

**MONDAY
EVENING
CONCERTS**

**SACRED/PROFANE:
THE MUSIC OF
MICHAEL PISARO and
GUILLAUME de MACHAUT**

March 6, 2017 | 8:00 PM
Zipper Concert Hall

MONDAY EVENING CONCERTS MARCH 6, 2017

Sacred/Profane:

The Music of Michael Pisaro and Guillaume de Machaut

Michael Pisaro (b. 1961) – ***When I Hear Light*** (2016-17) World Premiere [16']

Greg Stuart, vibraphone

Guillaume de Machaut (~1300-1377) – ***La Messe de Notre Dame*** (~1365) [30']

- I. Kyrie
- II. Gloria
- III. Credo
- IV. Sanctus and Benedictus
- V. Agnus Dei

MEC Early Music Consort

Dylan Hostetter, countertenor
Joel Nesvadba, baritone
Stephen Salts, baritone
Niccolo Seligmann, vielle

INTERMISSION

Guillaume de Machaut – ***Quant j'ay l'espart*** (~1363) [4']

Dylan Hostetter, countertenor
Niccolo Seligmann, vielle

Michael Pisaro – ***asleep, desert, choir, agnes*** (2016) West Coast premiere [30']

Soloists

Michael Pisaro, electric guitar
Greg Stuart, crotales and melodica

Quartet

Christine Tivolacci, flute
Kathryn Pisaro, oboe
Cassia Streb, viola
Jennifer Bewerse, cello

The Dog Star Orchestra

Casey Anderson
Matt Barbier
Erika Bell
Emily Call
Scott Cazan
John Eagle
Julia Holter
Mari
Liam Mooney
John Pisaro
Sepand Shahab
Stephanie Smith
Laura Steenberge
Tashi Wada
Colin Wambsgans
Scott Worthington

PROGRAM NOTES by Paul Griffiths

Introduction

Is this the lesson of Guillaume de Machaut's mass, as it travels down six and a half centuries to meet us, that rituals are not handed down from above but are things we make?

Machaut may well have thought he was not making a ritual but clothing one that already existed, adorning the plainsong of the Catholic mass with polyphony for those sections of the text that were always the same, whatever the day or festival.

Now, though, we do not hear his settings in the context of a liturgy – least of all one being celebrated, as he intended, in honor of the Virgin Mary on the holiest spot in Reims Cathedral (of which he was a canon), the place where an early bishop was killed by pagans. The music has long left its purposed forum, left medieval France, left the Catholic mass, left the items of belief it declaims. No longer part of a ritual, it has become a ritual itself, one in which words originally sacred are re-enshrined in sound and time. In this sense, although it may come from long ago, it is very much here now, as starlight is.

The light from Michael Pisaro's compositions is, of course, new; this time last year, these works did not exist. Their light, however, can shine back into the past, as much as that of Machaut's mass shines on into its faraway future. Thus scanning back, they seem to hit upon the Machaut as a distant cousin.

Each of the Pisaro pieces is what the Machaut has become: a ritual existing in its own terms, a structure of sound and time.

A ritual is a sequence of events whose succession is absolutely necessary but unexplained, because needing no explanation. A ritual does not ask us to follow its progress but rather to stay still in its non-progress. A ritual welcomes repetition. A ritual is less like a story than it is like a space – a room or a landscape, whose elements are revealed, set in place around us.

There are times when we need stories. And there are times when we need rituals. [P.G.]

Michael Pisaro (b. 1961) - When I hear light

A visit to the cathedral in Reims is a stroke of good fortune. For one thing, its size guarantees that one will never see the whole exterior at once. For a first time visitor, each new face of the building as one walks around it, seems like a fresh creation not imaginable from the previous orientation. Inside the silence is crowded with echo (more reflection than source) and the light and the stone are shaded with saturated hues from both ends of the spectrum.

For the musician the place is still haunted by Guillaume de Machaut, who was canon there beginning in 1338. Perhaps doubly so in my case, as Machaut took part in the one visitation I can claim have experienced in my life. One day in 1986, while learning the rondeau "Quant j'ay l'espant" for a class at Northwestern University, I felt a slight alteration of the light, as if a spontaneous gathering of a microscopically thin layer of grey fog had entered the room. It was not a religious, perhaps not even a mystical, experience, but something physical, as if a shift in the space had allowed another atmosphere to leak in through the cracks. I suddenly felt that to enter the world of Machaut one had to see one's own world at a minimally different angle; as if hidden dimensions had preserved the past in their folds.

