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Concert: Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra

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Jeffery Meyer

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ITHACA COLLEGE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Jeffery Meyer, conductor

Ford Hall
Saturday, October 3, 2009
8:15 p.m.
PROGRAM

Jeu de timbres

Ma Mère L'Oye, 5 pièces enfantines
Mother Goose, Suite in 5 movements

1. Pavane de la Belle au bois dormant
   (Sleeping Beauty's Pavan)
2. Petit Poucet (Tom Thumb)
3. Laideronette, Impératrice des Pagodes
   (Empress of the Pagodas)
4. Les entretiens de la Belle et la Bête
   (Conversations of Beauty and the Beast)
5. Le jardin féerique
   (The Fairy Garden)

INTERMISSION

Symphonie Fantastique
(Épisode in the Life of an Artist), Op.14

1. Rêveries (Passions)
2. Un Bal (A Ball)
3. Scène aux champs (Scene in the Fields)
4. Marche au Supplice (March to the Scaffold)
5. Songe d'une nuit de Sabbat (Dreams of a Witch's Sabbath)

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PROGRAM NOTES

Je de timbres

Steven Stucky, whose Second Concerto for Orchestra won the 2005 Pulitzer Prize, was born on November 7, 1949, in Hutchinson, Kansas, and was raised in Kansas and Texas. He studied at Baylor and Cornell Universities with Richard Willis, Robert Palmer, Karel Husa, and Burrill Phillips. In recent years, Mr. Stucky’s compositions have been performed by the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Boston Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Dallas Symphony, Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony, New World Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and others.

Stucky writes about Je de timbres:

According to one rule of thumb for categorizing 20th-Century music, works that emphasize thematic development and counterpoint are “German”, while those that emphasize color, atmosphere and the beauty of individual harmonies are “French”. Look at it closely enough, of course, and such a simplistic dichotomy fails right away – just think of the thematic development in Debussy, or the harmonic sorcery in Schoenberg or even (on a good day) Hindemith – but still it has its uses. If by “French” we mean music that follows Debussy’s example in prizing the rich harmonic sonority or the delicate instrumental effect for its own sake (as opposed to valuing it mostly for its logical function in the musical grammar), then I am happily a composer of “French” music. Among my household gods are not only Debussy but also several other composers for whom sonority and color are not cosmetic frills but fundamental building blocks, including Stravinsky, Ravel, Varèse, Messiaen, and Lutoslawski.

In its four-minute span, Je de timbres spends most of its energy on rhythmic verve and luminous orchestral colors. There are two themes, to be sure, but the first of them, a descending line of splashy chords, is mainly about its own splashiness, and even the second, though it is an honest-to-goodness lyrical melody in the strings, would make a poor candidate for a symphonic working-out of the Beethoven or Mahler sort. The title (play, or game, of musical colors) both alludes to these Gallic tendencies in general and makes a small, specific inside joke: je de timbres is the French name for the orchestra bells or glockenspiel, an instrument that makes an occasional appearance in this piece. There are other inside jokes, too, including two admiring glances at works by Ravel – one oblique, the other (at the end) quite direct.

Je de timbres was commissioned by the National Symphony Orchestra to serve as an encore during a festival of French music. They premiered it under Leonard Slatkin in 2004.
Ma Mère L'Oye, 5 pièces enfantines
Mother Goose, Suite in 5 movements

“Ravel...used to tell me marvelous stories. I would sit upon his lap and invariably he would begin ‘Once upon a time....’ And it was Laideronnette, Beauty and the Beast and, above all, the adventures of a poor mouse that he had made up for me.”

Mimi Godebski

Maurice Ravel was born in Ciboure, Basses-Pyrénées, March 7, 1875 and died in Paris, December 28, 1937. Ravel wrote Ma Mère L'Oye as a piano duet for Mimi and Jean Godebski, the children of Ravel’s best friends Ida and Cipa Godebski in 1908-1910. However, the music was too difficult for Mimi and Jean for public performance, so, at the first performance held in the Société de Music Independent on April 20, 1910, the work was performed by Milles Jeanne Lela and Genevieve During. The music itself is based on the fairy tales of Charles Prebuilt, Marie Catherine d'Aulnoy, and Jeanne Marie Le Prince de Beaumont.

The five movements include:

-Pavane de la Belle au Bois dormant (Sleeping Beauty's Pavan)
-Petit Poucet (Tom Thumb)
-Laideronnette Impératrice des Pagodes (Empress of the Pagodas)
-Les entretiens de la Belle et la Bête (Conversations of Beauty and the Beast)
-Le jardin féérique (The Fairy Garden)

In 1911, Ravel orchestrated Ma Mère L'Oye to become a suite in five movements. In 1912, Ravel added the Prelude and Danse du Rouet et scène and produced the longer and more involved version for the ballet. The premier was on January 29, 1912 at the Theater des Arts in Paris.

