



CARTE BLANCHE CONCERT IV:

Into the Light:
Jorja Fleezanis, violin

JULY 28

Sunday, July 28, 6:00 p.m., The Center for Performing Arts at Menlo-Atherton

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Violinist Jorja Fleezanis curates and leads this summer's fourth Carte Blanche Concert, examining music's mysterious power to give voice to the human condition, from our darkest and most introspective moments to our most radiant. Devoutly religious and spending much of his creative life in service of the church, Bach viewed even human tribulation as a vessel for spiritual fulfillment. The exuberance of even a secular work such as the Violin Concerto in E Major can only be heard as an expression of praise and profound joy. Likewise, the deeply spiritual Messiaen's Theme and Variations offers a plaintive melody ecstatically transfigured. Mozart's moody g minor String Quintet casts these joyful expressions in stark relief, and the program culminates in Handel's *Eternal Source of Light Divine* and Bach's transcendent *Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen*. A cohort of festival artists joins Jorja Fleezanis in this multifaceted look at the depth of Bach's art and the greater power of music to lift the spirit.

SPECIAL THANKS

Music@Menlo dedicates this performance to the memory of Michael Steinberg.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

Violin Concerto in E Major, BWV 1042 (ca. 1723)

Allegro
Adagio
Allegro assai

Jorja Fleezanis, *solo violin*

Arnaud Sussmann, Sean Lee, *violins*; Paul Neubauer, *viola*; Dmitri Atapine, *cello*; Gloria Chien, *harpsichord*

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

String Quintet no. 4 in g minor, K. 516 (1787)

Allegro
Minuetto: Allegretto
Adagio ma non troppo
Adagio – Allegro

Jorja Fleezanis, Sean Lee, *violins*; Paul Neubauer, Sunmi Chang, *violas*; Laurence Lesser, *cello*

INTERMISSION

OLIVIER MESSIAEN (1908–1992)

Theme and Variations for Violin and Piano (1932)

Thème modéré
Variation 1: Modéré
Variation 2: Un peu moins modéré
Variation 3: Modéré, avec éclat
Variation 4: Vif et passionné
Variation 5: Très modéré

Jorja Fleezanis, *violin*; Gloria Chien, *piano*

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685–1759)

Eternal Source of Light Divine, HWV 74 (1713)

Elizabeth Futral, *soprano*; David Washburn, *trumpet*; Jorja Fleezanis, Kristin Lee, *violins*; Sunmi Chang, *viola*; Dmitri Atapine, *cello*; Hyeyeon Park, *harpsichord*

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen, BWV 51 (ca. 1730)

Aria: Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen!
Recitative: Wir beten zu dem Tempel an
Aria: Höchster, mache deine Güte
Chorale: Sei Lob und Preis mit Ehren
Aria: Alleluia!

Elizabeth Futral, *soprano*; David Washburn, *trumpet*; Jorja Fleezanis, Kristin Lee, *violins*; Arnaud Sussmann, *viola*; Laurence Lesser, *cello*; Hyeyeon Park, *harpsichord*

Program Notes: Into the Light

I have always been fascinated with how music affects the mood of the mind, soul, and spirit, how it transports us from where we were before hearing a masterpiece to a place very different after it is over. As a result of a life of listening to and living in music, I am primed to anticipate what is likely to happen to me when I hear a particular work. Let's take, for instance, Schubert's great song cycle *Winterreise*. If the artists in front of me are doing their job to transmit the human journey through the dark and light of each song, and I am actively present, there is no way I can escape the confrontation with the words, their sensitive musical depictions, and their ability to elevate me to where their meaning lies. This is the point of art, presenting us with a language that engages our many emotional temperatures, whether we call it hot or cold, light or dark, uplifting or painful, frivolous or profound, sublime or a surface to admire. The festival's centering around Bach offers us a chance to witness how this master infuses these diametrically opposed expressions into both his secular and his sacred works.

