

*SHEPHERD SCHOOL
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA*

LARRY RACHLEFF, conductor

Friday, February 17, 1995

8:00 p.m.

Stude Concert Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

Oiseaux Exotiques

Olivier Messiaen
(1908-1992)

Daniel Velicer, piano solo

INTERMISSION

(10 minutes)

Symphony No. 7 in E Major

Anton Bruckner
(1824-1896)

Allegro moderato

Adagio. Sehr feierlich

und sehr langsam

Scherzo. Sehr Schnell

Finale. Bewegt, doch nicht schnell

edited by Leopold Nowak

In consideration of the performers and members of the audience, please check audible paging devices with the ushers and silence audible timepieces. The taking of photographs and use of recording equipment are prohibited.

SHEPHERD SCHOOL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Violin I

Tiffany Modell,
concertmaster
Rebecca Ansel
Rachel Tsuchitani
Eugenia Wie
Curt Thompson
Rachael Snow
Amy Sauers
Kim Fick
Sylvia Danburg
Gabrielle Stebbins
Steven Leung
Andrew Cheung
Courtney LeBauer
Joanna Winters
William Fedkenheuer
Rolanda Shine

Violin II

Jeanine Tiemeyer,
principal
Zachary Carrettin
Melissa Yeh
Jeffrey Issokson
Wendy Koons
Matthew Fuller
Lucian Lazar
Mona Rashad
Angela Marroy
Lise Nadon
Janice Chow
Mihaella Misner
Vanessa Cook
Claudia Harrison

Viola

Kelly Dylla,
principal
Adam Clarke
Krista Austin
Kristen Drake

Viola (cont.)

Sharon Neufeld
Ian Gravage
Alexis Bacon
Noemie Dharamraj
Dominic Johnson
Aaron Bielish
Jonah Sirota
Patrick Horn

Cello

Robin Creighton,
principal
Lisa Vosdoganes
Robert Howard
Jane Kang
Kari Jane Docter
Lisa McCormick
Benjamin Wolff
Nicholas Anton
Allison Braid
Martha Baldwin
David Jankowski
Scott Brady

Double Bass

Robert Stiles,
principal
Judith Yaldatel
Chris Windham
Christopher Simison
Joel Reist
David Murray
Sandor Ostlund
Eyal Ganor
Alain Malo
Charles DeRamus
Pamela Lopes

Flute

Julie Duncan
Susan Kerbs
Lisa Pulliam

Piccolo

Kris Guthrie

Oboe

Judy Christy
Rebecca Schweigert

Clarinet

Jacob DeVries
Nicholas Murphy
Xin-Yang Zhou

E-flat Clarinet

Nicholas Murphy

Bass Clarinet

Dawn Dale

Bassoon

William Hunker
Scott Phillips

Horn

Wade Butin
Kelly Daniels
Stephen Foster
Katherine Loesch
Jeffrey Rogers
George Warnock

Trumpet

George Chase
Dennis de Jong
Edward Martinez
John Urness

Trombone

Nathaniel Dickey
Don Immel
Carl Muller

Wagner Tuba

Kelly Daniels

Wagner Tuba (cont.)

Tricia Giesbrecht
Dietrich Hemann
Rebecca Novak

Tuba

Mark Barnette

Piano

Daniel Velicer

Timpani and Percussion

Julie Angelis
Nathan Davis
Matthew Gold
Joanna Nelson
Frank Ronneburg
Michael Sharkey
Deirdre Urano
Joel Woodson

Orchestra Manager

Martin Merritt

Orchestra Librarian

Ellen Rose

Library Assistants

Aaron Bielish
Sharon Neufeld
Rebecca Novak
Robert Rohwer
Anne Schlossmacher
Lisa Waters

Stage Assistants

Mark Barnette
Nathaniel Dickey
Edward Martinez
Michael Sundell
Joel Reist
Chris Windham

WINDS, BRASS, AND PERCUSSION LISTED ALPHABETICALLY.

STRING SEATING CHANGES WITH EACH CONCERT.

