

Thursday, October 23, 8pm | THE ELOISE AND RAYMOND H. OSTRANDER MEMORIAL CONCERT
Friday, October 24, 8pm
Saturday, October 25, 8pm

JAMES LEVINE conducting

MESSIAEN ET EXSPECTO RESURRECTIONEM MORTUORUM,
for orchestra of woodwinds, brass, and metallic percussion
(marking the 100th anniversary of the
composer's birth)

I. Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice.
(*Psalm 130:1,2*)

II. Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more
dominion over him.
(*St. Paul's Letter to the Romans, 6:9*)

III. The hour is coming when the dead shall hear the voice of the
Son of God.
(*Gospel According to St. John, 5:25*)

IV. They shall be raised in glory, with a new name, when the morning
stars sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy.
(*St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, 15:43;*
Revelation, 2:17; The Book of Job, 38:7)

V. And I heard the voice of a great multitude.
(*Revelation, 19:6*)

{INTERMISSION}

BOULEZ NOTATIONS I-IV

I. Modéré, Fantasque
IV. Rythmique
III. Très modéré
II. Très vif, Strident

BERLIOZ HAROLD IN ITALY, OPUS 16

Harold in the mountains: Scenes of melancholy, of happiness, and of joy
March of the pilgrims singing their evening prayer
Serenade of an Abruzzese mountaineer to his mistress
Brigands' orgy, with recollections of past scenes

STEVEN ANSELL, viola

These concerts will end about 9:55.

Olivier Messiaen

“Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum,” for orchestra of woodwinds, brass, and metallic percussion

OLIVIER MESSIAEN was born in Avignon, France, on December 10, 1908, and died in Paris on April 28, 1992. He composed “Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum” in Petichet in 1964, on a commission from André Malraux, the French Minister of Culture, for a major work to be performed as part of national commemorations for the dead of the two World Wars. The first performance was a

private one in the Sainte-Chapelle, Paris, on May 7, 1965, conducted by Serge Baudo. The public premiere, again with Baudo conducting, took place in the Cathedral of Nôtre Dame de Chartres on June 20, 1965.

THE SCORE CALLS FOR THREE ENSEMBLES: Woodwind—two piccolos, three flutes, three oboes and English horn, three clarinets, E-flat clarinet, and bass clarinet, three bassoons and contrabassoon; Brass—trumpet in D, three trumpets, six horns, three tenor trombones, bass trombone, tuba, and bass saxhorn in B-flat; and Metallic Percussion—three sets of tuned cow bells (cencerros), tubular bells, six gongs, and three tam-tams.

Olivier Messiaen began his musical education as a young child in his native Avignon. His taste for music was awakened by a Christmas gift he received in 1916—scores of *The Damnation of Faust* and *Don Giovanni*, a remarkable gift for an eight-year-old! Two years later his family moved to Nantes and he took formal instruction in harmony. His teacher, Jehan de Gibon, gave him the score of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Messiaen has described his encounter with this work as “a real bombshell...probably the most decisive influence of my life.” Messiaen entered the Paris Conservatoire at eleven. In 1926 he won the first prize in fugue, following that in 1928 with the prize in piano accompaniment. During the two successive years he bore off the palm in music history and in composition. His teachers included Marcel Dupré for organ, Messiaen's principal instrument, and Paul Dukas in composition.

Almost immediately after finishing his studies, Messiaen took up the position of organist at the church of La Trinité in Paris, remaining in the post from 1930 until his death. He began teaching in Paris in the École Normale de Musique and the Schola Cantorum. And, of course, he continued composing. Already during the 1930s his music was introduced to Boston by Serge Koussevitzky, who led the American premiere of *Les Offrandes oubliées (The Forgotten Sacrifices)* in October 1936, when the composer was not yet twenty-seven. Messiaen's connection with the Boston Symphony Orchestra continued for the rest of his life. He was composer-in-residence at Tanglewood in 1949; that December Leonard Bernstein led the BSO in the world premiere of the *Turangalîla-symphonie*, commissioned by Koussevitzky. Other Messiaen works performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra over the years include *L'Ascension* (Koussevitzky, Eugene Ormandy, and Richard Burgin), *Chronochromie* (Georges Prêtre), *Concert à quatre* (Myung-Whun Chung), *Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum* (Michael Tilson Thomas and Simon Rattle), *Oiseaux exotiques* (Seiji Ozawa), *Réveil des oiseaux* (Ingo Metzmacher), and *Three Short Liturgies of the Divine Presence* (Ozawa). After Seiji Ozawa conducted the world premiere of Messiaen's six-hour-long opera *Saint Francis of Assisi* in Paris in 1985, he gave the American premiere of three scenes in concert format with the Boston Symphony. In the winter of 1992, the BSO gave its last American premiere of a new Messiaen piece, *Un Sourire*, a tribute to Mozart, under the direction of Marek Janowski, who had commissioned it.

One of the major elements of Messiaen's work was his deep and mystical religious faith. He thoroughly absorbed the musical elements of the Catholic tradition through his many years as a distinguished organist, and he could, when he chose, employ the traditional melodies of Gregorian chant for both musical and symbolic purposes in his own scores, as he does in the fourth movement of *Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum*. This religious thread is central to many of his most significant and effective works.

