LUTOSŁAWSKI'S LAST CONCERT

Partita • Chain 1 and 2 • Chantefleurs et Chantefables

Fujiko Imajishi, Violin • Valdine Anderson, Soprano
New Music Concerts Ensemble • Witold Lutosławski

Witold

LUTOSŁAWSKI

(1913-1994)

Partita (version for violin and orchestra)	**17:47**
1 I. Allegro giusto	4:33
2 II. Ad libitum	1:19
3 III. Largo	6:46
4 IV. Ad libitum	0:57
5 V. Presto	4:13
6 **Interlude**	**7:09**
Chain 2	**19:38**
7 I. Ad libitum	4:01
8 II. A battuta	5:12
9 III. Ad libitum	5:40
10 IV. A battuta	4:45
Chantefleurs et Chantefables	**20:56**
Texts by Robert Desnos (1900-1945)	
11 No. 1. La Belle-de-nuit	2:25
12 No. 2. La Sauterelle	1:48
13 No. 3. La Véronique	2:35
14 No. 4. L'Eglantine, l'aubépine et la glycine	1:45
15 No. 5. La Tortue	2:16
16 No. 6. La Rose	2:23
17 No. 7. L'Alligator	3:02
18 No. 8. L'Angélique	2:38
19 No. 9. Le Papillon	2:05
20 **Chain 1**	**10:08**

Witold Lutosławski (1913-1994)

Partita • Interlude • Chain 2 • Chantefleurs et Chantefables • Chain 1

Born in Warsaw on 25th January, 1913, Witold Lutosławski began improvising on the piano at the age of six. Three years later, having taught himself enough to notate a short piano prelude, he reached the conclusion that *"it was my fate to compose music"*. He took his first music lessons at the age of eleven and enrolled at the Warsaw Conservatoire in 1932. While completing his degrees in performance (piano and violin, 1936) and composition (1937) he also studied mathematics at Warsaw University. The première of his *Symphonic Variations* in June 1939 encouraged him to complete his studies in Paris, but his plans were soon shattered by the Nazi invasion of Poland in September.

After his capture by the Germans Lutosławski was assigned to the command of a military radio station near Kraków. Fortunately, he was able to escape and wend his way back to Warsaw. During the years of the occupation, public concerts were strictly monitored by the Nazi regime. Lutosławski managed to conceal his fugitive status by forming a piano duo with his colleague, the composer Andrzej Panufnik, and restricting his performances to the relative anonymity of the cafés of the city. For five years they performed popular Polish music, abridged versions of the classics, and the occasional jazz number. The only surviving manuscript amongst the hundreds of arrangements that formed their repertoire is Lutosławski's dazzling piano duet, *Variations on a Theme of Paganini* (1941).

In that year he also began the first of his four *Symphonies,* though a further six years would pass before its completion. By the time the *First Symphony* received its première performance Poland was a Soviet satellite and subject to the same Stalinist cultural policies that had twice muzzled Shostakovich in 1935 and 1948. Forty years later, in a conversation with Bogdan Gieraczynski, Lutosławski recounted the circumstances surrounding the première:

> *... My Symphony was labelled 'formalist' and, as such, was not performed in my own country for ten years. After the performance of the work at the Polish National Philharmonic Hall in 1949, the minister of culture stormed into the conductor's room and in front of a dozen people announced that a composer like me ought to be thrown under the wheels of a streetcar. It is interesting that this was not meant as a joke – he was really furious.*

Lutosławski was dejected by this dangerous turn of events, which portended a grim future of consigning his compositions to the safety of his desk drawer in the forlorn hope that they might some day be discovered. He survived through the creation of so-called *"functional music,"* producing a succession of 66 scores consisting of background music for radio plays, five film scores, incidental music for the theatre and educational materials. His principal symphonic work of this era was the compelling *Concerto for Orchestra* of 1950-54. He discussed this stage of his career with Richard Duffalo in 1987:

> *During the work on functional music, I developed a certain kind of style; a style consisting of folk, diatonic tunes, combined with non-tonal counterpoint and some colourful harmonies... But of course, this was not the music that I really wanted to compose… It was the music I was able to compose… Some think that it was the pressure of government that made me compose with folk-tunes. No! It's absolutely not true – a sheer misunderstanding. When I was ready to realize my first examples as a result of my work on sound language, I just abandoned folk stuff… In 1955 I got rid of it. Since then I have never used it.*

