


DELPHINE TRIO WITH MAJA HORVAT

Quartet For The End Of Time

 **Sunday 14 July**  **3pm – 4pm**

 **St John's Church**

Magdalenna Krstevska	Clarinet
Jobine Siekman	Cello
Maja Horvat	Violin
Roelof Temmingh	Piano

The **Delphine Trio** brings together three young musicians from opposite sides of the globe: Australian clarinetist Magdalenna Krstevska, Dutch cellist Jobine Siekman and pianist Roelof Temmingh from South Africa. Founded in 2020 at the Royal College of Music, the Delphine Trio showcases a combination of individual instrumental talent, intelligent and curious music-making, and a diverse repertoire. They are currently Artists in Residence at Leighton House London. They were finalists in the 2022 Royal Over-Seas League Competition and have recorded at Abbey Road Studios. Their debut album was published with the Dutch label TRPTK in December 2023.

Maja Horvat, a graduate from the Royal College of Music, made her Wigmore Hall debut as first violinist of the Brompton Quartet, of which she is a founding member. In 2019 she was awarded the Royal Philharmonic Society's Emily Anderson Prize, and she was a Tillet Debut Scheme Artist for 2022/2023. She has performed as soloist with the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra, the National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra and the Mendelssohn Chamber Orchestra. As concertmaster she has performed with the Royal College of Music Symphony and Philharmonic Orchestra and the Echo Ensemble.

Quatuor Pour la Fin du Temps (Quartet for the End of Time)

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)

Messiaen's *Quatuor Pour la Fin du Temps* is an extraordinary work created in extraordinary circumstances. In 1940 he was serving in the French army medical corps, when he was one of a number of soldiers captured by German troops. The group included a professional cellist, Etienne Pasquier and clarinetist, Henri Akoka, and when they were taken to Stalag VIII A in Silesia, they met a violinist, Jean Le Boulaire. Messiaen wrote for them what he later described as 'an unpretentious little trio'. He gradually added other movements, including a piano part for himself in all except one, and on 15 January 1941 the complete eight-movement work was given one of the most remarkable premières in western musical history. The story acquired an exaggerated mythical dimension in subsequent tellings: Pasquier later denied Messiaen's statement that the cello had only three strings, and the real size of the audience was probably nearer a tenth of the 5,000 the composer claimed. But even allowing for later embellishments, it was an exceptional event, and Messiaen later commented that he had 'never been listened to with such concentration and understanding'.

Three of the movements already existed in one form or another. Messiaen had begun composing the third movement, 'Abîme des oiseaux', for Akoka before they were captured, while the fifth and the last movements re-worked pieces he had written some years before. 'Louange à l'Éternité de Jésus' is based on part of *Fête des Belles Eaux* (Festival of Beautiful Fountains) for six ondes Martenot (an electronic instrument played by a keyboard), written for a light and fountain display in Paris in 1937, while 'Louange à l'Immortalité de Jésus' originated as the slow second panel of Messiaen's *Diptyque* for organ, composed in 1930.

The quartet takes its inspiration from the final book of the New Testament, the Revelation of St John the Divine, specifically the description of the angel who descends from heaven and announces that time shall be no more. In Messiaen's mind the idea of time coming to an end also took on the concept of musical time being suspended, as various passages in the Quartet undermine our sense of a regular pulse, or of any forward movement at all.



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1. 'Liturgie de cristal' (Crystal liturgy)

This one of Messiaen's earliest pieces to reflect his fascination with birdsong, here played by the violin and clarinet against the unchanging background of slow repeated phrases on the cello and piano.

2. 'Vocalise, pour l'Ange qui annonce la fin du Temps' (Vocalise, for the Angel who announces the end of Time)

The forceful opening and close of this movement surround a long serene unison melody for the violin and cello, accompanied by gentle staccato figures ('drops of water in a rainbow', in the composer's words) for the piano.

3. 'Abîme des oiseaux' (Abyss of birds)

'The abyss is Time ... the birds ... are our desire for light ...' This is for unaccompanied clarinet, and contrasts slow music, marked 'expressive and sad', exploring a relatively narrow range of notes, with faster sections ('lively, capricious') which range over virtually the clarinet's entire compass.

4. 'Intermède' (Intermezzo)

The trio that Messiaen wrote for his companions takes its place here as the Quartet's lightweight centrepiece. The quiet central passage became the basis of the theme of the sixth movement.

5. 'Louange à l'Éternité de Jésus' (Praise to Jesus's eternity)

A tranquil song to Jesus the Word of God, 'infinitely slow, ecstatic', for the cello, playing in its highest register, accompanied by repeated piano chords.

6. 'Danse de fureur, pour les sept trompettes' (Dance of fury, for the seven trumpets)

A complete contrast to the previous movement, as all four instruments play, in unison, a powerfully energetic theme consisting of a single, unharmonised melodic line in Messiaen's most intricate rhythmic style.

7. 'Fouillis d'arcs-en-ciel, pour l'Ange qui annonce la fin du Temps' (Swirls of rainbows, for the Angel who announces the end of Time)

Slow sections for the piano with, first, the cello, then the violin and clarinet, alternate with faster, more incisive music for all four instruments, building to a tumultuous, ecstatic climax.

8. 'Louange à l'Immortalité de Jésus' (Praise to Jesus's immortality)

A quiet meditation on the Word made Flesh. Scored for violin and piano and marked 'extremely slow and tender', it recalls the fifth movement in both mood and texture. At the end the music passes beyond our hearing with both instruments in their highest registers.