My Carte Blanche Concert will start with the secular Bach, his E Major Violin Concerto. The outer movements dance and engage in a physical energy that rocks rhythmically, cleverly bouncing the music back and forth from soloist to orchestra. The music in both of these movements is bright and upbeat, with only a few passing dark clouds. Sandwiched in the middle is a movement that could easily be lifted out of a cantata where the text is filled with loss and suffering. It takes us to E major's dark side of c-sharp minor and suddenly we seem light years (no pun intended) from the romping joy of the first *Allegro*.

We then move to one of the most adept users of light and dark, Wolfgang A. Mozart, in one of his most touching chamber works, the g minor Viola Quintet. If you were to watch the emotional weathervane in this work, you would see it turning from the dark pangs of restlessness, perhaps brought on by love lost or betrayal, to the sunny emergence of optimistic reconciliation. For me he is the master of the emotional light and dark show.

My decision to add Messiaen's voice into this program came about simply because his music is inspired by celestial content, whether specified as such or not. Messiaen's all-encompassing devotion to Roman Catholicism is fused into his music much as Lutheranism is in Bach's music. This shared spiritual connection was crucial to me in adding this piece, together with the remarkable way Messiaen's plaintive and yearning opening **theme** is then carried through four **variations** to a final one that restates the theme in extreme exaltation.

The Handel excerpt *Eternal Source of Light Divine*, from his secular cantata celebrating the birthday of Queen Anne of England, introduces the power of words and voice to invoke the holiness of the divine. The high soprano and trumpet duet is a brief but miraculous bit of transcendence.

The program ends with triumphant jubilation in Bach's Cantata no. 51. What could be more sacred, and equally secular, than a virtuoso high trumpet part helping the soprano to announce the words "Shout for joy to God in every land"? Bach is so clever in employing the right instrument and voice type to generate the meaning of his texts as he does here, blending the high soprano and nimble high trumpet to create sonic brilliance that gives praise of the highest order. When he wants to be more introspective in the inner movements, he retires the trumpet's heralding and lowers the lights, only using strings, and in the aria he dims things even more to the darker tones of the cello and bass **continuo**—light to dark and back to light, simple and yet essential ingredients that power the music of this program.

—Jorja Fleezanis

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

(Born March 21, 1685, Eisenach; died July 28, 1750, Leipzig)

Violin Concerto in E Major, BWV 1042

Composed: ca. 1723

Other works from this period: Six Suites for Solo Cello, BWV 1007–1012 (ca. 1720); Sonata no. 3 in C Major for Solo Violin, BWV 1005 (ca. 1720); Partita for Flute in a minor, BWV 1013 (1723); *Brandenburg* Concerti, BWV 1046–1051 (1721)

Approximate duration: 17 minutes

From early on in his musical life, Johann Sebastian Bach demonstrated a broad and insatiable musical curiosity—which, combined with his great intellectual capacity, allowed him to master the musical dialects of numerous foreign cultures, without ever leaving Germany. One of the foreign styles with which Bach became intimately acquainted is that of the Italian concerto. Prior to his tenure in Cöthen from 1718 to 1723, Bach diligently studied the works of such composers as Arcangelo Corelli, the acclaimed seventeenth-century violinist and composer who played a key role in the development of the Baroque concerto grosso style, and Antonio Vivaldi, whose bright and flamboyant style is evident in Bach's concerto writing. Upon his appointment by Prince Leopold of Cöthen, who commissioned Bach to write secular music for the court, Bach produced a wealth of concerti and sonatas, including the *Brandenburg* Concerti. Like the *Brandenburgs*, the Violin Concerto in E Major, likely written in 1723 and later arranged for keyboard in 1729 as BWV 1054, exemplifies the deep influence of the Italian concerto on Bach during this period.

