PROGRAMME NOTES

La Création du monde (The Creation of the world)

Darius Milhaud first became intrigued with jazz in London, when he heard an American band playing in a Hammersmith dance hall. During his 1922 trip to America he heard the Leo Reisman band and the Paul Whiteman orchestra. He travelled to Harlem, listened to the jazz musicians of the day and returned to Paris complete with modern recordings.

La Création du monde was completed in 1923, and premiered in the Théâtre des Champs - Elysées. Conceived as a ballet, Milhaud worked with scene designer Fernand Léger (Ballet Mécanique), writer Blaise Cendrars, and choreographer Jean Böldin.

Immediate critical reaction to La Création was that it was frivolous and suited more to dance hall than concert hall. But as Milhaud noted dryly in Notes Without Music: "Ten years later the same critics were discussing the philosophy of jazz and learnedly demonstrating that La Création was the best of my works.

Histoire du Soldat (The Soldier's Tale)

Histoire du Soldat was a collaboration between Igor Stravinsky and C.F. Ramuz. The production revolved around a theatre piece which could be produced on a limited budget for and about common people. The plot, derived from the Faust legend, unfolds as the soldier swaps his violin to the Devil for a book which holds the key to success and wealth. A series of battles between good and evil is presented through music, text and dance. Eventually the Soldier's greed gets the upper hand and, thus, the Devil's bargain is consummated.

Histoire du Soldat received its premiere on the 28th of September, 1918 in Lausanne's Théâtre Municipal. The original handbill lists M. Ernest Ansermet as conductor as well as the cast of characters and members of the orchestra. Influenced by American jazz, Stravinsky chose an ensemble of six players plus a percussionist. It is interesting to note that in this work as well as La Création du monde, we see the very early beginnings of today's modern drumkit. The production was carried out on a shoestring budget, with Stravinsky as rehearsal pianist. Histoire du Soldat has become a favourite of the W.A. Conservatorium Chamber Players. Stravinsky's own description of the work was characteristically simple and direct. It was: "to be read, played, and danced."

Gary France
Programme

La Création du monde 1923
DARIUS MILHAUD

The W.A. Conservatorium Contemporary Ensemble

Anthony Maydwell - Conductor
Pal Eder - Violin
Suzanne Wisjman - Cello
Peter Suzuki - Alto Saxophone
Darryl Poulsen - French Horn
Kirrily Morrison - Trumpet
Gary France - Percussion
Cathy McCorkill - Clarinet
Ann Gilby - Oboe
Helen McLaughlin - Flute
Erika Toth - Violin
Richard Lynn - Bass
Marie Hultberg - Bassoon
Andrew Ross - Trombone
Simon Lilly - Trumpet
Alison Eddington - Timpani
Samantha Heath - Clarinet
Brian Warren - Flute
Cecilia Sun - Piano

Interval

There will be one 20 minute interval to reset the stage.

The Soldiers Tale 1918
STRAVINSKY / RAMUZ

The W.A. Conservatorium Chamber Players

Anthony Maydwell - Conductor
Geoffrey Gibbs - Narrator
Pal Eder - Violin
Cathy McCorkill - Clarinet
Marie Hultberg - Bassoon
Kim Harrison - Cornet
Andy Ross - Trombone
Richard Lynn - Bass
Gary France - Percussion

Part One
1 The Soldier's March
2 By the banks of a stream
3 Airs by a stream...
4 The Devil enters...
5 The Soldier's March
6 The Soldier returns to his homeland
7 Pastoral
8 The Soldier confronts the Devil
9 Little Pastoral
10 The Soldier exploits his aquisition greedily but soon comes to realise his foolishness
11 Airs by a stream: The Soldier reminisces
12 He regains his violin
13 Little Airs by a stream

Part Two
14 The Soldier's March
15 The Soldier travels afar
16 Royal March
17 The Soldier visits the King
18 The Soldier plays cards with the Devil
19 Little Concert
20 The Princess dances: a Tango, a Waltz, a Ragtime
21 The Devil's Dance
22 Little Chorale and the Devil's Song
23 Grand Chorales...
24 The Devil's Triumphant March