
ANAM AT THE CONVENT

BOULEZ RULES!

Friday 11 April 2025

6pm, 8pm and 10pm

Rosina Auditorium, Abbotsford Convent

Join us at the 'Boulez Bar'

Situated in The Oratory from 5pm and between concerts, experience a selection of drinks, view a special screening of director Reiner Moritz's profile of the great composer and hear a discussion with some of tonight's performers.

ANAM respectfully acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands spread across Australia on which we work and live. We uphold and honour their continued relationship to these sites, we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

CELEBRATING A FUTURISTIC LEGACY

Welcome to this celebration of the 100th anniversary of Pierre Boulez. Over these last few weeks diving into his music, we have been guided by Boulez's audacious vision, his uncompromising industry, and his optimistic belief in music that can renew itself and reveal more truths about universes, the micro as much as the macro.

At the heart of Boulez's music lies a tension between structure and freedom. Structures spiral in ways where you can concurrently sense the past and the future, and each moment unravels new harmonic vistas that seem incomprehensible to fully grasp. His scores are complicated and discrete, but often the word *libre* (with freedom) is given as a performance instruction. He is said to not be interested in compositional tools like chance or electronics "as such" but rather curious about the new sounds they might yield. He felt strongly that the way to musical freedom is through tireless labour, not mechanic but always guided by instinct. Boulez's ethos serves as a great metaphor for the artist's growth, a path towards greater depth and flexibility through constant self-questioning and artistic work.

Boulez stretches the capabilities of even the most skilled virtuosi nearly beyond what is possible, all the while metaphorically behind each instrumentalist with his idiomatic writing and admiration for each timbre. The ANAM musicians today have engaged in an unusually demanding rehearsal process, accepting this challenge and rising to this opportunity to exponentially expand their capabilities.

Tonight's event presents works from the entirety of Boulez's career, from his early period "creating and developing a language" to the later "using that language".

This is our representation of Boulez's artistic journey.

Thank you for joining us on this quest.

Paavali Jumppanen

ANAM Artistic Director

The position of ANAM Artistic Director is supported by Janet Holmes à Court AC, and John and Rosemary Macleod.

THE WORKS OF BOULEZ FEATURED TONIGHT

12 Notations is the earliest of Boulez's works featured today, and its creation captures the fierce opinions and determination that defined his rise to notoriety. This 1945 study already criticises the two teachers that inform his compositional style: Olivier Messiaen and René Leibowitz. Messiaen followed from, but did not directly take after, the French impressionists, synthesising a remarkable set of influences from across the world, and especially a personal fascination with birdsong, and used rich analysis of the entirety of the Western canon to inform his teaching. Liebowitz was a staunch disciple of Arnold Schoenberg and was determined to seed dodecaphonic (twelve-tone) composition in France. In a way, through Boulez's legacy, Liebowitz was wildly successful, as the young composer immediately took to the style. Boulez quickly found flaw with Liebowitz's treatment of twelve-tone writing, calling it "so dry and so unimaginative." The 12 Notations, like an *Art of the Fugue*, are each twelve bars, and use the same tone row (arrangement of the twelve tones in a set order). Though their influences are manifest, the Notations refute the theories of both Messiaen and Liebowitz, loudly proclaiming a burgeoning independence.

The **Sonatine for flute and piano** was composed less than a year after the 12 Notations. Though flautist Jean-Pierre Rampal had commissioned the work, he refused to premiere it as it was "too extreme", and it took a year to find a flautist that would premiere it (Herlin Van Boterdael in Brussels). The revised version, premiered alongside Karlheinz Stockhausen's similarly revolutionary *Zeitmasse*, only added to this reputation of immense technical challenge that Boulez's entire body was fast receiving.

The **second piano sonata** remains an even more demanding summit of technical prowess. Despite his written insistence of breaking with the past across many essays and critiques written before the second sonata, Boulez openly plays with musical heritage, using these "last vestiges" of tradition to demolish history. Ludwig van Beethoven's op. 106 *Hammerklavier* piano sonata serves as a model, and though the intricacy may not be immediately aurally perceptible, the four movements are an homage to the piano sonata tradition. The third movement is Boulez's take on scherzi and trios, and the 'germ cells' (very generally a shorter version of a tone row) throughout meticulously explode into fugues. The final section of the fourth movement even uses the BACH sequence (B-flat, A, C, B) in retrograde (B, C, A, B-flat) as a fugue subject. Boulez once described the fourth movement as "putting one's hand in a beehive" – like watching a bomb being defused, the technical thrill itself propels the listener and performer.