When I hear light (November 2016 – January 2017) is also a rondeau, in four parts. The guiding question for me was whether the vibraphone could become a voice, its silver sound both reflecting colors of various frequencies in the spectrum (sine tones) and absorbing a sustained grey breathing emanating from speakers, whose hidden sounds produce a kind of friction that rubs against the vibrations that creep from the instrument. [M.P.]

Guillaume de Machaut (c. 1300 – 1377) - La Messe de Notre Dame

Kyrie
Gloria
Credo
Sanctus – Benedictus
Agnus Dei
Ite missa est

Right from its opening, Machaut's mass acts in two ways on its text. It vigorously proclaims the first word – 'Kyrie' (Lord), we hear, from four voices locked together – but then the music absconds, exuberant through more than twenty measures (in modern notation; the fourteenth century had other ways of marking time) that require the singers simply to extend the word's closing 'e'. The meter is constantly in flux as the music of this passage swings between activity and relative rest, on long notes. What occasionally adds further to the rhythmic vitality is 'hocket', whereby one part moves against the strong beats enunciated by others; there is an example here quite soon, in one of the upper voices.

Elsewhere, a motif of two short notes descending scalewise to a longer one (or conversely rising) bounces around the three added parts: two above the tenor, which follows the original plainsong melody, and one in the tenor's own register. There are also longer-range correspondences that may not be at all as obvious. The tenor line fixes the notes of the plainsong to a rhythmic formula it presents nine times, while the other part in this lower register has a longer rhythmic subject it recycles just once (with some variations). From contemplation of God, the music turns its attention to arithmetic, which for Machaut may have been the same thing. And arithmetic, for him as for Pisaro, is measured as duration, on two levels: of note value and section length.

Isorhythm – the technique of repeatedly revolving through a sequence of note values – features in the two lower parts through much of the mass: in the four segments of the Kyrie, the Amen of the Gloria and that of the Credo, the Sanctus and Benedictus, the Agnus Dei, and the 'Deo gratias' response to the *Ite missa est*.

This final dismissal was not normally set by later composers, but in other respects Machaut's setting stands at the very start of the road leading on to Dufay in the fifteenth century, to Palestrina and Byrd in the sixteenth, and on through Bach and Beethoven to the present day.

Yet this work is also powerfully apart. In leaving words behind after its first instants, it makes a declaration by which it abides. Only the Gloria and the Credo (until in each case the concluding 'Amen' is reached) are set for the most part syllabically, so that the words are present and comprehensible – though the music's impetus seems rather to get through these relatively lengthy texts as fast as possible, except for a few words demanding emphasis, and except also for curious prelude gestures that are textless. In all other sections, the words are so far extended that they dissolve into pure sound. It is as if, in viewing a painting from this period, our gaze were being held not so much by the ostensible subject as by the gold background, by its geometry and by its luster. [P.G.]

Guillaume de Machaut - Quant j'ay l'espart

Machaut's mass is in every way exceptional. He was primarily a poet, the author of long verse narratives, of a few sacred pieces, and of four hundred love lyrics, well over a hundred of which he set to music. These lyrics follow the conventions of what has become known as "courtly love," whereby it is understood that the lady addressed is unavailable, so that the poem becomes an expression of adoration and pain. Strict conventions also governed poetic form at this period, "Quant j'ay espart" exemplifying the *rondeau*, which has eight lines, the opening line being repeated in fourth place and again in seventh, this time followed once more by what was the second line.

The musical setting – a long curving, hesitating vocal melody over a simpler part that, having no words, invites instrumental performance – follows this form, and indeed takes the constraint further, for the music for the first line is repeated not only for the fourth and seventh, following the verbal reprises, but also for the third and fifth, and the music for the second line is repeated for the sixth as well as the eighth. There are thus only two different lines of music, represented by Roman and italic type in the text below.

This presentation also shows how there are only two different rhymes as well. Each twelve-syllable line falls into three metrical feet known classically as *choriambs*, the first always ending "–art" and the last ending "–our." [P.G.]

Quant j'ay l'esp**ART**
 Son dous esp**ART**
 Car main et t**ART**
 Quant j'ay l'esp**ART**
 Et me reg**ART**
 Par son dous **ART**
 Quant j'ay l'esp**ART**
 Son dous esp**ART**

de vo reg**ART**
 en moy esp**ART**
 M'esprent son d**ART**
 de vo reg**ART**
 D'un ris qui m'**ART**
 de moy dep**ART**
 de vo reg**ART**
 en moy esp**ART**

dame d'on**OUR**
 toute douç**OUR**
 de fine am**OUR**
 dame d'on**OUR**
 Mais celle ard**OUR**
 toute dol**OUR**
 dame d'on**OUR**
 toute douç**OUR**

Michael Pisaro - asleep, desert, choir, agnes

Agnes Martin called a significant series of paintings from 1997 *With My Back to the World*. By "the World" I think she meant what we sometimes call "the real world" – of commerce and the art market, of social life and family, of media and entertainment. But there are multiple worlds, and those paintings are emissaries from another world: of solitude and quiet, of nature and light, and of an emptiness so austere that it becomes radiantly full. This is a world that, unlike the day-to-day life in cities, requires full engagement to perceive at all.