The concerto's opening *Allegro* is written in the Italian **ritornello** form, where the opening theme frequently returns in full or in part, at times in different keys. The theme begins with three striding E major chords and then seamlessly moves into a buoyant melody. After a full statement of the melody, the solo violin emerges and remains tame and at bay with the accompanying orchestra until the first tutti in a minor key. The solo violin gradually unveils itself as a virtuosic character, tendering an exposed unaccompanied passage after the second minor-key episode. A somber pause ushers in the return of the tutti in the tonic key of E major.

The *Adagio* opens with a lugubrious melody by the cello and continuo. This pensive and sorrowful melody finds its way to each instrument yet never reaches the solo violin part, though Bach writes brief **motifs** in the solo part that flirt with this theme. While the orchestra provides a seemingly melancholy, almost lifeless, theme, the violin divulges a heartfelt and passion-filled countermelody, creating an emotional dialog between the two voices.

The *Allegro assai* finale is in a Baroque **rondo** form, a precursor to the Classical-era rondo form. Similar to a Classical rondo, the theme is presented in E major after each solo violin episode, but the Baroque rondo always presents the theme with the full ensemble in the tonic key. Though delightfully simplistic in form, the solo violin lacks nothing in virtuosity and charm, making for an enchanting conclusion.

—Andrew Goldstein

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

(Born January 27, 1756, Salzburg; died December 5, 1791, Vienna)

String Quintet no. 4 in g minor, K. 516

Composed: 1787

Other works from this period: Symphony no. 36 in C Major, K. 425 (1783); String Quartet in G Major, K. 387 (1782); String Quartet in d minor, K. 421 (1783); Piano Quartet in g minor, K. 478 (1785); *Don Giovanni*, K. 527 (1787); Symphony no. 41 in C Major, K. 551, *Jupiter* (1788)

Approximate duration: 33 minutes

Moving to Vienna in 1783, Mozart was soon to begin the most successful years of his career. He was in the highest demand of his career as a performer and composer, notably performing thirteen times in the Esterhazy court in 1784 alone. Joseph Haydn wrote to Leopold Mozart around this time, "Before God and as an honest man I tell you that your son is the greatest composer known to me either in person or by name. He has taste and, what is more, the most profound knowledge of composition" (February 1785). Mozart's budding popularity was then elevated by the debuts of some of his now most cherished works: *The Marriage of Figaro*, the *Prague* Symphony, and the Piano Trio in G Major, K. 496, among many others. As 1787 unfolded, Mozart began preparing to write his next operatic masterpiece, *Don Giovanni*, when Leopold became fatally ill. Wolfgang wrote in a letter to his father:

As death, when we come to consider it closely, is the true goal of our existence, I have formed, during the last few years, such close relations with this best and truest friend of mankind, that his image is not only no longer terrifying to me but is indeed very soothing and consoling.

With Leopold's death two weeks later, the String Quintet in g minor, dated May 16, 1787, was one of Mozart's most personal works. It was composed during a time of deep inner turmoil and unfathomable sorrow as Mozart, still in Vienna while his father passed in Salzburg, witnessed from afar the decline of his only remaining parent.

The quintet is in g minor, a key which for Mozart carries the distinction of anguish. Other works in g minor, such as his earlier Piano Quartet no. 1 (1785) and his later Symphony no. 40 (1788), carry a similarly severe tendency. Straightaway, one notices a sense of urgency in the opening *Allegro*, characterized by falling **chromatic** phrases and sustained by pulsing eighth notes from start to finish. The violin begins the beguiling yet dour theme, which is then echoed by the viola. A partial statement of the theme in the cello flows immediately to the second theme, also in g minor. The second theme finds relief in the key of B-flat major but remains doleful, flirting with a return to g minor. The **development** section is followed by a substantial **recapitulation** and **coda** containing rolling lines underneath each theme.

