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**INTRODUCING THE PROGRAM**

# *Soothing Shockwaves*

**THE REMARKABLE HISTORY** of 20th-century music would have taken a quite different course were it not for two masterpieces from which, many would argue, it all grew. To hear Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* alongside Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* is to marvel at the extreme contrast between Debussy's delicate evocation of a sensuous afternoon in the forest and Stravinsky's savage vision of prehistoric Russia. Yet both were unmistakably modern, and both composed for a Paris audience that was nothing if not culturally aware. Parisians were enthralled by Debussy's poetic imagination — and both thrilled and outraged by Stravinsky's uncompromising modernity.

There is an equally strong contrast between the two works in the first half of this weekend's concerts. Takemitsu's evocative *Dream/Window* from 1985 is a direct descendant of Debussy's sound world. The Japanese composer's high standing among composers of the late 20th century rests securely on his dedication to nature (a garden, in this case) and his sensitivity to beautiful sound.

Takemitsu's quest for the world of the spirit was no less sincere than Bach's, yet to move from a dream-world to Bach's no-nonsense declaration of faith introduces a complete shift of sonority. This kind of shock is based on surprise, not the shock of outrage that Stravinsky's famous work once let loose.



A drawing  
by Pablo Picasso  
of Igor Stravinsky.

—HUGH MACDONALD

*Hugh Macdonald is Avis H. Blewett Professor of Music at Washington University in St. Louis and is a noted authority on French music. He has written books on Beethoven, Berlioz, and Scriabin.*

# Dream/Window

composed 1985



BY

**Tōru  
TAKEMITSU**

BORN

October 8, 1930

Tokyo

DIED

February 20, 1996

Tokyo

**IN THE HEART** of Kyoto, once the imperial capital of Japan, stands an ancient Buddhist temple called Saiho-ji, next to an equally ancient garden famous for its mosses. It offers a striking refuge from the modern city all around it, with the headquarters of many familiar hi-tech companies nearby. When the Kyoto Shinkin Bank commissioned a new orchestral work from Japan's leading composer in 1985, Takemitsu, was drawn to exploring this very garden as inspiration because he had always loved Japanese gardens and had already composed some works in which gardens are the principal theme.

This piece, *Dream/Window*, views the garden in two ways: as in a dream, and as seen through a window. This binocular view reflects a further binary opposition between the inner life and outer reality. The city itself embodies a violent contrast between modern activity and ancient values of repose and contemplation, but in the music we are less aware of this striking contrast and more drawn to the subtle overlap of this double vision. The music repeats itself and reveals itself in a seemingly incoherent manner, as Takemitsu said, like the fragments of a dream. He added: *"To make the inner and the outer resound simultaneously is the prime object of the music. Accordingly, it was necessary to alter the arrangement of the orchestra from the standard. The form of the music resembles that of a dream. While the details are clearly defined, their arrangement is left up to the fortuities of the self-propelling narrative."*

The score requires a solo group (flute, clarinet, and string quartet) to be at the front in the center. They represent the "inner self" and also stand as a microcosm of the entire orchestra, in Takemitsu's plan. Behind them are seated the two harps, celesta, and guitar, and behind these players, at the back, are the orchestral winds. The strings are to be divided into two equal groups and placed left and right.

Although Takemitsu had very early been associated with the European post-World War II avant-garde, his music gradually moved closer to the visionary style of the French composer Olivier Messiaen, whose influence is clearly heard in this work, with its evocative and beautifully layered harmonies. In addition, Takemitsu never lost sight of his obsession with the sound-world inherent in Debussy's music — and the delicacy

and restraint of *Dream/Window* will surprise many who expect something more aggressive from an avant-garde composer of the 1980s. Takemitsu did sometimes write for Japanese traditional instruments, but he was more often content, as here, to exploit the amazing range of sounds and pitches to be obtained from the large modern symphony orchestra.

