

The background of the entire page is a soft, atmospheric illustration of a forest. In the foreground, dark silhouettes of various evergreen trees are scattered across the lower half. Beyond them, rolling hills and more distant forested mountains are visible, shrouded in a thick, pale mist or fog. The sky is a light, hazy yellow, suggesting a dawn or dusk setting. The overall mood is quiet and contemplative.

A Silent Wood

Olivier Lattion

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DISC 1

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20. A SILENT WOOD (Fender Rhodes version)

04:46

COEUR À COEUR

prelude for piano, composed in November 2016

Piano:

Olivier Lattion

As recitalist, I like to begin a programme with 'Für Alina' by Arvo Pärt and then continue straight into the next piece without a break. This little musical ritual enables me to create a first contact with the audience. For me it is important to put myself in the position of the listener because the pianist must listen very carefully to 'Für Alina' to be able to play the piece the way it is intended. I then reconnect with my instrument so that I now feel able to contain or even overcome the 'bad' stage fright that prevents me from finding in myself the resources I need to convey the emotions of the piece to my audience.

A fellow pianist once suggested to me that the calming effect of Arvo Pärt's work was perhaps due to the first notes, which the pianist has to make 'vibrate' very strongly in order to release a lot of tension. This gave me the idea of composing a piece of my own that would help me make the kind of contact with the audience that I search for at the beginning of a recital and to establish a heart-to-heart relationship.

The title, of course, describes the contact that musicians must make with their audience. The first notes, simulating an agitated heartbeat, become progressively calmer and subsequently establish a constant and even hypnotic acoustic base on which the musician places mysterious, floating chords.

A SILENT WOOD

for piano, composed in February 2016

Piano (CD 1):

Olivier Lattion

Fender Rhodes

(CD 2):

Olivier Lattion

This piece is dedicated to the memory of my brother, Thierry, who died too young at the age of 46. In this piece, I want the listener to hear echoes of certain pieces of music that I discovered in my adolescence in the mid-1970s. These years were the heyday of 'Progressive Rock' with the music of Yes, King Crimson and especially Genesis that fascinated me with the energy it generated and the magic of its sounds.

In this piece I try to reproduce at the piano the shimmering sounds created by the combination of several 12-string guitars playing simultaneously in the way Genesis did in their first albums or, even more systematically, as Anthony Phillips did in his solo recordings.

The title of this piece is taken from Elizabeth Siddal's poem 'A Silent Wood'.

A L'UNISSON DU CIEL

for piano, composed in January and February 2016

Piano:

Olivier Lattion

For me, as probably for all composers who confess to one or other form of spirituality, the act of composing music is not as solitary as it may seem. When I revisit a piece of music I had written some months or years previously, I sometimes have the feeling that I am not its sole composer. In fact, I have the distinct feeling that it is impossible that I could be the only one to have worked on it!

To be 'at one with the universe' therefore means being in touch with the source of creativity that enables me to go beyond my own abilities (technique, knowledge, sensitivities, etc.). Such transcendence can only originate in a higher creative force... a feeling of connection that I feel especially strongly in this piece with its pronounced mystic impulses. It is written as a tribute to Jehan Alain, a profoundly spiritual composer whose work and personality resonate within me in a very special way.

LE CHÂTEAU DES BROUILLARDS

for two pianos, composed in January 2013

Pianos:

[Olivier Lattion](#)

[Laetitia Lattion](#)

Inspired by the famous building in Montmartre where many artists have lived, including the great painter Auguste Renoir, I composed this piece for my daughter Laetitia, who at the time had only been playing the piano for three years. I therefore wrote a relatively easy part for the first piano and a significantly more demanding part for the second piano.

I tried to translate into music the impressions that the title suggests: very chromatic and misty musical language that evokes a mysterious, even disturbing atmosphere corresponding to the dismay that the residents of Montmartre must have felt when they saw the inexplicable vapours and clouds issuing from this grand old building.

SHADOWS AND VOICES FROM THE SUN

for piano, composed in December 2012 and January 2013

Piano:

Olivier Lottion

This quite dark and anxious piece is absolutely not a musical portrait of Guy-Philippe Ayer, who was a radiant and joyful person, but rather a description of the disarray into which his accidental death plunged not only me but everyone who knew and loved him.

