



St Mary's Church, Cratfield
Sunday 30 July 2017

CHROMA

David le Page *violin*
Clare O'Connell *cello*
Eleanor Turner *harp*

Concerts at Cratfield

TODAY'S CONCERT

A 'Trio' in 19th and 20th century concert music terms, usually means a piano trio of piano, violin and cello. Many masterpieces of the repertoire are written in that combination and form a major part of chamber music programmes. Featuring a harp instead of a piano is a rare combination that suits music from the French repertoire with its soft focus sound and romantic inclinations. At Cratfield it has been some years since we featured a harp and we have never featured this particular trio combination. The nearest has been a trio for flute, violin and harp. The *Elegiac Trio* by Arnold Bax formed part of that concert in 1992. Tom Manger played some harp solos during our very first season in 1988. Interestingly, he included a harp piece by Henriette Renie, a composer we also feature today. During the autumn of 1994, Susan Blair gave a harp recital at Halesworth Art Gallery, under the auspices of Blyth Valley Chamber Music and Hindermith's *Harp Sonata* was included in her programme. In the 1989 Cratfield season a group called *Capricorn* played the Saint-Saens *Fantasia for violin and harp*, our opening work of today. All the other works we hear today are new to Cratfield.

The all French programme we present today has its own peculiar colour and atmosphere. Maybe less serious minded than German/Austrian music, or folk song orientated such as Czech or the pastoral English nature style, and especially not the hot-blooded full-on romantic expression that Russian music tends to be but French

music full of subtle beauty, artful sophistication and overall a real feeling of communicating a sense of well-being! Enjoy.

TODAY'S PERFORMERS

CHROMA is a collective of 20 musicians founded in 1997. They are an acclaimed flexible chamber ensemble dedicated both to new music and revisiting classic repertoire in fresh and exciting contexts, mentoring the next generation of composers and involving audiences in compelling, inspirational experiences. They are the associate ensemble for the Tête-à-Tête Opera Company, and the ensemble in residence at the Royal Holloway University of London. They have collaborated with Mahogany Opera and the Royal Opera House in contemporary operas and ballets. They are the orchestra for the upcoming production of Puccini's *La Bohème* for the Iford Festival.

David Le Page (*violin*) has been a member of CHROMA since 2013. Born in Guernsey, he attended the Yehudi Menuhin School at age 11. David has worked with a diverse selection of artists and ensembles as a director, soloist and chamber musician and has formed his own groups: the Le Page Ensemble, The Harborough Collective and Mysterious Barricades. He has made many recordings, including the Tippett and Shostakovich Quartets. In 1999 he was appointed leader of the Orchestra of the Swan, a Stratford-upon-Avon based chamber orchestra. David has appeared at most of the leading UK festivals, and

has collaborated with many of the major artists of today.

Clare O'Connell (*cello*) is a founder member of CHROMA. For the past 20 years she has been able to pursue her love of chamber music thanks to the inspiration, trust and amazing musicianship of her fellow CHROMA members. Clare also works with The Storytellers Ensemble, The Harborough Collective, Lontano, Aurora, Marias Ensemble and Propellers Ensemble. She also programmed and produced CHROMA's first own label album *Folk Tales* which Clare conceived and recorded with CHROMA's artists David Le Page and Ian Watson. She lives with her family half-way up a steep hill in Berkhamsted Hertfordshire.

Eleanor Turner (*harp*) is making a guest appearance with CHROMA today as their regular member harpist, Helen Sharp, is on maternity leave. Eleanor has been performing professionally for over 18 years and made her London concerto debut aged 15 with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, conducted by Daniel Harding and broadcast live on Classics FM. She has performed solo at the Berlin Philharmonie and the Wigmore Hall in London. Eleanor won Second Prize in the 2011 Gaudeamus Interpreters Competition, showcasing the harp in a competition for contemporary music that is open to all instruments, voices and ensembles. She studied with the great harpist, Marisa Robles.