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## At a Glance

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*Takemitsu wrote Dream/Window in 1985 for a commission underwritten by Kyoto Shinkin Bank. It was first performed on September 9, 1985, in Kyoto, Japan, played by the Kyoto Municipal Symphony Orchestra conducted by Seiji Ozawa.*

*This work runs about 10 minutes in performances. Takemitsu orchestrated it for a solo group of flute, clarinet, and string quartet, plus a main orchestra consisting of 3 flutes, 3 oboes, english horn, 3 clarinets, 3 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, percussion (vibraphone, tubular bells, glockenspiel, suspended cymbals, antique cymbal, Chinese cymbal, triangles, gongs, tamtams, bass drum) 2 harps, celesta, guitar, and strings.*

# Mass in F major, BWV233

composed 1735-40



BY

**Johann Sebastian  
BACH**

BORN

March 31, 1685  
Eisenach, Germany

DIED

July 28, 1750  
Leipzig

## At a Glance

*Bach wrote this Mass between 1735 and 1740. It is among a group of four Masses that Bach wrote to Latin texts. Because Bach was a devout Lutheran, they were for many years referred to as "Lutheran Masses," but may well have been created as commissions for use in Catholic churches.*

*This Mass runs about 30 minutes in performance. It calls for an orchestra of 2 oboes, 2 horns, strings, and continuo, plus a chorus and three solo singers.*

**COMPARED TO** the well-known Mass in B minor, Bach's four shorter Masses are rareties, but for all the wrong reasons. Although they are much shorter and therefore easier to rehearse and perform than the big B minor, and although they offer much more rewarding choral material than most of Bach's cantatas, it has always been known that the music is all, or nearly all, recycled from earlier works — and thus the taint of inauthenticity hangs over them. But Bach would never turn to music that was not worthy of him, and, in any case, he was incapable of writing music that isn't brilliantly alive on every page.

In the late 1730s, Bach, the devout Lutheran, evidently had a reason to write four Latin Masses. He had always been in the habit of borrowing from his own vast repertoire of earlier music, but at this point in his life (he was in his fifties) he lacked the inclination to compose new works unless the motivation came from within. That is argument enough for supposing that the Masses were commissioned, and the two favored candidates are the Catholic establishment in nearby Dresden and Bach's Bohemian patron, Count Sporck. There is no real evidence to support either theory, so the why and the when remain unknown.

The opening *Kyrie* is probably an early work. It had previously existed with a German chorale entering line by line in the top voice, replaced here by two oboes and two horns in unison. The counterpoint is old-fashioned but amazingly fluent. The *Christe* takes the *Kyrie* subject and neatly inverts it, so that at the return of the *Kyrie*, the tune can be both in its original and its upside-down form at the same time.

The origin of the next two movements is unknown, but there is a sprightly feel to the *Gloria*, as if it came from a concerto grosso or a secular cantata. The momentum, as so often in Bach, is unstoppable, and when he gets to the words "Gratias agimus," the choir parts refuse the expected fugal entries and come in all together in a burst of devotion and thanks.

The *Domine Deus* is a bass solo with string accompaniment, and it leads directly into the *Qui tollis*, a marvelously expressive movement for the soprano soloist and oboe in plaintive dialogue. This, like the *Quoniam* that follows (for alto and violin solo), was adapted with great skill from Cantata No. 102,



from 1726.

The final movement, *Cum Sancto Spiritu*, originally the opening of Cantata No. 40 from 1723, fits its new words superbly well, leading into an exultant “in gloria Dei Patris, Amen.”

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**I. Kyrie**

*Kyrie eleison.  
Christe eleison.  
Kyrie eleison.*

**I. Kyrie**

Lord have mercy.  
Christ have mercy.  
Lord have mercy.

**II. Gloria**

*Gloria in excelsis Deo  
Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.  
Laudamus te, benedicimus te,  
adoramus te, glorificamus te.  
Gratias agimus tibi propter  
magnam gloriam tuam.*

**II. Gloria**

Glory to God in the highest  
And on earth peace to men of good will.  
We praise you, we bless you,  
we adore you, we glorify you.  
We give you thanks  
for your great glory.

**III. Domine Deus**

*Domine Deus, Rex coelestis,  
Deus Pater omnipotens.  
Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe,  
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.*

**III. Domine Deus**

Lord God, heavenly King,  
God the Father almighty.  
Lord, only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.

**IV. Qui tollis**

*Qui tollis peccata mundi,  
miserere nobis,  
suscipe deprecationem nostram.  
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,  
miserere nobis.*

**IV. Qui tollis**

You take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us,  
receive our prayer.  
You sit at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.

**V. Quoniam**

*Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus  
Dominus, tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe.*

**V. Quoniam**

For you alone are holy, you alone are Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ.

**VI. Cum Sancto Spiritu**

*Cum Sancto Spiritu,  
in gloria Dei Patris,  
Amen.*

**VI. Cum Sancto Spiritu**

With the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father,  
Amen.

# Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun

## [*Prélude à l'Après-Midi d'un Faune*]

composed 1892-94



BY

**Claude  
DEBUSSY**

BORN

August 22, 1862  
St. Germain-en-Laye,  
France

DIED

March 25, 1918  
Paris

**THIS WAS DEBUSSY'S** first masterpiece and in many ways can be seen as the first masterpiece of 20th-century music — even though it predated the new century by six years. It is hard to comprehend how a mere ten minutes of music for small orchestra can serve as a foundation stone for so much that came after. But whenever we hear this music, its magic is immediately apparent, as it was indeed to its first audience in 1894.

It is even harder to realize that these few pages, with their mysteriously improvisatory air, took Debussy two years of patient toil to put together. He was still relatively unknown in Paris and had not written anything close to the visionary step into the unknown that the Prelude represents.

In a sense, Debussy was simply writing a symphonic poem on a literary text, as Strauss, for example, had treated Lenau's *Don Juan* a few years before. But Mallarmé's *Après-midi d'un faune* was no conventional narrative poem, and it left no scope for the direct matching of music and words.

Debussy's intention was not to parallel the poem's text, but to decorate it. In the note given out at the first performance, he explained: "*The music of the Prelude is a very free illustration of Stéphane Mallarmé's fine poem. It is not meant to be a synthesis of it but rather a series of settings across which pass the desires and dreams of the faun in the heat of the afternoon.*"

Many symphonic poems had merely evoked a tableau or a mood, but Debussy not only avoided any precision of character and action, he allowed his music to develop in an altogether free way. From the very first bar, the music starts and evolves without clear-cut notions of thematic balance or tonal precision. The famous flute solo with which the music begins sounds like an improvisation, not a theme, and its musical key is far from clear. Each time this melody comes back, its shape and its harmonic background are different, like a continuous variation.

Once the flute solo has run its course, the clarinet, over a sharp horn chord, moves into a different atmosphere, laden with the whole-tone scales that Debussy had already marked as his own. When the oboe takes melodic charge, the warmth of the music grows from within.

The middle section, over throbbing string chords, betrays the faun's unmistakable passion, and the flute returns transfigured for the faun's languid intoxication in the forest heat, interrupted by impulsive little movements and sudden charges of feeling. The closing pages have an epic dimension, as if a curtain is being closed on a whole world of poetic mystery.

The orchestration throughout is of extraordinary delicacy, with the multiple division of the strings (Debussy's preferred string sound) with solo violin and solo cello for added sweetness, and two harps. No heavy brass is needed, no timpani. The only percussion is the pair of miniature cymbals whose spare notes are like sparkles of light in the forest.

—HUGH MACDONALD © 2010

## At a Glance

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*Debussy began writing his Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune ("Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun") in 1892 and completed it in the summer of 1894. His original plan to compose a Prélude, Interlude, and Paraphrase finale — in which the verses, according to the poet's wishes, would be recited by an actor — was abandoned, and a projected performance in Brussels (planned by Eugène Ysaÿe to introduce the young Debussy's music) did not come about. The first performance took place in Paris on December 22, 1894, conducted by Gustave Doret. The United States premiere was given by the Boston Orchestral Club under Georges Longy*

*on April 1, 1902.*

*This work runs about 10 minutes in performance. Debussy scored it for 3 flutes (the first including extensive solo passages), 2 oboes, english horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 harps, antique cymbals, and strings.*

*The Cleveland Orchestra first performed Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun in October 1919, under the direction of Nikolai Sokoloff. It has been frequently programmed ever since, most recently as part of this summer's 2010 Blossom Festival, under the direction of Franz Welser-Möst, who also led performances of it during the Orchestra's European Festivals Tour in August.*

## Pictures from Pagan Russia, in Two Parts: **The Rite of Spring** [La Sacre du Printemps]:

composed 1911-13



BY  
**IGOR  
STRAVINSKY**

BORN  
June 17, 1882  
Oranienbaum,  
near St. Petersburg

DIED  
April 6, 1971  
New York

**THE RITE OF SPRING** sits at the head of classic 20th-century orchestral masterpieces — and will never be dislodged from that throne. Once thought to be beyond the pale of modernity, it has long been accepted as a thrilling concert work.

