



# Guillaume CONNESSON

## *Le Rire de Sarai*

**Guillaume Connesson** (b. 1970) studied piano, history of music, choir analysis and direction at the Conservatoire National de Région de Boulogne-Billancourt, as well as orchestration at the Conservatoire National de Paris. He also undertook parallel courses from Marcel Landowski. He is presently professor of orchestration at the Conservatoire National de Région d'Aubervilliers. In 1998, he received the Cardin award of the French Institut of Supernova and in 1999 he received the Nadia and Lili Boulanger award. In 2000 he received the SACEM award, and In 2001 a scholarship from Natexis Foundayion in 2006 he was awarded the Grand Prix Lycéen des Compositeurs. Guillaume Connesson was commissioned for most of his works, including Supernova (Montpellier Philharmonic Orchestra, 1997), Athanor (Choir and National Orchestra of France 2004) or more recently A Glimmer in the Age of Darkness (Royal Scottish National Orchestra, 2005) and Aleph (Miami New World Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National orchestra).

*“This sonata for flute and piano, dedicated to its creator Sarah Louvion (at the Colmar festival in July 2002) is inspired by an episode in the book of Genesis, in which Sarah, the wife of Abraham, conceives and gives birth to a son in her old age. When God had promised her it would happen she had laughed, convinced that this sort of miracle was impossible. **Sarah’s Laughter** is like a parable about doubting faith. To the scriptures’s line “Is there anything difficult for God?”, we could also add “is there anything that love cannot conquer?”. The child was both a miracle from God and a miracle of love: both are essentially the same.*

*The score’s two movements are different in character. The first depicts Sarah throwing her servant Hagar out of her home through jealousy. Faced with Sarah’s inability to conceive Abraham had had a son with Hagar. Fearing this rivalry, Sarah drives Hagar out into the desert. Hagar’s desperate wandering is expressed through a melancholic, increasingly passionate theme. Hagar prays to God to save her and God hears her prayer. The theme come back in, but this time is more soothing, with modal harmonies. A divine consolation brings the first part to an end. The second movement is a joyful dance that celebrates the birth of Isaac, the new symbol of the alliance between God and Israel. The polyrhythm of the flute and piano leads the movement into a never-ending whirl. God blesses Isaac and says to Abraham: “As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be”. The woman who doubted, becomes the woman who loves and believes.”*

— Guillaume Connesson