

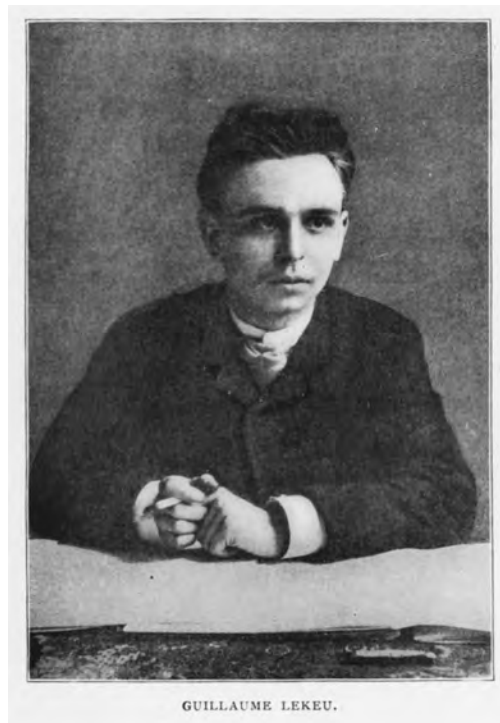
CHANDOS

THÈME VARIÉ



Sohy
Bonis
Lekeu
Saint-Saëns
Messiaen
Barraine

Elena Urioste *violin*
Tom Poster *piano*



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Guillaume Lekeu, c. 1886

Charlotte Sohy (1887 – 1955)

1

Thème varié, Op. 15 (1921)

8:31

in D minor / major • in d-Moll / D-Dur • en ré mineur / majeur

for Violin and Piano

À Nadia Boulanger

Lent – Animez peu à peu –

Allegro – Même mouvement –

Même mouvement –

Même mouvement –

Même mouvement –

Lent –

Allegro –

Moins animé –

Lent

Mel [Mélanie Hélène Domange, née] Bonis (1858 – 1937)

2

Andante religioso, Op. 78 (1910)

2:47

in D major • in D-Dur • en ré majeur

for Violin and Piano

À Mademoiselle Sophie Baudot, affectueux souvenir

Sostenuto – Con anima – Crescendo ed animato

3	Allegretto non troppo, Op. 84 (1904 / 10)	2:38
	in D major • in D-Dur • en ré majeur	
	[<i>Andante</i>]	
	for Violin and Piano	
	À Monsieur Raphaël Kellert [À Monsieur Paulin Gaillard]	
	Allegretto non troppo [Andantino con moto] – Languidamente – Tempo I	

Guillaume Lekeu (1870 – 1894)

	Sonate (1892)	33:24
	in G major • in G-Dur • en sol majeur	
	(Sonata)	
	for Piano and Violin	
	Edited by Mathieu Crickboom (1871 – 1947)	
	À Eugène Ysaÿe	
4	I Très modéré – Vif et passionné – Très modéré	12:07
5	II Très lent – (Très simplement et dans le sentiment d'un chant populaire)	10:57
6	III Très animé – Très modéré – Très animé (Premier Mouvement) – Très modéré – Très animé (Premier Mouvement) – Très modéré – Très vite	10:18

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835 – 1921)

7

Élégie, Op. 143 (1915)

4:54

in D major • in D-Dur • en ré majeur

for Violin and Piano

À Sir Henry Heyman

Andantino (sans lenteur) – [] – Tempo I – Poco a poco stringendo –

Allegro – Poco a poco ritenuto –

Tempo I – (Sans presser) – Tempo I

8

Élégie, Op. 160 (1920)

4:37

in F major • in F-Dur • en fa majeur

for Violin and Piano

À Monsieur Charles de Galland

En souvenir d'Alexis de Castillon

Moderato, espressivo – Poco più lento –

Tempo I – Allegro non troppo – Più allegro – Largamente, sostenuto –

Tempo I

Mel [Mélanie Hélène Domange, née] Bonis

9	Largo, Op. 83 (1910) in E flat major • in Es-Dur • en mi bémol majeur for Violin and Piano À Monsieur Paulin Gaillard Largo – Crescendo ed animato	3:09
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Olivier Messiaen (1908 – 1992)

	Thème et variations, Simeone I / 10 (1932) for Violin and Piano Pour 	10:20
10	Thème. Modéré –	1:57
11	Première Variation. Modéré –	1:35
12	Deuxième Variation. Un peu moins modéré –	1:03
13	Troisième Variation. Modéré, avec éclat –	0:50
14	Quatrième Variation. Vif et passionné –	1:09
15	Cinquième Variation. Très modéré	3:44

