



JAAP VAN ZWEDEN
MUSIC DIRECTOR

The Art of the Score

Metropolis in Concert

Tuesday, February 6, 2024, 7:30 p.m.

Cameron Carpenter, Organ

Wu Tsai Theater
David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center
Home of the New York Philharmonic

This program will last approximately two and one-half hours. There will be no intermission.

The Digital Organ is made possible by **Ronnie P. Ackman and Lawrence D. Ackman.**



February 6, 2024

The Art of the Score

Cameron Carpenter, Organ

Cameron CARPENTER
(b. 1981)

Metropolis (film, 1927; music, 2022;
New York Premiere of full silent film
with Carpenter's original score)

Director
Fritz Lang

Producer
Erich Pommer

Screenplay
Thea von Harbou, from her novel

Cinematography
Karl Freund
Günther Rittau
Walter Ruttmann

Cast
Alfred Abel
Gustav Fröhlich
Rudolf Klein-Rogge
Fritz Rasp
Theodor Loos
Erwin Biswanger
Heinrich George
Brigitte Helm

Art Direction
Otto Hunte
Erich Kettelhut
Karl Vollbrecht

Costume Design
Aenne Willkomm

THIS CONCERT WILL BE PERFORMED WITHOUT AN INTERMISSION.

A film from the holdings of the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung
(www.murnau-stiftung.de) in Wiesbaden.

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Notes on the Program

Metropolis

Cameron Carpenter

Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* might be cinema's greatest collision of the old and the new — a modernist masterpiece steeped in myth and melodrama. Over the decades, as it came to represent the pinnacle of silent film's Golden Age, the movie has continued to forge new connections to the future, influencing not only filmmakers but musicians, artists, designers, and architects. This makes it an ideal showcase for the New York premiere of a live score by organist Cameron Carpenter, who himself melds tradition with technology, classicism with innovation.

Metropolis takes place in a dystopian city of the future where wealthy hedonists live in grand enclaves while faceless laborers are worked to the bone in massive subterranean caves. Freder Frederesen (played by Gustav Fröhlich) — the sheltered, bon vivant son of the city's grim-faced leader, Joh Fredersen (Alfred Abel) — accidentally discovers the cavernous world of the suffering masses when he follows Maria (Brigitte Helm), an angelic young activist, underground. In the ensuing story — filled with wild sci-fi imagery (including Maria replicated as a Machine Woman, a direct influence on our modern conception of the robot), epic disaster sequences, and references to ancient myth and the Bible — the two sides of *Metropolis*, its "head" and its "hands," confront one another.

Few modern musical artists represent the bridge between the old and the new as vividly as Cameron Carpenter. The organ's origins date back to Ptolemaic Egypt, and its use in churches has led to

its being seen as the most traditional of instruments, but Carpenter has brought it into the modern world. The son of an inventor, his technological innovations are almost as notable as his bravura performances, which are marked by improvisations and deviations from established compositions. Indeed, the album that earned him a Grammy Award nomination in 2009, making him the first organist nominated for the honor for a solo album, is titled *Revolutionary*.

A prodigious musical talent from a young age, Carpenter was a student at Juilliard when the organ at Trinity Church Wall Street was destroyed by the September 11 attacks. In 2003, the then-nascent firm of Marshall & Ogletree built an electronic organ for the church (which is now in the process of installing a new pipe organ). Carpenter was wowed, and over the next ten years worked with the company to create the International Touring Organ, a digital organ that made

In Short

Born: 1981, in Titusville, Pennsylvania

Resides: in Berlin, Germany

Work composed: 2022

World Premiere: The film was premiered in January 1927 in Berlin; Carpenter's score was first performed on March 17, 2023, at the Hong Kong Cultural Center.

New York Philharmonic premiere: this performance, which marks the score's New York premiere

Estimated duration: ca. 120 minutes

Metropolis's Musical Legacy

For a silent film, *Metropolis* has had a fascinating and perhaps surprising relationship with music ever since its 1927 premiere, when it was accompanied live with an original score by German composer Gottfried Huppertz (who had also played during the film's production to help the actors emotionally prepare for their scenes).

With its rhythmic factory scenes, wild nightclub sequences, and religious processions, the film certainly lends itself to musical interpretation. Over the years a variety of composers, artists, ensembles, DJs, and producers have created their own musical spin on the film, including Australian composer Chris Neal, Seattle's eclectic performance collective the Degenerate Art Ensemble, the German electronic artist Dieter Moebius, the Montenegrin experimental rocker Rambo Amadeus, British pianist Dmytro Morykit, and the Massachusetts-based Alloy Orchestra.

