



Laurent
PETITGIRARD

States of Mind

Saxophone Concerto • Symphonic Poems

Michel Supéra, Alto saxophone

Hungarian Symphony Orchestra Budapest • Petitgirard



Laurent Petitgirard (b. 1950)

States of Mind

États d'âme (2011–12)

I have always been disturbed by the 'vocal' dimension of the saxophone. Throughout the long years of writing that both my operas needed, I have often caught myself thinking that a concerto for saxophone and orchestra would be a natural work to write as the culmination of a lyric work. After having spent three years devoting myself to the writing of my second opera *Guru*, I responded positively to the request of the Orchestre de Douai and Michel Supéra, to whom my work is dedicated. I did not want the soloist to play two or three different saxophones. Indeed, I have thought that the constraint of the limits of the saxophone's tessitura should be considered as an additional stimulus and should enable me to tighten the musical speech and to better define the cyclic aspect I wanted to incorporate into this work. Some sections, notably in the first movement, come close to the concept of a concerto grosso by mixing the soloist with the three flutes or the three clarinets.

Solitaire (2014)

Solitaire is a cyclical and intimate work. It is a progression towards a central idea that appears in the middle of the work, developed by the strings, and then becomes obsessive, before calming at the end. This title does not correspond to the music – it simply describes the composer's state of mind in front of a blank piece of paper.

Le Marathon (1992, revised 2010)

Le Marathon is a symphonic poem born out of an opera that was never written. Since 1983, I have felt passionately about a theatrical play by Claude Confortès, *Le Marathon*, that tells the story of three men running an Olympic marathon – it is, in fact, birth, love and death who are competing. I did not compose the opera, but I did accumulate enough notes to compose two suites, the first

for two pianos, and the second for piano solo, and in 1992 I decided to write a symphonic poem using this material. One can hear in this piece the asymmetrical rhythms of 7/16 and 9/16, which is reminiscent of a small stone in a shoe, and the terror of the runners. The sweeping cello solo, extremely exposed in the high register of the instrument, depicts passion. The orchestral accompaniment was originally conceived for a mixed choir, singing 'So is love'. I revised this score in 2010.

Flaine (2018)

The symphonic poem *Flaine* evokes the adventure of the conception and construction of a resort at Haute-Savoie, from the dreams of Eric and Sylvie Boissonnas, through to Marcel Breuer's architectural realisation. From 1968 geophysicist and sponsor Éric Boissonnas had imagined combining the poetry and magic of this location with contemporary architecture to host both winter sports and artistic activities, specifically focusing on classical music. Sylvie, at the same time, curated the vision for the visual arts. This work must therefore be listened to as a journey, with the moving memory of this couple, these passionate advocates of arts and culture, as a guide. The work was commissioned by the Flaine Music Academy, directed by Bruno Latouche.

States of Mind, featuring my saxophone concerto and three symphonic poems, is my second collaboration with the excellent Hungarian Symphony Orchestra Budapest after the recording of my second opera *Guru*, besides many other recordings for movies scores. I deeply appreciate the quality and the concentration of those superb musicians and I am especially grateful to Christian May for the perfect organisation of the recording sessions.

Laurent Petitgirard

Laurent Petitgirard (né 1950)

États d'âme

États d'âme (2011–12)

J'ai toujours été troublé par la dimension « vocale » du saxophone. Durant les longues années d'écriture qu'ont nécessité mes deux opéras, je me suis souvent surpris à penser qu'un concerto pour saxophone et orchestre serait une œuvre naturelle à écrire en point d'orgue d'une œuvre lyrique. Après les trois années consacrées à l'écriture de mon second opéra *Guru*, j'ai donc répondu positivement à la demande de l'Orchestre de Douai et de Michel Supéra, auquel cette œuvre est dédiée. Je n'ai pas souhaité que le soliste joue de deux ou trois saxophones différents, estimant que la contrainte des limites de la tessiture du saxophone alto devait être considérée comme une stimulation supplémentaire et me permettre de resserrer le discours musical et mieux définir l'aspect cyclique que je souhaitais introduire dans cette œuvre. Certains passages, notamment dans le premier mouvement, s'approchent du concept du concerto grosso, en mêlant le soliste aux 3 flûtes ou aux 3 clarinettes.

Solitaire (2014)

Solitaire est une œuvre cyclique et intimiste. C'est une progression vers une cellule centrale qui apparaîtra au milieu de l'œuvre, développée par les cordes, pour devenir ensuite obsessionnelle, se calmer pour mieux revenir achever l'œuvre. Ce titre ne correspond absolument pas un programme, il décrit simplement l'état d'esprit du compositeur devant une feuille de papier à musique vierge.

Le Marathon (1992, révisé 2010)

Le Marathon est un poème symphonique né d'un opéra jamais écrit. Dès 1984, j'étais passionné par une pièce de Claude Confortès, *Le Marathon*, qui raconte l'histoire de trois hommes qui courent un marathon olympique. En fait, c'est la naissance, l'amour et la mort qui courent. Je n'ai pas composé l'opéra, mais j'avais accumulé suffisamment

de notes pour écrire deux suites, la première pour deux pianos, la seconde pour piano. En 1992, j'ai décidé d'en faire un poème symphonique, créé la même année à la Salle Pleyel à Paris par l'Orchestre Symphonique Français. On retrouvera dans cette œuvre la rythmique asymétrique à 7/16 et à 9/16 qui correspond au "grain de sable dans la chaussure", hantise du coureur à pied. Le grand solo de violoncelle, très exposé dans l'aigu de l'instrument, décrit la passion amoureuse, l'accompagnement d'orchestre étant conçu originellement pour être un chœur qui scandait "C'est donc ça l'amour". Ce n'est que douze ans après *Le Marathon* que j'ai entamé l'écriture de mon premier opéra *Joseph Merrick dit Elephant Man*, créé à Prague en 2002. J'ai révisé cette partition en 2010.

