

For immediate release

Tomorrow (Aug 5): Alan Gilbert conducts Messiaen's "Canyons" on new recording

Contact Glenn Petry (212) 625 2038

gpetry@21cmediagroup.com

Alan Gilbert Conducts Messiaen's *Des canyons aux étoiles...* on New Album Available Tomorrow (Friday, Aug 5), Recorded Live at Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival



Last summer, as Artist-in-Residence of the **Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival**, [Alan Gilbert](#) led an all-star orchestra of **44 superlative musicians** – his frequent collaborator Israeli pianist **Inon Barnatan** among them – in an account of **Olivier Messiaen's** monumental and otherworldly twelve-movement, 90-minute orchestral masterpiece, *Des canyons aux étoiles... (From the Canyons to the Stars...)*. Marking a major milestone in the festival's history, the performance – featuring the largest ensemble ever gathered there for a single work – was **recorded live** for release **tomorrow (Friday, August 5)** on the **Entertainment One Music** label. Click [here](#) to hear an excerpt from the new recording.

Marc Neikrug, the festival's artistic director, captures the significance of the live performance and recording:

"This monumental work falls into a niche that is very difficult to program. The forces it demands are too small for the average symphony concert, but way too large for most chamber music concerts. When it is programmed by symphonies, the performers are, of course, the normal roster of the orchestra. For our presentation **I wanted to assemble the utopian ensemble, hand-picked over a year, from the best possible players for each and every instrument.** I also ensured that we provided an unusual and abundant amount of rehearsal time. And **I entrusted this epic endeavor in the festival's history to Alan Gilbert with the confidence that he would provide an illuminating and transcendent performance. It's captured here in all its glory.**"

Commissioned by art patron Alice Tully for the U.S. bicentennial and premiered at Lincoln Center in 1974, *Canyons* celebrates the awe-inspiring beauty of the great canyons of southwest Utah, which include Cedar Breaks, Bryce Canyon, and Zion National Park. Encompassing a characteristically Messiaenic mix of birdsong, modernist experimentalism, and religious mysticism, the work expresses the composer's faith in the power of nature to communicate the very essence of God. Messiaen drew inspiration from an unlikely source: photos of Bryce Canyon and its bright red rocks, which he happened upon in the picture book *Wonders of the World*. Then in spring 1973 he and his wife, pianist Yvonne Loriod, toured southern Utah and experienced firsthand the setting's majesty and the myriad sounds of the canyon and desert landscapes. As the composer explained,

"Having left the canyons to climb to the stars, I had only to keep going in the same direction to raise myself up to God. So my work is at once geological, ornithological, astronomical, and theological. **Despite the importance of color and birds, it's above all a religious work of praise and contemplation.**"

On the new recording, Alan Gilbert, who launches his eighth and final season as Music Director of the New York Philharmonic next month, conducts an orchestra that includes many of his close musical friends and collaborators. In a work requiring staggering virtuosity from all players, **Inon Barnatan** plays the notoriously challenging piano part, including the fourth and ninth movements (*Le cossyphé d'Heuglin* "The white-browed robin-chat" and *Le moqueur polyglotte* "The mockingbird"), both of which are scored for solo piano. The Israeli pianist has worked with Gilbert on numerous projects throughout his career, and is currently serving a three-year residency as the New York Philharmonic's inaugural Artist-in-Association. He and the conductor look forward to reuniting in the coming season to continue recording Beethoven's Five Piano Concertos with London's Academy of St. Martin in the Fields.

The new album also showcases **Philip Myers**, renowned Principal Horn of the New York Philharmonic, in the haunting sixth movement (*Appel interstellaire* "Interstellar Call"), for solo horn. Likewise, **Daniel Druckman**, who holds a New York Philharmonic percussion chair, and

Jeffrey Milarsky, founding music director of AXIOM, are featured prominently throughout the nine remaining movements, on xylorimba and glockenspiel respectively. A complete list of the orchestral musicians follows below.

Alan Gilbert observes, "Honestly it's hard to imagine a more stellar group of musicians coming together to play this fiendishly difficult work. Many performances of Messiaen's music stop at the level of mere precision. What these musicians brought to the music was an unusual warmth and depth of feeling. **This recording is one of my proudest achievements.**"

For high-resolution photos, click [here](#).

www.alangilbert.com

www.facebook.com/GilbertConducts

www.twitter.com/GilbertConducts

Olivier Messiaen (1908 – 1992)

Des canyons aux étoiles... ("From the canyons to the stars...")

Label: Entertainment One Music

Release date: Friday, August 5

Alan Gilbert, conductor

Inon Barnatan, piano

Daniel Druckman, xylorimba

Jeffrey Milarsky, glockenspiel

Philip Myers, horn I

Part 1:

1. Le désert ("The desert")
2. Les orioles ("The orioles")
3. Ce qui est écrit sur les étoiles ("What is written in the stars")
4. Le cossyphe d'Heuglin ("The white-browed robin-chat")
5. Cedar Breaks et le don de crainte ("Cedar Breaks and the gift of awe")

Part 2:

6. Appel interstellaire ("Interstellar call")
7. Bryce Canyon et les rochers rouge-orange ("Bryce Canyon and the red-orange rocks")

Part 3:

8. Les ressuscités et le chant de l'étoile Aldebaran ("The resurrected and the song of the star Aldebaran")
9. Le moqueur polyglotte ("The mockingbird")
10. La grive des bois ("The wood thrush")
11. Omao, leiiothrix, elepaio, shama ("Omao, leiiothrix, 'elepaio, shama")
12. Zion Park et la cité céleste ("Zion Park and the celestial city")

Orchestra:

Jennifer Gilbert, violin I	Katherine Kohler, E-flat clarinet
Harvey De Souza, violin II	Michael Rusinek, clarinet I
Kathleen Brauer, violin III	Todd Levy, clarinet II
Daniel Phillips, violin IV	Mark Dubac, bass clarinet
Joel Link, violin V	Nancy Goeres, bassoon I
Bryan Lee, violin VI	Theodore Soluri, bassoon II
Kimberly Fredenburgh, viola I	Toni Lipton, contrabassoon
Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt, viola II	Leelanee Sterrett, horn II
L. P. How, viola III	Julie Landsman, horn III
Kajsa William-Olsson, cello I	Ethan Bensdorf, D trumpet
Felix Fan, cello II	Christopher Stingle, C trumpet I
Camden Shaw, cello III	Charley Lea, C trumpet II
Kristen Bruya, double bass	Peter Ellefson, trombone I
Tara Helen O'Connor, piccolo	Mark Fisher, trombone II
Joshua Smith, flute I	Andrew Chappell, bass trombone
John McMurtery, flute II	Robert Klieger, percussion I
Bart Feller, alto flute	Jeffrey Cornelius, percussion II
Liang Wang, oboe I	Joseph Ferraro, percussion III
Robert Ingliss, oboe II	Angela Gabriel, percussion IV
James Button, English horn	Gregg Koyle, percussion V

Recorded August, 2015 at The Lensic, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Produced by Susan Napodano DelGiorno

Engineered by Matthew Snyder

#

© 21C Media Group, August 2016