That religious faith formed the basis for one of his best-known and most moving compositions, *Quatuor pour la fin du Temps (Quartet for the End of Time)*, which he wrote while imprisoned in a

Silesian military camp in 1940. Finding three other musicians who had managed to retain their instruments, he composed the work for a quartet, with himself as pianist, drawing upon imagery from the book of *Revelation* (the same source as some of the images in *Et exspecto*). The four musicians gave the first performance of the quartet in those stark surroundings in 1941.

After his release from the camp in 1941, Messiaen became professor of harmony at the Conservatoire. Not long afterward he began the series of lessons in the home of a friend that attracted the attention of the brightest young composers at the institution, notably Pierre Boulez. He was named Professor of Composition at the Conservatory in 1966 and was elected a member of the Institut the following year.

Messiaen was a renowned ornithologist and often included actual birdcalls, collected all over the world, in his music. For a period in the 1960s, especially, some of his largest works were based almost entirely on musical gestures created in imitation of the songs of specific birds, which the composer always gratefully acknowledged in his prefaces.

As a musician, Messiaen liked to refer to himself as a “rhythmician,” since he had spent years in a detailed study of the elements of rhythm, not only in the European art-music tradition, but also the rhythmic concepts of the ancient Greek and Hindu traditions.

The three threads of Catholic mysticism, birdsong, and exotic rhythms all come together in *Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum*. The title comes from the Nicene Creed: “And I look for the resurrection of the dead.” Though the five movements are untitled, each is preceded in the score by a Biblical quotation (or an assemblage of quotations) to reflect the theme of a transition from despair to faith. For a composer who could, upon occasion, write some of the most complex music of our time, Messiaen’s score is amazingly direct and straightforward, though, as always, filled with gestures that have symbolic significance as much as a purely aesthetic one.

During the decade before the composition of *Et exspecto*, Messiaen had concentrated on the exploitation of timbre and rhythm, with little or no attention to melody. Then with *Sept Haïkaï* of 1962, inspired by Japanese gagaku music, he returned to a kind of melody-based music. And in his next piece, *Couleurs de la cité céleste* (1963), he made greater use of chant melodies and less of the birdsong that had so dominated his work of the few years previous. Thus, with *Et exspecto* (1964) he blends melody (including subtle and rare quotations of birdsong or chant), rhythm, and timbre in a way that allows each aspect its own significant role.

The overall effect of the work is one of monumental grandeur and a new simplicity. One elementary illustration of the simple directness of Messiaen’s musical imagery comes in a comparison of the beginning and end of the work: it starts in darkness, a “cry from the abyss,” with a low A-flat on the saxhorn; the last movement, symbolizing the multitude of resurrected humanity, ends with a shimmering chord whose top note is G-sharp in the piccolos—exactly five octaves above the opening pitch. The gap of five octaves symbolizes the full expanse of the space between the abyss and celestial glory; at the same time, the achievement of the original pitch as the culmination of the final chord brings a purely musical sense of closure. The feeling of grandeur in this score, of formal hieratic event, is emphasized, too, by the composer’s request that the work’s five movements each be separated from one another by a minute of silence.

The following paragraphs begin with the Biblical quotation that heads each movement, followed by a brief analysis:

I. Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice. (Psalm 130:1-2).

Beginning on a low A-flat in the saxhorn, the low woodwinds and brass begin to unwind a long and slow melody in a solemn mood, deepened by the soft rumble of the tam-tams. A gradual crescendo culminates in eight massive dissonant chords (each containing all twelve notes of the chromatic scale) that represent the cry from the Abyss.

II. Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. (*Romans 6:9*).

A splash of arabesque decoration in the upper woodwinds and a sustained chord in the horns anticipate the elements of a slow lyrical melody begun in the oboe and continued by the other woodwinds. A contrasting section begins with a complex rhythmic figure in the cowbells. This is a Hindu rhythm (*Simhavikrama*) consisting of fifteen units—here eighth-notes—in a complex pattern. Messiaen chooses it for its symbolic significance. The Hindu name for this rhythm means “the power of the lion,” and it contains embedded within it a shorter rhythm (*Vijaya*), the name of which means “victory.” The number fifteen is also symbolic, being a multiple of three and five. Three, of course, represents the Trinity in a Christian context; five is the number of Shiva in Hindu belief—Shiva, the destroyer of death, and therefore also a symbol of Christ. The movement alternates twice between the opening lyric melody and the faster rhythmic passage, then closes with a reference to the opening material.

III. The hour is coming when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God. (*John 5:25*).

Messiaen begins this movement with his first use of birdsong in the piece—the song of the uirapuru (musician wren) of the Amazon. As with the Hindu rhythm of the preceding movement, he turns an exotic image into a Christian symbol: according to a legend prevalent among the natives of the Amazon, one hears the uirapuru only at the moment of death. There is an improvisatory feeling to the birdsong; the rest of the movement is formal in structure, as if emphasizing death’s ultimate unavoidability. Four notes on the bells, permuted to different shapes, an orchestral crescendo on a repeated chord, and long notes, allowed to vibrate freely, on the gongs and tam-tams make up the stock of musical gestures. On its last appearance, the sound of the gongs appears from under the woodwind figure and grows to the loudest moment in the movement (marked *fffff*), then dies away into silence.

IV. They shall be raised in glory, with a new name, when the morning stars sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy. (*I. Corinthians 15:43; Revelation 2:17; Job 38:7*).