The minuetto embarks in the same austere manner in which the *Allegro* concluded. Yet even here, Mozart refuses to impart any source of relief. The fluid melody is violently interrupted with a stark diminished chord, accented on the third beat of the measure, making this very unlike a typical dance **minuet**. The trio that follows, in G major, thematically derives from the minuetto, borrowing melodic portions and **cadences** from the earlier themes. The *Adagio ma non troppo* is unlike a typical *adagio*, providing some sense of relief, as if Mozart has found a source of peace amidst his wretchedness. The final movement begins with another *Adagio* section, returning the work to the somber key of g minor. As in the opening *Allegro*, the accompaniment provides a steady pulsing motion, adding a sense of drama to the melancholic and soaring violin melody. After a halting transition, the *Allegro* finale provides a completely contrary sentiment to the three movements that preceded it. A

buoyant rondo in G major brings a long-awaited resolution to an otherwise dark piece, perhaps indicating Mozart's resolve to end his inner plight.

—Andrew Goldstein

OLIVIER MESSIAEN

(Born December 10, 1908, Avignon; died April 28, 1992, Paris)

Theme and Variations for Violin and Piano

Composed: 1932

Other works from this period: *Fantaisie burlesque* (1932); *Pièce pour le tombeau de Paul Dukas* (1935); *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* (1940–1941)

Approximate duration: 10 minutes

At the dawn of the twentieth century, Paris was a hotbed of musical ingenuity. It became the epicenter of an artistic battleground in which countless composers feuded over the direction of modern composition. The modernist composers collectively known as *Les Six*, including Darius Milhaud and Francis Poulenc, were among the day's leading musical innovators. Their contemporaries included the likes of the **Impressionists**, including the composers Maurice Ravel and Claude Debussy (though Debussy notably despised the term "Impressionist"); the heavy German post-**Romantics** such as Richard Wagner; the New German School, personified by Franz Liszt; and the **Expressionists** of the **Second Viennese School**.

It was into this impassioned feud that the young Olivier Messiaen exited the Paris Conservatoire in 1930, having already mastered the innovations of such composers as Debussy, Berlioz, and Wagner. Rather than conforming to the style of Debussy, whom he admired, Messiaen developed a distinct and highly individual harmonic language of his own, based on the "modes of limited transposition"—a series of seven **modal** scales—beginning with some of his earliest works, including the Theme and Variations for Violin and Piano, written in 1932.

Messiaen began his Theme and Variations shortly following his marriage to violinist and composer Claire Delbos in June 1932; he intended to perform the work alongside his wife as a wedding gift on November 22, 1932, at a concert sponsored by the Cercle Musical de Paris. He finished the work on November 17, five days before it was scheduled to premiere. Messiaen wrote to a friend, "...my wife and I will give the first performance of my *Thème et variations* for Violin and Piano. It would be very nice of you to come along and make lots of noise so that this work—one of my best yet—gets an encore. Unless you would prefer to whistle, which would make just as much noise."

The work opens with an unaltered statement of the theme, succeeded by five variations on that theme. Harmonically, Messiaen calls on two of his seven modes of limited transposition, which he later published in his book *La technique de mon langage musical* (*The Technique of my Musical Language*) in 1944: Mode 3 and Mode 7.

Example 1: Mode 3: characterized by three whole steps, separated from each other by two half steps.



Example 2: Mode 7: characterized by two whole steps, separated from each other by three half steps.



The commonality between the two modes is eight notes (C, D, E-flat, E, F-sharp, A-flat (G-sharp), B-flat, B), making any changes between modes

subtle to the listener. The *Thème modéré* begins in Mode 3 and is divided into three subsections: two seven-measure phrases and one fourteen-measure phrase. Variation 1 keeps the same mode and phrase structure as the theme but adds some harmonic and rhythmic tension as it gets louder.

Variations 2 and 3 modulate to Mode 7. The second variation consists of two alterations of the theme's fourteen-measure phrase and one of the opening phrase. Variation 3 then further disintegrates the theme, serving as the centerpiece and climax of the entire work.

