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Email info@ongaku-records.com
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ONGAKU RECORDS RELEASES GROUND BREAKING CD OF OLIVIER MESSIAEN'S *THE QUARTET FOR THE END OF TIME*

BOSTON August 1, 2004 — Ongaku Records (<http://ongaku-records.com/>) announced the release of a ground-breaking new recording of Olivier Messiaen's monumental chamber work *Le Quatuor pour la fin du Temps (The Quartet for the End of Time)* coupled with *Theme and Variations for violin and piano*, also by Messiaen, recorded in the resplendent acoustics of Mechanics Hall in Worcester, Massachusetts. The new release (024-119) features world-renowned Ongaku artists Jonathan Cohler (clarinet) and Ilya Kaler (violin) together with Ongaku debut artists Janice Weber (piano) and Andrew Mark (cello).

Ongaku Records releases have garnered stunning reviews and accolades including *BBC Music Magazine's Best CDs of the Year*, the **Outstanding Recording** mark of *American Record Guide*, the **Top Five List** of *Fanfare Magazine*, and the coveted **INDIE Award Nomination** among others.

Although the *Quartet* is Messiaen's most recorded work, the difficulties encountered in achieving Messiaen's extreme tempi, dynamics and colors have proved to be a formidable challenge for performers and recording engineers alike. As Cohler points out in his extensive program notes that accompany the CD,

“In my survey of the existing recordings, however, I discovered that none of them, including Messiaen's own, had realized some of the most critical aspects of the piece. We made this recording with the purpose of adhering more closely to the artistic desires of Messiaen, as indicated by his detailed markings in the score, his later writings and musings on the work, and his supervised recording of 1991.”

This recording was produced using the latest in 24-bit digital recording technology, and was edited and mastered throughout in 24-bits to preserve the amazing dynamic range and tonal colors evoked by Messiaen's masterpiece.

Jonathan Cohler is recognized internationally as a virtuoso clarinetist. Through his performances around the world and on record, he has thrilled an ever-widening audience with his incredible musicianship and total technical command. *Fanfare Magazine* has compared him to the legendary pianist Dinu Lipatti, and the magazine dubbed Mr. Cohler's performance “superhuman.” *The Clarinet Magazine* of the International Clarinet Association proclaimed Mr. Cohler “an absolute master of the clarinet.” His recordings have received resounding acclaim including the coveted INDIE Award Nomination, and the Best CDs of the Year selection of *BBC Music Magazine*. *American Record Guide* has declared, “Cohler is an amazing musician — I suppose there is nothing he cannot play,” while *Listener Magazine* said, “Cohler possesses such musical integrity and taste that everything he touches seems like the last word!” Mr. Cohler is on the faculty of the Longy School of Music in Cambridge and the New England Conservatory in Boston, Massachusetts.

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The only violinist ever to win Gold Medals at all three of the world's most prestigious competitions—the Tchaikovsky, the Sibelius and the Paganini competitions—Ilya Kaler has been compared to the likes of Heifetz and Perlman. Kaler's recordings of the Paganini *Caprices* have been deemed by *American Record Guide* to be, “in a class by themselves” combining “the perfection, passion, and phrase sculpting of Michael Rabin with the energy, excitement, and immediacy of Jascha Heifetz.” His recording on Ongaku of solo works for violin (024-103) has been hailed by *Listener Magazine* as, “the finest violin recording I have ever encountered by one of the truly great performers of the day,” and by *BBC Music Magazine* as “[an] arresting collection...Ilya Kaler, an explosive virtuoso, assaults the ears and compels with his sheer fluency.” Mr. Kaler is on the faculty of DePaul University School of Music in Chicago, Illinois.

Cellist **Andrew Mark** has had a wide-ranging career both as soloist and chamber musician performing for years as a member of the award-winning contemporary group *The Core Ensemble*, and prior to that as a member of the *Boston Composers String Quartet*. Mr. Mark has been a guest artist at several summer music festivals including the Newport Music Festival, the Contemporary Music Festival at Tanglewood, the Chautauqua Festival, June in Buffalo, Florida International Festival, and the Castle Hill Festival. As a Mr. Mark has performed with the Florida Philharmonic, the Cleveland Chamber Symphony, the Palm Beach Opera Orchestra, the New Hampshire Symphony, the Yamagata Symphony Orchestra of Japan, and with several orchestras in the Boston area. He has recorded for New World, Koch, Albany, Dorian, CRI, and Neuma Recordings. This marks his recording debut for Ongaku. Mr. Mark is Chairman of the String Department at The Boston Conservatory.

Pianist **Janice Weber** has appeared as soloist with the American Composers Orchestra, Boston Pops, Chautauqua Symphony, New Hampshire Symphony, Sarajevo Philharmonic, and Syracuse Symphony. Critics have hailed her “superfluid mastery” at solo performances including the White House, Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall, Weill Hall, National Gallery of Art, Boston's Symphony Hall, and the 92nd Street Y in New York. She has toured Yugoslavia, Turkey, the Baltic States and China. Her eclectic recordings include the complete transcriptions of Rachmaninoff (IMP); with the Lydian Quartet, Leo Ornstein's vast Piano Quintet (New World Records); waltz transcriptions of Godowsky, Rosenthal, and Friedman (IMP); the world premiere recording of Liszt's Transcendental Etudes in the notoriously difficult 1838 version (IMP); and solo piano music of Leo Ornstein (Naxos). Miss Weber has recently completed her sixth novel. This marks her recording debut for Ongaku. Ms. Weber is on the faculty of The Boston Conservatory.

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