PROGRAM NOTES

Oiseaux Exotiques Olivier Messiaen

French avant-garde composer Olivier Messiaen developed his own unique musical language. Drawing elements from such diverse sources as the ancient Greeks, Mozart, Chopin, Debussy, Dukas, Stravinsky, and the musical systems of India, Japan, and Indonesia, he synthesized a wide variety of musical styles from all eras of music history and different areas of the world. Born in Avignon on December 10, 1908, he became a professor at the Paris Conservatory in 1942. There his pupils included Karlheinz Stockhausen and Pierre Boulez (who would later commission *Oiseaux Exotiques*). Messiaen also worked as principal organist at La Trinité in Paris for over 40 years, and he composed many pieces for the organ. Messiaen was a devout Catholic and looked to his religion for musical inspiration. He once said, "The first idea that I have wanted to express... is the existence of the truths of the Catholic faith.... That is the first aspect of my work, the most noble, doubtless the most useful, the most valuable, the only one, perhaps, that I will not regret at the hour of my death."

Messiaen was fascinated with birdsong. Although many composers throughout the history of Western art music have made isolated efforts to represent birdsong in their music (Jannequin, Handel, Vivaldi, and Beethoven are a few examples), no composer used birdsong as often and as precisely as did Messiaen. His devout Catholicism and his love of birds (he was an excellent amateur ornithologist) led him to choose birdsong to express God in his music. He collected many of his birdsongs in the field using nothing but a pen and paper; he transcribed others from recordings. Beginning with the organ piece *La Nativité du Seigneur* (1935), Messiaen used birdsong in many different kinds of compositions.

Oiseaux Exotiques (1955-56), or *Exotic Birds*, is the second of a trilogy of pieces using only birdsong for melodic material, and includes *Réveil des oiseaux* (1953) and *Catalogue d'oiseaux* (1956-58). *Oiseaux Exotiques* lasts approximately fourteen minutes and is scored for piano solo with winds and percussion without strings. The piano and winds play birdsongs from India, China, Malaysia, and North and South America, while the percussion plays Hindu and Greek rhythms. The songs of 47 different birds are indicated in the score, including such common types as the Cardinal and American Robin and such rarities as the North American Red-eyed Vireo and the White-crested Laughing Thrush from the Indian Himalayas. Structurally, Messiaen juxtaposes six tutti sections involving the songs of various birds with five piano solo sections, each section focusing on the songs of one, two, or three birds. In the score Messiaen indicates specific instructions for the arrangement of the orchestra on the stage. The piano, B-flat clarinets, and xylophone are located at the front, as they have the most prominent roles. In all, nineteen performers are used: piccolo, flute, oboe, E-flat clarinet, two B-flat clarinets, bass clarinet, bassoon, two horns, trumpet, glockenspiel, xylophone, piano solo, three temple blocks, wood block, bass drum, three gongs, and tam-tam. Messiaen dedicated *Oiseaux Exotiques* to his wife, Yvonne Loriod, who performed the piano solo at the premiere on March 10, 1956, in Paris.

Symphony No. 7 in E Major Anton Bruckner

"Also characteristic of Bruckner's newest symphony is the immediate juxtaposition of dry schoolroom counterpoint with unbounded exaltation. Thus, tossed about between intoxication and desolation, we arrive at no definite impression and enjoy no artistic pleasure. Everything flows, without clarity and without order, willy-nilly into dismal long-windedness It is not out of the question that the future belongs to this muddled hangover style — which is no reason to regard the future with envy."

Thus wrote the critic Eduard Hanslick upon hearing the Viennese premiere of Bruckner's eighth symphony. Thankfully this was another misjudgment on the part of Mr. Hanslick; as in the case of Wagner, against whom Hanslick argued vehemently, Bruckner's music has survived and is today an important part of the symphonic repertory. In any event, contemporary as well as nineteenth-century audiences often misunderstand Bruckner. Despite frequent performances, his language remains foreign to many listeners.

Bruckner's often discussed lack of self-confidence was part of a somewhat unusual life that was filled with many contradictions. He was born the son of a schoolmaster in rural Austria in 1824, yet he became an important figure in Viennese musical culture. While he turned to Catholicism for musical inspiration, he was unable to find personal fulfillment. Although he frequently fell in love with women much younger than he (many in their teens), none of the women to whom he proposed would consent to marriage. He suffered from frequent depression and even a nervous breakdown in 1867. Although a brilliant professional organist, he chose to focus on composing symphonic music for an extremely unsympathetic Viennese public. And although he eventually became professor of harmony and counterpoint at the Vienna Conservatory and organist at the Viennese Imperial Chapel, Bruckner encountered enormous difficulty in having his symphonies performed by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. Bruckner was often unsure of himself as a person and a composer. In order to ensure performances, he often accepted absurd suggestions from conductors who wished to reorchestrate or cut large sections of his symphonies.

