

New Music Delaware presents

Quartet for the End of Time

Sunday, April 26, 2026

8 p.m.

Gore Recital Hall
in the Roselle Center for the Arts
University of Delaware

Program

Film Screenings of:

Cuerpos Sutiles (2025)
<https://vimeo.com/1125579451>

Juan Pablo Pacheco (b. 1991)

Music by Rodrigo Pacheco
Yoshiaki Onishi, bass clarinet
Juan Pablo Pacheco, waterphone and sound design

Non Plus Ultra (2025)
<https://vimeo.com/1125588171>

Juan Pablo Pacheco

Music by Rodrigo Pacheco and Juan Pablo Pacheco
Juan Pablo Pacheco, narrator
Carmen de la Jara, Colombiana Song

— Intermission —

Quatuor pour la fin du Temps (1940–41)

Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992)

- I. Liturgie de cristal
- II. Vocalise, pour l'Ange qui annonce la fin du temps
- III. Abîme des oiseaux
- IV. Intermède
- V. Louange à l'Éternité de Jésus
- VI. Danse de la fureur, pour les sept trompettes
- VII. Fouillis d'arcs-en-ciel, pour l'Ange qui annonce la fin du temps
- VIII. Louange à l'Immortalité de Jésus

Yoshiaki Onishi, clarinet
Guillaume Combet, violin
Lawrence Stomberg, cello
Marie-Christine Delbeau, piano

Introduction

Just as a dream, while maintaining clear
details, reveals its unexpectedly unreal
totality...

Tōru Takemitsu

Given that *Quatuor pour la fin du Temps* by Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992) was premiered 85 years ago (January 15, 1941), it may seem far-fetched by today's standards to call this piece “new music.” Indeed, “new music”—as in *Neue Musik* in German—found its epicenter in postwar Germany, when then-young composers—most notably two of Messiaen's protégés, Pierre Boulez and Karlheinz Stockhausen, as well as Luigi Nono—advocated total serialism. *Quatuor* certainly predates this movement. So why present this work at New Music Delaware?

I believe that *Quatuor pour la fin du Temps*, while unmistakably bearing the voice of a still relatively young Messiaen, has profoundly inspired later composers and opened the door to many strands of modernist musical thought, whether consciously or not. English composer Harrison Birtwistle considers this work as the foundational work of Messiaen which, without it, one cannot speak about his subsequent works. The eight movements are thematically interrelated and, in the case of the two *Louanges*, intertextually connected with Messiaen's earlier works. The rhythmic palindrome in Movement VI—which he called “non-retrogradable rhythm”—and the sense of timelessness induced by the extremely slow tempi specified in *Louanges* push the limits of memory and perception—concerns that would preoccupy many composers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Quatuor is a work that many music students encounter in their studies, yet the opportunity to hear the complete piece in concert remains relatively rare. I first came across a recording—and later the score—of this piece while I was a high school student in California, and I was immediately captivated. It was one of the pieces that helped define what I wanted to pursue in life. I am delighted to join my colleagues in sharing this music with you this evening.

The first half of the concert features two video essays by Juan Pablo Pacheco, a Colombian artist and researcher based in Madrid, whom I had the pleasure of meeting during an artist residency at Künstler*dorf Schöppingen in Germany. In *Cuerpos Sutiles* (Subtle Body), Pacheco invited me to collaborate on creating the soundtrack. Just a few days before his residency ended, we went to St. Brictius Church to record a 45-minute improvisation—him on waterphone, me on bass clarinet. While the films may seem to bear little direct relation to Messiaen's work, they nonetheless resonate with it through shared themes of memory, dreams, visions, and power dynamics across political, natural, and religious or mythological domains. In this sense, I like to think of tonight's concert as a kind of dream, as described by Tōru Takemitsu—a composer inspired by Messiaen's *Quatuor* to write his own works: *Quatrain* and *Quatrain II*.

As the originally advertised title of this concert may imply, the concert was to feature two recent works of mine: *PmuD III* for alto flute, bass clarinet, violoncello, and piano in its revised and expanded version, as well as *spec: hommage à Solage et à Matteo da Perugia* for three bass clarinets. While I completed these two pieces earlier in the past winter, it soon became evident that in the context of this program, pairing of Pacheco and Messiaen would give an even stronger impact. I look forward instead to presenting my music in the near future.