Elsa Barraine (1910 – 1999)

première recording



Nocturne (1928)

1:47

for Violin and Piano

Lent et doux – Un peu plus animé – [Lent et doux]

TT 72:09

Elena Urioste violin

Tom Poster piano

Elena Urioste and Tom Poster



Titilayo Ayangade

Thème varié

Saint-Saëns: *Élégie* in D major, Op. 143 / *Élégie* in F major, Op. 160

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835 – 1921) composed his *Élégie* in D major, Op. 143 during a stay in San Francisco, in May – July 1915. He dedicated it to the violinist Henry Heyman for his hospitality while Saint-Saëns was in California to represent France at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. Saint-Saëns sent a letter to his publisher Durand on 8 July, announcing

the birth of an *Élégie* for violin and piano which I have written for a charming man, a violinist now retired from his career, in recognition of the innumerable acts of kindness he has shown me since my arrival in San Francisco. His name is Sir Henry Heyman.

Knighted by King Kalākaua of Hawaii, Heyman (1855 – 1924) was a leading figure in San Francisco's musical life, who had studied at the Leipzig Conservatoire with Ferdinand David. The first public performance, in Paris, was given on 23 November 1916 at the Salle Gaveau by Saint-Saëns with the violinist Gabriel Willaume. The next day, Saint-Saëns wrote to Heyman that

I had as my partner a violinist with the most brilliant qualities which he exercises on one of the most marvellous Guarnerius instruments... I predict a great future for this little composition, which I owe to you, as without you I would never have written it.

One notable aspect of the early history of the *Élégie* is that Saint-Saëns and Willaume made a recording of it, in November 1920.

The *Élégie* in F major, Op. 160 was composed in January 1920 during a stay in Algiers. It was dedicated to Saint-Saëns's friend Charles de Galland, an amateur violinist and Mayor of Algiers; the work was also inscribed 'in memory of Alexis de Castillon'. De Castillon (1838 – 1873), who died at the age of thirty-four, had been a friend of Saint-Saëns in his youth, and was the first secretary of the Société nationale de la musique when it was founded, in 1871. In the printed score, Saint-Saëns has added letters ('A' and 'B') at the start and finish of the second theme (*Poco più lento*, marked *dolcissimo – molto espressivo*), noting that

Alexis de Castillon often played these bars (from A to B) which he very much liked but

never used. Since they exist now only in my memory, I didn't want this relic of a very dear friend to be lost, and I have framed it as best I could to preserve it.

As in the case of the earlier *Élégie*, in D major, Saint-Saëns played this work with the violinist Willaume and wrote to Charles de Galland in November 1920 that

your *Élégie* has been extremely well received – you bring it good fortune.

Bonis: Andante religioso / Largo / Allegretto non troppo

Three pieces for violin and piano by Mel Bonis (1858 – 1937) were composed around 1910 with dedications to three different violinists. The *Andante religioso*, Op. 78 is dated 1910 at the end of the autograph piano part, and on the violin part, Bonis has written 'To Mademoiselle Sophie Baudot, an affectionate souvenir'. Scored for violin with 'organ or piano', it opens with an eloquent violin melody, working towards a more animated climax before resuming the calm of the opening.

The *Largo*, Op. 83 was originally dedicated to Raphael Kellert, but this has been scratched out by Bonis on her manuscript, to be replaced by an inscription 'à Monsieur Paulin Gaillard'. Though undated, the *Largo* certainly dates from the same time as the

other two pieces. In the opening, grave and quietly implacable, Bonis's gift for long lines is again in evidence, the melody rising to a noble high-point at the end. The composer wrote on the last page of the score 'Mauvais' (Bad) – either a harsh and questionable judgement on the music, or a comment on the rather messy state of the manuscript.

The title of the third piece on Bonis's manuscript is *Allegretto non troppo* and the piano part is dated 1910. However, the earlier of two manuscripts of the violin part (written in D flat major rather than D major) is dated 1904 and headed 'Andante'. Confusingly, it carries a dedication to Paulin Gaillard, whereas the final version is dedicated 'à Monsieur Raphaël Kellert', leader of the Trio Kellert who gave regular performances of Bonis's chamber music. The later manuscript of the violin part (presumably from 1910) has yet another version of the tempo marking: 'Andantino con moto'. Over a rippling piano part, the violin spins a lyrical theme, before introducing a more harmonically ambiguous second idea which is echoed by the piano. The impression throughout the piece is of effortless flow and quiet delight.