This is the longest and most complex movement, built out of the repetition of a few specific blocks of material shaped into a long crescendo to a powerful climax. Three long-held notes played on three tam-tams begin the movement; the gesture recurs many times, each time louder than before. It alternates with two different kinds of ideas: chant melodies from the Easter service (the introit “Resurrexi” played on bells and cowbells, followed by the “Alleluia” on trumpet and all the woodwinds), and the song of another bird, the calandra lark of southern Europe, which symbolizes for Messiaen “heavenly joy and one of the four qualities of the Heavenly Host, the ‘gift of agility.’” Each time a section recurs, it grows slightly longer and more elaborate. At the third statement of the plainsong material, Messiaen creates a powerful climax by combining it contrapuntally with the opening theme of the first movement in the horns and trombones. The overall plan of the movement is as follows:

Three tam-tam strokes (*pp*)
Plainsong from Easter service
Three tam-tam strokes (*p*)
Calandra lark

Three tam-tam strokes (*f*)
Plainsong from Easter service
Three tam-tam strokes (*ff*)
Calandra lark
Three tam-tam strokes (*fff*)
Plainsong from Easter service combined
with theme of first movement
Tam-tams and gongs (*p*, then *f*)
Eight long chords (full ensemble), recalling
end of first movement

V. And I heard the voice of a great multitude. (*Revelation 19:6*).

The brief finale has correspondences with the opening movement; the smoothly lyrical melody, however, is now driven along by an implacably steady sixteenth-note rhythm in the six gongs. The pulsing surge of the great multitude runs on without pause until finally arriving at a series of massive closing chords, on the last of which the three piccolos rise to the high G-sharp—five octaves above the work’s opening pitch—to complete the ascent from the abyss to the celestial heights.

Steven Ledbetter

STEVEN LEDBETTER *was program annotator of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1979 to 1998 and now writes program notes for other orchestras and ensembles throughout the country.*

THE ONLY PREVIOUS BOSTON SYMPHONY PERFORMANCES of “*Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum*” were led by Michael Tilson Thomas as part of “Spectrum” concerts in March/April 1972, and then at Tanglewood that August; by Simon Rattle at Symphony Hall in January 1994, and by James Levine at Symphony Hall in December 2004. More recently, the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra conducted by Stefan Asbury performed the work on June 30, 2008, this past summer, to mark the centennial of Messiaen’s birth.

Pierre Boulez

“Notations I-IV”

PIERRE BOULEZ was born in Montbrison, France, on March 26, 1925, and lives in Paris. His “Notations I-IV” are orchestrations and expansions of the first four of twelve solo piano pieces that he wrote in 1945. The first four orchestrations (which were originally to include all twelve) were commissioned by the Orchestre de Paris, completed in 1978, and premiered under Daniel Barenboim’s direction on June 18, 1980, in Paris. Boulez made some revisions in 1984.

THE SCORE OF “NOTATIONS I-IV” calls for an orchestra of four flutes (fourth doubling piccolo), three oboes, English horn, E-flat clarinet, two B-flat clarinets, A clarinet, bass clarinet, three bassoons, contrabassoon, six horns, four trumpets, four trombones, tuba, percussion (eight players suggested, variously performing on: xylophone, vibraphone, marimba, glockenspiel, tubular bells, bell plate, glass chimes, bell tree, wood blocks, temple blocks, Japanese wood blocks, boobams, anvils, claves, timbales, cymbalettes, crotales, cowbells, maracas, large triangle, metal blocks, snare drum, bass drum, tom-toms, log drum, tablas, hand drum, congas, bongos, suspended cymbals, Chinese cymbal, sizzle cymbal, tam-tams, gongs), timpani, celesta, three harps, piano, and strings.

For performance of “Notations I-IV,” Boulez suggests the order I, IV, III, II; the durations are: I. about 2:30; IV. about 1:45; III. about 4:00; II. about 2:00.

Pierre Boulez wrote his *12 Notations* for solo piano in 1945, when he was still a student at the Paris Conservatoire. They were premiered in 1948 by Yvette Grimaud, but weren't published until almost forty years later, following the creation of the composer's orchestral versions of the first four pieces. The *Notations* in 1945 represented a dramatic step forward for a composer who, upon his arrival in Paris from a decidedly un-cosmopolitan region of France to attend the Conservatoire, had virtually no exposure to contemporary music. By all accounts he picked up astoundingly quickly both the foundations of traditional music (particularly harmony and counterpoint) and the influences of the progressive composers he encountered in the capital. Most important of these was Olivier Messiaen, a middling teacher of counterpoint at the Conservatoire who happened to be one of the most original composers of the era.

Outside of his formal courses, Messiaen invited interested pupils to his own home for classes in analysis of modern works by Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Bartók, whose music received short shrift at the school. Another major acquaintance of Boulez, in some ways countering Messiaen's predilections, was René Leibowitz, the most important proponent in France—perhaps in Europe at that time, Schoenberg himself having moved to the United States—of Schoenberg's new techniques of twelve-tone composition. Between Leibowitz's explications of the music of Schoenberg and (especially) Anton Webern, and the particular rhythmic and harmonic experiments of Messiaen's own unique, relatively little-known music, Boulez began to find his way. The *12 Notations* for piano, along with the Sonatine for flute and piano (1946) and Piano Sonata No. 1, synthesized the approaches that in a few short years Boulez absorbed during his time at, and outside, the Conservatoire. By the time he was thirty, in 1955, he was considered the most formidable and uncompromising composer of the post-World War II generation and was well known as a sometimes-angry iconoclast, nihilist, anarchist (take your pick) determined to redefine musical culture itself.