JACQUES IBERT
1890-1962

This piece has not previously been played at Cratfield. Jacques Ibert was born in Paris and studied music at the Paris Conservatoire; winning the Grande Prix de Rome in 1919. During his 3 years living in Rome, Ibert wrote some of his best known works: *La Ballade de la Geole de Reading* (based on Oscar Wilde's *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*) and *Escales (Ports of Call)* both pieces for orchestra and *Histoires for piano*. In 1937 Ibert was named Director of L'Academie de France a Rome. He held the position until 1960, although World War II forced him to leave Rome for a few years. He also held the position of general administrator of the combined management of the Paris Opera and Opera Comique. In 1956 Ibert was elected to the Academie des Beaux Arts of the Institute de France. Although of the same generation as *Les Six*, Ibert was not part of that group of composers which included Honneggar, Milhaud and Poulenc. His music has been somewhat overshadowed by theirs.

TRIO FOR VIOLIN, CELLO
AND HARP (1943-44)

ALLEGRO TRANQUILLO

ANDANTE SOSTENUTO

SCHERZANDO CON MOTO

About 14 minutes

The Trio for violin cello and harp was written for the composer's harpist daughter, Jacqueline; it was first performed in Paris in 1946. The piece begins in a free flowing style for all three instruments. A delicate harp solo for seven bars is then accompanied by a warm cello theme with the violin joining in with expressive music, the harp executing the first of several glissando's. The tempo picks up and the free flowing of the opening continues to the end of the movement with several *Ritardando's* along the way.

A beautiful cello theme with harp accompaniment opens the *Andante sostenuto*. The violin enters and the music becomes passionate. A slightly faster middle section leads back to the opening with the violin now playing the cello's opening theme. The passionate feel to the music returns and this gorgeous movement unwinds to a gentle conclusion.

The *Scherzando con moto* is a virtuosic display, especially for the harp which includes solos and descending *arpeggios*. The music is energetic and lively and the trio ends with five bars of solo harp marked *forte* with three emphatic chords for the three instruments.

CLAUDE DEBUSSY
1862-1918

The Frenchman Claude Debussy was one of the most influential composers of the late 19th - early 20th centuries; his use of non-traditional scales and chromaticism has influenced many composers who followed. His most iconic works include the orchestral pieces *Prelude a l'apres mid d'un faune* (1894) *La Mer* (1903-5), the opera *Pelleas et Melisande* (1902), the ballet *Jeux* (1913) and much piano music and songs of great originality.

L'AME EVAPOREE
(THE VANISHING AND
SUFFERING SOUL)

LES CLOCHES
(THE BELLS)

About 5-6 minutes

These pieces have not previously been played at Cratfield. *Deaux Melodies* is a transcription from Debussy's songs Two Romances (1885) for cello and piano by Ferninando Ronchini. They are played by cello and harp this afternoon: *L'ame evaporee* (The vanishing and suffering soul) and *Les Cloches* (The bells).

CAMILLE
SAINT-SAENS
1835-1921

Camille Saint-Saens was born in Paris and was a child prodigy, playing the piano at age 2 and composing at aged 3. At age 10 he gave a concert playing Beethoven's 3rd piano concerto, Mozart's B flat concerto K460 along with works by Handel, Bach and Hummel. At age 13 he entered the Paris Conservatory to study organ and composition. An unsuccessful marriage in 1875 and the subsequent loss of his two children were devastating episodes for Saint-Saens and during that dark period he produced the famous *Danse Macabre* in 1875 and his most frequently performed opera *Samson et Dalila* in 1878. Besides those two pieces, his most well-known compositions are: the Symphony No.3 (Organ 1886), Piano Concertos No.2 (1868) and No.5 (The Egyptian 1896), his 1st Cello Concerto (1872), his 3rd Violin Concerto (1880), his Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso (1863) and of course, his most famous piece of all, The Carnival of the Animals (1886).

A hugely prolific composer, Saint-Saens wrote music in all the main genres including much chamber music which had not been part of the French musical tradition before his time: two violin sonatas, two cello sonatas, two piano trios, one piano quartet and a piano quintet, two string quartets and much else besides. Saint-Saens wrote several works for the harp: the *Fantasie* for solo harp Op.95, the *morceau de concert* for harp & orchestra Op.154, and the piece we hear today, the *Fantasie* for violin and harp Op.124. This

piece was previously performed at Walpole Old Chapel by *Capricorn* during our 1989 season. In this late work Saint-Saens thins his texture and his piano parts become somewhat lighter; hence the attraction of the harp instead of a piano. Saint-Saens composed the Fantasie whilst touring the Mediterranean in the early months of 1907. The piece is dedicated to the sisters, Marianne and Clare Eissler.