Symphonie Fantastique (Episode in the Life of an Artist), Op.14

Je vais donc quitter pour jamais
Mon doux pays, ma douce amie,
Loin d’eux je vais trainer ma vie
Dans les pleurs et dans les regrets
Fleuve dont j’ai vu l’eau limpide,
Pour réfléchir ses doux attraits,
Suspendre sa course rapide,
Je vais vous quitter pour jamais.

Forever, then, shall I forsake
Beloved home, beloved friend.
Far, far from them my life I’ll spend
In tears, with heart's regretful ache
O river, whose clear stream I've seen
Pause in its rapid course to make
A mirror for her lovely mien,
You, too, forever I forsake.

H. Berlioz
Hector Berlioz was born on December 11, 1803 at La Côte-André, Isère and died in March 8, 1869 at Paris. He was by most accounts the leading French musician of his age. Although Berlioz had deep classical roots, he explored a wild romantic style in his compositions, pushing compositional and orchestral boundaries to their limits. His symphonic music was deeply influenced by Beethoven. The *idée fixe* idea and much of the pastoral and programmatic elements in *Symphonie Fantastique* can be traced to Beethoven’s 6th Symphony. The first print of the score that has Berlioz’s program notes for *Symphonie Fantastique*, follows:

**Note**

The following program should be distributed to the audience whenever the Fantastic Symphony is executed dramatically and consequently followed by the monodrama *Lélio*, which finishes and completes the Episode from the Life of an Artist. In such case, the orchestra should be unseen, placed on the stage of a theater behind the lowered curtain.

If the symphony alone is performed in a concert, this arrangement is no longer essential; if necessary, one can even dispense with distributing the program, keeping only the titles of the five movements. The symphony by itself (in author hopes) can afford musical interest independent of dramatic purpose.

**Program of the Symphony**

A young musician of morbidly sensitive temperament and fiery imagination poisons himself with opium in a fit of lovesick despair. The dose of the narcotic, too weak to kill him, plunges him into a deep slumber accompanied by the strangest visions, during which his sensations, his emotions, his memories are transformed in his sick mind into musical thoughts and images. The loved one herself has become a melody to him, an idée fixe as it were, that he encounters and hears everywhere.

**Part I - Reveries, Passions**

He recalls first that soul-sickness, that vague desires, passions, those depressions, those groundless joys, that he experienced before he first saw his loved one; then the volcanic love that she suddenly inspired in him, his frenzied suffering, his jealous rages, his returns to tenderness, his religious consolations.

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1 This is the second part of the *Episode from the Life of an Artist.*
Part II - A Ball

He encounters the loved one at a dance in the midst of the tumult of a brilliant party.

Part III - Scene in the Country

One summer evening in the country, he hears two shepherds piping a ranz des vaches in dialogue; this pastoral duet, the scenery, the quiet rustling of the trees gently brushed by the wind, the hopes he has recently found some reason to entertain all concur in affording his heart an unaccustomed clam, and in giving a more cheerful color to his ideas. But she appears again, he feels a tightening in his heart, painful presentiments disturb him what if she were deceiving him? One of the shepherds takes up his simple tune again, the other no longer answers. The sun sets distant sound of thunder loneliness silence.

Part IV - March to the Scaffold

He dreams that he has killed his beloved, that he is condemned to death and led to the scaffold. The procession moves forward to the sounds of the march that is now somber and fierce, now brilliant and solemn, in which the muffled sound of heavy steps gives way without transition to the noisiest clamor. At the end, the idée fixe returns for a moment, like a last thought of love interrupted by the fatal blow.

Part V - Dream of a Witches’ Sabbath

He sees himself at the Sabbath, in the midst of a frightful troop of ghosts, sorcerers, monsters of every kind, come together for his funeral. Strange noises, groans, bursts of laughter, distant cries which other cries seem to answer. The beloved melody appears again, but it has lost its character of nobility and shyness; it is no more than a dance tune, mean, trivial, and grotesque: it is she, coming to join the sabbath. A roar of joy at her arrival. She takes part in the devilish orgy. Funeral knell, burlesque parody of the Dies irae, sabbath round-dance. The sabbath round and Dies irae combined.