Martin abandoned New York and her painting career in 1967 (at the age of 55), and resettled in the New Mexico desert. When she began painting again in 1973 her work was markedly different: both lighter in color and mood and deeper in affect. This impression is nearly impossible get from photographs of the paintings, as it seems to lie as much in the manner in which the painting asks us to engage with it as it does with shape or color.

What I hope to do with *asleep, desert, choir, agnes* (June-August 2016) is to call up a series of sonic fragments of that world, not as they might actually have been if we'd recorded them, but as if their sonic traces had placed themselves onto one of her canvases. [M.P.]

Program notes © Paul Griffiths. Paul Griffiths is an acclaimed writer on contemporary and classical music whose books include *A Concise History of Western Music* and *The Penguin Companion to Classical Music*. He is also known as a librettist (Elliott Carter's *What Next?*) and novelist. In 2002, Griffiths was honored by the French government as a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

TEXTS

Guillaume de Machaut – La Messe de Notre Dame

I.

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

II.

Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.
Laudamus te. Benedicimus te.
Adoramus te. Glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.
Domine Deus, Rex caelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili unigenite, Iesu Christe.
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.
Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus. Tu solus Dominus.
Tu solus Altissimus, Iesu Christe.
Cum Sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen.

Glory to God in the highest,
and, peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

III.

Credo in unum Deum.
Patrem omnipotentem,
factorem caeli et terrae,
visibilium omnium et invisibilium.
Et in unum Dominum
Iesum Christum,
Filius Dei unigenitum,
Et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula.
Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,
Deum verum de Deo vero.
Genitum, non factum,
consubstantialem Patri:
per quem omnia facta sunt.
Qui propter nos homines
et propter nostram salutem
descendit de caelis.

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord,
Jesus Christ,
Only begotten Son of God,
Begotten of his Father before all worlds.
God of God, light of light,
Very God of very God.
Begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father:
by whom all things were made.
Who for us men
and for our salvation
came down from heaven.

Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto
ex Maria Virgine:
Et homo factus est.

And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost
of the Virgin Mary:
And was made man.

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato:
passus, et sepultus est.

And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate:
suffered, and was buried.

Et resurrexit tertia die,
secundum scripturas.
Et ascendit in caelum:
sedet ad dexteram Patris.
Et iterum venturus est
cum gloria iudicare vivos et mortuos:
Cujus regni non erit finis.

And the third day He rose again
according to the scriptures.
And ascended into heaven,
and sitteth at the right hand of the Father
And He shall come again
with glory to judge the living and the dead:
His kingdom shall have no end.

Et in Spiritum sanctum Dominum,
et vivificantem:
Qui ex Patre, Filioque procedit.
Qui cum Patre, et Filio simul adoratur,
et conglorificatur:
Qui locutus est per Prophetas.

And (I believe in) the Holy Ghost, Lord
and giver of life:
Who proceedeth from the Father and Son.
Who with the Father and Son
together is worshipped and glorified:
Who spake by the Prophets.

Et unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam.
Confiteor unum baptisma
in remissionem peccatorum.
Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum
Et vitam venturi saeculi.
Amen.

And in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
I acknowledge one baptism
for the remission of sins.
And I look for the resurrection of the dead
And the life of the world to come.
Amen.

IV.
Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.
Osanna in excelsis.

Holy, holy, holy
Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

Benedictus qui venit
in nomine Domini.
Osanna in excelsis.

Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

V.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.

VI.
Ite, missa est.
Deo gratias.

Go, you are dismissed.
Response: Thanks be to God.

Guillaume de Machaut – Quant j'ay l'espart

Quant j'ay l'espart
De vo regart.
Dame d'onnour.
Son doulz espart
En moy espart
Toute doucour.

When I see the flash
Of your glance.
Most noble lady.
Its sweet flame
Spreads out in me
Every delight.

Car main et tart
M'esprent son dart
De fine amour.
Quant j'ay l'espart
De vo regart.
Dame d'onnour;

For morning and night
Its dart pierces me
With tender love.
When I see the flash
Of your glance.
Most noble lady;

Et me repart
D'un ris que m'art.
Mais celle ardour
Par son dous art
De moy depart
Toute douleur.