FANTASIE FOR VIOLIN
AND HARP OP. 124
(1907)

POCO ALLEGRETTO

ALLEGRO:

PIU ALLEGRO

VIVO E GRAZIOSO:

LARGAMENTE

ANDANTE CON MOTO:

POCO PIU MOSSO

POCO ADAGIO

About 12 minutes

The Fantasie is written in a cyclic form with 4 distinct sections. The opening *Poco allegretto* has short phrases for the harp, followed by the violin. The violin becomes more lyrical reaching stratosphere high-notes with *glissando* harp accompaniment. The music slows down as an introduction to the second section, marked *Allegro*. This sunny and serene section slowly becomes more passionate. At *Piu allegro* the music is even more virtuosic with quick-fire dotted rhythms for violin and *glissandos* for harp. The third section is a playful *Vivo e grazioso* with a change to *Largamente* with some lovely sustained lyrical writing for both instruments. The main tempo returns with some improvisational music for violin followed by solo harp virtuosity. The final section is *Andante con moto* with an easy going tempo that leads back to the passionate music of the second section and again lead to trills and dotted rhythms for violin. At *Poco piu mosso*, the opening theme returns which leads to molto espressivo *Poco adagio*. After several bars of solo harp *glissandi* the Fantasie concludes in a soft and sustained manner.

INTERVAL

Refreshments are offered by a team from the parish, in aid of church funds

CAMILLE
SAINT-SAENS
1835-1921

TWO ROMANCES
FOR CELLO AND HARP:

D MAJOR OP.51
AND
F MAJOR OP.36

About 5-6 minutes

The Romance in D major Op.51 for cello and piano (1877) played today by cello and harp. This short Romance written for cello and piano has been played by various instruments accompanied by piano. They include, Recorder, Flute, Oboe, Bassoon and Clarinet. Today we hear the original cello version but accompanied by harp instead of the piano.

The Romance in F major Op.36 for horn or cello and orchestra (1874) has been transcribed for horn or cello and piano. Today we hear a version for cello and harp. Both pieces are new to Cratfield.

HENRIETTA
RENIE
1875-1956

We close our programme today with a work by Henriette Renie who was born in Paris and played the piano at a very early age. When she was 5 years old she heard the Belgian harpist Alphonse Hasselmans play and decided that he was going to be her harp teacher. At 10 years old she became a regular student at the Paris Conservatoire. She won 2nd prize in their harp competition in her first year there and 1st prize the following year. She graduated when she was 12 years old, gave performances all over France and taught the harp to students in Paris. Her early works include Concerto in C minor for harp and orchestra (1901) and a harp solo called *Legende*, which was inspired by the poem,

Les Elfes by Leconte de Lisle (1818-1894). Later in life during World War II, Renie wrote the *Harp Method*. Its two volumes examine harp technique and harp music. Her technique was widely adopted and at the end of the war, students spread her teaching to conservatories all over the world. Renie was eventually awarded the Legion of Honour, having turned it down the first time it was offered in 1922. Renie's Trio for violin, cello and harp is a major chamber music work which could join the piano trio repertoire as she also made an alternative version for violin, cello and piano. Renie's musical style is reminiscent of Cesar Frank (1840-1890); contrapuntally active, dense harmony with chromatic modulations. Perhaps her shorter pieces best indicate Renie's progressive musical traits; nevertheless this trio is an impressive piece of chamber music, if a touch conventional.

SOME ASPECTS TO
THE PERSONAL LIFE OF
HENRIETTE RENIE:

When Henriette was in her teens the family spent summers in Etretat in Normandy, Henriette had a rare chance to interact with people of her own age. She was mutually attracted to one of her brother's friends, but decided not to sacrifice her art and career. She also rejected marrying Henri Rabaud three years later. Henriette financially supported her brothers who were in the army. In addition, she paid for a new harp for herself, and despite struggling financially she still gave lessons for free. Shortly before World War I, Renie became friends with the family of one of her students, Marie-Amelie Regnier. After

winning the Premier Prix, Renie undertook to financially support the Regnier family and became the godmother to Marie-Amelie's daughter, Francoise. She helped Louise Regnier (Marie-Amelie's mother) buy a portion of her house. Following the death of Henriette's mother, she moved in with the Regniers. Unfortunately, there was a falling-out between teacher and pupil and despite Henriette's generosity to the family they tried to have her evicted from the house, but Francoise sided with her godmother and Renie was saved from financial ruin. Renie was deeply religious when the Third Republic was trying to separate the church and state. The government kept a file on her and considered her an enemy of the state. She was strong in her beliefs and tore down German propaganda posters despite the fears of her friends and students.