Lekeu: Violin Sonata in G major

Guillaume Lekeu (1870 – 1894) was a young man when he composed his Violin Sonata,

in 1892, two years before his far too early death, from typhoid, in January 1894, the day after his twenty-fourth birthday. Lekeu grew up in the province of Liège, in Belgium. After his family moved to Poitiers, in France, in 1879, he continued to study music privately and began composing at the age of fifteen. Following a move to Paris, in 1888, Lekeu initially studied philosophy, but a visit to the Bayreuth Festival, in August 1889, inspired him to devote himself to composition. He studied privately with César Franck – the most enduring influence on his work – then with Vincent d'Indy. The great Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe first encountered Lekeu in 1890 and the two became friends. Ysaÿe commissioned the violin sonata in February 1892, learned it by September, and gave a private performance a few weeks later. On that occasion, Ysaÿe told Lekeu that he had arranged a pianist (Caroline Théroïne-Mège), who will 'play my Sonata to perfection' once she has had the chance to learn it. Ysaÿe and Théroïne gave the first public performance, in Brussels, on 7 March 1893 at a concert of Le Cercle des XX. After the première, a delighted Lekeu wrote to a friend:

You can't imagine what my Violin Sonata became in Ysaÿe's hands. I'm slightly shocked by my feelings of rapture. Styled by this master violinist, Mme Théroïne

played the piano part with incomparable artistry.

Press reaction was just as enthusiastic: the unnamed critic for *L'Art moderne* (12 March 1893) declared that

the Sonata contains lofty, beautiful ideas artfully developed, rhythmic and harmonic innovations, and a distinctive personality which is rare for such a young composer. We think it is the best chamber composition that has ever sprung from Belgian soil.

Franck and Wagner undoubtedly left their mark on Lekeu, but from the haunting opening (the source of so much that is to follow) it is clear that Lekeu's music has a voice all its own. This strikingly beautiful passage contains motifs that are to return in all three movements, echoing Franck's techniques of thematic transformation and cyclic form. The initial *Très modéré* serves as an introduction to a faster section marked *Vif et passionné*. The central slow movement, marked *Très lent*, is a long meditation mostly in 7 / 8 time; a contrasting section in 3 / 4 time is marked to be played 'Très simplement et dans le sentiment d'un chant populaire' (Very simply, with the feeling of a folksong) before a return of the 7 / 8 theme. The finale, *Très animé*, begins with a soaring violin motif and dramatic piano chords, after which the

texture changes to rapid piano figuration. There are shifts of mood throughout this movement, which also includes a very lyrical reworking of the music from the opening of the Sonata, supported by ever-more inventive harmonies. In *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music* (1929), the Belgian musicologist Georges Systemans summed up Lekeu's Sonata as a work 'overflowing with lyricism and with emotion which reaches the heights of warmth and of enthusiasm', adding that

There is an assurance and strength in its construction, and a psychologic unity, which are reinforced by the return of themes which unite its three movements.

Sohy: *Thème varié*, Op. 15

The *Thème varié* by Charlotte Sohy (1887–1955) was composed in 1921 and published, by Maurice Senart, in 1922, with a dedication to Sohy's friend Nadia Boulanger. Sohy (sometimes known as Durey-Sohy) studied composition at the Schola Cantorum with Vincent d'Indy as well as the organ with Vierne and Guilmant. There she met the composer Marcel Labey (1875–1968); they married, in 1909, and had seven children together. Sohy's most prolific years were from about 1910 to 1922 and during this period she completed a Symphony in C sharp

minor, subtitled *Grand Guerre* (The Great War), and the three-act lyrical drama *L'Esclave couronnée* as well as numerous shorter pieces. Among these is the *Thème varié* for violin which appeared in two versions, one with piano and the other with orchestra. At the start, Sohy presents a theme in D minor, initially brooding, but then becoming more expressive. A series of free variations follow, revealing an ingenious and resourceful composer. The music ranges through a variety of keys before finally settling into radiant D major for the tranquil epilogue.