And it rewards me
With a smile that burns me.
But this ardour
By its sweet art
Drives from me
Every pain.

Quant j'ay l'espart
De vo regart.
Dame d'onnour.
Son doulz espart
En moy espart
Toute doucour.

When I see the flash
Of your glance.
Most noble lady.
Its sweet flame
Spreads out in me
Every delight.

BIOGRAPHIES

Michael Pisaro (born 1961 in Buffalo, New York) is a guitarist and composer. He is member of the Wandelweiser collective. While, like other members of Wandelweiser, Pisaro is known for pieces of long duration with periods of silence, in the past fifteen years his work has branched out in many directions, including work with field recording, electronics, improvisation and large ensembles of very different kinds of instrumental constitution. Called "patient, unpredictable, exceedingly beautiful" by the New York Times, Pisaro's music has been featured on many recordings in the last decade. Ben Ratliff of the Times writes: "The American composer Michael Pisaro likes his music to develop as a slow-motion force, with adjustments of tone and pitch and instrumentation so long-brewing that you lose your awareness of the player's hand and the composer's will."

Pisaro has a long-standing collaboration with percussionist Greg Stuart, with over thirty projects (pieces and recordings) to date, including their 3-disc set, *Continuum Unbound* from 2014. The work together on Pisaro's evening length work for 100 percussion, *A wave and waves*, was featured at the Melbourne Festival (October, 2015) and Atlanta's Elevate festival (October, 2016), with performances at the Big Ears (Knoxville, March 25th) and Banff (July 29th) festivals scheduled for 2017. Recent portrait concerts of his music have been given in London, Paris, New York, Santiago, St. Petersburg, Lille, The Hague, Tokyo, Glasgow, Moscow, Chicago, Wrocław, Munich, Sydney, Buenos Aires, Madrid, Brussels, Montpellier, Caracas, Boston, Berlin, Houston, Bologna, Trondheim, Amsterdam, Nantes, Mexico City, Seattle and elsewhere. Recordings of his work have been released by Edition Wandelweiser Records, erstwhile records, New World Records, another timbre, slubmusic, Cathnor, Senufo Editions, winds measure, HEM Berlin and on Pisaro's own imprint, Gravity Wave.

Before joining the composition faculty at the California Institute of the Arts, he taught music composition at Northwestern University. In 2005/6 he was awarded a grant from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts. He was Fromm Foundation Visiting Professor of Music Composition at in the Department of Music at Harvard in the Fall of 2014.

Greg Stuart is a percussionist whose work draws upon a mixture of music from the experimental tradition, Wandelweiser, improvisation, and electronics. His performances have been described as "a ghostly, gorgeous lesson in how close, concentrated listening can alter and enhance perception" (*The New York Times*). Since 2006, he has collaborated extensively with the composer Michael Pisaro, producing a large body of music comprised of pieces that focus on the magnification of small sounds through recording and layering, often in combination with field recordings and/or electronic sound.

Stuart currently performs with fellow percussionists Tim Feeney and Sarah Hennies in the percussion trio, Meridian, and with computer musician Joe Panzner. Other recent collaborations include projects with Ryoko Akama, Erik Carlson, Antoine Beuger, Jürg Frey, Kunsu Shim, Phillip Bush, Nomi Epstein, Speak Percussion, and the International Contemporary Ensemble. He has appeared as a featured performer at numerous festivals and notable venues presenting experimental music including MaerzMusik (Berlin), the Melbourne Festival, Café Oto (London), Arnolfini Centre for Contemporary Arts (Bristol), Gallery Kapelica (Ljubljana), Cha'ak'ab Paaxil (Mérida), Issue Project Room (New York), REDCAT (Los Angeles), Dreamland (Louisville), Elastic Arts Foundation (Chicago), New Music Co-Op (Austin), Philadelphia Sound Forum, and Non-Event (Boston) among others. Stuart has recorded for Edition Wandelweiser, Gravity Wave, Erstwhile, Cathnor, New World Records, Accidie, L'innomable, caduc, Lengua de Lava, Crisis, and Senufo Editions.

Greg Stuart is currently an Assistant Professor at the University of South Carolina School of Music where he teaches experimental music, music history, and runs the Experimental Music Workshop.

The Dog Star Orchestra is an ensemble and a once-a-year festival of experimental music, started in 2005 by Michael Pisaro as a way of playing recent experimental music by young composers and classic pieces from the experimental tradition. Described as "messily exceptional" by the Los Angeles Times, Dog Star events happen throughout the Los Angeles area and often feature offbeat performances in out-of-the-way places, alongside more traditional concert settings. It is one of the main presenters fostering and documenting the strong local experimental music scene, as well as presenting work that would otherwise not be heard in the US. (Over the years, the orchestra has occasionally formed for single events like this one.)

