

2007-08



**Esa Tapani,  
horn**

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Wednesday, February 27, 2008  
Cohen Family Studio Theater  
6:30 p.m.

## PROGRAM

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|---|----------------------------------|
| Appel Interstellaire (1974)             | Olivier Messiaen<br>(1908-1992)  |
| Sonata 1974 (" <i>Baumann Sonata</i> ") | Vitaly Buyanovsky<br>(1928-1993) |
| Aria (1979)                             | Eero Hämeenniemi<br>(b. 1951)    |
| Study for horn and tape (1979)          | Jan Segers<br>(b. 1929)          |
| Horn Lokk (1972)                        | Sigurd Berge<br>(1929-2002)      |
| Concert Etude                           | Esa-Pekka Salonen<br>(b. 1958)   |

**Guest Artist Series**

## PROGRAM NOTES

Oliver Messiaen's *Des canyons aux étoiles...* (*From the Canyons to the Stars*) was commissioned by Alice Tully for the Lincoln Center. The piece is 1.5 hours long and its 6th movement is a horn solo. "Appel interstellaire" (Interstellar Call) Part II opens with a horn solo that symbolizes both humanity's suffering and redemption. Messiaen is referring to two texts, one from the Psalms: "He (God) heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds. He determines the number of the stars and gives to all of them their names." The other is from the Book of Job: "O earth, cover not my blood, and let my cry find no resting place." This is one of the most impressive pieces ever written for horn solo.

Vitaly Buanovsky was a Russian horn player and played his career in St. Petersburg Philharmonic. He has composed many pieces for his instrument, especially for horn alone. His composing style is naive and romantic, but he handles the instrument with extraordinary virtuosity. This *Sonata* from year 1974 is written for another famous horn virtuoso, Hermann Baumann.

Eero Hameenniemi wrote his *Aria* at his summer house during a weekend he spent together with his friend Esa-Pekka Salonen (music director of L.A. Philharmonic). As Hameenniemi stated: "I was all the time asking, can you play this, can you play this? Sure, said E-P, but finally it became so difficult that Esa-Pekka never performed it." I doubt that the piece was too difficult for Salonen who was an excellent hornist. He was simply leaving the instrument at the time for other activities.

Jan Segers worked for Belgium Radio as a producer. His *Study for horn and tape* today sounds charmingly old fashioned, but at his time Segers won many prizes for his compositions.

Friendship between composer Sigurd Berge and horn virtuoso Froydis Ree Wekre resulted in many works for horn. *Horn Call* is one of the most popular works in horn literature. Its Scandinavian romantic sound suits the instrument very well.

Esa-Pekka Salonen writes about his *Concert Etude*: "I will never forget my first French horn lesson with Holger Fransman. For an eleven-year old boy the great Finnish musician and teacher was an awesome sight: an impressive moustache and fiery eyes. He used to call me Mr. Salonen despite my age, and only after I could play to the top c with some accuracy did he suggest we start addressing each other by first names.

I spent hours every day with the Waldhornschnule by Oscar Franz, starting from triads for the natural horn, and gradually moving on to chromatic scales using the valves. The very last section of the Waldhornschnule contained hair-raisingly difficult "real" compositions called "Konzert-Etuden". The title really whetted my appetite, and I kept practicing these little pieces feverishly, hoping that one day I would be a great horn player, worthy of my teacher.

Life took a different turn later, and I became a conductor and a composer instead. I never lost contact with Holger, however, and he never missed my concerts in Helsinki. There would be a phone call the morning after always, and Holger's creaky voice would deliver often quite a harsh view of what he had heard. Always to the point, I now have to admit.

I saw him for the last time on his deathbed in a hospital in Helsinki. When I entered the room he was listening to 'Ein Heldenleben' from his portable CD-player. His eyes were closed, but he knew I was there. Finally he spoke: 'Why, it is the Vienna Philharmonic and yet the timpani is too sharp!' We spoke a bit later about this and that, but these are his last words I can remember. When I was asked to write a piece for solo horn for the Holger Fransman Memorial Competition, I agreed right away. I decided to write my own Concert Etude, and thus create a little homage to my teacher, who in fact was like a grandfather to me.

In this piece I treat the horn as a virtuoso instrument, capable of acrobatics as well as the idiomatic melodic expression. In a way, I wrote the piece for the great horn player I never became."

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