

The Cambridge Festival

Concert of Music by Yvonne Loriod and Olivier Messiaen

Robinson College, Cambridge

1 April 2023 at 4pm

pre-concert talk by Christopher Brent Murray and Peter Asimov at 3pm

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Grains de cendre (1946)
(U.K. premiere)

Yvonne Loriod (1924–2010)

Margaux Pogue, *soprano*
Kevin Plante, *ondes Martenot*
Robin Le Bervet, *piano*

Harawi: chants d'amour et de la mort (1945)

Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992)

Hannah Dienes-Williams, *soprano*
Gregory May, *piano*

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This event is a partnership between the University of Cambridge and the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse de Paris.

We thank the Fondation Olivier Messiaen, the Conservatoire de Paris, the Leverhulme Trust, the Faculty of Music, the Cambridge Festival, and the Warden and Fellows of Robinson College for making this event possible.

Further thanks are due to Malcolm Ball for loan of the ondes Martenot, and to Jeremy Thurlow, Delphine Mordey, and Arthur Macé for organisational support.

Grains de cendre, by Yvonne Loriod (1946)

- I. Surrealist wordplay on the words 'aile' (wing) and 'ciel' (sky) – important words drawn from moments in Messiaen's *Harawi*.
- II. Longing for the loved one, featuring a play of possessive pronouns, 'my mine', 'my yours'. More surrealism: 'you are born of my powder'.
- III. Despairing images on the impossibility of the union. 'You are where I have no entry'; 'the path disappears when you approach'; 'my only ticket is for death'.
- IV. A 'naïve' fantasy, in childlike grammar: 'You, there. Me, there. That's all'.
- V. More surrealist imagery, playing with the images of a mountain ('mont'), a spring [of water] ('source'), a poppy seed ('pavot'), and the sky ('ciel').
- VI. The singer spells out the phrase 'Je t'aime' (I love you) letter by letter, including the apostrophe.
- VII. The singer addresses the 'beloved': 'when we become one, will we only need one cloak? One sandal? One fruit? Yes.'
- VIII. The longest and most elaborate song, it begins with musical wordplay, assigning characters to syllables of solfège (*ré, mi, fa, sol*, etc.). Then, the singer effuses on the words sky ('ciel') and circle ('cercle'), addressing her love and recalling some of the thematic motifs from earlier in the cycle.

Harawi: chants d'amour et de la mort, by Olivier Messiaen (1945)

- I. **La ville qui dormait, toi.** The lovers lie on a flowery bank; deep at midnight, the town sleeps, you.
- II. **Bonjour toi, colombe verte.** [He sings:] Good morning green dove, you of flower, of heaven, of water.
- III. **Montagnes.** The rugged mountain peaks of the Andes: violet-red, black on black.
- IV. **Doundou tchil.** He performs a vigorous courtship dance; his ankle-bells jingle, *doundou tchil*.
- V. **L'amour de Piroutcha.** Piroutcha sings to her lover: rock your little one in your green arms. [He replies:] cut off my head. Our breaths, blue and gold. Love, death.
- VI. **Répétition planétaire.** Planets turn and swirl in a dark chaotic universe: vortex, black echo of time.
- VII. **Adieu.** Farewell green dove, you of night, of fruit, of day. Two-voiced love potion, shared shadow. Farewell, mirror without breath of love, forever.
- VIII. **Syllabes.** Dancing out grief for the lost beloved. The double violet will redouble, far, low.
- IX. **L'escalier redit, gestes du soleil.** Stairway retold, sun gestures, water, time, heaven, my fruit, share of darkness.
- X. **Amour oiseau d'étoile.** Star-bird, your singing eye, towards the stars, your head falling under the sky.
- XI. **Katchikatchi les étoiles.** Grasshopper, make the stars dance, the atoms, ants, arrows, twofold silence.
- XII. **Dans le noir.** In the dark, green dove, limpid pearl. Very far, very low, the town sleeps...

Biographies

Soprano **Margaux Poguet** is completing her Masters in voice studies at the Paris Conservatoire, in the class of Yves Sotin. She began studies in music (bassoon) and theatre at the Conservatoire of Bourges. Before entering the Paris Conservatoire, she also pursued a research Masters in philosophy and studied at the Jeune chœur de Paris.

These diverse backgrounds contribute to Margaux's artistic versatility, ranging from French Baroque opera to contemporary premieres, with a particular affinity for Mozart (*Vittelia**, *Fiordiligi**, *Comtessa*), as well as German and Russian repertoire. This season, she is participating in the project 'Return to Versailles' (directed by Emmanuelle Haïm), Mahler's Fourth Symphony, and Berlioz's *Nuits d'été* with the orchestra of Conservatoire laureates. Committed to contemporary music and techniques, she collaborates regularly with young composers and has also taken initiation courses in ondes Martenot with Nathalie Forget at the Paris Conservatoire. Most recently, she has participated in the Opéramorphose project at the Rennes Opera, a laboratory of thought considering questions of opera for all.

Margaux is a prizewinner of the concours Raymond Duffaut at the Avignon Opera, of the concours Gaston Litaize, the Fondation Royaumont, and the Ravel Academy of Saint-Jean de Luz. At the Ravel Academy in 2022, she premiered the first- and second-prizewinning compositions. Margaux has been the beneficiary of support from the Fondation Lions Club of France, and the Fondation Meyer.