Bruckner's symphonies taken as a whole exhibit a stylistic unity without parallel in any other composer's symphonic output. All are lengthy elaborations of the traditional four movement Viennese symphony, extending from Haydn and Mozart to Beethoven and Schubert. Bruckner's point of departure (as was Wagner's) was Beethoven's **Choral Symphony** (1822-24). From this piece Bruckner adapted the enormous length as well as certain orchestral textures, most notably the opening — a quiet theme of strong rhythmic and motivic character rising out of pianissimo tremolo. Bruckner's music frequently uses slow-moving harmonic rhythm. Frequently one chord or pedal point will continue for thirty-two or even sixty-four measures. Bruckner favors a homorhythmic texture with sustained sounds in the full orchestra, a technique learned from playing the organ. Indeed, Bruckner's use of the orchestra often reminds the listener of an organist playing as he pulls out various stops of strings, woodwinds, and brass at different times. Deryck Cooke has commented that "Experiencing Bruckner's symphonic music is more like walking around a cathedral, and taking in each aspect of it, than like setting out on a journey to some hoped-for goal."

Bruckner's **Symphony No. 7** dates from 1881-83, and is contemporary with Brahms' **Symphony No. 3** (1883), R. Strauss' **Horn Concerto in E-flat** (1882-83), and Chabrier's **España** (1883). The first movement is a large sonata form design marked by its unusually long and vocal melodies. Bruckner declared that he heard

the opening melody containing a quote from the Credo of his **Mass in D minor** (1864), played on the viola in a dream. In all, three theme groups are heard; the first two are lyrical while the third is more rhythmic in nature. The development section works with the inversion of the first theme in a wide variety of keys. The recapitulation comes only after hearing several false recapitulations of the first theme in 'wrong' keys. The second movement is perhaps the most admired of all of Bruckner's music. Written with the knowledge that Richard Wagner, Bruckner's musical idol, was near death, the movement pays 'the master' tribute by using a quartet of 'Wagner tubas.' This was the first time a composer other than Wagner had employed these instruments. Bruckner uses the Wagner tubas, invented by Wagner for the orchestration of **Das Rheingold** (1853-54), in the second and fourth movements. The ponderous first theme of the second movement is played by the Wagner tubas and involves a quote from the non confundar in aeternam of Bruckner's **Te Deum** (1881). This is contrasted with a nostalgic second theme in the strings. The news of Wagner's death arrived just after Bruckner wrote the emotional climax of the movement. The music of the adagio is strong and convincing; it is among Bruckner's best. The third movement is a lengthy scherzo and trio. The theme of the scherzo involves a rhythmic bass figure under a trumpet call said to resemble a cock's crow remembered from Bruckner's rural childhood. The trio involves the symphony's most relaxed music. The Finale is another sonata form movement with three theme groups. The first theme is a highly rhythmicized version of the first theme of the first movement. The second is a hymn-like melody with cello/bass pizzicato accompaniment. The third is another of strong rhythmic nature, this time with full orchestra in unison. The recapitulation begins with the hymn-like second theme and leads to the coda where we hear the amalgamation of the first theme with the first theme from the first movement, this time in the brass. The **Symphony No. 7** has remained a part of the standard repertory since its premiere in 1884 and is today among the most frequently performed of Bruckner's compositions.

— Notes by John Urness

DANIEL VELICER is a native of East Lansing, Michigan, and graduated from Cornell University in 1992 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music Performance and Anthropology where he studied with Jonathan Shames. In addition to presenting numerous recitals, Mr. Velicer was a featured soloist with the Cornell Symphony. He is currently a student of Brian Connelly at The Shepherd School of Music where he is a recipient of the Bridget and Al Jensen and the Katie Walter Hubert Scholarships. This spring he will be the first student to graduate with a master's degree in the new Piano Chamber Music and Accompanying degree program, coordinated by Brian Connelly.

UPCOMING ORCHESTRA CONCERTS

Friday, March 24, at 8:00 p.m.

SHEPHERD SCHOOL

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Larry Rachleff, conductor

Program: Vaughan Williams **The Wasps: Overture**; Hindemith **Der Schwanendreher** (Bin Sun, soloist; Michael Hammond, conductor); and Brahms **Symphony No. 2**.
Stude Concert Hall, Free Admission

March 26, 28, 30, and April 1, 7:30 p.m.

SHEPHERD SCHOOL OPERA

and the SHEPHERD SCHOOL

CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

present Menotti's **The Medium**; and the premiere of Richard Lavenda's **Barricade**.
Wortham Opera Theatre

Admission: (general seating): \$10/\$7.
For advance tickets, call 527-4933.