The festival has also featured the US premieres of many works by the international Wandelweiser collective and presented seminal pieces from the American origins of the experimental school (Cage, Wolff, Feldman, Lucier, Oliveros, Tenney and so on). Initially curated by Pisaro alone, the summer festival grew from six concerts to, in its most recent incarnation in 2015, fifteen concerts. Beginning in 2011 the festival began to employ multiple curators drawn from people who had participated in previous years. In most years upwards of 60 musicians participate as composers and performers. The local following for the series has also grown substantially over the twelve years of its existence.

This year's festival will run from June 3 to June 17 and, as in past years, will occur in a great variety of locations in and around Los Angeles. (<http://dogstarorchestra.com>)

Dylan Hostetter was born in Indianapolis and is now a resident of Los Angeles. He started singing in the Anglican tradition of boys' choirs at Christ Church Cathedral Indianapolis, and went on to study voice with Paul Elliott and Paul Hillier at the Early Music Institute at Indiana University. He has sung with the Pro Arte singers, Theatre of Voices, and was a founding member of the Concord Ensemble. He later joined the award-winning ensemble Chanticleer, with whom he recorded and toured internationally for six years. A lover of all kinds of music, he currently freelances as a composer, producer and arranger, and moonlights as a singer and songwriter.

Baritone **Joel Nesvadba** (pronounced "nes-VAHD-ba") is a passionate performer of early music, especially that of the Medieval and Renaissance eras. He has toured both nationally and internationally, singing with The Boston Camerata, The Broken Consort, Bach Collegium San Diego, and The Texas Early Music Project. Last spring, he was soloist with the Boston Camerata's "The Night's Tale", a show The Boston Globe praised for its "rousing theater" and exclaimed "...very few evenings are as rewarding." He has also performed at the San Francisco Early Music Society's Berkeley Festival and Exhibition, the Amherst Early Music Festival, and the Boston Early Music Festival with Early Music America's Young Performers Festival Ensemble. In addition to early music, Joel is active in contemporary popular music. He has worked with the electronic artist and DJ Moby as a background vocalist, guitarist and pianist. He is currently completing a Doctorate of Musical Arts in Early Music Performance at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music.

Stephen Salts is a professional musician based in Los Angeles. He has earned three degrees including a Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance from Florida State University, Master of Music in Choral Conducting from the Cole Conservatory of Music at California State University-Long Beach (Summa cum laude), and Master of Music with Highest Distinction from one of the leading music departments in the United Kingdom at Royal Holloway-University of London. He studied conducting with Dr. Jonathan Talberg (USA) and Rupert Gough (UK), and singing with Larry Gerber (USA) and Mark Wilde (UK). Stephen has also benefited greatly from a year of vocal coaching with members of the King's Singers.

In 2014, Stephen was awarded the prestigious Fulbright scholarship to research the Anglican choral tradition in England. Living in London, Stephen conducted the Royal Holloway Founder's Choir, and sang with the internationally acclaimed Choir of Royal Holloway, for whom he was the Assistant Conductor. He has recorded and produced albums of choral music, performed on BBC radio and television, sang for Her Majesty The Queen, integrated with the conducting program at the Royal Academy of Music, and conducted choirs throughout the USA and Europe.

Stephen is a professor at Riverside City College, Master of Choristers at St Wilfrid's Church in Huntington Beach, and a regular performer with many professional choirs in southern California. He is an active member of the American Choral Director's Association and the American Guild of Organists, and is the Creative Director of southern California's *Howells125 Festival*.

Niccolo Seligmann's musical experience transcends time, place, and genre. Equally at home playing Bach in a church, taqsim at a Persian Nowruz party, and electronic chaos metal in a sweaty basement, he thrives on the communication between musical traditions. You can hear him play 4 different instruments on the soundtrack to award-winning PC game Civilization VI. His early music improvisations have been featured on WGBH Boston, WYPR Baltimore, and on Sunday Baroque's 2013 Christmas compilation CD. Having graduating from Peabody Conservatory in 2015, he continues to tour across North America playing viola da gamba and vielle with ensembles such as Alkemie, The Broken Consort, Divisio, Hesperus, and The Peabody Consort. He enjoys teaching viola da gamba and vielle at UCLA, Curiosity Crossing in Portland, Oregon, and in his private studio. 2016 marks the beginning of his live-coding chaos metal side project, LADYPRODUKT, which looks forward to going on an east coast tour in the summer.

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