The central formant (or movement) of Boulez's third piano sonata, *Constellation*, is printed as a map of fragments across ten pages. On the back of these ten pages, it appears in retrograde, as if through a mirror, and is thus **Constellation-Miroir**. Boulez describes the formant as like a city a tourist visits: "the actual route taken is left to the initiative of the performer, who has to pick his way through a close network of paths." This 'chance', inspired by the revolutionary 'open form' poetry of Stéphane Mallarmé, is almost obsessively controlled through a series of signs which limit the choice of which fragment to play after any given one. The four remaining movements were to "orbit" the central *Constellation* and its retrograde *Miroir*, moving from most to least structured – and the increasing challenges that Boulez faced through creating "radical innovations" to write these works left the complete sonata unfinished.

Messagesquise is the first of a series of works based on the SACHER sequence. Like the BACH sequence used by Johann Sebastian and in retrograde in Boulez's second piano sonata and Shostakovich's autographical DSCH, eS-A-C-H-E-Re (E-flat, A, C, B, E, D) becomes the hexachord (or, six-note germ cell) from which the musical material for *Messagesquise* and the

Derive, *Répons* and *Incises* works are generated. This came out of a commission by cellist Mstislav Rostropovich to celebrate the 70th birthday of Paul Sacher, composer and pharmaceutical philanthropist who championed twentieth century music before Boulez through extensive programming and commissioning.

The relatively short brass fanfare ***Initiale*** was composed several years after *Messagesquisse*. A less examined work, it's become a quiet star of Boulez's catalogue, an avant-garde take on the fanfare (much like the second piano sonata's destruction of the sonata), now taking the place of the traditional fanfare as concert opener for a more adventurous program. *Initiale* was the first work performed in Berlin's Pierre Boulez Saal, and will also open our series of concerts today.

Sur Incises is a reimagined *Incises* ('sur' being French for 'on'), itself a tightly coiled ten-minute work written as a test piece for the Umberto Micheli Piano Competition of 1994 and his first published piano work since the third piano sonata's formants. *Sur Incises* explodes out the ideas generated in *Incises* from the SACHER sequence across three pianos, utilising a harp and percussionist per piano to acoustically extend the sonorities of the piano. The work is one of a larger catalogue of reimagined and revisited works (including a selection of 12 Notations, the very earliest works performed today) which the older Boulez revisited, expanding their durations and orchestrations and arguably transforming his revolutionary ideas into more mature containers. Finishing *Sur Incises* at 73 years of age, Boulez still astounded audiences with the sheer originality of his colours and textures. This will be the work's third performance in Australia, unsurprising given its instrumentation, length and difficulty.

BOULEZ & FRIENDS: ADDITIONAL WORKS

When Boulez was in New York, the most exciting place to see him was usually not on stage at the Lincoln Centre, but a subway ride downtown to Greenwich Village. Here, Boulez realised his vision of curation more than working within the traditions and restrictions of a world-class symphony orchestra ever could, programming the day's chamber music to packed, sweaty rooms of experimentalists, students and those with more adventurous palettes. These concerts often had a distinctly local focus, presenting the works of Manhattanites and other Americans.

By programming Melbourne composers Evan J Lawson, Christine McCombe and Helen Gifford, we pay another small homage to Boulez by placing his works alongside a necessarily tiny slice of the new and experimental in Melbourne. Lawson and McCombe are both active in Melbourne and continue to receive acclaim for their works. Gifford, less than a generation after Boulez, shared his vision of unflinching modernism, pushing through the nineteenth century focus at Melbourne's conservatorium to direct her own studies and take after Witold Lutosławski. Despite her catalogue of major works and acclaim, she's faded faster into history than the likes of Sculthorpe and Glanville-Hicks.

The final concert focuses on Boulez's pianism, placed alongside works of Frédéric Chopin. Despite the deep analytical nature of the systems behind his works, Boulez understood that music as a phenomenon is rapturous - an opinion shared with Chopin. Though disparate in time, each innovated the concept of pianism for their generation, moving beyond technique and theory to new sound worlds.