More than fifty years later, much has changed, and Boulez is one of the most respected administrators and conductors in the world. As a conductor he held the chief conducting positions of both the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic (concurrently) and guest conductor positions with the Cleveland Orchestra and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and was admitted to the inner sanctum of Wagner's Bayreuth, first by Wieland Wagner for performances of *Parsifal* and *Tristan und Isolde* in the 1960s, then for the centennial performances of the *Ring Cycle* in 1976. As an administrator and organizer he worked with the French government to establish IRCAM, the most important state-supported initiative for advanced music education and research in the world, in the late 1970s.

These mainstream activities, paradoxically, have been a continuation of Boulez's wide-ranging vision of transformation for the world's musical culture. As a conductor of the great, established orchestras he attempted to introduce a counterposition to the masterpiece-centered program formula that he felt shackled those institutions, keeping them from freshening their approach and their audiences. In the process he came to realize the limits of his own interest in certain kinds of repertoire and the limits of his audience to accept the steady diet of the new (and, significantly, the “classic”-new of Schoenberg, Varèse, and other earlier 20th-century masters) that was the bread-and-butter of his early career and the fond hope of his major appointments. The successes of his performance career have largely depended not on his philosophy but on the strength of his musicianship, phenomenal ear, and clear technique, which earned him the crucial respect of orchestral musicians regardless of their own aesthetic positions.

The “Institut de recherche et de co-ordination acoustique-musical” (IRCAM) was the centerpiece of a broader retooling of French musical institutions that Boulez and others proposed already in the 1960s, only part of which came to pass. In the 1960s and early ’70s Boulez lived in self-imposed expatriation in Baden-Baden, West Germany, finding himself at odds with much of the government’s official attitude toward music. By forwarding Boulez’s propositions Georges Pompidou, who became President in 1969, hoped to return the most famous and respected French musician to his home soil. Even before its opening in 1978, IRCAM was on its way to becoming the hotbed of training for advanced composers and sound researchers from around the world. IRCAM has also been central in developing hardware and software for music creation, helping to transform fundamentally the commercial and consumer markets in computer music. In addition, the Ensemble InterContemporain was created as the institute’s resident ensemble.

As part of the general state reforms of the musical situation in Paris, in 1967 the Orchestre de Paris was created by the ministry and Charles Munch as a result of the dissolution of the orchestra of the Conservatoire and with the intent to bring together permanently the best orchestral musicians in the city. Its creation went against Boulez’s ideas, and for many years he didn’t conduct the major orchestra of Paris. A partial reconciliation came about in the late 1970s when Daniel Barenboim, whom Boulez had nominated for the post, became the Orchestre de Paris music director, and subsequently the ensemble commissioned the orchestral versions of the composer’s *12 Notations*, which were little-known and had not yet been published.

Boulez’s music, even those pieces widely acknowledged as masterworks—*Le Marteau sans maître*, the Piano Sonata No. 3, *Pli selon pli* (all dating from the 1950s)—is not nearly as well known in practice as in anecdote, and in some ways he is as well known for the failure of his austere polemic in integral serialism, *Polyphonie X*, as for his genuinely successful pieces. This has partly to do with his ascension in the ranks of the great conductors— not only the time required to devote to that part of his musical life (not to mention IRCAM and what that entailed), but the eclipsing nature of his conducting persona. Also, famously, he has rarely settled on finished versions of his pieces since *Le Marteau*, although he has nonetheless allowed their performance. The Third Sonata, in which he first explored indeterminacy via performer choice (under the influence of the poet Mallarmé), remains unfinished; the much larger *Pli selon pli* transformed over the course of forty-plus years to reach its (supposedly) final state; and several other works dating back to the 1960s are yet “in process.” Since completing the first four *Notations* in 1978 (and revising them in 1984), Boulez has talked of two more groups of four pieces each as being in various stages of completion. To date only *Notation VII* has been published in addition to the first group.

Another inhibitor to the potential popularity of Boulez’s sensual, brilliant, often ravishing music has been his interest in redefining the very media of performance, and for logistical reasons many organizations and ensembles avoid scheduling some of his more adventurous works. On the tame side, *Polyphonie X*, *Le Marteau sans maître*, *Éclat*, and *sur Incises*, for example, all require different non-standard performing forces, beyond which the orchestral works *Figures*, *Doubles*, *Prismes* and *Rituel in memoriam Bruno Maderna* call for unconventional deployment of the orchestra onstage. Since 1980 his work at IRCAM has led the use of complex configurations of pre-recorded or live electronics along with acoustic instruments in such pieces as *...explosante-fixe...*, *Anthèmes 2*, *Répons* (which won a Grammy!) and *Dérive 2*, all of which initially demanded the services of IRCAM-trained sound technicians (although now they travel more easily than they used to). So it is that *Notations I-IV* is without question Boulez’s most popular work for orchestra, not least because it is technically conventional, in spite of its massive percussion requirements.

Boulez, in an interview accompanying David Robertson and the Orchestre National de Lyon's recording of *Notations*, recalls reading a report of 4000-year-old grain seeds taken from an Egyptian tomb and which, when planted, sprouted and grew. This, he says, encouraged his idea of returning to his student-era piano works. He had actually attempted orchestrations of eleven of the twelve piano pieces already in the mid-1940s; from what little I've seen of these withdrawn versions, they are scarcely more sophisticated than one would expect from a brilliant young composer with no experience writing for orchestra. In their sharply drawn musical character, both the piano pieces themselves and the idea of orchestrating them strongly suggest Boulez's familiarity with Schoenberg's *Five Pieces for Orchestra*, Opus 16, and possibly Webern's *Variations for orchestra*, Opus 30 (the latter particularly in the twelve-tone influence and the miniature scale of the pieces).

