

# Edition Klavier-Festival Ruhr

30 Jahre Klavier-Festival Ruhr  
„Vive la France!“ – Debussy & Saint-Saëns

Live Recordings 2018

Kulturpartner



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Théo Fouchenneret | Mi-sa Yang | Victor Julien-Laferrière

Benjamin Moser | Liza Ferschtman | delian::quartett

# CD 1

[73:24]

## „VIVE LA FRANCE!“ CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

### Images I (1904–05)

- |   |  |         |
|---|--|---------|
| 1 | <i>Reflets dans l'eau (Spiegelungen im Wasser)</i> | [05:25] |
| 2 | <i>Hommage à Rameau</i>                            | [07:23] |
| 3 | <i>Mouvement</i>                                   | [03:17] |

### Images II (1907)

- |   |   |         |
|---|---|---------|
| 4 | <i>Cloches à travers les feuilles<br/>(Glocken, durch das Laub hallend)</i>                         | [04:51] |
| 5 | <i>Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut<br/>(Der Mond senkt sich über den Tempel von einst)</i> | [05:46] |
| 6 | <i>Poissons d'or (Goldfische)</i>   | [04:06] |

### SERGEI REDKIN

Moers, Martinstift | Live Recording: 23. Mai 2018

- |   |  |         |
|---|--|---------|
| 7 | <i>L'isle joyeuse (1904) (Die Insel der Freuden)</i> | [06:17] |
|---|--|---------|

### JAMINA GERL

Wattenscheid, Zeche Holland | Live Recording: 03. Mai 2018

### Estampes (1903)

- |    |  |         |
|----|--|---------|
| 8  | <i>Pagodes (Pagoden)</i>                       | [05:31] |
| 9  | <i>Soirée dans Grenade (Abend in Granada)</i>  | [05:27] |
| 10 | <i>Jardins sous la pluie (Gärten im Regen)</i> | [03:49] |

### MAO FUJITA

Bochum, Kunstmuseum | Live Recording: 02. Juni 2018

### Deux Arabesques (1888)

- |    |                                 |         |
|----|---------------------------------|---------|
| 11 | <i>Arabesque Nr. 1 in E-Dur</i> | [04:39] |
| 12 | <i>Arabesque Nr. 2 in G-Dur</i> | [03:29] |

### INGA FIOLIA

Essen, Haus Fuhr | Live Recording: 09. Juni 2018

### Pour le Piano (1894–1901)

- |    |                  |         |
|----|------------------|---------|
| 13 | <i>Prélude</i>   | [04:14] |
| 14 | <i>Sarabande</i> | [05:20] |
| 15 | <i>Toccata</i>   | [03:50] |

### MAO FUJITA

Bochum, Kunstmuseum | Live Recording: 02. Juni 2018

# CD 2

[74:46]

## „VIVE LA FRANCE!“ CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835–1921)

### Sechs Bagatellen op. 3 (1855)

- |   |                                     |         |
|---|-------------------------------------|---------|
| 1 | <i>Poco sostenuto</i>               | [02:42] |
| 2 | <i>Allegro animato quasi presto</i> | [03:23] |
| 3 | <i>Poco adagio</i>                  | [03:59] |
| 4 | <i>Moderato assai</i>               | [02:10] |
| 5 | <i>Allegro molto</i>                | [04:09] |
| 6 | <i>Poco sostenuto – Adagio</i>      | [06:00] |

### JUAN CARLOS FERNÁNDEZ-NIETO

Bottrop, Kulturzentrum August Everding

Live Recording: 06. Mai 2018

### Album op. 72 (1884)

- |    |  |         |
|----|--|---------|
| 7  | <i>Prélude: Poco allegro, tempo rubato</i> | [03:52] |
| 8  | <i>Carillon: Moderato tranquillo</i>       | [04:53] |
| 9  | <i>Toccata: Allegretto</i>                 | [02:28] |
| 10 | <i>Valse: Allegro grazioso e con moto</i>  | [05:43] |
| 11 | <i>Chanson Napolitaine: Andantino</i>      | [04:16] |
| 12 | <i>Final: Allegro quasi minuetto</i>       | [05:51] |