Messiaen: *Thème et variations*, Simeone I / 10

Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992) wrote his *Thème et variations* in 1932 as a wedding present for his new bride, Claire (Louise) Delbos, a talented violinist and composer. They married in June 1932 and Messiaen completed the *Thème et variations* just in time for the première, given by Delbos and Messiaen, at a concert of the Cercle musical de Paris on 22 November 1932 (which was also Claire's birthday). A review in *Le Ménestrel* described the new piece as 'aspiring continuously to a spiritual world – there is great nobility here'. Messiaen was pleased with the piece and wrote to his friend Jean Langlais before the concert, inviting him to come along to 'make lots of



Elena Urioste during the recording sessions

enthusiastic noise and try to get the piece encored, as it is one of my best'. Over the next few years, Delbos and Messiaen played the *Thème et variations* a number of times, and it was published in 1934. In terms of structure, this is one of Messiaen's more straightforward works: the theme is stated quietly and is followed by four increasingly animated variations; they lead to a fifth which is a rapturous restatement of the opening, the violin now playing the theme an octave higher. But though the form may be traditional, the sound-world of Messiaen's first piece of instrumental chamber music is entirely individual. Unusually, the dedication is expressed in musical notation: Messiaen's pet name for Claire was 'Mi' and the first edition of the score prints this as the note 'E' ('Mi' in French), the highest open string on a violin.

Barraine: Nocturne

Elsa Barraine (1910 – 1999) was an extremely gifted pupil of Dukas and a life-long friend of her classmate Messiaen. Her remarkable music is gradually being rediscovered (notably her two symphonies), while biographical research is revealing more about an extraordinary life, not least her activities as an active member of the French Resistance in World War Two. The *Nocturne*

is one of her earliest works – the manuscript is dated 14 May 1928 – written when she was still in her teens and studying with Dukas. Marked *Lent et doux*, a rising and falling *piano* phrase introduces a high-lying *piano* melody in the violin, before a slight change in mood (*Un peu plus animé*) drives towards a *fortissimo* climax after which the music returns to the quiet of the opening.

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A note by the performers

We conceived this album as a treasure trove of lesser-known French and Belgian repertoire spanning the forty-year period from 1892 to 1932. A number of unifying threads run through the programme, perhaps the most significant of which is the influence of a composer whose music is not heard here at all: César Franck. Franck taught and championed Guillaume Lekeu and Mel Bonis; and Bonis in turn taught Charlotte Sohy, whose principal composition teacher was Vincent d'Indy, one of Franck's most devoted acolytes.

Franck's evergreen Violin Sonata might have been considered an obvious candidate for inclusion on our recording. However, there are currently around 500 recordings of this Sonata available in the catalogue, while the Violin Sonata by Franck's fellow Belgian Lekeu,

which arguably surpasses Franck's in passion, intoxication, and ecstasy, has received a tiny fraction of that number of recordings and is hardly ever heard in the concert hall. Its slow movement in particular is one of the great glories of the chamber music literature, and if we have managed to summon even half the pathos of the classic recording by Yehudi and Hephzibah Menuhin, we will be delighted.

Alongside Lekeu's Sonata, we present a selection of shorter works equally deserving of a far wider audience. Charlotte Sohy's *Thème varié* is surely one of the most perfect single-movement works ever written; its theme undergoes constant renewal and slowly unfurling metamorphosis on its journey from darkness to radiance. Having previously recorded the outstanding Violin Sonata by Mel Bonis for Chandos, we could not resist adding three of her shorter pieces to our discography, even if she self-critically scrawled 'Mauvais' (Bad) on the manuscript of the *Largo*. (We respectfully disagree!)

Arguably the most obvious outlier here is Saint-Saëns, who fell out with the 'bande à Franck', disliked Franck's influence on French music, and remained a classicist to the end. Yet so much of his music, too, has been unfairly neglected, his reputation chiefly resting on a small handful of works, and the two *Élégies* seemed to us to deserve a place

here. We were also fascinated by the thought that barely more than a decade separates the works by Saint-Saëns and Messiaen on this album, two composers who seem to inhabit completely different musical eras and worlds.

Messiaen's early *Thème et variations*, probably the best-known work on the album, is the piece which both of us have lived with for longest, since our respective student days. Elsa Barraine, Messiaen's contemporary and lifelong friend, has been a more recent discovery and a figure of fascination for us, both for her richly eloquent music and her fascinating life story (her wartime bravery, as a Jewish woman and a leading member of the French Resistance, is remarkable). Tom recently made a pilgrimage to the Bibliothèque nationale de France to track down some of her unpublished manuscripts; among them was her haunting *Nocturne* which, echoing across time, seemed to provide a fitting conclusion to this programme.