The 1978 (rev. 1984) versions of the first four *Notations* benefited from Boulez's vast experience with an enormous range of the orchestral canon from Bach to Berio. The new versions are not mere orchestrations but expansions and transformations of the original pieces, three minutes of original material becoming ten. Boulez had, in the meantime, also developed a much more refined approach to harmony and structure, and the new pieces reveal a lush bloom in contrast with the comparatively colorless total chromatic of the originals. Their strongly defined characters also expand richly in space and timbre in their new guise.

In *Notations* one can clearly hear the echoes in Boulez's orchestral writing of the music of Wagner, Debussy, Ravel, Bartók, and Schoenberg, with tendencies toward the metallic and the shimmering. The shimmering cascades of arpeggios of *Notation I*, *Modéré. Fantasque*, for example, are pure Boulez (one hears similar moments in *Rituel* and *Pli selon pli*) expanded from a tiny four-note piano figure. In *Notation IV*, *Rythmique* (which should always be performed as the second movement in this group of four), the profile is much more aggressive, with brass predominating. In the third piece, *Notation III*, *Très modéré*, the orchestra is a resonant body, sustained harmonies buoying and also obscuring a central melodic line. The original piano *Notation II*, *Très vif*, is the most radical and aggressive of the piano pieces. Its blurring of pitched sound and noise (glissandi, cluster chords, and tremolo) in the original are pushed further in the use of much unpitched percussion and insistent brass, driving forward in mechanically insistent pulse.

Robert Kirzinger

THE FIRST AMERICAN PERFORMANCE of "*Notations I-IV*" took place on December 11, 1980, with Zubin Mehta conducting the New York Philharmonic.

THE ONLY PREVIOUS BOSTON SYMPHONY PERFORMANCES of "*Notations I-IV*" took place in March 1986 in *Symphony Hall*, with the composer conducting.

Hector Berlioz

"Harold en Italie," Symphony in four parts with viola solo, Opus 16

HECTOR BERLIOZ was born at La Côte-St-André, near Grenoble, France, on December 11, 1803, and died in Paris on March 8, 1869. "Harold en Italie" was composed between January and June 1834 in Paris. The first performance was given at the Paris Conservatoire on November 23, 1834, with Chrétien Urhan playing the viola solo and Narcisse Girard conducting. Berlioz first conducted it himself, again with Urhan as soloist, in Paris on December 13, 1835.

IN ADDITION TO THE SOLO VIOLA, the score of “Harold in Italy” calls for an orchestra of two flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes (one doubling English horn), two clarinets, four bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, two cornets, three trombones, ophicleide or tuba, timpani, triangle, cymbals, tambourine, harp, and strings.

No northern musician has ever visited Italy and come away unaffected. Schütz, Handel, Tchaikovsky, Bizet, Barber, and Henze have all responded in their own ways to the idyllic Italian landscape, civilized by the relics of antiquity and beautified beyond compare by the Renaissance. Wolf never went there, but he came under its spell; on Debussy, too, Italy left its mark, though he was less affected than most.

Berlioz spent more than a year in Italy in 1831 and 1832, having won the Prix de Rome, instituted by the French Government to enable French artists to study in an environment of classical art treasures, whether painting or sculpture. Musicians were loosely thought to need the same benefits, but for Berlioz the price of a few years’ state pension was exile from the central sources of his art. He had already developed a strong distaste for all Italian opera from disgust at the noisy enthusiasm of the “dilettanti,” as its fans were termed. In Rome itself he found the cultivation of music indescribably narrow and parochial; the musical establishment at St. Peter’s shocked him as being miserably inadequate for such an immense building. He was not much interested in architectural treasures in themselves, more in their potential for music. In Florence it is clear that he was more preoccupied with reading Shakespeare than with his surroundings.

In the country, on the other hand, in Subiaco, and on the long walk from Naples to Rome, he really found musical inspiration. “I long to go to Mount Posilippo,” he wrote, “to Calabria, or to Capri, and put myself in the service of a brigand chief. That’s the life I crave: volcanos, rocks, rich piles of plunder in mountain caves, a concert of shrieks accompanied by an orchestra of pistols and carbines, blood and Lacryma-Christi, a bed of lava rocked by subterranean tremors: *allons donc, voilà la vie!*”

At Alatri, on his return from Naples, Berlioz and his two Swedish hiking companions spent a dreadful night on hard beds, plagued by fleas and by the “young men serenading, going round the village all night singing beneath their mistresses’ windows, to the accompaniment of a guitar and a terrible squawking clarinet.”