Pianist and vocal conductor **Robin Le Bervet** began music at the age of 6 in Brittany. He trained in Pontivy, Rennes and Lille before specialising at the CNSMD in Paris in voice direction in the class of Erika Guiomar and in vocal accompaniment in the class of Anne Le Bozec and Emmanuel Olivier. In September 2023 he will join the academy of the Opéra National de Paris.

Passionate about vocal music, Robin has always enjoyed accompanying singers. He works regularly at the Opéra de Rennes, at the Opéra de Lille, and at the Linière(s) festival for open air operas, and is involved in several productions as a conductor. In 2019, he performed in a piano-vocal version of Poulenc's *La Voix Humaine* with soprano Roxane Chalard, directed by Julien Ostini at the Eden Palace (Bretagne), and shared the stage with talented young singers such as tenor Jean Miannay, baritone Timothée Varon, soprano Marie Perbost and soprano Clarisse Dalles. In spring 2020, following the lockdown, he co-created the company Lyrisme de Rue.

Interested in teaching, Robin has taught in several conservatories. In 2021, he went to New Delhi to coach the singers of the Neemrana Music Foundation, and since 2021 he has been working as a substitute vocal coach at the Paris Conservatoire. In 2022, he will accompany Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti* at the piano in a production by Jean Lacornerie at the Paris Conservatoire, and he will actively participate in the creation of *Dis-moi tes amours!*, the new show by Lyrisme de rue directed by Katja Krüger and supported by the Opéra de Rennes. He is supported by the Nguyen Thien DAO Foundation and the Royaumont Foundation.

Performer and arranger **Kevin Plante** began study at the Paris Conservatoire in 2017, and currently studies harmony, Renaissance polyphony, twentieth-century analysis and orchestration. A musician with expansive interests, he works as an arranger at the Hall de la Chanson, where he works closely with actors to arrange French vocal repertoire for diverse

ensembles (Big Band, traditional Egyptian ensemble, Paris Chamber Orchestra...). Following a pivotal encounter in 2020, Kevin has chosen to pursue Ondes Martenot as a student of Nathalie Forget at the Paris Conservatoire.

Hannah Dienes-Williams is a 21-year-old soprano in her third year at Clare College, Cambridge, where she studies Music and holds a choral scholarship. Hannah is in demand as a soloist around Cambridge, and is at home with a wide breadth of repertoire. She began singing as a chorister at Guildford Cathedral, during which time she was a finalist in the BBC Young Chorister of the Year competition, a soloist on a DECCA premiere recording of Rebecca Dale's music, and a soprano soloist in two premieres of choral and orchestral works by Harold Darke, released by Regent Records. As a Cambridge choral scholar, Hannah has toured the UK, Iceland, Denmark, and the Netherlands and has been a soloist on recordings and live broadcasts. Since starting at Cambridge, Hannah has been selected in both her first and second years for the Pembroke Lieder Scheme which provides coaching on Art Song from Joseph Middleton. She was also awarded second prize in the Cambridge-wide Clare Song Competition in 2021, and received the highest mark throughout the Music Tripos in her first year performance exam. Hannah has enjoyed operatic opportunities in Cambridge, having performed the roles of 'Susanna' (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), 'Mezzo-Soprano' (*Denis and Katya*), 'Almirena' in a recording project of *Rinaldo*, 'Adele' (*Die Fledermaus*), 'Ino' (*Semele*), 'Dido' (*Dido and Aeneas*), 'Pamina' (*The Magic Flute*), 'Mrs P' (*The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat*), and 'La Fée' (*Cendrillon*), as well as 'Galatea' in *Acis and Galatea*, with Godalming Choral Society. Recent masterclasses include sessions with Nicky Spence, Nick Mulroy, Mark Padmore, Lucy Crowe, Mark leBrocq and John Graham-Hall. She has sung soprano solos in Respighi's *Il Tramonto* with Concordia Cambridge, Bach's *St John Passion* with Cavatina Orchestra, Handel's *Messiah* with London Baroque Ensemble, Mahler's *Fourth Symphony* with Cavatina Orchestra at St John's Smith Square, Britten's *Les Illuminations* as winner of the Clare College Concerto Competition, and *The Blue Hour* by various female composers with Cambridge Orchestra. She is passionate about performing modern works by marginalised composers and promoting accessibility for classical music. Hannah is grateful to Gary Coward, Ann De Renais and Robert Rice for their teaching.

Gregory May is a 21-year-old pianist and composer. He is currently studying piano privately with Rolf Hind, having previously studied with Fiona Harris at the Junior Department of the Royal Academy of Music. He enjoys regular engagements both as an accompanist, recitalist and soloist, showcasing a diverse repertoire. As a soloist he has performed concertos by Mozart, Beethoven, Saint-Saëns, and Shostakovich, and has a keen interest in twentieth- and twenty-first-century repertoire as both a recitalist and accompanist. Greg is also a composer, studying with Christian Mason, and was a winner in the 2020 BBC Young Composer Competition. His music has been recorded by, amongst others, the BBC Concert Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, and the Choirs of Clare College Cambridge and Guildford Cathedral.