We spend a lot of our time seeking out undersung composers and music, but are often indebted to others for pointing us in valuable directions. Gary Carpenter, Tom's childhood composition teacher, alerted us to the brilliance of Sohy's *Thème varié*; Jessica Duchon urged us to seek out Lekeu's Sonata; and Nathan Laube introduced us to the music of Elsa Barraine. We are also grateful to the Bru

Zane Mediabase for making freely available the manuscripts for the works by Mel Bonis on this album, enabling us to correct numerous errors in the printed scores.

As ever, our sincere thanks to Ralph Couzens, Jonathan Cooper, and all at Chandos for enabling us to share this wonderful music more widely.

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Elena Urioste is a musician, yogi, writer, and entrepreneur. As a violinist, she has given acclaimed performances as soloist with major orchestras throughout the world, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Boston Pops Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Hallé, Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Malaysia Philharmonic Orchestra, Chineke! Orchestra, and the orchestras of the BBC, among others. She has performed regularly as a soloist in the Stern Auditorium, in Carnegie

Hall, and has given recitals at Wigmore Hall, Weill Recital Hall, in Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, Konzerthaus Berlin, Sage Gateshead, Bayerischer Rundfunk, Munich, and Mondavi Center. She was a BBC New Generation Artist in 2012–14 and has been featured on the covers of *Strings*, *Symphony*, and *BBC Music* magazines.

An avid chamber musician, Elena Urioste is the founder and Artistic Director of Chamber Music by the Sea, an annual festival on Maryland's Eastern Shore. She has been a featured artist at the Marlboro, Ravinia, La Jolla, IMS Prussia Cove, Cheltenham, Bridgehampton, Moab, and Sarasota Music festivals, and is co-director of Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective. She is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music and The Juilliard School. Notable teachers and mentors include Joseph Silverstein, David Cerone, Ida Kavafian, Pamela Frank, Claude Frank, and Ferenc Rados. Elena Urioste has practiced yoga for over a decade and received her RYT 200-hour certification from the Kripalu Center in June 2019. She is the co-founder of Intermission, a programme that combines music, movement, and mindfulness, aiming to make music-making a healthier, more holistic practice for students and professionals alike through yoga and meditation. Elena Urioste plays a violin made by Alessandro Gagliano,



Tom Poster during the recording sessions



Elena Urioste and Tom Poster during the recording sessions

Naples, c. 1706, and a bow by Nikolai Kittel, both outstanding instruments on generous extended loan from the private collection of Dr Charles E. King through the Stradivari Society, Chicago. www.elenaurioste.com

Tom Poster is a musician whose skills and passions extend well beyond the conventional role of the concert pianist. He has been described as 'a marvel, [who] can play anything in any style' (*The Herald*), 'mercurially brilliant' (*The Strad*), and as having 'a beautiful tone that you can sink into like a pile of cushions' (*BBC Music*). He has performed more than forty concertos, from Mozart to Ligeti, with Aurora Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, China National Symphony Orchestra, Hallé, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and Scottish Chamber Orchestra, collaborating with conductors such as Vladimir Ashkenazy, Nicholas Collon, Robin Ticciati, and Yan Pascal Tortelier. He has premiered solo, chamber, and concertante works by many leading composers and made multiple appearances at the BBC Proms. His exceptional versatility has put him in great demand at festivals internationally.

Tom Poster is founder and artistic director of Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective, which was appointed Associate Ensemble at Wigmore Hall in 2020. Having a flexible line-up featuring many of today's most inspirational musicians, and an ardent commitment to diversity through its creative programming, the Collective has recently been ensemble-in-residence at the Aldeburgh and Cheltenham festivals, and has released eight albums on Chandos Records, recently appearing on shortlists for the *BBC Music Magazine* and *Gramophone* awards. His extensive discography includes two solo albums, recordings with the Aronowitz Ensemble (former BBC New Generation Artists), and collaborations with Alison Balsom, Guy and Magnus Johnston, Jennifer Pike, Aurora Orchestra, and London Symphony Orchestra. He has made six duo recordings with Elena Urioste, with whom he won the Inspiration Award of the Royal Philharmonic Society in 2020 for the lockdown project #UriPosteJukeBox. Tom Poster studied with Joan Havill at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and at King's College, Cambridge. His compositions and arrangements have been commissioned, performed, and recorded by Alison Balsom, Matthew Rose, Yo-Yo Ma, and Kathryn Stott. He is a lifelong fan of animals with unusual noses. www.tomposter.co.uk

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