Flaine (2018)

Le poème symphonique *Flaine* évoque l'épopée de la conception et de la construction de cette station de Haute-Savoie, depuis le rêve d'Eric et Sylvie Boissonnas jusqu'à la réalisation architecturale de Marcel Breuer. A la fois géophysicien et mécène, Eric Boissonnas avait imaginé dès 1968 lier la poésie et la magie de ce domaine avec la force de l'architecture contemporaine pour y accueillir, parallèlement aux sports d'hiver, une intense activité artistique, notamment musicale. Sylvie, en même temps, orientait les arts visuels et notamment un centre d'art aux expositions réputées. C'est ce foisonnement sonore et visuel qui m'a toujours fasciné lors des académies d'été qui s'y déroulent depuis 40 ans et dont mon cher ami Bruno Latouche assure la direction depuis 1998. Cette œuvre doit donc s'écouter comme un voyage, avec comme guide le souvenir ému de ce couple passionné d'art et de culture.

États d'âme, qui comprend mon concerto de saxophone et 3 poèmes symphoniques, est ma seconde collaboration avec l'excellent Hungarian Symphony Orchestra Budapest après l'enregistrement de mon second opéra *Guru*, sans parler de plusieurs enregistrements de musiques de film. J'apprécie profondément la qualité et la

concentration de ces superbes musiciens et je remercie tout spécialement Christian May pour l'organisation parfaite des séances d'enregistrement.

Laurent Petitgirard

Michel Supéra

Photo: Denis Gliksmann



Saxophonist Michel Supéra trained at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris. A multifaceted performer with a genre-spanning repertoire, he regularly appears as a soloist with prestigious orchestras around the world. He is also passionate about chamber music and has performed with a wide array of eminent musicians. Supéra has been invited to give masterclasses in Europe, Asia, South America and the US, has been a jury member for international competitions, and is co-artistic director of the European competition ClariSax. Supéra also works with contemporary composers to create new repertoire for the saxophone. He is a Buffet Crampon and D'Addario artist.

www.michelsupera.com

Hungarian Symphony Orchestra Budapest



The Hungarian Symphony Orchestra Budapest is one of the finest orchestras in Hungary, well known for its excellent recordings, concerts and tours. As well as concerts in Hungary and abroad, such as in Vienna and Hong Kong, the orchestra is regularly invited to undertake international tours. Studio recordings are also an important part of its work. The orchestra has worked with Laurent Petitgirard on numerous occasions, with recordings on Naxos including his opera *Guru* (8.660300-01) and *The Little Prince* ballet suite (8.573113).

www.hsobudapest.com

Laurent Petitgirard



Photo: JFR Leclercq

Laurent Petitgirard's career as a composer of symphonic music, operas and film music is matched by his activities as a guest conductor over the world. His concertos have been performed and recorded by eminent soloists including Augustin Dumay, Gary Hoffmann, Gérard Caussé, Emmanuel Pahud, Marie-Pierre Langlamet and Michel Supéra. Music director of the Orchestre Colonne in Paris from 2005 to 2018, and the French Symphonic Orchestra from 1988 to 1997, Petitgirard has recorded over 40 albums. As a guest conductor he has appeared with the Paris Opéra Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo, Orchestre National de France, Bamberg Philharmoniker, Berliner Symphoniker, Tonhalle Orchester Zürich, Utah Symphony, Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, Korean Symphony Orchestra, KBS Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Spanish National Orchestra, Moscow State Symphony Orchestra and the China National Symphonic Orchestra. His first opera, *Joseph Merrick, The Elephant Man*, was first performed in 2002 at the Prague and

Nice Operas, and in 2006 at the Minnesota Opera. His second opera *Guru* was nominated as CD of the Month by *Classica* magazine, and was premiered at Opera at the Castle in Szczecin. Laurent Petitgirard's concertos for violin, viola, cello and saxophone, symphonic poems, operas and the ballet suite *The Little Prince* have been released on Naxos. In February 2017 he was elected Perpetual Secretary of the Beaux-Arts Academy.

www.petitgirard.com

Laurent Petitgirard's eclectic career as a composer of lyrical and intensely French symphonic music, operas and chamber music is matched by conducting activities at the highest level – experience that accounts for the colourful richness of his orchestration. The rhapsodic concerto *États d'âme* explores the saxophone's vocal expressiveness. Of the three symphonic poems *Le Marathon* is an allegory in which the runners represent birth, love and death, while *Flaine* is a poignant and inspiring journey through art and culture. 'Anyone enjoying accessible contemporary music will find much to enjoy here.' (*MusicWeb International* on Petitgirard's *Concertos for String Instruments*, Naxos 8.557602)

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(b. 1950)

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	États d'âme (2011–12)	22:44
❶	Movement 1	7:14
❷	Movement 2	7:17
❸	Movement 3	8:12
❹	Solitaire (2014)	12:09
❺	Le Marathon (1992, revised 2010) Balázs Kántor, Cello solo	14:12
❻	Flaine (2018)	9:13

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

Michel Supéra, Alto saxophone ❶–❸

Hungarian Symphony Orchestra Budapest

Laurent Petitgirard

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