

Music

AT HOLY TRINITY
316 East 88 Street, New York City
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Dr. Stephen Jon Hamilton, Artistic Director

OPENING NIGHT CONCERT

SONOS Chamber Orchestra

Erik E. Ochsner
conductor

Stephen Hamilton
organist

Thursday, November 15, 2001

8:00 PM

Music at Holy Trinity presents ...
11th Season Gala Opening Night Concert

featuring

Stephen Hamilton, Organ

Pamela Ajango, English Horn

&

SONOS Chamber Orchestra

Erik E. Ochsner, Music Director

Thursday, November 15, 2001 8pm

— PROGRAM —

Samuel Barber (1910-1981) **Adagio for Strings op. 11** (1936)
** After the piece, there will be a moment of silence, please no applause.*

Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992) **Tanti Anni Prima (“Ave Maria”)** (1984)
Orchestrated by Lajos Lencsés
Pamela Ajango, English Horn

Arthur Honegger (1892-1955) **Symphony No. 2** for strings and trumpet (1941)
Molto Moderato — Allegro
Adagio mesto
Vivace, non troppo

— Intermission —

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957) **Andante Festivo** (1922)
Arr. for string orchestra and timpani (1939)

Franz Waxman (1906-1967) **Sinfonietta** for string orchestra and timpani (1955)
Lento — Allegro
Lento (Dirge)
Scherzo — Finale

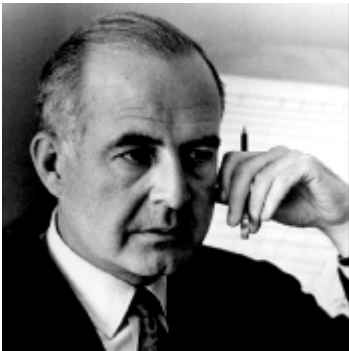
Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) **Concerto for Organ in g minor** for string orchestra, timpani and organ (1938)
Stephen Hamilton, organ

Please join us for a reception immediately following the performance.

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

By Brian Wise

It's an often-repeated truism that 20th century music became difficult, complex or dissonant because of a certain historical inevitability. An era defined by violent revolutions, the rise of dictatorships, and two colossal struggles to "end all wars," gave composers no choice but to respond with music that expressed man's hostility, alarm or outrage. Certainly, the anxiety of a society on the eve of a global conflict has frequently been seen at the root of the Expressionism, Russian primitivism, Italian Futurism, or any other number of movements. Yet there were plenty of composers who reacted to turbulent times with genuine expressions of order and simplicity. It is not too fanciful to suggest that the need to bring a sense of order in periods of chaos can partially explain the themes of spirituality, nostalgia or even escapism adopted by many 20th century composers – six of which are featured on this evening's program.



American composer **Samuel Barber** served a brief wartime stint in the Army Air Force during the 1940s and had previously spent many summers vacationing in Europe. Though he maintained a healthy interest in the abstract modernism of Boulez, Schoenberg and Webern, he remained stubbornly resistant to foreign influences and pursued his own lush Romanticism with integrity. His most popular work, the **Adagio**

for Strings, is a prime example, a gravely beautiful elegy built on a long, winding melody leading to a radiant climax. The work began as the central movement of the String Quartet, Op. 11; the composer re-scored it at the request of the conductor Arturo Toscanini, who gave the first performance of the arrangement in 1938 with the NBC Symphony Orchestra. This string orchestra version has been extremely popular as film music, most recently in Oliver Stone's film *Platoon*.

Like Barber, **Astor Piazzolla** was well traveled – an urbane world citizen who studied composition with Nadia Boulanger and Olivier Messiaen in Paris during the 1950s. Paradoxically, it was Boulanger who guided Piazzolla back to his Argentinean roots and specifically, the tango. Soon he began writing works that blended the tango with jazz, classical and other "serious" forms of music. Piazzolla had a long and vital career in this mode, writing new works up until his



death in 1992. In 1984, he was commissioned to write **Tanti anni prima** ("Many years ago") for the Marco Cellocchio film "Henry IV, the Mad King," starring Marcello Mastroianni and Claudia Cardinale. A simple but affecting piece with a soaring melody, it finds the composer at an inspired peak. Reportedly, while living in Paris, he was neighbors with Arthur Honegger.



