

Hunt of the Sun and music for prominent choreographers. He has also composed and directed music for the gala opening of the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach. He gave his New York premiere as a harpsichordist at the prestigious Midtown Concerts early music series. In addition, he studied harpsichord and continuo playing with Gwendolyn Toth, and Baroque vocal technique and interpretation with Grant Herreid. He has coached and directed many works from the Baroque era, including *Orfeo* by Monteverdi, *Agrippina and Giulio Cesare* by Handel and the *Magnificat* of J. S. Bach.

THANK YOU

We are grateful to our colleagues: Dr. Elizabeth Lindau and Matt Garza for their superb page-turning, piano technician Sue Babcock, Colleen Ryan and the staff of DRH, Matt Pogue and Kate Gillon for program and inter-webs design.



THE BOB COLE CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC AT
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH AND THE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS PROUDLY PRESENT:



FACULTY ARTISTS RECITAL

ORPHEUS DUO

ALTHEA WAITES
MARK URANKER

PIANO

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2021
7:30PM

GERALD R. DANIEL RECITAL HALL
PLEASE SILENCE ALL ELECTRONIC MOBILE DEVICES.

PROGRAM

Le courlis cendré from *Catalogue d'oiseaux*..... Olivier Messiaen
(The Curlew from Catalogue of the Birds) (1908-1992)

Mark Uranker—piano

BRIEF INTERMISSION

Visions de l'Amen..... Olivier Messiaen
(Visions of the Amen)

- I. Amen of the Creation
- II. Amen of the Stars, and of the Planet with Rings
- III. Amen of the Agony of Jesus
- IV. Amen of Desire
- V. Amen of the Angels, Saints and Song of the Birds
- VI. Amen of the Judgment
- VII. Amen of the Consummation

Althea Waites & Mark Uranker—piano

We present this concert as a final act of generosity; the sharing of music, it seems to us, is a fundamental human activity. We hope this will inspire others to be more thoughtful and generous, and perhaps less cruel.

PROGRAM NOTES

CATALOGUE D'OISEAUX (Catalogue of the Birds) **Olivier Messiaen** composed the *Catalogue d'oiseaux* from 1956-58. It is his longest single work for piano, lasting over three and a half hours in its entirety. The Catalogue contains 13 pieces divided into 7 books. Messiaen describes and dedicates the work in the following way: "Bird songs from the provinces of France. Each soloist is presented in its habitat, surrounded by its natural landscape and the calls of other birds which live in the same region."

This work is dedicated twofold: to my avian models, and to the pianist Yvonne Loriod.

VI. Amen of the Judgment — Three notes frozen like the bell of evidence. In verity, I say to you, Amen. Accursed, get thee hence! (St. Matthew). An intentionally short and harsh piece.

VII. Amen of the Consummation — The life of the bodies in glory, in a carillon of light, the shining light that shineth more and more (Prophets). The Second Piano takes up the theme of Creation and makes of it a long chorale of glory. The first piano surrounds the second (in the very low and very high registers together with a ceaseless carillon of chords and brilliant, scintillating rhythms, in ever closer rhythmic canons; the entire rainbow of precious stones of the Apocalypse that ring, collide with, dance, color and perfume of the light of life."

—Olivier Messiaen

ABOUT ALTHEA WAITES Internationally acclaimed pianist **Althea Waites** has concertized extensively throughout the United States, Europe, Asia and South Africa as a soloist, chamber musician and collaborative artist. Praised by the *Los Angeles Times* for "superb technique and profound musicality", Ms. Waites has a distinguished history of championing music by American composers and has received several honors and commendations for her work. She holds degrees from Xavier University of Louisiana and the MM in piano from the Yale School of Music where she studied with Donald Currier.

Previous teaching positions and affiliations include CSU/Long Beach for the Cole Conservatory of Music and collaborative performances with pianist Mark Uranker as the Orpheus Duo. She is in demand for her work with many outreach programs and is committed to using music as a tool for peace and the elimination of racial and political division. She is a Yamaha artist and her recordings are now incorporated on her new label, Kuumba Music.

ABOUT MARK URANKER **Mark Uranker** enjoys a varied career as a pianist, harpsichordist, chamber musician, and composer. With pianist Althea Waites, he tours as the Orpheus Duo, a two-piano ensemble dedicated to performing standard works of the repertoire as well as championing new works. Premiering the works of many composers, he has performed at many venues including the Luckman Center for the Arts, California Institute of the Arts, the Palm Springs Bach Festival, and on KUSC.