– Yoshiaki Onishi

Program Notes

Cuerpos Sutiles (13'13") is a video essay that reinterprets the myth of Atlantis, invoking voices from the bottom of the sea that awaken to devour cables and recreate the world. The video connects colonial caravels, telecommunication towers, and Civil War bunkers, portraying the idea of a border disputed by stories of migration.

Non Plus Ultra (13'13") is a video essay that tells stories of aliens in Conil de la Frontera from a TV5 archive, the creation myth of the Strait of Gibraltar, and a bronze plaque found in the anti-nuclear bunker where the Atlantis-2 cable lands. Drawing lines between science fiction, technology, and colonialism, it closes with a flamenco song of *ida y vuelta* (coming and going) performed by a dancer on the cable's manhole cover.

– Juan Pablo Pacheco

Olivier Messiaen's **Quatuor pour la fin du Temps** (Quartet for the End of Time), has a complex history of composition. While Messiaen put the eight movements together while he was a prisoner-of-war at Stalag VIII-a in Görlitz, Germany in 1940 and 1941, not all movements have their origins from Messiaen's time in the camp. For example, Movement III *Abîme des oiseaux* was written shortly before he was imprisoned, in Verdun, where he met Henri Akoka, an Algerian Jewish clarinetist who would soon become one of the premiering musicians of *Quatuor*. Movement IV is the first movement he completed at the camp. The two *Louanges* are, in fact, arrangement (or reimagination) of previous works: The first *Louange* for violoncello and piano is an adaptation of his *Fête des belles eaux* (1937) for six Ondes Martenots, and the second one for violin and piano is an arrangement of the second section *Le paradis* of *Diptyque* (1930) for organ solo. What is extraordinary, however, is that he arranged these pieces from memory.

In line with his catholic faith, Messiaen dedicated this piece to the angel that announces that there would be "no more time," and indeed,

there are many devices in the music that implicitly induce the perception of static and still time. Yet the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible translates this passage as “there shall be no more delay.” In *Olivier Messiaen: A Critical Biography*, Robert Sholl writes:

The angel in St. John’s narrative does not therefore announce the end of time, but that there will be no more time left before God completes his purposes; time and humanity will be changed in a way that remains unclear. The promise of the transformation of the world into God’s kingdom will occur in the future. Messiaen’s *Quatuor* can therefore be more properly understood as an act of faith that this transformation will happen, but also, through the course of its eight movements, as an improvisation with time and our own experience of it as a semblance of this future time.

Stasis of time, then, may only partly describe the nature of *Quatuor*, for there is the ebb and flow of tension and release. Indeed, *Quatuor* prompts the listeners—regardless of what religious convictions they may hold—with a fundamental question of time in eight distinct yet interconnected movements.

– Yoshiaki Onishi

Preface by Olivier Messiaen

I saw a mighty angel descend from heaven, clad in mist; and a rainbow was upon his head. His face was like the sun, his feet like pillars of fire. He set his right foot on the sea, his left foot on the earth, and standing thus on sea and earth he lifted his hand to heaven and swore by Him who liveth for ever and ever, saying: There shall be time no longer; but on the day of the trumpet of the seventh angel, the mystery of God shall be finished. (Apocalypse of John, Chapter X)

Planned and written during my captivity, the Quartet for the End of

Time was first premiered at the Prisoners-of-War camp, Stalag VIII-A on January 15, 1941, by Jean Le Boulaire (violin), Henri Akoka (clarinet), Étienne Pasquier (violoncello), and myself on the piano. It was directly inspired by this quotation from the Apocalypse. Its musical language is essentially immaterial, spiritual and catholic. The pitch organization, realized both melodically and harmonically in a sort of tonal ubiquity, evoke in the listeners the eternity of the space or infinity. The special out-of-time rhythms contribute powerfully to stretch the sense of time. (All that I write here become feeble attempts and childish stammering, when one ruminates on the staggering greatness of the subject!)

This Quartet is comprised of 8 movements. Why? 7 is the perfect number, the creation lasting 6 days was then sanctified by the divine sabbath; the number 7 of the respite prolongs itself into the eternity and becomes the number 8, of the indefectible light and the immutable peace.

I. *Liturgy of crystal*. Between the morning hours of three and four, the awakening of the birds: a thrush or a nightingale soloist improvises, amidst sonorous dusts and a halo of trills that lose themselves high in the trees. Transpose this to the religious plane: you will have the harmonious silence of heaven.

II. *Vocalise, for the angel who announces the end of Time*. The first and third parts (very short) evoke the power of that mighty angel, his hair a rainbow and his clothing mist, who places one foot on the sea and one foot on the earth. Between these sections are the ineffable harmonies of heaven. From the piano, soft cascades of blue-orange chords, encircling with their distant carillon the plainchant-like recitativo of the violin and cello.