Here clearly is the background to the last two movements of *Harold en Italie*. But the work did not come into being at that time. In 1834, over a year after Berlioz’s return to Paris, Paganini, in admiration of the *Symphonie fantastique*, asked Berlioz for a work in which he could display his powers on a fine Stradivarius viola. Berlioz at first planned a choral work based on the last hours of Mary Queen of Scots, but somehow the ideas were transmuted into the four-movement symphony with solo viola *Harold en Italie*, incorporating two passages that had actually been composed in Italy for the overture *Rob Roy*, which Berlioz had recently rejected. It is with Harold’s own theme that the solo viola first enters:

The new work was to be a series of Italian souvenirs in a symphonic frame with a title alluding to Byron. Donald Tovey’s *bon mot* has relieved us of one obligation: “There are excellent reasons,” he wrote, “for reading *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*. But among them I cannot find any that concern Berlioz and this symphony.” He was right insofar as the four movements of the symphony do not

enact the contents of the poem, but he was wrong to suppose that Harold is an irrelevance: he is the spectator of events and scenes, not a participant in them. Harold is, of course, a Byronic Berlioz. All four movements picture outdoor scenes drawn from the most vivid experiences of his Italian stay. The melancholy of Byron's hero is clearly heard at the opening and in the third-movement Serenade, echoes of the spleen so vividly described by Berlioz in his *Memoirs*. The pilgrims and tolling bells in the second movement (deftly scored for horns and harp) appeared in any Italian itinerary of the time. Mendelssohn, whom Berlioz met in Italy, put a pilgrims' march into his own *Italian Symphony*. Berlioz felt no special sense of identification with pilgrims in this movement as he did with hillsmen and brigands, but this makes no difference to the elegant musical design of the piece, nor to its evocative color. It became a favorite piece in Berlioz's concert tours in the 1840s and 1850s, often detached from the rest of the symphony.

The Serenade is an ingenious exercise in creating a folksy atmosphere while at the same time combining different rhythms, the more languorous melody on the English horn unperturbed by the jaunty piping of the hillsmen or the stately span of Harold's theme. Such absorption in rhythmic detail typifies the whole symphony, composed at a time when cross-rhythms, atmospheric rhythms, and unusual rhythms of every kind were uppermost in Berlioz's mind. He was also thinking of the overlapping orchestras in the first-act finale of *Don Giovanni*, each with its own dance rhythms, and emulating the same effect.

The last movement borrows the device of parading previous themes in the manner of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, not for any convincing reason, but to draw the work together and to pay tribute to the finest symphonic model Berlioz knew. When it is the turn of Harold's theme to be recalled (on the viola), it has become so protracted after its successive elongations in previous movements that it only achieves half its span. The frenetic vigor of the finale makes a stirring close interrupted only once by distant memories of the Pilgrims' March. The solo viola's final phrases in this brief interlude are drowned by the orchestra's savage interruption, and Harold is heard no more.

Harold in Italy remains a symphony, not a concerto, for the traditional balance between soloist and orchestra is shifted. Berlioz was the first to perceive the viola's potential as an expressive instrument, and because it is a dramatic and expressive rather than a virtuoso work, the soloist is rarely the protagonist, more often a bystander marking his presence with a recurrent theme. Paganini was startled and offended by this; he found the solo part "too full of rests" and never played it, although he later came to appreciate its worth in no uncertain terms by making Berlioz a gift of 20,000 francs at a time when the composer was most in need, allowing him to compose the next symphony, *Roméo et Juliette*, fittingly dedicated to Paganini.

The music of *Harold en Italie* is full of youthful vitality, tinged with that appealing romantic sensibility that Berlioz borrowed so poetically from literature. For him it was an autobiographical vignette; the Italian experience was something to which all his later music, from *Benvenuto Cellini* to *Les Troyens*, would bear powerful witness.

Hugh Macdonald

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THE FIRST AMERICAN PERFORMANCE of Berlioz's "*Harold in Italy*" was of just two movements, led by Theodore Thomas with violist Edward Mollenhauer and an unnamed orchestra on May 9, 1863, at New York's Irving Hall. The first complete American performance was given by the Thomas Orchestra in Boston at the Music Hall on October 28, 1874, with violist Charles Baetens.

THE FIRST BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PERFORMANCES of "*Harold in Italy*" were led by Georg Henschel in February 1884 with violist Henry Heindl, subsequent BSO performances being led by Wilhelm Gericke, Arthur Nikisch, and Emil Paur, all with violist Franz Kneisel; Gericke, Karl Muck, and Max Fiedler, all with Emil Férir; Pierre Monteux with F. Denayer; Serge Koussevitzky with Louis Bailly, Jean Lefranc, William Primrose, Jascha Veissi, and Joseph de Pasquale; Eleazar de Carvalho with de Pasquale; Ernest Ansermet with Primrose; Charles Munch with de Pasquale and Primrose; Seiji Ozawa with Pinchas Zukerman; John Eliot Gardiner with Yuri Bashmet (the most recent Tanglewood performance, on July 25, 1993), and Emmanuel Krivine with Steven Ansell (the most recent subscription performances, in October/November 2003).

To Read and Hear More...

An excellent recent book on Messiaen and his music is Peter Hill and Nigel Simeone's *Messiaen*, published in 2005 (Yale University Press). A pianist who has recorded all of Messiaen's piano music, Peter Hill was a student of the composer and his wife, Yvonne Loriod. He is also the editor of the largest English-language study of Messiaen's music, *The Messiaen Companion*, a compilation of essays by such luminaries as Hill, Paul Griffiths, Wilfred Mellers, and Jane Manning, with contributions by Yvonne Loriod and Messiaen's pupils Pierre Boulez and George Benjamin (Amadeus Press paperback, 1995). The book also contains a works-list and discography, though the latter is now well out of date. Also important is *Olivier Messiaen: Music and Color: Conversations with Claude Samuel* (Amadeus Press). *The life of Messiaen* by Christopher Dingle is a useful volume in the series "Musical lives" (Cambridge paperback). The New Grove (1980) article on Messiaen by André Boucourechliev was included in *The New Grove Twentieth-Century French Masters: Fauré, Debussy, Satie, Ravel, Poulenc, Messiaen, Boulez*, which seems to be unavailable at the moment (Norton paperback). The Messiaen article in the revised Grove (2001) is by Paul Griffiths, whose lucid *Olivier Messiaen and the Music of Time* is out of print but worth searching for as a readable introduction (Faber & Faber). Messiaen's own *Technique of My Musical Language* from the 1940s is available in a pricey reprint-on-demand version (Reprint Services hardcover). His seven-volume *Traité de rythme, de couleur, et d'ornithologie (1949-1992)* has not, as far as I know, been translated into English, but is useful for the scholar for its specific discussion of the composer's own music. This is, even for those who read French, a very detailed and technical source; expect to find it only in a very good music library.

Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum has been recorded a few times, although several seem recently to have dropped out of the catalog. Your best bet—for availability and provenance—is Pierre Boulez's recording with the Cleveland Orchestra (Deutsche Grammophon, with Messiaen's *Chronochromie* and *La Ville d'en haut*). Also readily available are Reinbert de Leeuw's recording with the Netherlands Wind Ensemble (Chandos, with various other Messiaen works). Other recordings on CD have included an earlier Pierre Boulez performance with musicians of the Domaine Musical (once available on Erato with *Couleurs de la cité celeste* and *L'Ascension*); Karl Anton Rickenbacher's with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra (Koch Schwann, with *Oiseaux exotiques*, or differently packaged with *La Transfiguration de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ*), Ingo Metzmacher's with the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra (EMI, with Hartmann's Fourth Symphony), and Bernard Haitink's with the Concertgebouw Orchestra (Philips).

Although it doesn't include *Et exspecto*, a good way to jump in with both feet in getting to know Messiaen's music is a recent, nicely priced, six-disc compilation, released in honor of his centennial, of works including *La Transfiguration*, *Des Canyons aux étoiles*, *Couleurs de la cité céleste*, and other pieces from piano solo to orchestral, with such performers as Boulez, Yvonne Loriod, Ensemble InterContemporain, and the Schoenberg and ASKO ensembles, recorded mostly in the late 1980s/early '90s (Naïve). In 2006 Warner Classics both trumped and anticipated Naïve's centennial gambit with an eighteen-disc release from its back catalogue (specifically the Erato series), also featuring such notables as Boulez, Loriod, and Marius Constant. Many of these recordings (including *Et exspecto* with Boulez/Domaine Musical) are classics and seem no longer to be available on individual discs; the only genre that seems to be lacking here is the organ music. Also of interest is a DVD, released in 2007, of a documentary by director Olivier Mille on Messiaen's life and work called *Olivier Messiaen: The Crystal Liturgy* (Juxtapositions).

Although more than twenty years old, Pierre Boulez's *Orientations*, a collection of the composer's writing about his own music as well as aesthetic and practical approaches to the music he has programmed, studied, and conducted, is still invaluable (Harvard paperback). The only full-length biography of Boulez available is Dominique Jameux's *Pierre Boulez* (translated from the French by Susan Bradshaw), but this too is nearly two decades old (Harvard). It covers Boulez's life and musical relationships through the mid-'80s, with somewhat in-depth discussion of several of the important works (not including *Notations*, however). Also useful is *Pierre Boulez: A Symposium*, edited by Sir William Glock, with essays by several prominent musicians including Glock himself, pianist Charles Rosen, and composer Jonathan Harvey (Eulenberg/Da Capo paperback). Although not exclusively about Boulez, Joan Peyser's *To Boulez and Beyond: Music in Europe Since "The Rite of Spring"* contains significant biographical information on the composer and goes a long way in placing his accomplishments within the larger context of 20th-century concert-music culture (Scarecrow paperback). More specifically technical but also quite useful are the pages of material on Boulez's works in Paul Griffith's *Modern Music and After* (Oxford paperback). The article on Boulez in the New Grove II (2002) is by G.W. Hopkins and Paul Griffiths. Of possible tangential interest is anthropologist Georgina Born's *Rationalizing Culture: IRCAM, Boulez, and the Institutionalization of the Musical Avant-Garde*—the title is self-explanatory (University of California paperback, 1995).

Daniel Barenboim and the Orchestre de Paris, who gave the first performances of *Notations I-IV*, recorded them in 1988, but frustratingly this seems to have gone out of the catalog (Erato, which has since come under the Warner Classics umbrella). Fortunately there is a fine recording by David Robertson with the Orchestre National de Lyon of the first four *Notations* as well as No. 7 (Naïve, with *Rituel* and *Figures, Doubles, Prisms*). Robertson was a Boulez protégé, chosen by the composer to be music director of the Ensemble InterContemporain. Michael Gielen and the Southwest German Radio Symphony Orchestra recorded *Notations I-IV* and No. 7 (hänssler classic, with Mahler's Symphony No. 9). Claudio Abbado led the Vienna Philharmonic in performances of *Notations I-IV* for their "Wien Modern" series (Deutsche Grammophon, with works by Nono, Rihm, and Ligeti). A DVD of Pierre Boulez in rehearsal with the Vienna Philharmonic includes *Notations I-IV* (Image Entertainment). For the piano versions of all twelve *Notations*, one can't do better than Pierre-Laurent Aimard's performances (Deutsche Grammophon "20/21" series, on a disc with Boulez's *Structures Book II* and *...explosante fixe...*). Pi-Hsien Chen's recording of the twelve *Notations* is also excellent (Telos; with Boulez's Third Sonata and the great Piano Sonata of Jean Barraqué).

