

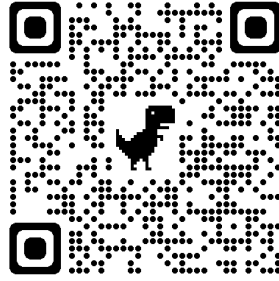
Divinity and the Cosmos

A genderqueer exploration of Messiaen's
Turangalila-Symphonie

Alison Norris, Conductor
featuring **David Karp**, ondes Martenot
and **Shuguang Gong**, piano



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MONDAY, MAY 13, 2024 | 7:30 PM
NEIDORFF-KARPATI HALL

Divinity and the Cosmos

A genderqueer exploration of Messiaen's *Turangalila-Symphonie*

Alison Norris, Conductor
featuring **David Karp**, ondes Martenot
and **Shuguang Gong**, piano

PROGRAM

TJ COLE
(b. 1993)

Nightscape (2015)

OLIVIER MESSIAEN
(1908–1992)

Turangalila-Symphonie (1948)

Introduction. Modéré, un peu vif

Turangalila I. Presque lent, rêveur

Chant d'amour II. Bien modéré

Jardin du sommeil d'amour (Garden of
Love's Sleep). *Très modéré, très tendre*

Joye du sang des étoiles (Joy of the Blood of
the Stars). *Vif, passionné avec joie*

COSMOS ORCHESTRA

Alison Norris, Conductor

David Karp, ondes Martenot

Shuguang Gong, piano

Adeline DeBella, film technician

Olivia Zhao, piano page turner

VIOLIN 1

Michael Ferri,*

concertmaster

Fara Gera d'Adda, Italy

Sandra Bouissou

Palo Alto, California

Corinne Au

Short Hills, New Jersey

Ian Mengzhe Zhao

Lanzhou, China

Arianna Behrendt

Redwood City, California

Eugene Liu

Clarksville, Maryland

Vanda Paszko*

Montreal, Canada

Dayeon Jang

Jeonju, South Korea

VIOLIN 2

Cecilia Martin, principal

Bexley, Ohio

Subin Valerie Choi

Vaughan, Canada

Licheng Chen

Bondi Junction, Australia

Faith Borkowski

Niskayuna, New York

Sonia Susi*

Saratoga Springs, New York

Natsuki Kojima*

Inagi, Japan

Oliver Costello

Denver, Colorado

VIOLA

Kunbo Xu, principal

Changsha, China

Charlie Kanne*

Austin, Minnesota

Jack Rittendale

New York, New York

Katya Eibozhenko

Moscow, Russia

CELLO

Clara Cho, principal

Ulsan, South Korea

Rahel Lulseged

Richardson, Texas

Jack Huang

Yilan City, Taiwan

Haeun Chung

Jinju, South Korea

August Schwob

Oak Park, Illinois

BASS

Sienna George, principal

New York, New York

Bakari Williams

Oak Cliff, Texas

Aiden Johnson

Dacula, Georgia

Tong Wu

Nanjing, China

FLUTE

Kyrese Washington

Raleigh, North Carolina

Lorien Britt

Fate, Texas

Jonah Murphy

Brooklyn, New York

OBOE

Rebecca Nelsen

Manorville, New York

Ellen Gruber

Cortlandt Manor, New York

Megan Strait

Greenwood, Indiana

CLARINET

Juhyun Lee

Seoul, South Korea

Gabe Henkin

Virginia Beach, Virginia

Emily Geoffroy

Portland, Oregon

BASSOON

Chaoyang Jing

Boston, Massachusetts

Nicholas Finch

New York, New York

Hunter Lorelli*

Washington, DC

Chanelle Junio

Honolulu, Hawaii

HORN

Keagan McCardell
Ellicott City, Maryland

Vera Romero
Austin Texas

Taylor Krause
Calgary, Canada

Ben Hommowun
St. Charles, Illinois

TRUMPET

Tiago Linck
Porto Alegre, Brazil

Nathan McKinstry
State College, Pennsylvania

Themba Pieterse
Albany, New York

Sam Atlas
Westport, Connecticut

Kyle Nix
Pontotoc, Mississippi

TROMBONE

Sterling Davis
Woodside, New York

Sarah Rathbun
Wellington, New Zealand

Leor Arbel
Katy, Texas

Logan Reid*
Oviedo, Florida

TUBA

Tanner Stegink
New York, New York

PERCUSSION

Hwane Pak
Columbia, Maryland

Sekou van Heusden
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Austin Cantrell
Charlotte, North Carolina