As a tribute to Guy-Philippe, I slipped into my composition two allusions to pieces he had written for D.I.F., the jazz fusion group he founded in the 1980s.

Interesting anecdote: I had already chosen the title and written the first 15 bars of this piece long before I had the idea of adding these musical quotations. Almost immediately after, I found in the large volume of D.I.F. scores the two extracts that would allow me to continue with this short piece: 'Cold Light' and to finish, 'Voices'. Only later did I notice the parallelism between the title of my composition 'Shadows and Voices from the Sun' and those of the two pieces written by Guy-Philippe!

MERVEILLEUX NUAGES

for violin and piano, composed in October and November 2016

Violin:

Iván Zepa

Piano:

Olivier Lottion

Written for my violinist and improviser colleague, François Karth, this piece fully evokes the adventure that composing a piece of music is for me. Starting with the mood created by the piano introduction, the piece then develops almost impressionist atmospheres that I had not at all intended originally. As composer, I have neither the intention of knowingly borrowing already explored musical language from the past nor of systematically rejecting such language. In the case of 'Merveilleux nuages', however, I remain with the feeling that what I had to express should be written in this way, and I ended up developing a great affection for this piece, which I find expressive and full of emotion.

The title is taken from the novel 'Les merveilleux nuages' by Françoise Sagan, which she in turn had borrowed from Charles Baudelaire.





DYNAMIC CURVE PRELUDES

Two preludes for fortepiano or modern piano, composed in September and October 2016

Piano:

Olivier Lattion

I wrote these pieces as preparation for a course on fortepiano given by Dirk Börner at the Fribourg Conservatory of Music, in Switzerland, in November 2016.

While writing them I was inspired by an important characteristic of the fortepiano: the distinctly different registers (colour and character of sound) over the range of the keyboard, in contrast to the modern piano which produces a much more homogeneous sound. Furthermore, with the fortepiano, the volume of sound tends to diminish towards the upper end of the keyboard to a greater extent than it does with the modern piano.

Thus, when played on the fortepiano these two preludes produce a wide range of nuances and colours without the musician necessarily seeking to create them – on the contrary, it is important to allow the registers of the instrument itself to take charge naturally of the dynamic diversity in the music (jumps of register, accompanying arpeggios towards the top or bottom notes...).

In the version for modern piano, I suggest a range of dynamic indications designed to emulate the effects that are natural to the pianoforte. The pianist is, of course, free to accept or not the scheme of nuances I suggest.

These pieces are dedicated to Dirk Börner as a tribute to his great human, artistic and pedagogical qualities.

CINQ HAÏKUS

for piano, composed in October and November 2012

Piano:

Olivier Lattion

‘Cinq Haïkus’ is the first composition I published. Although I had been very creative in my improvisations – which enabled me to dispense with a score that at times I found excessively constraining – until then I had never felt any need to commit my musical imagination to paper. Then one night I saw myself in a dream with surprising clarity composing music, setting down and giving form to ideas that had always come to me naturally when improvising. The desire and need to write then grew, became rooted within me, and have since never left me.

Given my lack of practical experience in writing music, letting myself be inspired by minimalist poems such as haikus seemed reassuring to me. These five pieces have somehow gone beyond the original idea of extreme conciseness linked with a strict economy of means, without, nevertheless, becoming excessively complex.

KARMA

for piano and percussion, composed in November and December 2016

Percussion:

Gonzague Ruffieux

Piano:

Olivier Lottion

This piece, which is dedicated to my daughter Marie, is to a large extent inspired by the instruments used to perform it: a shamanic drum and a series of eight Tibetan bowls. I occasionally play these instruments myself in conjunction with the piano at my improvisation concerts. The structure of the piece is a simple alternation between very wild passages, which remind the listener of the recourse in Shamanism to a frenzied and repetitive style of playing the drum, and of other very meditative moments that combine the magic and vibrant sounds of the Tibetan bowls with the harmonies and resonances of the piano.