Written by Alex Owens, ANAM Music Librarian, Robert Salzer Foundation Library

CONCERT 1, 6PM

MÉLANGE – A COMMUNITY OF INNOVATION

Fabian Russell conductor

Pierre BOULEZ (1925-2016) *Initiale* (1987) 5'

Tom Allen* (VIC) horn

Oliver Harris* (NSW) horn

Stephen Mosa'ati* (NZ) trumpet

Koominka* (NSW) trumpet

Harrison Steele-Holmes (VIC) trombone

Max Gregg (NSW) trombone

Robin Hall* (NSW) tuba

Evan J LAWSON (b. 1989) *Echoes from the Labyrinth* (2022) 11'

Emica Taylor* (NZ) flute

Karen Chen* (NSW) clarinet

Sola Hughes* (QLD) violin

Louise Turnbull* (VIC) viola

Jack Overall* (SA) cello

BOULEZ *Messagesquise* (1976) 8'

Isaac Davis* (NSW) cello soloist

Ariel Volovelsky* (NSW) cello

Cindy Masterman* (QLD) cello

Fergus Ascot* (VIC) cello

Boudewijn Keenan* (NZ) cello

Heesoo Kim* (QLD) cello

Max Wung* (WA) cello

Christine MCCOMBE (b. 1967) *Five Pieces for Wind Quintet* (1997) 10'

i. Murmurous

ii. Resonant

iii. Immutable, steady

iv. Lyrical

v. Buoyant

Braden Simm* (QLD) flute

Ethan Seto* (QLD) oboe

Josephine Daniel* (QLD) clarinet

Stephanie Sheridan* (WA) bassoon

Tom Allen* (VIC) horn

BOULEZ *Sonatine* (1946) 13'

Maria Zhdanovich* (SA) flute

Reuben Johnson (ANAM Alum, 2024) piano

Approximate duration: 60 minutes

** Denotes ANAM musicians supported by ANAM Syndicate donors or ANAM Training Scholarships*

Following this performance, please join us in the 'Boulez Bar' situated in The Oratory, to experience a selection of drinks and view a special screening of director Reiner Moritz's profile of the great composer.

CONCERT 2, 8PM

SUR INCISES – AN EXPLOSION OF SONORITIES

Fabian Russell conductor

Helen GIFFORD (b. 1935) *Celebrations of the Apsaras* (2013) 2'

Josephine Daniel* (QLD) clarinet

Pierre BOULEZ (1925-2016) *Sur Incises* (1996-1998) 40'

Paavali Jumppanen (ANAM Artistic Director) piano

Timothy Young (ANAM Resident Faculty, Head of Piano) piano

Po Goh* (VIC) piano

Melina van Leeuwen (ANAM Alum, 2014) harp

Jessica Fotinos (ANAM Alum, 2012) harp

Marshall McGuire (guest) harp

Jamie Willson* (TAS) percussion

Caleb Goldsmith* (NZ) percussion

Steven Bryer* (QLD) percussion

Approximate duration: 45 minutes

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Following this performance, please join us in the 'Boulez Bar' situated in The Oratory, for a discussion with ANAM Artistic Director Paavali Jumppanen, renowned harpist Marshall McGuire, ANAM flautist Maria Zhdanovich and ANAM Music Librarian, Alex Owens.

CONCERT 3, 10PM

THE POWER OF IDEA – BOULEZ AT THE PIANO

- Pierre BOULEZ (1925-2016)** *12 Notations* (1945) 11'
- i. Fantastique. Modéré*
 - ii. Très vif*
 - iii. Assez lent*
 - iv. Rythmique*
 - v. Doux et improvisé*
 - vi. Rapide*
 - vii. Hiératique*
 - viii. Modéré jusqu'à très vif*
 - ix. Lointain. Calme*
 - x. Mécanique et très sec*
 - xi. Scintillant*
 - xii. Lent. Puissant et âpre*
- Francis Atkins*** (NSW) piano
- Frédéric CHOPIN (1810-1849)** Nocturne in D-flat Major, op. 27 no. 2 (1836) 6'
- Sarah Chick*** (TAS) piano
- BOULEZ** Piano Sonata No. 3, Formant 3 *Constellation-Miroir* (1955-1957) 15'
- Timothy O'Malley*** (VIC) piano
- CHOPIN** Nocturne in C Minor, op. 48 no. 1 (1841) 7'
- Liam Furey*** (NZ) piano
- BOULEZ** Piano Sonata No. 2 (1947-1948) 32'
- i. Extrêmement rapide*
 - ii. Lent*
 - iii. Modéré – Presque vif*
 - iv. Vif*
- Paavali Jumppanen** (ANAM Artistic Director) piano

Approximate duration: 1 hour 15 minutes

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