Drew Hoschar
Hudson, Ohio

Josh Conklin
Basking Ridge, New Jersey

CELESTE

Ossi Tanner
Helsinki, Finland

PROGRAM NOTES

Nightscape

TJ Cole

Nightscape is a short, orchestral meditation inspired by a night of stargazing in northern Michigan. As I watched the stars gradually emerge against the shifting night sky, I was deeply moved by the beauty of the cosmos, which evoked a mix of awe and fear. In *Nightscape*, there's a climactic moment reflecting a pivotal shift in focus from individual celestial objects to the entire night sky, portraying it as a vast, unified entity.

My creative process is heavily influenced by my experience with synesthesia, which blurs the boundaries between sensory experiences - especially between visuals and sound. Through shifting harmonies, textures, and tonalities, *Nightscape* serves as my way of creating a 'painting' of the night sky as a landscape.

—TJ Cole

Turangalîla-Symphonie

Olivier Messiaen

What can possibly be written about a piece of music said to contain everything? The incomprehensible workings of the gods played out across the backdrop of the universe, Messiaen's *Turangalîla-Symphonie* is an exceptional work of profound brilliance—written by a composer who saw the horrors of WWII firsthand and yet could not abandon the divine emotions of love and joy. Like many of the post-war composers of his time, Messiaen's harmonic language is marked by a stark shift away from the blissful, ignorant tonality of the generations before, and yet his turn from tonality was not a total plunge into the depths of human darkness he had witnessed; rather his atonality became an ascent towards the heavens. The word "turangalîla" is Messiaen's own invention, a combination of two sanskrit words: "turanga", evoking the flow of time, and "lîla", the agency of the gods, welding their power over creation and destruction. In the *Turangalîla-Symphonie* can be found the abstract expression of divine beings—the unfathomable cosmos as inexplicable yet calculated as the atomic and astrological science age soon to follow.

Written in 1946, the *Turangalîla-Symphonie* is one of Messiaen's largest and most ambitious works, featuring an incredibly demanding piano solo (Messiaen was a pianist himself) and one of the composer's favorite niche instruments, the elusive ondes Martenot. The piano often leads the percussion section in mechanical

material (in what feels like a very literal *deus ex machina*) while the orchestra provides a cosmic backdrop, occasionally relaying the capricious will of the gods. The lone ondes Martenot—standing completely apart from the timbre and established sound concept of the traditional orchestra, and at times rejoining in the hymns of the celestial strings or occasionally singing its own prayer—might be said to be the voice of humanity.

The piece begins with the Introduction: atonal harmonies and angular articulations create a backdrop for the play of the gods. The stoic brass promenade in the opening gives way to the machinery of the heavens: this movement is a peak into the unfolding, unfathomable divinity. The following movement forms around two contrasting strands of material: languid dialogue amongst a handful of instruments versus the heavy, impartial omnipotence of the entire orchestra. Each retort between chamber and tutti sections shifts the listener's perspective, and previous material twists and expands. The chamber orchestration of the *Turangalila I* movement carries through into the opening of the *Chant d'amour II*, or the love song. With the largest variety of motivic material, the *Chant d'amour II* begins with a bouncy woodwind duet—keen listeners might recognize this theme as a recharacterization of the brass chords heard in the first movement—before revealing the beautiful love melody, overwhelmed by the unusual timbre of the ondes Martenot. Woodwind and string each get to speak in their own voices: the former a soft chorus lead by gentle oboe, and the latter a handful of solo string players in tormented response. The movement culminates in the masterful combination of all four themes and even includes a statement of the statuesque chords from the low brass, before closing with one of Messiaen's few glimpses of tonality: shimmering piano like gossamer light from heaven.

