost jarring contrasts in sound and texture. He also experimented with sonorism, a technique in which contrasting musical sonorities, textures and rhythms supplanted traditional melodies and harmonies. But in the 1970's, Górecki's musical style undertook a significant shift. He began to concentrate on vocal music, often of a religious nature, and his music became much more tonal, harmonically simple, melodic and intensely expressive, a style which is often referred to as sacred or mystical minimalism.



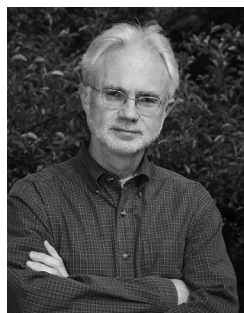
Totus Tuus was composed in 1987 for Pope John Paul II's third pilgrimage to his native Poland. The phrase *totus tuus* (wholly yours) was John Paul's apostolic motto, reflecting his deep devotion to the Virgin Mary. Górecki sets the text, a short Latin prayer by poet Maria Bogusława, in long, chant-like phrases. The harmonic structure is homophonic and deceptively simple, with subtle modulations built on enharmonic pitches. There is a constant repetition of short musical phrases, each succeeding one softer and slower, a meditative, almost mesmerizing affirmation of faith and devotion.

– Michael Moore

Shaker Loops (*written originally for string septet in 1978, transcribed by the composer in 1983 for string orchestra*)

Shaker Loops was composed in the fall of 1978 using fragments from a string quartet *Wavemaker*, written earlier in the year. The "waves" of *Wavemaker* were to be long sequences of oscillating melodic cells that created a rippling, shimmering complex of patterns like the surface of a slightly agitated pond or lake. But my technique lagged behind my inspiration, and this rippling pond very quickly went dry. *Wavemaker* crashed and burned at its first performance. The need for a larger, thicker ensemble and for a more flexible, less theory-bound means of composing became very apparent.

Fortunately I had in my students at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music a working laboratory to try out new ideas, and with the original *Wavemaker* scrapped I worked over the next four months to pick up the pieces and start over. I held on to the idea of oscillating patterns and made an overall structure that could embrace much more variety and emotional range. Most importantly the quartet became a septet, thereby adding a sonic mass and the potential for more acoustical power. The “loops” idea was a technique from the era of tape music where small lengths of prerecorded tape attached end to end could repeat melodic or rhythmic figures ad infinitum. The Shakers got into the act partly as a pun on the musical term “to shake,” meaning either to make a tremolo with the bow across the string or else to trill rapidly from one note to another.



Deborah O'Grady

The flip side of the pun was suggested by my own childhood memories of growing up not far from a defunct Shaker colony near Canterbury, New Hampshire. Although, as has since been pointed out to me, the term “Shaker” itself is derogatory, it nevertheless summons up visions of these otherwise pious and industrious souls caught up in the ecstatic frenzy of a dance that culminated in an epiphany of physical and spiritual transcendence. This dynamic, almost electrically charged element, so out of place in the orderly mechanistic universe of Minimalism, gave the music its *raison d'être* and ultimately led to the full realization of the piece.

– John Adams

Messagesquisse

In response to my invitation to Pierre Boulez to attend these concerts (and others during this year in which Orchestra 2001 will perform several of his works), he wrote the following:

“I would have liked very much to be with you in 2011-12 but I do now very few concerts and I try to concentrate on what I have not done really since a couple of years, concentrate on composing. Therefore I think I do you a favor in NOT being there because you will then have a chance of a new work! And so I will think of you more than you will be aware of. I am very proud of what you did about my music and I thank you very warmly.

I hope our paths will cross again one of these days, maybe in Chicago or Cleveland where I go regularly as a souvenir of past times. I wish you all the best and again, receive my warmest thanks.”



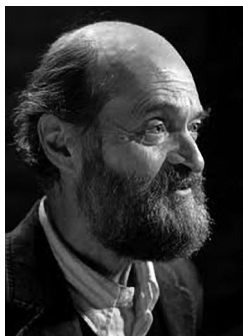
Messagesquisse, written in 1976, is in essence a mini-concerto for cello, with four mini-movements and a mini-orchestra of six other cellos. An opening section of transparent, slow (*pas du tout rythmique*), almost motionless har-

monics for all seven cellos leads into a fast *perpetuum mobile* for the solo cello, with jagged and irregular commentaries by the other six. A cadenza-like interlude is then followed by a final burst of energy, with all seven cellos rushing headlong to the finish!

