

## Éric Champagne Montréal (Canada), 1980

Winner of the “Discovery of the Year” Opus prize in 2014, composer Éric Champagne holds a Masters Degree in Composition from the Université de Montréal. He has studied with Michel Tétreault, François-Hugues Leclair, Michel Longtin, Denis Gougeon, Luis de Pablo, José Evangelista, John McCabe, and Gary Kulesha. Champagne’s music is regularly performed in Quebec, Canada, the United States, Europe, and India by distinguished orchestras, ensembles and soloists. He has collaborated with many poets and visual artists in multi-disciplinary projects. As composer-in-residence with Montreal’s Orchestre Métropolitain (2012 to 2014), Éric Champagne continues to be a regular collaborator on a variety of musical and pedagogical projects. He is composer-in-residence at the Chapelle historique du Bon-Pasteur in Montréal (2016 to 2018).

### Berceuse pour l’enfant solitaire (2017) For children’s choir (3 voices), piano and percussions

In memory of the lonely child that once was Claude Vivier

#### Presentation notes

This piece is inspired by Claude Vivier’s works, particularly his piece *Lonely Child* (1980). The goal is to invite young singers and musicians to plunge into Vivier’s sound universe and imagination, rife with whims, magical countries, invented languages and gentle, charming characters. The lullaby tries to console a child, perhaps abandoned, but who finds enjoyment, love and truth in a dream both strange and reassuring.

The words are verses excerpted from *Lonely Child*, and in a sense they summarize Vivier’s imagination: acrobats who touch the stars, the wicked fairy Carabosse met in a dream, young Tadzio who will be comforted. The dream section explores more typical elements of Vivier’s music.

Although simplified, the music was composed in order to familiarize the performer with Vivier’s music. The third minor (melodic and harmonic) interval is omnipresent: it is Vivier’s iconic interval. Certain melodic lines moving in parallel directions as well as certain chords used in a stripped down way are also borrowed from Vivier’s style. Also, the vocal effects in the dream section are featured in many works from Vivier’s repertoire.

The lullaby follows the melodic curve of the beginning of *Lonely Child*. From this perspective, listening to the work can be an interesting complementary appreciation activity when performing *Berceuse pour l’enfant solitaire*.

#### Text

Text selected and adapted by Éric Champagne, excerpt from *Lonely Child*, words and music by Claude Vivier. (Free translation)

#### The Lullaby

Sleep beautiful child of the light sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep, always sleep.  
Dreams will come, gentle fairies will dance with you.  
Sleep, sleep, sleep, always sleep sleep.  
Swallows will guide your steps.  
Sleep, sleep, sleep, always sleep sleep.  
The acrobats touch the tips of the stars.  
Sleep, sleep, sleep, always sleep sleep

#### The Dream

an an an an...  
u u u u...  
hé hé hé hé...  
HÉ! HO!  
Ho ho ho ho...  
Give me your hand and let us visit the fairy Carabosse  
Oh! Queen of blue dawns, please give me eternity.  
É é é é...  
Zipangu!  
HÉ! HO!

#### Love, Truth

And you will see love, Tadzio  
Your green eyes will draw truth from the tales  
Sleep my child  
Give me your hand, Tadzio  
Stars shine for you, Tadzio  
Stars shine for you and love you eternally.

#### PERFORMANCE NOTES

#### Voice

Some typical sound effects of Claude Vivier’s music are used to create a surreal effect, especially in “Le rêve” (“The Dream”). These are simple and somewhat theatrical, allowing the young singers to explore Vivier’s universe and imagination.

- « + » : this symbol, placed above the notes in “Le rêve” (“The Dream”), consists of beating the hand against the mouth while singing the note. Vivier very much liked shading the voice with this gesture.
- « Zipangu » : (measure 38) Must be sung without a precise pitch in particular, but creating a large interval between the beginning of the word and its last syllable, extending into a long glissando. The surprise effect must evoke a clown who jumps out of a Jack-in-the-box

Zipangu (« Country of gold ») is what explorer Marco Polo called Japan. For Vivier, this name evokes mystery, imaginary countries and dreams. Moreover, he composed a work for string orchestra with this title, besides using this word in several of his works for voice, such as *Prologue pour un Marco Polo*.

- « Hé! Ho! » (measures 30, 31 and 39,40). Another typical Vivier element, this interjection, sung on a third minor interval, is featured in several of the composer's major works (*Orion*, *Kopernikus...*). A highly theatrical effect, this can represent a person who is all alone, trying to discover if there is anyone else around (a bit like when we play Marco-Polo, searching for someone unseen). In a way it is a call to the universe, with the hope of an answer...

### Percussions

- Use a Gong or a small Tam-tam. Although optional, this instrument is strongly recommended. There is a direct reference to the structure of *Lonely Child* and it contributes to create a meditative atmosphere of lullaby, like a rite or a prayer.
- Using a Vibraslap is optional. This can be replaced by imitation, by castanets or wood blocks (sixteenth notes decrescendo, with a strong attack leading up to a pp, spread throughout 3 beats).

### ORFF Xylophones

- Optional, but recommended for their magical effect, especially in the second section (which greatly supports the voices and the ripple effect).
- The ORFF instrumentarium slightly evokes the Gamelan, a set of Balinese percussions very much present in Claude Vivier's imagery.
- Optional cuts are proposed in the score to simplify the ORFF sections, as needed:
  - Tacet dès la mesure 1
  - Begin to play "Le rêve" ("The Dream") section from measure 26, 3rd beat (xylo 2), measure 28 (xylo 3) and measure 29 (xylo 1)
  - Tacet from measure 42
  - Start with measure 52, for the finale.

# Berceuse pour l'enfant solitaire

à la mémoire de ce Lonely Child qu'était Claude Vivier

Musique : Éric Champagne

Paroles : Claude Vivier et Éric Champagne

Tempo de berceuse (♩ = c. 66)

The musical score is arranged in a system with seven staves. The top three staves are for three voices (Voix 1, Voix 2, Voix 3), each with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The lyrics for all voices are: "Dors bel en-fant de la lu - miè - re Dors, dors, dors, dors,". The piano part consists of two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a grand staff brace. The percussion part is a single staff with a double bar line and a gong symbol, marked *mp*. The three xylophone parts (Xylophone (Orff) 1, 2, and 3) are on the bottom three staves, each with a treble clef and marked *p*. Each xylophone part includes a note: "(Coupure optionnelle - jouez à partir de la mesure 27)". The score includes various time signatures: 4/4, 2/4, and 4/4.