The final two movements of this performance elaborate on love: first intimately with the *Jardin Du Sommeil D'Amour* and then joyously as in the *Joié Du Sang Des Etoiles*. The first of these, literally the "Garden of Love's Sleep", floats dreamlike and fluffy: the twittering birdsongs of the piano and swirling melodies of the woodwinds intertwine with the haze of strings. Loathe to be displaced—and only after much urging from the piano—the melody winds upwards before again drifting off. The fifth (and here, final) movement, the "Joy of the Blood of the Stars", is a joyous dance: an explosion of colorful instrumentation borrows again from the terrifying brass theme, reworking it into a brilliant jubilation. After an utter frenzy of orchestral exuberance we are once again treated to a long-awaited tonal resolution. The orchestra comes to a halt and cellos descend—broadening out the harmony like a golden celestial body bursting forth.

—Alison Norris

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Alison Norris, Conductor

Alison Norris is a current orchestral conducting student in the Professional Studies program at Manhattan School of Music, where they study under Maestro George Manahan. At MSM, Alison has served as a cover conductor and preparatory conductor for the MSM Symphony Orchestra, working alongside conductors such as Leonard Slatkin, Robert Kapilow, Daniela Candillari, and David Chan. Alison has also served as a conductor for the TACTUS Ensemble and the composition department, as well as serving as assistant conductor for the Undergraduate Opera Theater's production of Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*.

Before moving to New York, Alison served as cover conductor for the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra and the Madison Ballet. During their masters program at UW-Madison, Alison served as the conductor for both All-University Strings orchestras, conductor of the UWSMPH Medical Sciences Orchestra, and assistant conductor for the UW Symphony Orchestra.

Alison got their start in conducting in 2018 when they founded a wind ensemble as an undergraduate engineering student. Following their orchestral conducting debut with the Valparaiso University Symphony Orchestra, Alison was awarded an assistantship with the school upon graduation. Since then, Alison has conducted across China—from Beijing to Xi'an and Guangzhou—premiering to Chinese audiences Sky Macklay's *All About Alice* and the rediscovered Joseph Joachim violin concerto, *Hungarian Fantasy*, with violin soloist and esteemed musicologist Dr. Katharina Uhde.

Alison's primary conducting mentors include George Manahan, Oriol Sans, Kenneth Kiesler, and Dennis Friesen-Carper.

Shuguang Gong, piano

Shuguang Gong is a pianist from Shandong, China. He is currently working on his doctoral degree in piano performance with Professor Kevin Kenner at the Frost School of Music in Miami while working as a full-time teaching assistant. As a solo pianist, he has performed at the National Center for the Performing Arts, Beijing Concert Hall, and other major concert halls in China through winning competitions, including the Prime Golden Bell Music Award of China and Xinghai National Piano Competition. Since coming to the US, Gong has had solo recitals at the Knight Center for Music Innovation, Hamel Music Center, and other venues. As an avid chamber music performer, he has enjoyed collaborating with numerous instrumentalists and performing on many duo recitals.

Gong's past teachers include Professor Christopher Taylor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Dr. Lanlan Guo at the Beijing Normal University. He was the winner of the 2021 Mead Witter School of Music Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competition, Irving Shain Beethoven Competition, and Irving Shain Woodwind and Piano Duo Competition.

David Karp, ondes Martenot

David Karp is a composer and electro-acoustic engineer based in Queens. After a degree in Music Cognition from NYU Gallatin, Karp shifted gears and started designing special effects pedals. Karp's pedals have been used by artists spanning from the hard rock band Cleopatrck to the electro-acoustic composer Michelle Lou. At the same time, Karp continued to make music as half of the duo Arprei (formed in 2015), whose song cycle *Emergency Contact* was published in 2019. Also in 2019, Karp joined CuteLab in Gowanus, Brooklyn. There, Karp designs synth hardware, runs sound at shows, and ensures the snack shelf is always well-stocked.

Karp has performed on various instruments around New York, including with the choir Khorikos (playing synthesizer) and at the Juilliard school. Their focus is the ondes Martenot, an electronic instrument invented in 1930s France. Karp began to study the ondes Martenot in earnest in 2016, after acquiring a Japanese reconstruction co-built by a friend in the Radiohead cover band On A Saturday. Due to the instrument's niche nature, Karp has traveled to learn from professional ondes players around the world, including Takashi Harada, Cynthia Millar, and Genevieve Grenier. Karp has also written several works for the instrument, including *Sonatine Octatonique*, which ondist Tomomi Kubo recorded as part of her *Ondes Project*.