– James Freeman

Adam's Lament

Like Górecki, Estonian-born Arvo Pärt (b. 1935) also reinvented his compositional style after making an early name for himself as an avant garde composer. His early compositions were fiercely atonal and serial, but he also experimented with aleatoric music, where he might indicate the range of pitches for a given voice but not specify discrete pitches, rhythms or durations, and collage music, in which he layered phrases of music from composers like Bach onto his own 12-tone music. The premiere of Pärt's 1968 *Credo*, a choral collage piece, caused something of an uproar. The use of the liturgical text had not been approved by the composers' union and the work was subsequently banned in the Soviet Union. He stopped receiving commissions and was forced to support himself by writing film scores. He retreated from composing for several years, devoting himself to an intensive study of Gregorian chant and medieval sacred music. He also joined the Russian Orthodox Church.



Pärt's musical was considerably altered when he returned to serious composition in the mid-1970's. He focused increasingly on choral music, much of it of a religious character and set either in Latin or in the Church Slavonic of the Orthodox liturgy. And he developed a technique that he calls *tintinnabuli*, little bells in Latin. It refers to the reinforcement of sound that consonant pitches in a triad make, a clean, perfect sound that reminds Pärt of bells. Pärt uses the technique to define the relationship between two musical voices or lines, which typically come in and out of consonance with each other. His scores are often spare, with just a few voices, and tend to stay within the key which defines that triad. He once wrote, "I have discovered that it is enough when a single note is beautifully played. This one note, or a silent beat, or a moment of silence, comforts me. I work with very few elements – with one voice, with two voices. I build with the most primitive materials – with the triad, with one specific tonality."

Adam's Lament, set for chorus and string orchestra, was a joint commission from the Istanbul and Tallin Capitals of Culture to celebrate a Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Istanbul Music Festival in 2010, where it received its premiere at the historic Hagia Eirene (Holy Peace) cathedral. Pärt was looking for theme that would speak to both the Christian and Islamic worlds, and chose the story of Adam, the father of all mankind. For Pärt, Adam is not just an archetype for humanity, but represents all individuals as well. He explained, "For me, the name Adam is a collective term not merely for the whole of humanity, but for each individual, regardless of time,

era, social class or religious affiliation. And this collective Adam has suffered and lamented on this earth for millennia. Our ancestor Adam foresaw the human tragedy that was to come and experienced it as his own guilty responsibility, the result of his sinful act. He suffered all the cataclysms of humanity into the depths of desperation, inconsolable in his agony.” And for a text, he returned to the writings of the remarkable St. Silouan.

St. Silouan (1866-1938) entered the Russian Orthodox Monastery of St. Panteleimon on Mt. Athos in Greece at the age of 27, after completing military service. He initially struggled with his vocation but eventually embraced a life of simplicity and asceticism. He developed a reputation for great humility, compassion and wisdom, and pilgrims flocked to the monastery for his spiritual guidance. His writings and discourses were collected by a disciple and fellow monk, edited and published, which gained him a wide following. Although he was not well-educated, there is a poetic beauty to his writing which can be quite compelling. Silouan was canonized in 1987.

The music of *Adam's Lament* is highly expressive, but largely dark and anguished, conveying the deep despair of Adam as reflected in Silouan's text, with the repeated refrain that he has become estranged from God's love. The score is much more complex than one might have expected. While the orchestration, set only for strings, is characteristically lean, there are sections with a thickly textured, divisi chorus, which lend the music an air of gravity and import. The music modulates through a number of keys, and makes extensive use of the Phrygian mode, the early chant mode that is most closely related to a minor key and very fitting for Adam's long and plaintive lament. Pärt meticulously uses effects like dissonance and polytonality (music set simultaneously in more than one key) to enhance the text. When Adam laments that he will be the father of peoples who live in enmity and seek to slay each other, the orchestra is at its most strident and dissonant, and the choral parts move through a progression of polytonal chords, a very graphic representation of the violence and divisions among men. In the last lines of the piece, Silouan breaks off the narrative and adds his own voice to Adam's impassioned plea for mercy. The prayer ends quietly, with another polytonal chord gradually resolving to a consonant one, but with the tonal ambiguity of an open fifth. It leaves the listener with the very human feeling of both hopefulness and uncertainty.

– Michael Moore

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