Although **Arthur Honegger** held a Swiss-French dual citizenship, his music often had a more earnest, Germanic flavor. A case in point is his **Symphony No.2**, an overtly dark, somber work that is often interpreted as an intense reaction to the Second World War. The Symphony was commissioned in honor of the 10th anniversary of the Basle Chamber Orchestra, although it strikes a tone not of celebration but of mourning and consolation. Noteworthy are the frequent echoes of J.S. Bach, particularly in the final movement's employment of a

chorale-like *cantus firmus*. The first movement features a haunting, dirge-like motif built on three notes, heard repeatedly on the violas before evolving into an energetic, pulsating subject. These thematic ideas are reworked in the middle movement, *Adagio mesto*, beginning softly and developing in an expanded linear fashion. The finale, *Vivace non troppo*, features motoric, accompanying rhythms and a soaring trumpet and string melody, which intones a Bach-like chorale at its climax.



War clouds were forming when **Jean Sibelius** emerged from an extended retirement on New Year's Day, 1939, to conduct the premiere of his newly arranged **Andante Festivo** for strings and timpani. The performance was part of a live radio broadcast to America as a greeting to the world at the World Exhibition in New York. At first it would have seemed that Sibelius was less than ecstatic about the occasion, arriving late to the Helsinki radio station where it was to be recorded, and taking only one chance to rehearse the resident

orchestra. Yet he clearly saw the work's aptness as an emotional balm to a world about to be torn apart by war, imploring the musicians to "play with more humanity." Such is the sublime beauty of this 5-minute gem, whose tone has an almost sacred gravity. To this day, it is played in Finland during solemn state occasions, as it was during Sibelius's own funeral, estimated to have been attended by over 70,000 people.



On December 24, American composer and conductor **Franz Waxman** would have turned 95; this occasion provides an ideal vantage point to look back at one of his finest concert works, the *Sinfonietta* for string orchestra and timpani, composed at the height of the cold war in 1955. Waxman took the work with him when he was chosen by the U.S. State Department to be the first American conductor to lead a major orchestra in the Soviet Union. Waxman was an interesting choice for this privilege, being one of Hollywood's most valued

composers and winner of two Academy Awards. At any rate, the performance was a hit with the Soviets, and the orchestra asked for a copy of the score. The *Sinfonietta* has dark-hued quality reminiscent of Waxman's *film noir* scores, particularly the opening Allegro movement, with its intense contrapuntal writing for the strings. The Lento second movement is a dirge-like song with a heavy tread in the timpani, and the finale, an astringent, edgy Scherzo is dominated by a fugue, with a five-note figure as a cantus firmus.



A number of factors prompted **Francis Poulenc** to write his magnificent **Organ Concerto**, not the least being the looming outbreak of World War II. Just as crucial was the composer's re-conversion to the Roman Catholic faith of his childhood, an experience brought on by the death of his friend Pierre-Octave Ferroud in a car accident. The Organ Concerto is a sober work conceived in the spirit of the north German style of organ fantasias, with free alternating sections of various tempos, textures, and

colors played without pause. Yet it is hardly a musty exercise in nostalgia: Poulenc, as Roger Nichols has noted in the *New Grove*,

"leads the solo instrument from Bach's G minor Fantasia to the fairground and back again." In the course of seven sections, the Concerto explores the wide dynamic range and tonal possibilities of the organ, as well as many structural possibilities of organ-orchestra collaboration. As if to underscore its modernity, Poulenc includes calculated inelegances – sonorities that run slightly askew, occasional harmonic anachronisms, and the like. The work's premiere was given with organist Maurice Duruflé; though icily received at first, it now holds a well-established place in the repertoire.

MEET THE ARTISTS



Concert organist, **Stephen Hamilton**, is Minister of Music at the Church of the Holy Trinity (Episcopal), in New York City, where he is organist and conducts the semi-professional Holy Trinity Choir and is Artistic Director of *Music at Holy Trinity*, the church's subscription concert series.

Hamilton gave the premiere performance of Kenton Coe's *Concerto for Organ, Strings and Percussion* at the Festival du Comminges, France, with the Orchestra Capotole de Toulouse, Jean-Pierre Marty, conducting, and presented the American premiere with the Manhattan School of Music Chamber Orchestra, Glen Cortese,

conducting, at the Church of the Holy Trinity. He has performed with the Detroit Symphony under David Zinman in Ford Auditorium at the invitation of the National Convention of the American Guild of Organists, and has appeared with regional orchestras in the concertos of Handel, Mozart, Rheinberger, Poulenc, Saint-Saëns, Barber, Hindemith and Strauss.