III. *Abyss of the birds*. Clarinet solo. The abyss is Time, with its sadnesses and tediums. The birds are the opposite of Time; they are our desire for light, for stars, for rainbows and for jubilant outpourings of song!

IV. *Interlude*. Scherzo. Of a more outgoing character than the other movements but related to them, nonetheless, by various melodic ref-

erences.

V. *Praise to the eternity of Jesus.* Jesus is here considered as one with the Word. A long phrase, infinitely slow, by the cello expatiates with love and reverence on the everlastingness of the Word, mighty and dulcet, “which the years can in no way exhaust.” Majestically the melody unfolds itself at a distance both intimate and awesome. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

VI. *Dance of fury, for the seven trumpets.* Rhythmically the most idiosyncratic movement of the set. The four instruments in unison give the effect of gongs and trumpets (the first six trumpets of the Apocalypse attend various catastrophes, the trumpet of the seventh angel announces the consummation of the mystery of God). Use of extended note values, augmented or diminished rhythmic patterns, non-retrogradable rhythms—a systematic use of values which, read from left to right or from right to left, remain the same. Music of stone, formidable sonority; movement as irresistible as steel, as huge blocks of livid fury or ice-like frenzy. Listen particularly to the terrifying fortissimo of the theme in augmentation and with change of register of its different notes, toward the end of the piece.

VII. *Welter of rainbows, for the angel who announces the end of Time.* Here certain passages from the second movement return. The mighty angel appears, and in particular the rainbow that envelops him (the rainbow: symbol of peace, of wisdom, of every quiver of luminosity and sound). In my dreams I hear and see ordered melodies and chords, familiar hues and forms; then, following this transitory stage I pass into the unreal and submit ecstatically to a vortex, a dizzying interpenetration of superhuman sounds and colors. These fiery swords, these rivers of blue-orange lava, these sudden stars: Behold the welter, behold the rainbows!

VIII. *Praise to the immortality of Jesus.* Expansive violin solo balancing the cello solo of the fifth movement. Why this second glorification? It addresses itself more specifically to the second aspect of Jesus —

to Jesus the man, to the Word made flesh, raised up immortal from the dead so as to communicate His life to us. It is total love. Its slow rising to a supreme point is the ascension of man toward his God, of the Son of God toward his Father, of the mortal newly made divine toward paradise.

And I repeat anew what I said above: All this is mere striving and childish stammering if one compares it to the overwhelming grandeur of the subject!

– translated by Jessie Rothwell, partially revised by Yoshiaki Onishi

Biographies

Juan Pablo Pacheco is a Colombian artist and researcher based in Madrid. With a background in filmmaking, anthropology and visual art, his work explores the ecologies, politics and poetics of water bodies, technical infrastructures, and spiritual practices. Working across writing, sound, video, and participatory pedagogies, he approaches research as a situated, sedimented, and collective process.

Juan Pablo has worked as a public programs curator at Espacio Odeón and Plataforma Bogotá, and has taught at the Institute for Postnatural Studies, the Javeriana and Andes universities in Bogotá, the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague and Elisava Madrid. His work has been presented at Espacio Odeón (Bogotá), Momentum 13 (Moss), Matadero (Madrid), Hordaland Kunstsenter (Bergen), Manifesta 15 (Barcelona), Jan van Eyck Academie (Maastricht), La MaMa (New York), Kunstenfestivaldesarts (Brussels), ISEA (Barcelona), Transmediale (Berlin), Galería Santa Fe (Bogotá), and Museo Carrillo Gil (Mexico City), among others.

Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992) considered himself as much an ornithologist as a composer, organist and pianist. Inspired in large part by

his study of birdsong and his strong catholic faith, his output counts among the most fascinating of the twentieth century.

From the age of 11, Messiaen attended the Paris Conservatoire where, a few years later, he was awarded various first prizes (including counterpoint and fugue, piano accompaniment, organ and improvisation, history of music, and composition). A student of Charles-Marie Widor, Paul Dukas and Marcel Dupré, he became Organist at the Église de la Sainte-Trinité in 1931, a position he held until his death in 1992.

In the 1930s, he taught at the École Normale de Musique de Paris and at the Schola Cantorum. There, he met André Jolivet, Daniel-Lesur and Yves Baudrier with whom he formed the famous Jeune France movement in 1936.