Perhaps the most notorious was by the "Father of Disco," Giorgio Moroder, who in 1984 released a new, color-tinted version of the film with a pop soundtrack featuring songs by Pat Benatar, Adam Ant, Bonnie Tyler, and Freddie Mercury (whose band, Queen, used clips from the film for the video for "Radio Ga-Ga"). Moroder's version was blasted by critics, but his re-release of *Metropolis* was crucial in helping preserve and restore the film, prints of which had been badly cut and damaged over the previous decades.



Poster for Giorgio Moroder's 1984 version of *Metropolis*

its debut in 2014 and with which Carpenter, who has lived in Berlin for the past 12 years, built a successful touring career.

The epic scope and dense, novelistic story of *Metropolis* gave Carpenter the rare freedom to develop long-form musical ideas. The city's underground factories are full of grinding gears, clock-like contraptions, giant pumps and pipes, and he was tempted to underline such elements musically. "The machine sequences are all great, of course," he chuckles, "but there's only so much grinding gears that one needs in an evening." Instead, Carpenter's score begins with a familiar passion

chorale, then juxtaposes contrasting musical themes to symbolize the distance between the workers and the wealthy, creating a more emotional and deeper bond between the music and the film.

Carpenter first performed *Metropolis* in Hong Kong in 2023, but there's special resonance to the New York premiere of this score. Fritz Lang liked to say that the inspiration for his film came from a visit to New York in 1924, when he stepped out on the deck of the *S.S. Deutschland* and saw the city's skyline, with its neon lights and flashing advertisements. In truth, Thea von Harbou — the director's

David Geffen Hall's New Digital Organ

When David Geffen Hall underwent its recent renovation, a team of designers, working with the New York Philharmonic and Lincoln Center, considered various possibilities for a permanent organ. A full-scale pipe organ would have eaten up more precious backstage space, or required the additional removal of a significant number of seats. A digital organ was deemed a more viable and innovative option. Of course, these aren't small either. The 78-speaker array required for the new organ, built by the Walker Technical Company of Center Valley, Pennsylvania, hangs in the chamber overhanging the choir loft, behind a large, beautiful grid of bentwood slats.



A digital organ is not a fancy synthesizer. It uses a vast number of digital samples of pipe organs recorded with a variety of microphones. "It has to be a carefully crafted, designed instrument," says Carpenter. "There are about five digital organs in the world that really deserve to be respected as high musical instruments." He praises Lincoln Center and the New York Philharmonic for their approach to the new instrument: "it's the first really important concert hall in the world to not only permanently install a digital organ, but to be proud of doing so."

The organ built for the new David Geffen Hall when the building was renovated

then-wife and creative partner — was already at work on a script about a city of the future. But while the director may have been exaggerating, he wasn't lying. It's clear that much of the film's imagery was inspired by his visions of this city.

For all its ancient overtones, the story presents then — and still — contemporary ideas about working-class resistance and the power of capital. It evokes the trauma of World War I, with its images of mechanized slaughter, as well as the unhinged hedonism of the Weimar years in Germany and the Roaring Twenties in the US. As we watch the film's portrait of the desperate masses being led to ruin and destruction by seductive demagogues, it's hard not to tremble with the feeling that we're watching a prophecy.

Carpenter has immersed himself in the ideas of *Metropolis*, but he resists

excessive interpretation. "I'm not a cinema historian, and I'm not strong on film theory," he says. "I do have a kind of naivete about it, and I think that's good, because it allows me to just keep to the music." And for all his reputation as an iconoclast, this onetime *enfant terrible* of the organ admits that he loves the idea of performing in the service of something else. "It feels a bit like doing live music for ballet or theater. I want the music to be good music, but I want to assist the viewer — I don't want them to become only a listener."

Instrumentation: solo organ.

— *Bilge Ebiri, a film critic for New York magazine and Vulture whose work has appeared in The New York Times, Rolling Stone, The Village Voice, and the Criterion Collection*

The Artist



Organist and composer **Cameron Carpenter** — who has performed across the United States and Europe as a chorister, accompanist, and keyboard soloist — was

the first organist nominated for a Grammy, for the album *Revolutionary* (Telarc, 2008). He premiered his first concerto for organ and orchestra, *The Scandal*, Op. 3, in 2011 with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen at the Cologne Philharmonie. He also premiered Terry Riley's organ concerto, *At the Royal Majestic*, in Los Angeles, reprising it in Geneva and Berlin.