As the violin plays a beckoning melody shallowly resembling the theme, Variation 4 brings a return to the familiarity of Mode 3. The piano, first in duple **meter**, adds a rhythmic edge by catapulting to triple meter. The final measures of the fourth variation metamorphose into the fifth and final variation, a grand statement of the theme in half time. The piano's pulsing, monotonous accompaniment, alongside the soaring violin theme, brings closure to the work.

—Andrew Goldstein

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

(Born February 23, 1685, Halle, Germany; died April 14, 1759, London)

Eternal Source of Light Divine, HWV 74

Composed: 1713

Other works from this period: *Il pastor fido* (1712); *Water Music*, HWV 348–350 (1717)

Approximate duration: 3 minutes

Reveling in the success of his first trip to London (1710–1711) and the recent success of his operas there, the German-born George Frideric Handel decided to make his residence in London in 1713, leaving his post as **Kapellmeister** to the German prince George (who in 1714 would become King George I). Besides being infatuated with the culture of Great Britain, the young composer set his sights on London after a pivotal event on January 6, 1713, the birthday of Queen Anne. Up until this point, although enjoying substantial public success, Handel was very much an outsider to the composition scene of London. Upon invitation by Queen Anne, Handel joined the royal court in celebration of her birthday, a traditionally festive occasion for the premiere of new compositions. It was for this occasion that Handel composed his *Ode to the Birthday of Queen Anne* (*Eternal Source of Light Divine*).

Though the ode debuted to mixed reviews, Queen Anne was sufficiently satisfied that she commissioned Handel to write a setting of the State Service of Morning Prayer, a traditional English text used to mark a victorious battle. Handel wrote three settings of the text, which debuted several months before the close of the War of the Spanish Succession in September 1714. The queen was unable to attend the performance due to a sudden onset of gout; nevertheless the settings were met with greater public acclaim than the ode. Handel, now well known in both the private and public composition scenes, was almost immediately offered a permanent post in the queen's house with an annual pay of two hundred pounds.

Eternal Source of Light Divine is a through-composed **aria** for high tenor and was premiered by Richard Elford from the choirs of Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral. Since Handel's time, it has been adapted for alto and transcribed for soprano, as we hear in this evening's program. The full work is in nine movements, each movement after the first ending with the line "The day that gave great Anna birth who fix'd a lasting peace on earth." With its heavenly soaring melodies and pure, uplifting vowels, the voice seamlessly floats above the placid accompaniment. The singer achieves this pureness of tone technically by deploying open vowels, a method of placing the tongue low in the mouth, allowing the sound to swell uninhibited. The opening text, "Eternal source of light divine," aside from

adding stature to the phrase "to add a lustre to this day" (i.e., the birth of Queen Anne), also quite literally refers to Handel's devout faith in God, the divine. The work is just as much a testament to Handel's indisputable faith in God as it is a reflection of his affection toward Great Britain.

Eternal source of light divine,
With double warmth Thy beams display,
And with distinguished glory shine,
To add a lustre to this day.

—Andrew Goldstein

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen, BWV 51

Composed: ca. 1730

Other works from this period: Violin Sonata in G Major, BWV 1021 (1732–1735); Sonata for Flute and Violin, BWV 1038 (1732–1735); Concerto for Two Pianos in C Major, BWV 1061 (1723–1735); Concerto for Violin and Oboe in c minor, BWV 1060 (1736); *The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 2*, BWV 870–893 (ca. 1740)

Approximate duration: 20 minutes

One of Bach's most famous sacred cantatas, *Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen* (*Praise to God of all the Earth*) was first performed on September 17, 1730, on the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel. Scored for soprano, trumpet, strings, and continuo, the work is somewhat of a rarity in the sacred cantata repertoire. At the time, most sacred works were originally written for male voices, and if higher voices were necessary, young boys would sing the alto or soprano parts. Bach, however, called explicitly for a woman soprano, and *Jauchzet Gott* is one of only four sacred works intended for soprano.