Mr. Uranker has composed for both theater and dance: his works include incidental music for Moliere's *Bourgeois Gentleman*, Peter Shaffer's *Royal*

rotate violently. God called them, and they said: 'Amen, here we are!' (Baruch) The Second Piano exposes the theme of the Planets' dance. This theme begins with five notes which are the substance of the piece. First development: below the polymodal swirling of the First Piano, the Second alters the rhythm and changes in sudden leaps the compass of the first five notes of the theme. Second development: the opening fragment by elimination, in contrary and forward movement. A third development is superimposed: the First Piano has the fragment as a rhythmic pedal-point; the Second Piano has the fragment with changes of register. A varied recapitulation of the Planets' Dance follows. All these mixed movements evoke the life of planets and the wonderful rainbow which colors the ring turning around Saturn.

III. Amen of the Agony of Jesus — Jesus suffers and weeps: O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. (St. Matthew). He accepts, Thy will be done, Amen. The form is that of a Greek Triad: Strophe, Antistrophe, Epode. Strophe: Jesus is alone in the Garden of Gethsemane, face to face with his death agony. Three musical motifs: 1) the curse of the Father on the sins of the world which Jesus represents at this moment; 2) a cry! A rhythmic and expressive grouping: "anacrusis—accent— termination": 3) a heart-rending lament on four notes variously rhythmized. Antistrophe: the same music as the strophe, but more developed with the addition of low rhythmic pedal-points for the sonority of gongs and tam-tam. Epode: Recall of the theme of Creation (the sufferings of Christ bring forgiveness and create men anew). A long silence, broken by some pulsations, evokes the suffering of this hour: an unspeakable suffering physically expressed by sweat and blood.

IV. Amen of Desire — There are two themes of desire. The first, slow, ecstatic and yearning with deep tenderness: already the peaceful perfume of Paradise. The second is much more vehement: here the soul is drawn by a terrible love that attains the paroxysm of thirst. These two sentiments alternate, in the coda, the two principal voices seem to merge into each other, and nothing remains but the harmonious silence of Heaven...

V. Amen of the Angels, Saints and Song of the Birds — Song of the purity of the saints: Amen, the exultant vocalise of birds: Amen. The angels fell before the throne on their faces: Amen (Revelation). First the song of the Angels and Saints: stripped of inessentials and very pure: then a middle section based on birdsong, giving rise to more brilliant keyboard writing. Some of the best songsters: the songs of the Blackbird, Finch, and Blackcap are stylized, idealized and mingled with the thousand voices of nature in a turbulent yet smiling mixture. Varied recapitulation of the song of Angels and Saints, with a non-versible rhythmic canon arranged on three planes. A short coda based on the birdsong.

LE COURLIS CENDRÉ (The Curlew) From the Mediterranean to the Atlantic and from light to darkness, the final movement takes us to perhaps the supreme achievement of the *Catalogue*, and certainly its most striking. The setting is the extremity of France, the western tip of Brittany, with the desolation of the shoreline and the seascape conveyed as much as anything by the gaunt yet eloquent solo of the curlew. This is in three parts: first, oscillations over wide-spaced minor triads, then upward chromatic runs which culminate in fierce trills. As these dissolve, the final utterance brings a synthesis of the first two, with repeated ascending glissando swelling and fading over another minor harmony. This tendency of ideas towards concentrating or simplifying governs the rest of the piece.

A wild tumult ensues with the cries of seabirds, piercing or melancholy, hovering in the resonance of the surf. These give way to the eddying of the water, a twelve-note passage which itself begins to condense (as its pitches become more repetitious), ultimately forming huge chords (the descent of fog). Finally the entire passage is encapsulated in a single gesture, the monstrous blast of the fog horn. In the almost palpable darkness, the music seems to step beyond reality, in fragments of birdsong which end with a tiny "souvenir," the redshank—"flute-like"—in slow motion. In the void the music recalls the curlew, but only in its final simplified version, and as we pass beyond the end of France, Messiaen's beloved birds fall silent and we are left only with the muted splash of surf.

—Peter Hill

VISIONS DE L'AMEN (Visions of the Amen) This monumental work for two pianos was premiered in 1943 with Yvonne Loriod performing with the composer. Loriod studied with Messiaen, and he dedicated the piece to her as a tribute to her talent and profound musical and technical gifts. The music is prefaced with the following note by the composer:

"Amen, word of Genesis that is the Apocalypse of the beginning.

Amen, word of the Apocalypse that is the Genesis of the consummation.

'Amen' has four different meanings: Amen, so be it. The creative act.

Amen, I submit, I accept. Your will be done.

Amen, the hope, the desire to be one with You.

Amen, that which is. That which is fixed forever, consummated in Paradise.

I have tried to explain these various meanings of Amen in these seven musical visions."

I. Amen of the Creation — And God said "Let there be light!" The "theme of creation" arises from the dark depths, steady, solemn and hymn-like. As the daylight gradually swells and expands, bell-like chords ring ever louder, glistening like precious stones turned in the sunlight.

II. Amen of the Stars, and of the Planet with Rings — A savage and brutal dance. The stars, suns, and Saturn, the planet with its multicoloured ring