

MARK STRYKER

All-star quartet to play Messiaen masterwork

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CLASSICAL

Given the extraordinarily communicative power of Olivier Messiaen's 20th-Century masterpiece "Quartet for the End of Time," it's a shame that the piece has been played so infrequently in metro Detroit....

The good news is that the all-star ensemble of pianist Christopher Taylor, clarinetist John Bruce Yeh, violinist Cho-Liang Lin and cellist Gary Hoffman are now performing the 45-minute work Saturday under the umbrella of the Chamber Music Society of Detroit....

Written and premiered in a German prisoner of war camp in 1940-41, the piece was scored for such an unusual combination of instruments (violin, clarinet, cello and piano) because those were the instruments played by pianist Messiaen and three other imprisoned musicians. The music -- spare, shimmering and spellbinding -- speaks of an undying faith in liberation and deep spirituality. The title comes from the Revelation of St. John -- "There shall be time no longer."



Christopher Taylor performs Friday and Saturday in Beverly Hills. (Chamber Music Society of Detroit)

The all-French program also includes Ravel's Duo for Violin and Cello, Op. 73, and Debussy's "Premiere Rhapsodie" for clarinet and piano.

On Friday, the Chamber Music Society opens its Opus 3 Piano Series with a recital by Taylor, a pianist with a reputation for his keenly insightful interpretations. The traditional program includes Bach's French Overture, BWV 831; Beethoven's "Waldstein Sonata" and Chopin's complete Etudes, Book 2....