Miida Chu, Filmmaker (Introduction)

Miida Chu is a writer-director of trans experience in parallel universes. Her work often uses imaginative thought experiments to challenge assumptions about body and soul. Her short film *Eureka* won the prestigious Golden Reel Award at the 38th Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival, qualifying the film for consideration for the 2023 Academy Award. She was a finalist for the Warner Brothers 100 Short Film Initiative. She was a finalist for the WIF Director Fellowship. Her feature script *Sound of My Dreams* was a quarterfinalist for the Academy Nicholl Fellowships. Her feature script *Oblivion* was a semifinalist for the 2021 Outfest Screenwriting Lab. Miida holds a BA with high honors in philosophy from New York University and an MFA in directing from the American Film Institute. She was accepted to UCLA's PhD program in philosophy, but she's glad she didn't fall into that parallel universe. @miidachu miidachu.com

Alexia Catenazzo, Filmmaker (*Turangalila I*)

Alexia Catenazzo is a transsexual interdisciplinary artist and curator from Charlotte, North Carolina. Since graduating from University of North Carolina School of the Arts with a BFA in Filmmaking, her practice has strayed away from industrialized filmmaking and toward video art, poetry, and interdisciplinary collaborations. From 2018-2020 she lead the multimedia performance project *FRANKENSTEIN'S ASS* with a rotating cast of collaborators, in 2023 she co-curated an all-trans group show *The Thinning Veil at Eleventh Hour Art*, and in 2024 was featured in Kristine Snodgrass and Karla Van Vliet's *Glitchy Womyn* anthology. @catenazzo_images

Parker Wanamaker, Filmmaker (*Chant d'amour II*)

Parker Ivy Wanamaker is a trans filmmaker, poet, musician, and animator-based in Los Angeles, California. Inspired by the likes of Yoko Ono, Barbara Hammer, and Andy Warhol, she directs and produces experimental short films. Her films are created with a sense of ambiguity to allow the viewer to create their own interpretation of the material. This is based upon her work in free verse poetry.

On the musical side of things, she is inspired by the 1960s and 1970s singer/songwriter, spoken word, and sound collage music—sometimes dabbling with synth music made famous during the Progressive Rock movement of the 1970s.

Animation wise, Parker utilizes the experimental method of “Cameraless Animation,” translated into the digital medium. Using this method allows for a chaotic viewing that creates a gestalt feeling and sense of ambiguity.

Parker strives for inclusivity in the film industry, hoping to help tell and amplify the voices of women, trans, and non-binary people. @parker.wanamaker linktr.ee/parkerwanamaker

Kira Manwaring, Filmmaker (*Jardin Du Sommeil D'Amour*)

Kira Manwaring is a self-taught digital artist with a practice that incorporates generative, audio reactive, and live spatial elements. Her performative approach to code-based visual art is informed by her history with improvisational music, including with her current band, The Premise. Like writing a song as a springboard for improvisation, Kira's practice centers around building stably evolving frameworks and allowing beauty to emerge from the system. Whether live-coding visuals for DJs at Talon Bar, performers at Bed-Stuy Art House, running immersive ambiance for a party, creating an interactive slideshow gallery for a wedding at Grounds for Sculpture, or running the visuals for her band at Purgatory, a

persistent element within Kira's art is the inclusion of the human form abstracted through motion capture. Her iterative approach is informed by her history with improvisational music, building stably evolving frameworks and allowing beauty to emerge from the system. @kiraisonline

Marzipan Joyner, Filmmaker (*Joie Du Sang Des Etoiles*)

Marzipan Joyner is a trans queer multimedia artist, mostly working in the realms of video and collage. Her work deals with repurposing cultural detritus of American culture, monologues formed around those cultural symbols, and play as artistic practice. She helps run the art collective Sorensen Media GRP, and performs audiovisual pieces as Marzipan and ▶PLAY in the NYC area.

For this piece she is revisiting one of the first analog pieces she produced, an untitled performance with one video mixer, one camera, and a screen, connected in a closed loop. When you introduce the output back into the unit, it attempts to process the pixels over and over, somewhat similar to cells dividing. And like cells, slight variations occur and exponentially affect the final recorded image, which are never the same, and vary from mixer to mixer. The result is a refractive, color filled conversation between two planes sharing the same space. @negaverse_buffer
linktr.ee/marzipanjoyner

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