In 1956 the Soviets opened the Eastern borders and the Warsaw Autumn Festival of New Music was established. Though Lutosławski had been permitted to travel abroad occasionally, for most of his colleagues the sudden access to the latest developments in the West amounted to a cultural revolution. For his part, Lutosławski seemed less than enthusiastic about this development:

> *I was not influenced by the Darmstadt avant-garde. It was terribly alien. I should say that I felt terribly lonely when I realized that everything around me was like that. Followers of Webern's music and those people like Boulez and Stockhausen were the leading figures... I was terribly sad.*

For Lutosławski the act of composition involved the systematic examination of every element of the art, with the ultimate goal of developing a technique powerful enough to sustain a distinctive vision of music. The notion that an artist might settle for less, or willingly appropriate the style of another, was inconceivable to him.

Amongst the first fruits of a euphony he felt he could truly call his own was his *Funeral Music* for string orchestra of 1958. The keen balance of dramatic structural principles (particularly the dialectics of conflict and resolution) and singular "flow of all twelve tones in a relatively limited space" accomplished in this work placed him firmly in the forefront of contemporary European composers.

The definitive synthesizing element in the refinement of his style was achieved soon after he heard a radio broadcast of John Cage's *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* in 1960. The open form of this work suggested to Lutosławski the possibility of introducing a measure of controlled rhythmic freedom into his music. Beginning with his *Jeux Vénitiens* of 1961, an element of controlled aleatoricism became a characteristic aspect of his compositions. He remained adamant however, that "the introduction of chance at a precisely anticipated moment is only a means of developing the action, and not an aim in itself." In practice this takes the form of a signal from the conductor indicating the precise point of entry for those instruments that are not intended to be in coordination with the others.

The music that poured forth from Lutosławski in the following decades includes such cherished works as his *String Quartet* (1964), the *Second* (1967), *Third* (1983), and *Fourth* (1992) *Symphonies,* the *Livre pour Orchestre* (1968), the concertos for cello (1970) and piano (1988), and the song cycles, *Trois Poèmes d'Henri Michaux* (1963) and *Paroles tissées* (1965).

One of a handful of composers universally acknowledged as an icon of modem music, Witold Lutosławski was honoured throughout the world for his contributions to the orchestral repertoire. This 1993 recording documents his final appearance as a conductor of his own works before his death on 7th February, 1994.

Partita for violin, piano and orchestra

The *Partita for violin, piano and orchestra* is an expansion of an earlier duet for violin and piano written in 1984 for Pinchas Zukerman and Marc Neikrug. This second version was orchestrated by the composer in 1988 and is dedicated to the violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter, who premièred his previous concerto, *Chain 2*. Of the five movements, the second and fourth are incorporated from the earlier duo and function as short, *ad libitum* interludes that, though they share certain thematic materials, are not coordinated in any way.

Of the remaining three movements, the first marked *Allegro giusto,* is closely related to the constructive principles of *Chain 2*. Here the evolving interval is the minor second, expressed in permutations of the notes G-G#-A. An insistently pulsing background of common triads introduces the middle movement marked *Largo,* in which the violin spins out a poignant melody that gradually rises to the highest register of the instrument. Again, permutations of the three-note chromatic cell provide the thematic argument. The finale continues the tertiary theme with a pattern of recurring triplets that drive the work to a spirited conclusion.

Chain form

Lutosławski provided the following explanation of his concept of Chain form in a note provided for the première of *Chain 1* in 1983:

> *In a work composed in chain-form the music is divided into two strands. Particular sections do not begin at the same moment in each strand, nor do they end together. In other words, in the middle of a section in one strand a new section begins in another. This principle has already been used in my previous compositions as a base for particular stages of the form or in whole movements, as in the 'Passacaglia' of my Concerto for Orchestra.*

Chain 1

Chain 1 was composed for the fourteen instrumentalists of Michael Vyner's London Sinfonietta in 1983. Opening with a unison on the note 'A', it dramatically unfurls its wings only to retract them immediately to a stuttering unison on the note 'B'. This gesture becomes a refrain that grows more complex with each return. Throughout the work certain themes also undergo a process of transformation, notably the initial clarinet solo with its characteristic upbeat figures, the insistent repeated notes of the winds, and the steady chromatic tread of the plucked strings. The texture of the ensemble achieves its maximum density in a terminal network of twelve *cantabile* melodies that are performed *ad libitum*. Propelled by an ever-increasing kinetic energy, *Chain 1* eventually meets its destiny in a massive twelve-note chord. A detonation from the percussion brings the piece to a sputtering close.