After losing ten children and a wife by 1720, Bach was well accustomed to the presence of death. Furthermore, given Bach's faith, death was not a catastrophic event but rather a joyous reunion with God. This sentiment is evident in the surprisingly joyous and peaceful sentimentality that Bach incorporates into this work. The opening aria, in A-B-A form, begins with an exuberant duet between the soprano and trumpet in the joyous key of C major. The soprano begins with a declamatory "Jauchzet!"—"joyfully praise!" The movement shifts to the key of a minor, maintaining the same ornamental style in the voice and string accompaniment.

In contrast, the slow **recitative**, *Wir beten zu dem Tempel an*, is a pensive reflection on God's blessings. The melancholy accompaniment does little to support the sanguine text, which is offering praise to God. The slow movement serves as a beautiful prayer in preparation for the flowing *Höchster, mache deine Güte* aria. It is here that Bach's apprehension towards death is more audible, yet the lyrics—which are likely of his pen—are a solemn commitment to God:

Most High God, make your goodness new every morning from now on.
Then to your fatherly love a thankful spirit in us in turn
through a devout life will show that we are called your children.

The fourth movement, *Sei Lob und Preis mit Ehren* ("May There Be Praise, and Glory, and Honor"), is a return to the fervent radiance of the opening aria and seamlessly flows into the final *Alleluia*, a short **fugue** beginning with the soprano and then the trumpet. The fugue concludes with a grand C major chord, offering the highest exclamatory praise to God.

—Andrew Goldstein

Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen!
Was der Himmel und die Welt
An Geschöpfen in sich hält,
Müssen dessen Ruhm erhöhen,
Und wir wollen unserm Gott
Gleichfalls itzt ein Opfer bringen,
Dass er uns in Kreuz und Not
Allezeit hat beigestanden.

Wir beten zu dem Tempel an,
Da Gottes Ehre wohnt,
Da dessen Treu,
So täglich neu,
Mit lauter Segen lohnet.
Wir preisen, was er an uns hat
getan.
Muss gleich der schwache Mund
von seinen Wundern lallen,
So kann ein schlechtes Lob ihm
dennoch wohlgefallen.

Höchster, mache deine Güte
Ferner alle Morgen neu.
So soll vor die Vätertreu
Auch ein dank bares Gemüte
Durch ein frommes Leben weisen,
Dass wir deine Kinder heissen.

Sei Lob und Preis mit Ehren
Gott Vater, Sohn, Heiligem Geist!
Der woll in unsver mehrten,
Was er uns aus Gnaden verheisst,
Dass wir ihm fest vertrauen,
Gänzlich uns lass'n auf ihn,
Von Herzen auf ihn bauen,
Dass uns'r Herz, Mut und Sinn
Ihm festiglich an hangen;
Drauf singen wir zur Stund:
Amen, wir werdn serlangen,
Glaub'n wir aus Herzensgrund.

Alleluia!

Praise to God of all the Earth!
Whatever of heaven and earth;
All creatures He keeps
Must raise up this praise,
and now we shall likewise
bring an offering to our God,
since He has stood with us
at all times during affliction and
distress.

We pray at your temple,
where God's honor dwells,
where this truth,
daily renewed,
is rewarded with loud blessing.
We praise what He has done for us.
Even though our weak mouth must
gape in awe of His wonders,
our meager praise is pleasing to
Him.

Highest, renew Your goodness
henceforth every morning.
Thus, before this fatherly love,
I present a grateful conscious
by my pious life,
that we can be called Your children.

Glory, and praise with honor
to God the Father, Son, and Holy
Ghost!
He will increase in us
what He has promised us by grace,
so that we may trust in Him,
and rely completely on Him,
and build our hearts on it
so that our hearts, will, and mind
may cling steadfastly to Him.
Therefore we sing at this hour:
Amen, we shall obtain,
if we believe from deep in our
hearts.

Alleluia!

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