TRIO FOR VIOLIN, CELLO
AND HARP
(PUBLISHED 1910)

ALLEGRO RISOLUTO

SCHERZO:

VIVACE SCHERZANDO
CON SPIRITO

ANDANTE

ALLEGRO

about 30 minutes

The four movement trio opens in the resolute manner of the *Allegro risoluto* marking but quickly changes to *dolce* with lyrical writing for violin and cello. The movement as a whole alternates between these two opposites with much intricate working-out. Towards the close of the movement the score marking in French is *Vite et anime* (quickly and animated) as the music hurtles towards the conclusion. The *Scherzo* is in $\frac{3}{4}$ time and has an easy going feel to it. The Trio middle section of the movement retains the light and airy feel to the music. The main *Scherzo* is repeated and closes on a triple *pianissimo* chord for the harp. The harp having played virtually all the way through the

first two movements, gets a four bar rest at the start of the slow third *Andante* movement. The cello plays a beautiful theme *con sordini* (muted) followed by the violin; also muted. The mutes come off and the music slowly builds to a passionate climax, which is the heart of the work. Renie again uses French markings, *Un peu plus large* (a little wider) at the start of the build to *Plus large* (wider) at the climax. The mutes come on again following a short cadenza for the harp and the movement draws to a peaceful conclusion. The final fourth *Allegro* movement opens in an improvisational manner, then moves to sum-up both the previous slow and the *Scherzo* movements. When the *Allegro* gets going it's a jaunty high spirited theme that dominates proceedings with short sections of more lyrical music for the violin and cello. It's actually a mirror image of the first movement but this time around more of the music is in the high-jinks mode. The movement heads towards a *Presto* finale but briefly slows down completely with a reminder of the more lyrical music. That is then swept aside towards an exciting *Prestissimo* finish.

MUSIC ON CD
TODAY'S PERFORMERS
AND WORKS

CHROMA as a group and today's individual artists have made many recordings of a wide range of repertoire. David Le Page and Clare O'Connell both feature in an innovative CD titled *Folk Tales* on CHROMA'S own label. The disc includes arrangements for violin, cello and accordion of music by Brahms, Bartok, Kodaly

and Traditional Folk Music. A fairly recent CD titled *Winter* by Voces 8 is a mixed genre collection, featuring today's harpist, Eleanor Turner, on the Decca label.

Ibert's Trio for violin, cello and harp can be found on a complete survey of his chamber music on Brilliant Classics. Kees Hulsmann *violin*, Marien Van Staalen *cello* and Ernestine Stoop *harp*. An alternative box set of Ibert's chamber music can be sourced on the Somm label. The artists are members of the Bridge Quartet with Bryan Lewis on harp. Ensemble Pyramide offer a mixed composers single CD on the Divox label, which includes the Ibert trio. It is also included in a survey of the harpist Lily Laskine (1893-1988) on a 14 disc Erato box set.

There are several interesting choices for a recording of Saint-Saens's *Fantasia* for violin and harp. The popular choice though must be an Erato disc called *Le carnaval des animaux* (The Carnival of the Animals). Besides that work this includes two works featured at today's concert: the *Fantasia* for violin, cello and harp and the *Romance Op.36* as well as other of his chamber works. The performers are, Renaud Capucon *violin*, Gautier Capucon *cello*, Marie and Pierre Langlagent *harp*. This was a Gramophone disc of the month in Gramophone Magazine in 2004 (mid price). Alternatives include Philippe Graffin *violin*, and Catherine Beynon on the Helos label. The disc is a mixed programme of Chopin (transcriptions) and

Saint-Saens. A disc called *Harp - Greatest Works* on the two disc Berlin Classics label at bargain price, includes a wide variety of works that feature a harp. Two harpists are listed, Jutta Zoff and Katharina Hanstedt so we are unsure who plays the Saint-Saens? A viola, instead of a violin, is played by Joachim Ulbricht.

The only recording we can source for the Renie trio features Xavier De Maistre *harp*, Ingolf Turban *violin* and Wen-Sinn Yang *cello*. The label is Harmonia Mundi. The recording dates from 1999 but we are unsure of its current availability?

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