

Beyond the End of Times

Quartet for the twentyfirst century

in memory of Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)

Composed by

Peter Bjuhr

2008

violin, clarinet, violoncell, piano

written for

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It is easy to see how the twentieth century could be considered "the end of times". Never before had humanity seen such cruel and extensive wars and such a vast technical evolution. Life had changed for everyone and forever. It was also the end of a millenium, and twenty centurys had past from the birth of Christ. If there was a God maybe this was an appriorate time to end it all.

The title and the whole of this work is a reference to Olivier Messiaen's work "Quartet for the end of times (Quatuor pour la fin du temps)". Messiaen was a religious man and was also prisoned during the war while he wrote his famous piece. Hearing his quartet you can clearly imagine his position and his feelings and thoughts.

Now it is the twenty first century and it is obvious that humanity survived into the new millenium. The future is in our own hands, but we feel instead an accelerating worry about how the future generations will be affected by the damage done in the previous century. If the tweintieth century man didn't believe that it was the end of times, he surely acted as it was...

This piece is basically formed by three different sections (or themes):

The first section (*the techonological theme*) is not build upon Messiaen's quartet as much as on Messiaen in general. It uses scales from his "modes of limited transposition". The strings uses a whole-tone scale, the piano a dim-scale and the clarinet a scale which is Messiaens own. This section also features (pizzicato) harmonics in the strings.

The second section (*the powerlessness theme*) has more direct references to Messiaen's quartet. It uses the typical 16ths pulse chords in the piano and also utilizes some very short fragmented quotations.

The third section (*the humanity theme*) has in contrast much less references to Messiaen. It tries to capture the feeling of despair and hopelessness we can feel today. It constitutes of a Dm11(b13) chord held over several bars.

After the basic material is presented the themes are rearranged and varied throughout. The last time the humanity theme is heard it has been transformed into something more hopeful, yet the cello is presenting a threatening figure. The piece ends as it begins with the technological theme leaving the future still in obscurity.

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Disillusioned (♩ = c. 54)

Violin

Clarinet in B \flat

Cello

Piano

p

pizz.

arco

p

8vb
con Sca.

A

Violin: The Violin part begins with a melodic line in the treble clef, marked *p*. It features a trill on the final note of the first phrase. The second phrase starts with a *pizz.* marking and includes a **A** section. The Clarinet in B \flat : The Clarinet part is in the treble clef, marked *p*, and contains several triplet markings. The Cello: The Cello part is in the bass clef, marked *p*, and includes a *pizz.* marking followed by an *arco* section. The Piano: The Piano part is in grand staff, marked *p*, and features a quintuplet in the right hand and an *8vb con Sca.* marking in the left hand.

8 **B**

arco

3

8

8

8

8

poco cresc.

p

u.c.
senza sc^{a}

expr.

13 **C**

mf

mf

mf

mf

con sc^a

D

ff

f

ff

f

f

sim.

t.c.
senza sc^{a}

Very expressive and rather crude

19 *sim.*

Vln.

B♭ Cl.

Vlc.

Pno.

24 **E**

Vln.

B♭ Cl.

Vlc.

Pno.

p

subito p

expr.

p

u.c. subito p

29

Vln. *mf*

B♭ Cl. *mf*

Vlc. *mf*

Pno. *mp* *mf* *p*

con Sca

t.c.

G

36

Vln. *p* *pizz.* *arco* *p*

B♭ Cl. *p* *gliss.*

Vlc. *p* *pp* *p*

Pno. *p* *gentile* *mp*

u.c.

H

43

Vln. *agitated* *f* *sim.*

B♭ Cl. *f*

Vcl. *f*

Pno. *ff* *t.c.*

48

Vln. *ff* *sul pont.* *mf* *Delicately ord.* **K**

B♭ Cl. *mf*

Vcl. *ff* *pizz.* *arco sul pont.* *mf* *ord.*

Pno. *mf* *8^{vb} - 1 senza C^{ca}*

54

Vln. L

B♭ Cl.

Vlc.

Pno. *mp* *con Xeo*

8vb *8vb* *8vb*

59

Vln. *pizz.* M *arco*

B♭ Cl.

Vlc.

Pno.

N

64

Vln.

B \flat Cl.

Vcl.

Pno.

u.c.
senza *l*ea

O

68

Vln.

B \flat Cl.

Vcl.

Pno.

mf

mf

mf