### JAMINA GERL

Wattenscheid, Zeche Holland | Live Recording: 03. Mai 2018

- |    |   |         |
|----|---|---------|
| 13 | <i>Valse canariote op. 88 (1890)</i>    | [07:15] |
| 14 | <i>Valse langoureuse op. 120 (1903)</i> | [04:42] |
| 15 | <i>Valse gaie op. 139 (1912)</i>        | [05:37] |

### JUAN CARLOS FERNÁNDEZ-NIETO

Bottrop, Kulturzentrum August Everding

Live Recording: 06. Mai 2018

- |    |                              |         |
|----|------------------------------|---------|
| 16 | <i>Gavotte op. 23 (1871)</i> | [03:54] |
|----|------------------------------|---------|

### MAO FUJITA

Bochum, Kunstmuseum | Live Recording: 02. Juni 2018

- |    |   |         |
|----|---|---------|
| 17 | <i>Feuillet d'album op. 169 (1921) (Albumblatt)</i> | [03:52] |
|----|---|---------|

### SERGEI REDKIN

Moers, Martinstift | Live Recording: 23. Mai 2018

# CD 3 [78:01]

## „VIVE LA FRANCE!“ – LIEDER

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835–1921)

- 1 *L'Attente* (1855) (Victor Hugo) [02:21]
- 2 *La Coccinelle* (1868) (Victor Hugo) [02:02]
- 3 *Rêverie* (1851) (Victor Hugo) [04:12]
- 4 *Guitare* (1851) (Victor Hugo) [01:48]
- 5 *Si vous n'avez rien à me dire* (1870) (Victor Hugo) [03:17]
- 6 *Viens* (ca. 1855) (Victor Hugo) [02:36]
- 7 *Tournoiement* (1870) (Armand Renaud) [03:17]
- 8 *Danse macabre* (1873) (Henri Cazalis) [02:28]
- 9 *La cigale et la fourmi* (ca. 1860) (Jean de La Fontaine) [02:05]
- 10 *El Desdichado* (1871) (Jules Barbier) [03:29]
- 11 *Guitares et mandolines* (1890) (C. Saint-Saëns) [01:50]
- 12 *Grasselette et maigrelette* (1920) (Pierre de Ronsard) [02:27]
- 13 *Pastorale* (1855) (Philippe N. Destouches) [02:29]

GRAHAM JOHNSON

SORAYA MAFI (Sopran)

FRANÇOIS LE ROUX (Bariton)

Herten, Schloss Herten | Live Recording: 14. Mai 2018

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

- 14 *Voici que le printemps* (1884) (Paul Bourget) [02:56]
- 15 *Clair de lune* (1882) (Paul Verlaine) [02:47]
- 16 *Clair de lune* (1891) [02:55]  
aus: *Fêtes galantes I* (Paul Verlaine)
- aus: *Ariettes oubliées* (1888 rev. 1903) (Paul Verlaine)
- 17 *C'est l'extase* [02:39]
- 18 *Il pleure dans mon cœur* [02:49]
- 19 *Chevaux de bois* [03:38]
- 20 *Le Faune* [01:48]  
aus: *Fêtes galantes II* (1904) (Paul Verlaine)
- aus: *Cinq Poèmes de Baudelaire* (1889) (C. Baudelaire)
- 21 *Le jet d'eau* [06:08]
- 22 *Recueillement* [04:50]
- Chansons de Bilitis* (1899) (Pierre Louÿs)
- 23 *La flûte de Pan* [02:26]
- 24 *La chevelure* [03:09]
- 25 *Le tombeau des Naiades* [02:47]

- 26 *Ballade des femmes de Paris* (1910) (François Villon) [02:12]
- 27 *Noël des enfants qui n'ont plus de maisons* (1916) [02:36]  
(Claude Debussy)

GRAHAM JOHNSON

SARAH FOX (Sopran)

FRANÇOIS LE ROUX (Bariton)

Herten, Schloss Herten | Live Recording: 15. Mai 2018

## „VIVE LA FRANCE!“ – KAMMERMUSIK

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

*Trio für Klavier, Violine und Violoncello in G-Dur* (1880)

- 1 *Andante con moto allegro* [09:51]
- 2 *Scherzo. Moderato con allegro* [03:13]
- 3 *Intermezzo. Andante espressivo* [04:38]
- 4 *Finale. Appassionato* [06:39]

THÉO FOUCHENNERET

MI-SA YANG (Violine)

VICTOR JULIEN-LAFERRIÈRE (Violoncello)