Interlude

A mere five minutes in duration, *Interlude* was designed to form a link between the compositions *Chain 2* and *Partita*. The notion of joining these two works to form a triptych was suggested by the visionary Swiss conductor and patron of new music, Paul Sacher, who commissioned both *Chain 2* and the present work. Here the string orchestra, divided into nine parts, casts a seamless, shifting veil over a series of obtrusive outbursts from a cast of soloists. Widespread at the outset, the string harmonies gradually contract into smaller intervals until the envelope seals itself with a unison on the note 'F'.

Chain 2

Chain 2, subtitled *"dialogue for violin and orchestra,"* is a particularly lucid example of Lutosławski's enchantment with the dramatic possibilities inherent in the intercourse between music of a strictly notated nature (*a battuta*) and music containing an element of controlled aleatoricism (*ad libitum*). The four movements of this work reciprocate between these two approaches:

1. ad libitum

The subject of the conversation between the violin and orchestra in this dialogue is a chain of small musical intervals (major and minor seconds) which in turn are linked to a corresponding pair of larger perfect fourths. The smaller intervals evolve into trills and chromatic scales, or are compressed (in the solo violin part) into quarter tones. Their links with their corresponding fourths eventually generate a repertoire of triadic structures.

2. a battuta

As the process of intervallic expansion continues, the rhythmic profile of the music becomes more aggressive. Hammering triple-stops from the soloist evoke turbulent responses from the orchestra. The intervals of the major and minor third are introduced in the central *'trio'* of this Scherzo-like movement as a series of major triads.

3. ad libitum

A chromatic lament from the soloist gradually expands in its compass and register as the orchestra continues to develop elements from the first two movements.

4. a battuta

With a dramatic flourish from the orchestra, the finale amalgamates the chromatic and triadic gestures heard in the previous movements into a series of simultaneous sequential strands that, as in *Chain 1,* drive their way to a climactic twelve-note chord. After a brief respite, the work comes to a powerful close.

Chantefleurs et Chantefables

Lutosławski first set the poetry of the Surrealist author Robert Desnos (1900-1945) in his 1975 interpretation of "*Les Espaces du sommeil.*" *Chantefleurs et Chantefables* is drawn from a collection of rhymes that mirror the world of nature. Their subjects range from the sublime (*'L'Anglique')* to the ridiculous *('L'Alligator')*. All nine selections but the last are traditionally notated and translucently orchestrated. Often the instrumental textures are pared down to a kind of decorative monody, heightening the supremacy of melody in the conception of these delightfully sensitive miniatures.

Published posthumously in 1955, Desnos' verses were written to entertain the children of his close friends. The author was arrested by the Nazis in 1944 for his participation in the French Resistance and died of typhus while a prisoner in the ghetto of Theresienstadt (Terezìn), Czechoslovakia in 1945.

Daniel Foley

Fujiko Imajishi

Photo: Edward Nixon

Japanese-born Fujiko Imajishi has made her home in Canada since 1968. After studies with Lorand Fenyves, Ruggiero Ricci, Franco Gulli and the Hungarian Quartet she went on to win both the Montreal and Toronto Symphony Competitions. She is concertmaster of the Esprit Orchestra and until 2009 was concertmaster of the National Ballet of Canada, and is a founding member and first violinist of the string quartet Accordes. She has enjoyed a long association with New Music Concerts with which she performed Lutosławski's solo works for violin and orchestra, *Partita* and *Chain 2,* conducted by the composer, recordings of which were first released on CD in 1994. She also gave the Canadian première of Ligeti's *Violin Concerto* in 1999. In 2002 she performed *Anthèmes* for violin solo in the presence of composer Pierre Boulez on the occasion of the presentation of the International Glenn Gould Prize. In 2006 Fujiko Imajishi gave the North American première of the violin concerto *Vortex* by Raminta Serksnyte with New Music Concerts and in 2008 the first Canadian performance of two solo violin works by Elliott Carter, which were also included on a CD to mark his hundredth birthday. [Naxos 8.559614].