DOUZE PIÈCES FACILES D'APRÈS JULES VERNE

for piano, composed in March and April 2017

Piano:

Daphné Widmer

Fragnière

The origin of 'Douze pièces faciles d'après Jules Verne' was the desire to compose a compilation of atmospheric studies for piano pupils who have already been playing for some years. The pedagogical repertoire for the piano is full of studies and other pieces written to develop finger technique. I wanted to write pieces that would help young pianists develop their imagination, sense of freedom and their palette of sounds, while being sufficiently rich and interesting musically for them to be played in a recital by experienced musicians.

Each piece is based on a passage from one of Jules Verne's novels that have a special power to evoke musical images in me, the composer, and, hence, the performer.

This compilation is dedicated to Daphné Widmer Fragnière, a colleague, friend and former pupil, in recognition of her extraordinary musical, pedagogical and artistic talents (she is also an excellent designer and illustrator).

SONATE SPATIALE

pour piano, composé de janvier à mars 2017

Piano:

Etienne Murith

The idea to write a piece inspired by the 'Star Trek' universe was given me by the pianist Etienne Murith, to whom the 'Sonate Spatiale' is dedicated. In searching for a starting point for my composition, I asked him to tell me about some decisive moments or events in his youth. During this conversation, he talked to me about the film 'Star Trek: The Motion Picture', the first full-length film that he had especially liked, in particular the music (by Jerry Goldsmith). As a science fiction fan, the idea grabbed me immediately and I subsequently watched the film several times to fill my mind with the atmosphere of the film.

I then selected seven key moments of the film that would inspire me for each movement of the sonata: The piece begins with dark and threatening atmospheres in the first movement, entitled *La nuée. Kolinhar*, the second movement, describes through a very free use of certain principles of serial music composition (mixed with an omnipresent harmonic and melodic thread) the conflict within the character of Spock, part human part Vulcan, who is constantly torn between pure logic and emotions. The third, *Le vaisseau Enterprise*, evokes the grandiose image of a space vessel floating majestically through space. The strange, angular, though feminine, appearance of *Ilia*, in the fourth movement inspired in me a melody that presents the same characteristics and is taken up again in the sixth movement, *Le robot Ilia*, this time accompanied by an unchanging and

mechanical ground bass (ostinato) symbolising her transformation into a robot by the entity V'Ger.

The fifth movement, *La spirale*, describes through a series of repetitive motifs ranging in volume from pianissimo to fortissimo (the number of which is left to the performer to decide), the scene in which the 'USS Enterprise' is drawn into an almost catastrophic spatial-temporal spiral.

Concluding the piece, the movement entitled *Voyager* describes with its floating and airy character the voyage of the probe of the same name through an infinite and ethereal space.



Recorded between October and December 2017 by Gonzague Ruffieux in the concert hall of the Fribourg Conservatory and at Castle Life Studio, Fribourg, Switzerland.

The two Model D Steinways used for the recordings were tuned and maintained by Paul Lahme.

Mixing and mastering: Gonzague Ruffieux and Olivier Lattion, Castle Life Studio

Produced by Olivier Lattion and Gonzague Ruffieux

Graphic design (CD and sheet music): David Gfeller

English translation of the composer's notes: Hugh Brown

I would especially like to thank the following people:

Florence Yerly, Gonzague Ruffieux, Daphné Widmer Fragnière, Laetitia Lattion, Etienne Murith, Iván Zerpa, David Gfeller, Paul Lahme, the staff of Fribourg Conservatory, Guy and Chantal Lattion, Sandra and Marie Lattion, Thierry Lattion (†), Guy-Philippe Ayer (†), Father Henri-Marie and the entire community of the Hauterive Abbey, Paule Podkladov, Karl Engel (†), Francis and Betty Corpataux, Patrick Moraz, Matteo Mengoni, Daniel Gaggioli, Jean-Louis Fabre, Sabine Margueron, Dr Marc Peignier, Silvia Profeti Michel, René, Joris Bressan, Max Jendly and Caroline de Gottrau, Françoise and René Murith, Gerardo Vila, François Karth, Jean-Claude Charrez, Quentin Chevigny, and so many others...

This recording is dedicated to Florence Yerly and to all of you who listen to it, if possible in a quiet and dimly lit room...

Sheet music is available at: www.editions-rochebrune.com.

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