



MESSIAEN COMPLETE

17 november 2018, Stavanger concert hall

Olivier Messiaen's organ music - 9 hours, 8 organists

More and more often, Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992) is referred to as the most important organ composer of the 20th century. Many regard him as the greatest in this genre since Bach. He developed a strong, highly personal musical idiom, bridging challenging dissonances with the most ethereal beauty. 110 years after Messiaen's birth, Stavanger Concert Hall will present all his organ works in one day.

The concert spans 9 hours in total, from 15:00 to 24:00. It will be divided between 8 renowned international organists, representing three generations: Jennifer Bate (UK), Thomas Ospital (FR), Lidia Książkiewicz (PL/FR), Kåre Nordstoga (NO), Thomas Lacôte (FR), Nils Henrik Asheim (NO), James McVinnie (UK), Colin Mark Andrews (UK/USA). This will be the first time ever such an event is staged, internationally.

Free flow between 2 halls - a presentation for ear, eye, body and soul

The concert will take place in two rooms simultaneously. In the orchestra hall (Fartein Valen), the organists will perform live and the audience will be seated as in a conventional concert. The neighbouring hall (Zetlitz), a large "black box" venue, will operate more like an arts installation space where the public can move freely around.

In this space, the organ sound will be diffused through a three-dimensional "loudspeaker dome" and transformed by various artificial acoustic models. The hall will contain different zones where the public will be allowed to move around, meditate, walk, sit or even lie down, personalizing their own experience of the music and involving with it in an active way. In the adjacent foyer there will be access to food and refreshments.

Visual design - light and video projections

Both halls will be subject to light and video design by Boya Bøckman, most known for his work in the theatre company De Utvalgte. In 2012 his video design for this group won the Hedda Prize, Norway's most prestigious theatre prize, "for having created a staggering beautiful three-dimensional universe... letting a rich and diverse imagery allow for infinite variety of associations"

The organ of Stavanger concert hall

The concert hall of Stavanger, Norway's 4th largest city, was built in 2012. It is equipped with an excellent 65 stop organ, built by Ryde&Berg, Fredrikstad, that has become one of the major assets of the house. A considerable number of international organists have performed on it over the past five years. New programme concepts are being developed, and through this Stavanger Concert Hall aims to be in the international forefront in exploring new roles for the concert hall organ.

Conclusion - across the borders of music

Messiaen's lifework for the organ, written over 50 years, shows a remarkable consistency and stands out as a self-contained whole. At the same time, so many aspects of Messiaen's art points towards testing the borders of music. We could name his use of birdsong, his way of connecting colours with sounds, his aim to express the miraculous and ecstatic in religion, his fascination for the overwhelming elements of landscape, his integration of opposites as the ascetic and the sensual, and finally his concern with the intersection between time and eternity. All of this encourages a view of Messiaen's music as an open entity that deserves to be re-interpreted, contextualized and experienced in new ways. This is where the project Messiaen Complete will try to contribute.

www.stavanger-konserthus.no/messiaen-complete/

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The organists: Jennifer Bate, Thomas Ospital, Lidia Książkiewicz, Kåre Nordstoga, Thomas Lacôte, Nils Henrik Asheim, James McVinnie, Colin Mark Andrews.