

March 9th, 2022. 8:00pm.
Manuel López Tovar MMus Recital
Pollack Hall – Schulich School of Music
McGill University

Classe de/Class of Fabrice Marandola & João Catalão.

These program notes are written by the student performing, and are presented by the student in partial fulfilment of the requirements of their course.

Ces notes de programme sont écrites par l'étudiant-interprète et sont présentées en tant que réalisation partielle des critères de leur cour

Woodpecker (marimba)

Louis Andriessen (1939-2021)

While teaching at Princeton University in the United States, Louis Andriessen heard woodpeckers for the very first-time pecking in a tree just in front of his office. It was not only one but almost an entire family “drumming” in different rhythms and pitches; “one of the most important musical things that I experienced” as he vividly described it in an interview. This gave the composer the idea of writing a piece that materialised as a commission by the Tromp Music Festival in Eindhoven, Netherlands. It begins with the performer “pecking” on woodblocks, trying to imitate one bird. Meanwhile, a second bird makes its appearance and both start to interact, as the performer navigates the different timbres between instruments. While the first half of the piece can be heard as a conversation between the two woodpeckers, it evolves into a playful fantasy of sounds and imitation in the second half.

Concerto for Timpani and Orchestra op. 34

Werner Thärichen (1921-2008)

Piano accompaniment: Brigitte Poulin

Composed by Werner Thärichen, legendary timpanist of the Berliner Philharmonic Orchestra, this concerto remains one of his most well-known pieces. Presented in three movements, the first begins with an introduction where the melody presented by the orchestra gradually builds until the timpani takes over. Afterwards, the melody becomes highly demanding, with the accompaniment, in this case the piano, following a question-and-answer exchange with the soloist. Exploiting different playing techniques for the timpani such as hitting the drumhead on the center, the use of snare drumsticks, mutes, and glissandi, this movement explores a wide range of timbres and colours that the instrument is capable of, while remaining in the context of an orchestra.

The second movement, following the traditional fast-slow-fast 18th century standard concerto form, begins with the soloist playing a short two note motif. Followed by a simple but challenging melody, the soloist displays their skills by playing uninterrupted tremolos while changing notes without any glissandi. As the movement develops, the introductory motif is presented again, in a majestic manner with the accompaniment as strong support. As the intensity decays, the third movement starts *attacca*, or in simpler terms, without any pause. Once again, the timpani leads the beginning, repeating the main phrase that will be heard throughout the movement as the accompaniment gradually joins the soloist. With the cadenza, the performer demonstrates even more skills regarding all the different sound colours the instrument can produce. Quickly returning to the main movement's theme

following the cadenza, the solo part starts building in intensity until the accompaniment finally takes over with the melody to conclude the concerto.

Cinq danses dogoriennes

Étienne Perruchon (1958-2019)

Pour 5 timbales, 3 temple-blocks et violoncelle

Cello: Crystal Kim

Dogora is an imaginary country in Central Europe that was conceived by the composer as he was writing a piece for orchestra and choir commissioned by the Chambéry School of Music in Savoie. This “country” serves as the scenery for five contrasting dances in which Étienne Perruchon explores the texture between a very unusual, but extremely rich pairing: timpani and cello.

Introducing the main theme shared by the cello and timpani, the first dance’s bold and strong character can be heard right from the beginning, recalling a dance style similar to a tango. The second dance is very fast, displaying plenty of energy and ‘spice’ with a fierce feeling. The third dance starts with the timpanist playing a repetitive motive as accompaniment to a very intimate melody played by the cello that transforms throughout the piece. The fourth dance is a slow waltz in which both performers play the same melody, showcasing an exquisite texture created by the contrast of the constant roll of the timpani with the pizzicato, and later arco playing of the cello. In closing, the final movement is a vivid and fast celebration-like dance, demonstrating the timpanist’s skill through the constant change of tuning, while maintaining a solid, energetic ensemble.