

Cleveland Institute of Music to celebrate the legacy of composer/conductor Pierre Boulez

by Mike Telin



First in a series of articles.

French composer and conductor Pierre Boulez passed away on January 5, 2016, at the age of 90. In his obituary the following day, *The Guardian* (London) wrote:

Pierre Boulez was arguably the single dominant figure of the classical musical world through the second half of the 20th century and beyond. Without his compositions, his legacy of recordings as a conductor, his writings on music, and his administrative skill and drive, the musical scene today would be of a quite different order.”

On Sunday, September 25 at 4:00 pm in Mixon Hall, the Cleveland Institute of Music will present the first of seven events celebrating “The Boulez Legacy.” During his distinguished career, Boulez enjoyed a long relationship with The Cleveland Orchestra, which he conducted over a span of nearly 50 years. After making his American professional debut at Severance Hall in 1965, he went on to lead the Orchestra in more than 220 concerts. He was appointed the Orchestra’s first Principal Guest Conductor in 1969 and served as Musical Advisor for two seasons beginning shortly after George Szell’s death in 1970. Additionally he made a number of recordings with the Orchestra, five of which received Grammy Awards.

“Conductor Steven Smith and I were talking about Boulez’s long relationship with The Orchestra after his passing back in January,” Keith Fitch, Director of CIM’s New Music Ensemble, recalled over coffee. “We both thought it would be great to create a series of concerts devoted to each aspect of his life — composer, conductor, author, and teacher.”

Fitch put out a call to his faculty colleagues for proposals and received many enthusiastic concert ideas. “Each program is designed to be a snapshot of Boulez’s life and output,” Fitch noted. “It’s been interesting to think about him again, and really look at the totality of his life. When you think about his recordings of *The Rite of Spring* with Cleveland, you realize that we were able to hear great music like that played well for the first time. I’m so proud to be doing a retrospective of his life here in Cleveland.”



Boulez the Modernist I, Sunday, September 25 at 4:00 pm in Mixon Hall. Music for winds. Flutist Mary Kay Fink, oboist Frank Rosenwein, clarinetist Robert Woolfrey, bassoonist Barrick Stees, and hornist Richard King will perform Carter’s *Woodwind Quintet* (1948), Berio’s *Sequenza VII* (1969), Ligeti’s *Six Bagatelles* (1953), Boulez’s *Domaines* (1968), Stockhausen’s “PICCOLO” from *Der Jahreslauf* (1977), and Ravel’s *Mother Goose Suite* (arr. M. Popkin).

Boulez the Friend and Teacher, Wednesday, September 28 at 8:00 pm in Mixon Hall. Pianists Carolyn Warner and Daniel Shapiro will be joined by clarinetist Franklin Cohen, saxophonist James Umble, violinists Stephen Warner and Mari Sato, and cellist Brian Thornton. The program will include Ravel’s *Le Tombeau de Couperin* (1914-1917) and “Adagio” from *Piano Concerto in G* (1929-1931, trans. C. Warner), Bach/Kurtág’s *Chorales*, Berg’s *Variations on Themes from Lulu* (1934), Debussy’s *Cello Sonata* (1915), and Stravinsky’s *Suite* from *L’Histoire du Soldat* (1919).

Boulez the Conductor, Wednesday, October 5 at 8:00 pm in Kulas Hall. Conductor Steven Smith will lead the CIM Orchestra in Stravinsky’s *Le Chant du Rossignol* (1917),

Sept Haïkai: Esquisses japonaises (1962) with pianist Joela Jones as soloist, and Mahler's "Adagio" from *Symphony No. 10 in F-sharp* (1910).

Boulez the Modernist II, Wednesday, October 26 at 8:00 pm in Mixon Hall. Pianist Shuai Wang, flutist Madeline Lucas Tolliver, clarinetist Benjamin Chen, violinists Yun-ting Lee and Jinjoo Cho, cellist Daniel Pereira, and percussionist Luke Rinderknecht perform Messiaen's *Le Merle Noir* (1951), Boulez's *Improvisé — pour le Dr. Kalmus* (1969) and *Sonatine* (1946), Ligeti's *Continuum* (1968), and Davidovsky's *Flashbacks* (1995).

Symposium, Saturday, October 29 at 1:30 pm in Studio 113. Guest composer Augusta Read Thomas discusses her music and approach to composition.

Boulez the Advocate and Mentor, Sunday, October 30 at 3:00 pm in Mixon Hall. Pre-concert panel discussion, "Reflections on Boulez," with Augusta Read Thomas, University of Chicago; Susan McClary, Case Western Reserve University; and Joshua Smith, Principal Flute, The Cleveland Orchestra. Moderated by Keith Fitch, Head, CIM Composition Department.

CIM New Music Ensemble, Sunday, October 30 at 4:00 pm in Mixon Hall. Keith Fitch, director; Augusta Read Thomas, guest composer; and Joshua Smith, flute. Pierre Boulez's *Dérive I* (1984) and *Mémoriale ("...explosante-fixe..." originel)* (1985), Augusta Read Thomas's *Dancing Helix Rituals* (2007) and *Klee Musings* (2016), György Kurtág's *Hommage à R. Sch.*, Op. 15d (1990), and Bernard Rands' *...sans voix parmi les voix...* (1995).

Free seating passes are required for all events except for the October 30 concert.

Published on ClevelandClassical.com September 20, 2016.

Click here for a printable copy of this article

[Return to the Front Page.](#)