Robert Kirzinger

A comprehensive modern Berlioz biography in two volumes—*Berlioz, Volume I: The Making of an Artist, 1803-1832* and *Berlioz, Volume II: Servitude and Greatness, 1832-1869*—by Berlioz authority

David Cairns appeared in 1999 (University of California paperback). Another important modern biography, from 1989, is D. Kern Holoman's *Berlioz*, subtitled "A musical biography of the creative genius of the Romantic era" (Harvard University Press). *Berlioz*, by Hugh Macdonald, general editor of the Berlioz critical edition, offers a compact introduction to the composer's life as part of the "Master Musicians" series (Oxford paperback). Even more compact is Peter Bloom's *The life of Berlioz*, in the series "Musical lives" (Cambridge University paperback). Bloom also served as editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Berlioz* (Cambridge University paperback) and of *Berlioz: Past, Present, Future*. The latter book, published in 2003 to mark the bicentennial of the composer's birth, is a compendium of articles by various musical and cultural historians who examine, among other things, Berlioz's own responses to music of his past, his interactions with musical contemporaries, and views proffered about him in subsequent generations (Eastman Studies in Music/University of Rochester Press). More recently Bloom produced *Berlioz: Scenes from the Life and Work*, published in March 2008 (Eastman Studies in Music). Hugh Macdonald's Berlioz article from *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1980) was reprinted in *The New Grove Early Romantic Masters 2* (Norton paperback, also including the 1980 Grove articles on Weber and Mendelssohn). That article was retained, with revisions to the discussion of Berlioz's musical style, in the 2001 edition of *Grove*. In addition, Macdonald has served as editor for *Selected Letters of Berlioz*, a fascinating volume of the composer's letters as translated by Roger Nichols (Norton). Julian Rushton's *The Music of Berlioz* (2001) provides detailed consideration of the composer's musical style and works (Oxford paperback). Brian Primmer's *The Berlioz Style* offers another good discussion of the music (originally Oxford). The best English translation of Berlioz's *Memoirs* is David Cairns's (Everyman's Library; also once available as a Norton paperback). Still also available is the much older edition by Ernest Newman (Dover paperback). Jacques Barzun's two-volume *Berlioz and the Romantic Century*, first published in 1950, is a distinguished and still very important older study (Columbia University Press). Barzun's own single-volume abridgment, *Berlioz and his Century*, remains available as a University of Chicago paperback.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra has made two recordings of *Harold in Italy*: in 1944 under Serge Koussevitzky with violist William Primrose—this was the work's first commercial recording (RCA)—and then in 1958 under Charles Munch, also with Primrose (RCA "Living Stereo"). The Koussevitzky/Primrose/BSO recording has been reissued twice on CD (Biddulph and DoReMi). Colin Davis has recorded *Harold in Italy* three times: with the London Symphony Orchestra and violist Tabea Zimmermann (LSO Live, from concerts performed in February 2003); with the London Symphony and violist Nobuko Imai (in 1975, as part of his historic Berlioz cycle for Philips), and with the Philharmonia Orchestra and soloist Yehudi Menuhin (for EMI, in 1962). A period-instrument recording of *Harold* has John Eliot Gardiner conducting the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique with violist Gérard Caussé (Philips). Other historic accounts include a 1953 broadcast performance with Arturo Toscanini leading the NBC Symphony Orchestra and that ensemble's principal violist, Carlton Cooley (RCA), and a famous 1951 account again featuring William Primrose, with Thomas Beecham leading the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (Sony). Primrose first learned the work at Toscanini's request, for an exciting 1939 NBC Symphony broadcast that has been issued on CD (Music & Arts). Beecham also leads a lively and characterful 1956 Edinburgh Festival performance of *Harold* with the Royal Philharmonic; unfortunately this is compromised by an inadequate solo violist and dated sound (BBC Legends).

Marc Mandel

Steven Ansell

Steven Ansell joined the Boston Symphony Orchestra as principal viola in September 1996, having already appeared with the orchestra in Symphony Hall as guest principal viola. A native of Seattle, he

also remains a member of the acclaimed Muir String Quartet, which he co-founded in 1979, and with which he has toured extensively throughout the world. A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, where he studied with Michael Tree and Karen Tuttle, Mr. Ansell was named professor of viola at the University of Houston at twenty-one and became assistant principal viola of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra under André Previn at twenty-three. As a recording artist he has received two Grand Prix du Disque awards and a *Gramophone* magazine award for Best Chamber Music Recording of the Year. He has appeared on PBS's "In Performance at the White House" and has participated in the Tanglewood, Marlboro, Schleswig-Holstein, Newport, Blossom, Spoleto, and Snowbird music festivals. He teaches at the Boston University College of Fine Arts. As principal viola of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, he is also a member of the Boston Symphony Chamber Players. Mr. Ansell's solo appearances with the Boston Symphony Orchestra have included performances of Mozart's *Sinfonia concertante* for violin and viola, Berlioz's *Harold in Italy*, Bruch's Concerto for Viola, Clarinet and Orchestra, and Strauss's *Don Quixote*. He was solo violist for Berlioz's *Harold in Italy* with the BSO led by Emmanuel Krivine in October 2003; his most recent appearances as a soloist with the orchestra were in Strauss's *Don Quixote*, in February 2005 at Symphony Hall and in August that year at Tanglewood.