Les Percussions de Strasbourg

www.percussionsdestrasbourg.com

Fiftieth Anniversary Tour 2011

In 1962, six classically trained musicians founded the ensemble Les Percussions de Strasbourg to explore the wide range of percussion instruments available in Western, Asian and African traditions and the rich possibilities they suggested for use in contemporary music.

Works were soon being dedicated to them by Messiaen, Serocki, Kabelac, Xenakis, Mâche, Dufourt and other leading-edge composers. An early coup for the group was its virtuosic performance with only six performers of Varèse's 13-player work, *Ionisation.* The performance—pre-approved by the composer—was a huge success. Nearly fifty years later, the group has changed personnel, but Jean-Paul Bernard (artistic director), Claude Ferrier, Bernard Lesage, Keiko Nakamura, François Papirer and Olaf Tzschoppe remain committed to exciting performances of contemporary masterworks, especially through long term, interactive partnerships with young composers, the exploration of theatrical and dance collaborations, youth training programs through residencies and masterclasses, the development of new technologies and to continually re-thinking the form of percussion recitals and contemporary music concerts in order to keep the spirit and style of presentation fresh.

Les Percussions de Strasbourg command a repertory of more than 250 works by such 20th century luminaries as Harrison Birtwistle, John Cage, André Jolivet, Ed Campion, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Karl Heinz Stockhausen, Philippe Manoury, Iannis Xenakis and Georges Aperghis as well as by today's emerging composers, and presents them in a variety of recitals, multi-media shows and theatrical spectacles. Their discography includes more than 16 recordings including solo performances, collaborations with Ju Percussion Group of Taiwan, film scores, performances with orchestra, and an homage to Olivier Messiaen with Yvonne Loriod, conducted by Pierre Boulez.

To celebrate their first fifty years, Les Percussions de Strasbourg are embarking on an ambitious three year anniversary project to include theater pieces (Michaël Jarrell's *Le Père,* with video), dance (Xénakis' *Pléiades)*, operetta (Rapheël Cendo's *Pippo Delbono)* an orchestral commission, a tryptich of works by Hugues Dufourt, Luca Francesconi & Jonathan Harvey (an electronic piece) and Salvatore Sciarrino, a concert of works by young composers, and Ahmed Essyad's *La passion de Mirrida,* a multi-cultural collaboration with eighteen Moroccan singers and percussionists and an ensemble of twelve voices, as well as a 50th anniversary festival in the city of Strasbourg.

During their 50th anniversary tour of North America in February and March 2011, Les Percussions de Strasbourg will present performances and workshops at Lincoln Center, (New York City), EMPAC (Troy, NY), the State University of New York at Buffalo, Soundstreams Canada (Toronto), Place des Arts (Montréal), Boston University, The French Embassy (Washington D.C.), Cal Performances (Berkeley) and the University of Washington (Seattle).

The group is planning a tour of Asia to take place before 2013.

The North American tour will feature Gérard Grisey's *Le Noir de l'Étoile* (1991), a full length work which Les Percusssions de Strasbourg have performed regularly around the world, including a recent performance in Mexico 'under the stars' for an audience of 5,000.

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