In 1941, after a year imprisoned as a POW in Stalag VIII-A, he returned to the Conservatoire as professor of harmony and then professor of composition in 1966. His students included Pierre Boulez, George Benjamin, and Karlheinz Stockhausen.

A devout Catholic, much of his output was influenced by his faith, as many works testify (such as *La Transfiguration de Notre Seigneur Jésus Christ*, *l'Ascension*, *Le Banquet Céleste*, *Méditations sur le Mystère de la Sainte-Trinité* and even his only opera *Saint François d'Assise*).

Above all, Messiaen was fascinated by the birdsong that he heard and transcribed in his garden, and then featured in his compositions: *Catalogue d'oiseaux*, *Petites Esquisses d'oiseaux* and *Traité de rythme, de couleur et d'ornithologie* all conceived in this way. He said “nature offers an exhaustible treasure of colours and sounds, forms and rhythms, an unequalled model of total development and perpetual variation, nature is the supreme resource!”

Messiaen received numerous accolades throughout his career. He was elected Membre de L'Institut de France in 1967, he was awarded the Calouste Gulbenkian Prize in 1969, the Erasmus Prize in 1971, and Ernst von Siemens Music Prize in 1975. He also won the Wolf Prize in Arts in 1983, The Kyoto Prize in Arts and Philosophy in 1985, and the

International Paul VI Prize in 1988, all testimony to, and recognition of, his having created some of the greatest French music of the era.

Yoshiaki Onishi is a Japanese-American composer, conductor, and clarinetist. As a composer, he is interested in exploring a wide range of instrumental timbres and finding ways to incorporate them in musical syntaxes and forms that disrupt the sense of expectation. Noted by a New York Times critic Anthony Tommasini for its “varied, eerily alluring sounds,” Onishi’s music has been performed worldwide by organizations such as New Japan Philharmonic, Askō|Schönberg Ensemble, Klangforum Wien, Nieuw Ensemble, Distractfold Ensemble, Ensemble Intercontemporain, Quatuor Diotima and JACK Quartet. With his 2010 work *Départ dans...*, Onishi became the laureate of the Gaudeamus Prize 2011. He is named a 2018 Guggenheim Fellow. Other recent honors include the Fromm Commission in 2018 and artistic residency fellowships from Künstler*dorf Schöppingen (Germany), Civitella Ranieri Foundation (Italy). His works are published by Edition Gravis in Berlin, Germany.

As a conductor deeply engaged in promoting the music of today, Onishi served as Assistant Conductor then Director for the Mizzou New Music Ensemble. He was one of the founding members of Ensemble Exophonie Tokyo and its Artistic Director/Conductor/Composer Associate. Recent conducting engagements include a residency at Stanford University with the Ensemble Kujoyama from Kyoto, Japan in October 2023, a portrait concert of Makoto Shinohara at Tokyo Opera City in July 2021, and a concert “An Evening of Today 2014” with Nieuw Ensemble in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. He has conducted many ensembles and orchestras, working closely with composers of his generation.

As a clarinetist and improviser, he has worked with composers and musicians such as George Lewis, Alvin Lucier, Eli Wallace, Miles Brown, and Oswald Huynh. Together with Santiago Beis, he plays in the Onishi-Beis Duo, an electroacoustic improvisation duo. The duo has

released two albums to date.

Onishi received his doctorate in music composition from Columbia University in New York in 2015. Onishi has held teaching positions at Columbia University and Toho Gakuen School of Music in Tokyo, Japan, and the University of Missouri School of Music. Since fall of 2023, Onishi is Assistant Professor of Music Composition at the University of Delaware School of Music. (LinkTree: <https://linktr.ee/YoshiakiOnishi>)

Guillaume Combet is an Associate Professor at the University of Delaware School of Music and is an internationally acclaimed violinist. His most recent recording *Transcontinental: Music Without Borders* was awarded a Silver Medal Outstanding Achievement from *Global Music Awards* for trios and chamber music. In his 2021 recording with the late Sandra Carlock, he was heralded for his “perfect technique, fidelity to the music, and impeccable articulation” as well as his “rich, captivating sound.” Recorded in London at the Menuhin Hall and released by SOMM Recordings in 2021, the Carlock-Combet Duo’s *Romantic Violin Sonatas* received a 5-star review by the French magazine *Classica*. Their debut disc of French violin sonatas was released in 2017 also by SOMM Recordings to great critical acclaim. Music Web International accorded them the honor of a listing both as the Recording of the Month at the time of the release, and in December of 2017, the disc was named as one of Music Web’s Best Recordings for the year, 2017.