Valdine Anderson

Photo: Paul J Hoeffler

Canadian soprano Valdine Anderson has collaborated with many of the great composers of our time including Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Pierre Boulez, Thomas Adès, György Kurtág, Elliot Carter, and Gérard Grisey and has worked with such eminent conductors as Daniel Barenboim, Philippe Herreweghe, and Edo de Waart, among others. In celebration of Pierre Boulez's 75th birthday, she toured Europe with the Ensemble Intercontemporain and Boulez himself in performances of *Pli selon pli*. She toured the United States in a new work by Dutilleux, *Correspondances*, with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Simon Rattle and performed *Five Eliot Landscape*s by Adès at Carnegie Hall. Valdine Anderson made her European operatic début as the Maid in the world première of *Powder Her Face* (Thomas Adès). Her many recordings include Adès's *Five Eliot Landscapes* (EMI), Torke's *Book of Proverbs* (Decca), Adès's *Powder Her Face* (EMI), which was nominated for a Grammy Award, and Carter's *What Next*? (ECM).

New Music Concerts

Photo: André Leduc

New Music Concerts has been bringing the world's most noted contemporary musical art forms to Toronto since its founding in 1971 by internationally acclaimed Canadian musicians Robert Aitken and Norma Beecroft. English Canada's longest-running contemporary music series, NMC has a mandate to present recent works of Canadian and international composers in concerts covering many styles and genres, reflecting the face of contemporary music throughout the world. Since its inception NMC has presented more than 300 concerts, commissioned more than 100 Canadian and international works and performed 650 Canadian and world premières. The NMC Ensemble has performed under the direction of such distinguished conductors as Pierre Boulez, Mauricio Kagel, Heinz Holliger and Witold Lutosławski. Among NMC's many recordings are critically acclaimed CDs of the music of Toru Takemitsu, George Crumb and Elliott Carter which appeared on the Naxos label in 2003, 2006 and 2008 respectively.

Robert Aitken

Photo: André Leduc

Having previously served as principal flute for the Vancouver and Toronto Symphony orchestras, in 1970 the world-renowned flautist, composer and conductor Robert Aitken (Order of Canada, Chevalier de l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres (France) and recipient of Canada's most prestigious arts award, the 2009 Walter Carsen Prize for Excellence in the Performing Arts) embarked on a solo career that has taken him to virtually every corner of the globe. He has more than fifty recordings to his credit and such notables as John Cage, George Crumb, Elliott Carter and Toru Takemitsu have dedicated works to him. In 2004 he retired as Professor für Flöte at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg, Germany. Robert Aitken was director of the Banff Centre Winter Program in Music, founder and artistic director of Music Today, Music at Shawnigan and co-founder, with Norma Beecroft, of New Music Concerts in Toronto, which he has directed since its inception in 1971.

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LUTOSŁAWSKI'S LAST CONCERT

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The great Polish composer Witold Lutosławski was an important conductor of his own highly expressive music. With *Chain 1* he developed a new compositional method linking contrasting musical ideas into a satisfying whole. *Partita*, *Interlude* and *Chain 2* form an impressive trilogy. *Chantefleurs et Chantefables* is a luminous, bittersweet song cycle. Canadian soprano Valdine Anderson has been acclaimed for performances ranging from Baroque to contemporary music. Fujiko Imajishi, concertmaster of the National Ballet of Canada and Esprit Orchestra, has enjoyed a long association with Toronto's New Music Concerts.

Witold LUTOSŁAWSKI
(1913-1994)

1-5	Partita (version for violin and orchestra) (1984/1988) [1]	17:47
6	Interlude (1989) [2]	7:09
7-10	Chain 2 (1985) [3]	19:38
11-19	Chantefleurs et Chantefables (1990) [4]	20:56
20	Chain 1 (1983) [5]	10:08

Fujiko Imajishi, Violin [1, 3] • Valdine Anderson, Soprano [4]

New Music Concerts Ensemble
(Artistic Director: Robert Aitken)
Witold Lutosławski

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