Carpenter received the Leonard Bernstein Award at the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival 2012. He was the first organist-in-residence at the Berlin Philharmonie (2012–13) and artist-in-residence at the Konzerthaus Berlin (2017–18). Other honors include the ECHO Klassik award for *If You Could Read My Mind* (2015). A Sony Classical artist since

2013, he has been a featured speaker at TED, IdeaCity, Aspen Ideas Festival, and other conferences. He designed and debuted the George W. Mergens Memorial Organ at Palm Beach's Kravis Center for the Performing Arts.

Cameron Carpenter designed, financed, and converted most of his activities to his International Touring Organ (ITO). Following ITO's debut at Lincoln Center and the Vienna Konzerthaus in 2014, he toured extensively with the instrument throughout the United States, Europe, Russia, China, and Australia in a variety of solo, concerto, open air, collaborative, and broadcast presentations. He premiered his own organ-and-orchestra version of Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* with the ITO at the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra in 2018, since performing it with ensembles including the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Radio Symphony Orchestra Wien, Graz Philharmonic, Bamberg Philharmonic, Orchestre National de Lyon, and Minnesota Orchestra. He recorded it with the Berlin Concerthaus Orchestra and Christoph Eschenbach in 2019.

Jaap van Zweden and the New York Philharmonic



Jaap van Zweden became Music Director of the New York Philharmonic in 2018. In 2023–24, his farewell season celebrates his connection with the Orchestra's musicians as he leads performances in which six Principal players appear as concerto soloists. He also revisits composers he has championed at the Philharmonic, from Steve Reich and Joel Thompson to Mozart and Mahler. He is also Music Director of the Hong Kong Philharmonic, since 2012, and becomes Music Director of the Seoul Philharmonic in 2024. He has appeared as guest with the Orchestre de Paris; Amsterdam's Royal Concertgebouw and Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestras; Vienna, Berlin, and Los Angeles philharmonic orchestras; and London Symphony, Chicago Symphony, and Cleveland orchestras.

Jaap van Zweden's NY Phil recordings include David Lang's *prisoner of the state* and Julia Wolfe's Grammy-nominated *Fire in my mouth* (Decca Gold). He conducted the first performances in Hong Kong of Wagner's *Ring Cycle*, the Naxos recording of which led the Hong Kong Philharmonic to be named the 2019 *Gramophone* Orchestra of the year. His performance of Wagner's *Parsifal* received the Edison Award for Best Opera Recording in 2012.

Born in Amsterdam, Jaap van Zweden became the youngest-ever concertmaster of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra at age 19 and began his conducting career almost 20 years later. He was named *Musical America's* 2012 Conductor of the Year, was profiled by CBS *60 Minutes* on arriving at the NY Phil, and in the spring of 2023 received the prestigious Concertgebouw Prize. In 1997 he and his wife, Aaltje, established the Papageno Foundation to support families of children with autism.

The **New York Philharmonic** connects with millions of music lovers each season through live concerts in New York and around the world, broadcasts, streaming, education programs, and more. In the 2023–24 season — which builds on the Orchestra's transformation reflected in the new David Geffen Hall — the NY Phil honors Jaap van Zweden in his farewell season as Music Director, premieres 14 works by a wide range of composers including some whom van Zweden has championed, marks György Ligeti's centennial, and celebrates the 100th birthday of the beloved Young People's Concerts.

The Philharmonic has commissioned and / or premiered important works, from Dvořák's *New World Symphony* to Tania León's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Stride*. The NY Phil has released more than 2,000 recordings since 1917, and in 2023 announced a partnership with Apple Music Classical, the new streaming app designed to deliver classical music lovers the optimal listening experience. The Orchestra builds on a longstanding commitment to serving its communities — which has led to annual free concerts across New York City and the free online New York Philharmonic Shelby White & Leon Levy Digital Archives — through a new ticket access program.

Founded in 1842, the New York Philharmonic is the oldest symphony orchestra in the United States, and one of the oldest in the world. Jaap van Zweden became Music Director in 2018–19, following titans including Bernstein, Toscanini, and Mahler. Gustavo Dudamel will become Music and Artistic Director beginning in 2026 after serving as Music Director Designate in 2025–26.