We can never recreate the effect of surprise that so profoundly disturbed its first audience in Paris in May 1913. They came to watch a new ballet presented by Sergei Diaghilev's Ballet Russes ("Russian Ballet") and were soon divided into opposing camps — some horrified, some ecstatic with admiration.

Not only was the music unexpectedly different, the choreography created by Nijinsky was a conscious attempt to revive primitive movement and steps, the very opposite of what every ballet school had trained their dancers to do. Even so, to this day, no ballet interpretation can compete on equal terms with this music. And it is thus in the concert hall and through recordings that the *Rite of Spring* enjoys its popularity and scandalous success.

Large orchestras had been around since Wagner started his *Ring of the Nibelung* operas in the middle of the 19th century, and had been normal since Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben* ("A Hero's Life") just before the turn of the century. A ballet based on Russian folk themes using an oversize orchestra would not have occasioned any surprise if Stravinsky had not invested every bar with a distraught tension generated by intensive chromaticism and, even in the slow sections, disturbing rhythmic dislocations. Repetition and riff replaced the traditional thematic structure.

Stravinsky, for his part, found the whole process perfectly normal. His vision of primitive Russia and the elemental force of the Russian spring seemed to him complete justification for the appropriate expression in music designed to serve the stage action. He did not set out to shock or outrage. He simply wrote down what he heard as a product of what his mind's eye saw. "*I am the vessel through which Le Sacre passed,*" he said with alarming self-abasement.

Stravinsky has described the origins of the idea: "*I saw in my imagination a solemn pagan rite: wise elders, seated in a circle, watching a young girl dance herself to death. They were sacrificing her to propitiate the god of spring.*" He worked out the

## At a Glance

*Stravinsky wrote the scenario to the ballet Le Sacre du Printemps ("The Rite of Spring") in collaboration with the painter-writer Nikolai Roerich in 1910-11 and composed the music in 1912-13. It was first performed on May 29, 1913, by Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, with Pierre Monteux conducting. The sets were by Roerich, and the choreography by Vaslav Nijinsky.*

The Rite of Spring runs about 30 minutes in performance. Stravinsky scored it for piccolo, 3 flutes (one doubling second piccolo), alto flute, 4 oboes (one doubling second english horn), english horn, small clarinet in E-flat, 3 clarinets (one doubling second bass clarinet), bass clarinet, 4 bassoons (one doubling second contrabassoon), contrabassoon, 8 horns (two doubling tenor tubas), 4 trumpets (one doubling bass trumpet), piccolo trumpet, 3 trombones, 2 tubas, timpani, percussion (bass drum, tambourine, cymbals, antique cymbals, triangle, tam-tam, güiro [a scraped gourd]), and strings.

The Cleveland Orchestra first performed The Rite of Spring in March 1935, conducted by Artur Rodzinski. The most recent performances were at Severance Hall in April 2003, with Esa Pekka Salonen conducting.

eventual scenario in collaboration with Nicholas Roerich (and scenery designer), an archeologist with a special knowledge of prehistoric Russia. The sections of the work are:

### **Part I. The Adoration of the Earth**

Introduction  
Auguries of Spring (Dances of the Young Girls)  
Mock Abduction  
Round Dance  
Ritual of the Rival Tribes  
Procession of the Wise Elder  
Adoration of the Earth  
Dance of the Earth

### **Part II. The Sacrifice**

Introduction  
Mystic Circle of the Young Girls  
Glorification of the Chosen Victim  
The Summoning of the Ancestors  
Ritual of the Ancestors  
Sacrificial Dance (The Chosen One)

The sections run into one another, but are not too difficult to identify as the music changes. There is not much pause for breath or repose. Russian folksong lies behind many of the themes. *Auguries of Spring* introduces a famously dissonant chord stamped out by the strings and punctuated by eight horns. *The Round Dance of Spring* is broad and ponderous, and the *Procession of the Wise Elder* has a relentless heavy tread beneath an ungainly tune on four tubas. Part II begins with some ravishing sounds from the woodwinds and divided strings in a steady flow of even notes. Elsewhere, the rhythms are constantly broken up and fragmented, nowhere so furiously as in the final *Sacrificial Dance*, the fury of which touches on a primeval violence that was quite new to music at that time. It is curious to reflect that Stravinsky, in his outward style the doyen of 20th-century cosmopolitan sophisticates, was tapping into a source of some atavistic life force as threatening and as brutal as anything history had ever witnessed. World War I was shortly to make this horrific vision of ritual slaughter a reality.

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