In 2022, Kristin Ditlow, student of the late Sandra Carlock, and Combet formed the Ditlow Combet Duo. They have performed in Delaware, New Jersey, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and Paris, France, to great acclaim. Their upcoming CD project, *Les Muses de Calliope*, was recorded in December of 2025, and features music of all-women composers.

Mr. Combet has performed with numerous orchestras and chamber ensembles in Paris, Chicago and Philadelphia—Orchestra de l’Opéra de Paris Bastille, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Civic Orchestra as concertmaster under Barenboim and Boulez, Fulcrum Point New Music Project, Network for New Music,

Opera Philadelphia, Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, Philly POPS, Academy of Vocal Arts, Black Pearl Chamber Orchestra, New Music Delaware, and Pennsylvania Ballet.

Mr. Combet graduated with a *Premier Prix* (First Prize) in Violin and Chamber Music from the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris where he studied with Gérard Poulet and Sylvie Gazeau, and received his Advanced Certificate in Violin Performance from The Juilliard School where he studied with Joel Smirnoff, Robert Mann and William Lincer.

Cellist **Lawrence Stomberg** enjoys a varied career of performance as soloist and chamber musician, and pedagogue. Hailed for “style and elegance” and “drama and rhetoric” (Strings Magazine), and “lyrical yet impassioned interpretation” (Fanfare Magazine), he has been a featured performer at festivals across the United States, and performs and teaches annually at the Techne and SummerKeys Festivals. Currently a member of the Philadelphia-based mixed ensemble, The Halcyon Consort, he also served thirteen years as the cellist of the acclaimed Serafin String Quartet, having toured around the United States. Concerts have taken him across four continents, including solo and chamber music performances in Wuhan, London, Vienna, and Bogotá, and across the United States. He has recorded for the Centaur, Naxos, Albany, Parma, Ravello, VAI, and Meyer Media labels.

As a recipient of the 2018 Delaware Division of the Arts *Established Artist Fellowship*, Stomberg turned much his performance activity to musical outreach and community engagement through his project, *Bach in Wilmington*, which paired the six Suites for Solo Cello of J.S. Bach with recorded interviews of residents of Wilmington, Delaware. This work continues an online video series through Ankos Films, and an upcoming recording release (later 2026) on the Meyer Media label.

Stomberg is a busy and dedicated pedagogue, having served on the faculties at Truman State University in Missouri and Oklahoma State University before joining the music faculty at the University of Delaware

School of Music in 2004, where he is currently Professor of Cello and Associate Director for Performance Studies.

Pianist **Christine Delbeau**'s career has been marked by performances as a collaborator and soloist on some of the world's most prestigious stages. She has appeared in recital at leading venues including the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, Boston's Jordan Hall, and the Kimmel Center's Verizon Hall in Philadelphia. Internationally, she has performed at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, and she was a collaborative pianist in the acclaimed Fiddlefest Gala Concerts at New York's Carnegie Hall and the Tonhalle in Zürich, sharing the stage with the world's leading violinists.

Christine Delbeau has collaborated extensively in chamber music settings, performing with ensembles such as the Johannes and Mendelssohn String Quartets, as well as with principal musicians from major orchestras including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and Los Angeles Philharmonic. Her performance career also includes international festival and conference performances with colleagues, notably at the NCWPI International Conference in Vancouver and the Victoria International Arts Festival in Gozo, Malta.

She is a member of the Tiger Lily Trio, ensemble-in-residence at the University of Delaware School of Music. They perform concerts throughout the United States and at major national and international conferences including the National Flute Association Convention and the International ClarinetFest.

Christine Delbeau is Professor of Piano at the University of Delaware School of Music. She is a frequent presenter of master classes and an in-demand adjudicator. Former students have gone on to successful careers as performers and educators throughout the United States and internationally.

Gratitude

Daniel Stevens, Director, UD School of Music

Event Staff and Scheduling Team (Sharon Whetham, Fred Barr, John Alt, Ben McMonagle, Alejandro Lobo, and all the student workers)

Marie-Christine Delbeau, Guillaume Combet, and Lawrence Stomberg for their generosity and superb musicianship

Juan Pablo Pacheco for the enthusiasm to collaborate

The New Music Delaware Committee

All Colleagues and Staff at the UD School of Music for their support in new music

All Students whose curiosity and enthusiasm will move the music of tomorrow

You for coming to the concert or watching the live-stream online

Thank you