Originally, Berlioz titled the work Episode from the Life of an Artist, subtitled Grand Fantastic Symphony in Five Movements. In 1858, he reversed the title with the subtitle, which became the complete heading to this day: Symphonie Fantastique, Première partie de l’Épisode de la vie d’un artiste, œuvre lyrique. The Symphonie Fantastique was first performed on December 5, 1830 at Conservatoire de Paris.
Born in Chicago, **Jeffery Meyer** (DMA, MM, SUNY Stony Brook; BM, Lawrence Conservatory) began his musical studies as a pianist, and shortly thereafter continued on to study composition and conducting. He is presently the director of orchestras at the Ithaca College School of Music, as well as the founder and artistic director of the St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic in St. Petersburg, Russia. In the 2008-09 season, he assumed the position of artistic director of the Water City Chamber Orchestra, which has quickly become Wisconsin’s most innovative and exciting chamber orchestra.

Called “one of the most interesting and creatively productive conductors working in St. Petersburg” by Sergei Slonimsky, in recent concert seasons, he has been seen conducting, performing as piano soloist and chamber musician, as well as conducting from the keyboard in the United States, Canada, Russia, and throughout Europe and Asia. In 2007, he made his Glinka Hall conducting debut in the final concert of the 43rd St. Petersburg “Musical Spring” International Festival, featuring works by three of St. Petersburg’s most prominent composers, and in 2009, he conducted the opening concert of the 14th International Musical Olympus Festival in St. Petersburg. He has appeared with ensembles such as the Milwaukee Symphony, Syracuse Symphony, Philippine Philharmonic, Cayuga Chamber Orchestra and the Orchestra Sinfonico “Haydn” di Bolzano e Trento. As a pianist, he performs frequently as part of the piano-percussion duo /Strike/, which will release their first album on Luminescence Records in 2010. He has been broadcast on CBC Newfoundland, has recorded and performed with the Philadelphia Virtuosi (Naxos), and has been heard as a soloist at the Aspen Festival. During the 2001-2002 academic year he lived and studied in Berlin and Leipzig as the recipient of a DAAD grant in music. He has been distinguished in several international competitions (2008 Cadaqués Conducting Competition, 2003 Vakhtang Jordania International Conducting Competition, 2003 Beethoven Sonata International Piano Competition) and was recently a prizewinner in the Tenth International “Antonio Pedrotti” Conducting Competition.

The director would like to thank the following faculty members for working with the musicians of the ICSO in sectional rehearsals during this rehearsal cycle: Nicholas DiEugenio, Heidi Hoffman, Frank Campos, and Alexander Shuhan.
ITHACA COLLEGE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Jeffery Meyer conductor

Violin I
Maeve O’Hara, concertmaster
Charlie Palys
Aimee Lillienstein
Bryn Digney
Misako Sakurai
Isaac Shimian
Kristin Bakkegard
Sadie Kenny
Robin Alfieri
Jason Calhoun
Gabriella Colkett
Madeleine Wething
Nadine Cohen
Derek Voigt
Heather Munch
Kate Goldstein

Violin II
Natalie Brandt*
Alyssa Jutting
Will Downey
Matteo Longhi
Samantha Hecht
Emily Frederick
Shena Griffith
Sarah Weber
Chris Sforza
Sarah Hoag
Jenna Trunk
Alexas Esposito
Jessica Chen
Margaret Dagon

Cello
Alison Rehn*
Tristan Rais-Sherman
Phil Abbott
Peter Volpert
David MacLeese
Katharine McShane
Brooks Griffith
Meredith Gennaro
Hannah Whitehead
Thillman Benham
Marta Kelleher
Daniel Frankhuizen
Chelsea Crawford

Bass
Jarrett Bastow*
Corey Stevens
John Romey
Benjamin Dows
Samuel Verneville
Matthew Minter
Casey Georgi
Sara Johnson
David Barton

Flute
Emily Wespiser*
Rebecca Copek
Amelia Baran

Piccolo
Rebecca Copek

Oboe
Jamie Davis*
Julia Perry
Justine Popik

Clarinet
Brianne Remaley*
Marcus Christian
Sarah Koop

Bassoon
Noah Wolfinger*
Meghan Kininger
Lauren Jurcynski
Judith Olson

Contrabassoon
Noah Wolfinger (Ravel)
Lauren Jurcynski (Stucky)

Horn
Tyler Ogilvie*
Maureen Preston, assistant
Elizabeth Teucke
Lori Roy
Laura Francesce

Trumpet
Ethan Urtz*
Brian Binder
L. J. Neal (Cornet)
Emily Waltz (Cornet)

Trombone
Mark Neville*
Ryan Kuehhas
Michael Nave

Tuba
Daniel Troiano*
Alfred Hadinger

Timpani
Andrew Boynton*

Percussion
Julia Ross*
Colleen Clark
Darren Lin
Beth Faulstick

Celeste
Shalini Gandhi

Piano
Matthew Holehan

Harp**
Barbara Dechario
Myra Kovary

Graduate Assistants
Jesse Livingston
Chun-Ming Chen

* principal
** guest artists