Hamilton concretizes throughout the United States under the auspices of Phillip Truckenbrod Concert Artists. His recordings include Marcel Dupré's *Chemin de la Croix* and the 1996 release of "Great Organs of New York" that features Kenton Coe's *Fantasy for Organ* recorded on the Rieger organ at The Church of the Holy Trinity.

Hamilton is Dean of the New York City Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. Hamilton is also a member of the music faculty of the Browning School and Hunter College, and a member of the artists faculty of the Mannes College of Music.



This past summer, SONOS Music Director **Erik E. Ochsner** was an apprentice conductor with the Los Angeles Opera on tour to the Savonlinna Opera Festival (Finland). He apprenticed his mentor, Robert Spano, at both the Chicago Lyric and Houston Grand Operas. He has also served as Finnish diction coach for the soloists and chorus for the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra's performances of Sibelius' *Kullervo*; under Robert Spano. He has been

an Assistant Conductor of the Bayreuth International Youth Festival in Germany, working with the Youth Opera Orchestra, and Chorus. He has been an Assistant Conductor of the Round Top Music Festival in Texas for four years and studied with Charles Bruck at the Pierre Monteux School for five years. Mr. Ochsner has worked with Gustav Meier, Christopher Hogwood, Erich Kunzel, Marin Alsop, Efrain Guigui, and Roderick Brydon. Born in Würzburg, Germany, to a Finnish mother and American/Swiss-German father, Erik is a graduate of Dartmouth College, and resides in New York City.



Oboist/English Hornist **Pamela Ajango** is an active orchestral and chamber musician in the United States and abroad. She has performed with the New York Philharmonic, the New Jersey Symphony, the New York Wind Soloists, the Eos Orchestra, the Stamford Symphony, and for numerous Broadway productions and studio recordings. In 1998, Ms. Ajango was the visiting Lecturer of Oboe at the University of Virginia, and served as principal oboe of the Charlottesville Symphony Orchestra and the Albermarle Ensemble, the faculty

quintet-in-residence. She has been a featured soloist with the Boston Civic Symphony and the Manhattan Chamber Sinfonia. In 1998, she won first prize at the Greek Women's National Music Competition, held in Chicago. In 1999, Ms. Ajango was invited to perform at the Millennium Gala Concert of the Nations, an orchestra comprised of principal players from around the world, in a benefit held at Avery Fisher Hall. She has worked (as principal oboe) with the noted conductors Kurt Masur, Robert Shaw, Robert Spano, Marin Alsop, Christopher Hogwood, Lukas Foss, Raymond Leppard, and Pinchas Zukerman. Her oboe mentors include Ralph Gomberg, Joseph Robinson, and Steven Taylor. She holds the Bachelor of Music degree from Boston University, a Master's in Orchestral Performance

from the Manhattan School of Music, and is currently pursuing the Doctor of Musical Arts degree at SUNY Stony Brook. Also active in education, Ms. Ajango is the assistant oboe instructor at the Manhattan School of Music, and has a private studio of oboe students. She is co-founder of the newly formed SONOS Chamber Orchestra in New York.

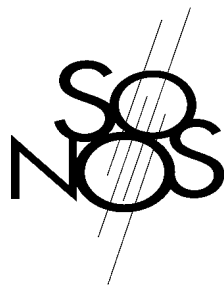
SONOS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

SONOS Chamber Orchestra is a flexible and versatile group of artists devoted to the performance of mostly classical music in the New York City area. SONOS is dedicated to the exploration of innovative educational strategies through the performance of music in the schools, and to developing artistic potential in communities. We are primarily musicians, collaborating with singers, dancers, artists, actors, choreographers, & videographers.

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Grand Orgue			Recit	
Bourdon		16	Flûte	8
Montre		8	Salicional	8
Flûte		8	Céleste	8
Prestant		4	Flûte	4
Doublette		2	Sifflet	1
Grosse Fourniture		VII	Basson	16
Fourniture	V	1 1/3	Hautbois	8
Cymbale	V	1	Trompette harmonique	8
Cromorne		8	Clarion harmonique	4
Trompette		8		
Clairon		4	Tremolo	
	Positif			Pedale
Flûte		8		
Principal		4	Montre	16
Larigot		1 1/3	Bourdon	16
Mixture	IV	1	Principal	8
Cornet	V	8	Kontrabombarde	32
Trompette		8	Bombarde	16
Chamade		8	Trompette	8

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