

Festival Hirondelle



www.festivalhirondelle.com

Association Amirondelle

siège . Lescure | *antenne* . La Mairie
15230 Pierrefort | 12600 Thérondels

Festival Hirondelle

Cantal and Auvergne, France

15-19 August 2018

"Japonisme"

It is a great honor and joy for me to take the role of artistic director of the Festival Hirondelle 2018. When Joëlle Martinez asked me to replace her job for the edition this year I immediately thought of bringing something very personal to the festival in this beautiful region in France... the theme would be "Japonisme", of course since Japan is the country where I come from.

Despite the distance of over 9800 kilometers, there has been a history of cultural exchange between Japan and France. The year 2018 happens to be our 160th anniversary of "the establishment of diplomatic relations". It was also this time when Japanese Art was first introduced to the west at the World Expositions in Paris. The wood prints of Hokusai gained a passionate popularity and the Japanese theater and music were appreciated with enthusiasm. Not only oriental taste had become "à la mode", but also for the artistes of the "fin de siècle" - as Manet, Redon, Van Gogh, Mallarmé and Debussy to name a few - they had been an inspiration and initiator to break the traditional forms and aesthetic of art, poetry and music.

Western classical music had been brought and started to develop in Japan in this time as well. A century later, there was a composer named Toru Takemitsu (1930-1996) who loved Debussy and French Impressionism, and who exchanged friendship and inspiration with other composers of the time as Olivier Messiaen and John Cage, who were also very fond of Japan.

It is this circle of inspiration over distance and time which fascinates me. I look forward very much as a musician and as a Japanese to link this circle now in this countryside of France by playing music. I also do hope that the moments we will share during the festival will lead to a new energy of inspiration for everyone who comes to visit the festival.....



We are planning four concerts and a day "OFF" for the public to get together with the musicians and to get closer to the theme of "Japonisme".

The first concert will be on the 15th of August in the church of Brezons. We start our festival from the time of "Fin de siècle" when Debussy was so fascinated by Japanese art and music that he even put a Hokusai-like painting as the front page of his newly written "la mer" to be published. We will hear his Preludes, Estampes and the sonata for Cello and piano. There will be an opposite direction of influence added by having a piece "les yeux clos" for piano by Takemitsu which was inspired by the paintings of the same name by Odilon Redon.

I would like to have a special and unusual concert featuring on "haïku", Japanese poetry on the second evening which will be happening on the 16th of August in the church of Nigressere. "Haïku" is an extremely short form of Japanese poetry which developed in the 17th century. There are many western composers among Olivier Messiaen and John Cage who wrote pieces inspired by this poetry. There will be beautiful pieces by a Hungarian born and in France living composer György Kurtag, which I find his way of composition very similar to the way of "Haïku" - it is a world where things are said the least and expressed the most...

The third day will be the day "OFF" and we are planning different activities in Laussac by the lake of Truyère throughout the day. There will be hiking, picnic, two concerts at the chapel, including performances by our special guest Gaho Takahahi, an excellent koto (Japanese traditional harp). These concerts would be accompanied by a beautiful work of art by Pascale-Sophie Kaparis, who has collected inspiration during her residency at the Awagami Factory in Shikou, Japan last year. At the end of the day we will have an open air cinema where we will enjoy one of the Japanese films from the 70s, accompanied by Takemitsu's music (he was a popular film composer as well, working with Akira Kurosawa and Nagisa Oshima)!

The third concert will be on the 18th of August in the church of Sainte-Marie, and it is a "Fairy's voyage". taken by Takemitsu's music to direction German classical and romantic music. The program will include Takemitsu's short pieces for children, his arrangement of Schuman's piano piece from the album for children, Schumann's Märchenerzählungen (= les contes de fée) for clarinet, viola and piano and Schubert's Arpeggione Sonata played by viola and guitar.

The last concert is named "Oiseau", happening on the 19th of August in the church of Albinhac. After hearing a French old baroque piece on the guitar and Takemitsu's bird-related work called "A Bird Came Down the Walk" for viola and piano, we will have the masterpiece of Olivier Messiaen "Quatuor pour la fin du temps" for clarinet, violin, cello and piano, composed and premiered in 1941 at the prisoner camp in Germany where the composer and the musicians were confined. His own words in the preface -



"The abyss is Time with its sadness, it's weariness. The birds are the opposite to Time; they are our desire for light, for stars, for rainbows, and for jubilant songs!" - a symbolic celebration to the finale of the festival "Hirondelle".

I am happy to announce that there are going to be five colleagues and friends of mine joining me to perform in the festival. Very international and excellent musicians who allowed and inspired me to plan such a program full of variety! Of course there will be OUR cellist Joëlle Martinez. From Sweden we have guitarist Jacob Kellerman, Clarinetist Maximilian Krome from Bremen, Germany, Italien pianist Marco Scilironi and Serbian Violinist Mirka Scepanovic from Basel.

Vive la France! Vive le Japon!

Vive le festival Hirondelle!

Yuko Hara

Artistic Director of Festival Hirondelle 2018

Violist of Quatuor Ardeo (Paris)

