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Faces to Watch in 2010: Music

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Jaap Van Zweden, Music Director of the Dallas Symphony

A couple of years ago, when the Dallas Symphony announced the appointment of Jaap van Zweden as its next music director, heads scratched in Texas at an unfamiliar Dutch name. Now in his second season, heads are scratching around the U.S. What took us so long? Finally, Van Zweden makes his Los Angeles Philharmonic debut on April 4 in Walt Disney Concert Hall.

The program is conventional — Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto and Brahms Fourth Symphony — and it needn't be. One of Van Zweden's first concerts as music director in Dallas was the premiere of an evening-long concert drama about the civil rights movement, "August 4, 1964," by then-L.A. Phil consulting composer Steven Stucky. Still, from the evidence of Van Zweden's two CDs of Beethoven and Tchaikovsky symphonies recorded live in Dallas during his first season, the 50-year-old Dutch maestro (who is also a Juilliard-trained violinist and former concertmaster of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra) knows how to generate tense, tactile excitement in all kinds of music.

Alexandra du Bois, Composer

At 28, Alexandra du Bois, a composer from Virginia, has had two commissions from the Kronos Quartet and has written for and performed with the Beaux Arts Trio. She's caught the attention of Philip Glass, Terry Riley, Osvaldo Golijov and Christopher Rouse. But this winter and spring she finds herself in stranger company. Southwest Chamber Music has selected her as the American composer most featured in its "Ascending Dragon Music Festival," a cultural exchange with Vietnam.

Several of Du Bois' recent chamber pieces, along with a world premiere, will be performed in the company of work by Vietnamese composers as part of the series, which will be given at the Armory in Pasadena and the Colburn School in downtown Los Angeles. She also travels with the ensemble in March for a residency in Hanoi and Ho Chi Min City.

The JACK Quartet, String Quartet

You don't know JACK? Then you've missed one of 2009's most impressive recordings — that of a muscular, young New York-based string quartet playing the physically demanding, mathematically multifarious and otherworldly string quartets of Iannis Xenakis. Mode has released it both as a CD and a DVD. The DVD, with its great surround sound, is the way to go,

especially since you can see the black T-shirted guys in startling action, unlike when they make their Los Angeles debut April 19 and 20 at Neighborhood Church in Pasadena.

As part of Monday Evening Concerts, JACK will perform Austrian composer Georg Friedrich Haas' evening-long microtonal quartet "In the Dark" as written. In the dark.