Herten, Schloss Herten | Live Recording: 13. Juni 2018

ERNEST AMÉDÉE CHAUSSON (1855–1899)

*Konzert für Violine, Klavier und Streichquartett in D-Dur op. 21* (1889–91)

- 5 *Décidé* [14:24]
- 6 *Sicilienne* [04:10]
- 7 *Grave* [10:52]
- 8 *Finale. Très animé* [11:21]

BENJAMIN MOSER

LIZA FERSCHTMAN (Violine)

delian::quartett

Adrian Pinzaru (Violine) | Andreas Moscho (Violine)

Georgy Kovalev (Viola) | Miriam Prandi (Violoncello)

Essen-Werden, Folkwang Universität der Künste

Live Recording: 18. Mai 2018

*Das delian::quartett spielt auf dieser Aufnahme  
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delian::quartett appears by courtesy*

# CD 4 [65:08]

## CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

*Images I**Reflets dans l'eau (Reflections in the water)**Hommage à Rameau**Mouvement**Images II**Cloches à travers les feuilles (Bells through the leaves)**Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut**(And the moon descends on the temple that was)**Poissons d'or (Golden fishes)*

*Images* is one of Debussy's key works: he wrote the first volume in 1905/06. In *Reflets dans l'eau* he portrays the movements of waves and the reflections of the sun's rays on the water; not only the glistening surface, but also what is moving in the depths beneath. With his *Hommage à Rameau*, Debussy weaves a sarabande to create a wistful remembrance of the great Baroque composer who set the standards of his day. Looking back from Modernism to the old masters, the French composer nevertheless remains true to his own style. *Mouvement*, the last piece in the first cycle, associates mechanical motion with the animated stirring of living beings in nature. The second cycle opens with a nuanced keyboard illustration of the sound of bells. In *Cloches à travers les feuilles*, Debussy interweaves distant bell peals with the proximity of the wind blowing through the leaves. Thus, two thoroughly separate points of reference – an immaterial sonority combined with animated objects of nature – open up a wide range of musical possibilities, with the colorful addition of a Southeast Asian flair. The spatial dimension is subsequently further extended in *Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut* to incorporate the dimension of time. The moonlight not only shines down its rays from above to illuminate the scenery below: it even

manages to fathom the depths of the past. The theme of water returns in the final piece: a Japanese lacquer panel reportedly inspired Debussy to compose *Poissons d'or*, a vibrant paean to the transformations that are constantly taking place within the aquatic element.

*L'isle joyeuse (The island of pleasures)*

Shimmering colors, virtuoso aplomb, and sheer *joie de vivre* take center stage in *L'isle joyeuse*, a solo piano work Debussy wrote in July/August 1904. For this piece he is said to have been inspired by Watteau's 1717 painting "The Embarcation for Cythera". That rococo pictorial masterpiece depicts an ideal landscape on the mythological island of Cythera, where happiness and sensuality find fulfillment. The technically demanding piano part imitates the sounds of the full orchestra. The air shimmers in the glistening heat; the buoyant spirits of a bacchanalia are sketched here in finest musical detail.

*Estampes**Pagodes**Soirée dans Grenade (Evening in Granada)**Jardins sous la pluie (Gardens in the rain)*

Tunes and sonorities from Southeast Asia made a profound impression on Debussy – particularly in 1889, when he heard the fascinating timbres of a Javanese gamelan ensemble at the Paris World's Fair. His study of that region's music led to *Pagodes*, the piece that opens the *Estampes* cycle. In this musical tableau, Debussy multiplied the layers of rhythm and applied a five-tone pentatonic scale to create a contemplative, Far Eastern mood: stillness and animated motion

interlock to form a satisfactory whole. *La soirée dans Grenade* is brimming with Iberian local color. In spite of its use of habanera rhythm, tango, and Orientally-tinged flamenco, the piece avoids superficial folklore and conjures an imaginary, quasi-unreal flair instead. Moods and concrete images likewise alternate in the final piece, *Jardins sous la pluie*, where Debussy unfurls an elaborate toccata tracing the outlines of pearly drops on leaves and plants after a downpour, or depicting the finest drizzle.

### *Deux Arabesques*

Written in 1888, the *Two Arabesques* are regarded as Debussy's first major piano works, and can be studied as prime examples of his early style. True to their title, they feature rich adornments in profusion; here, the arabesque is not merely meant to decorate, but plays a significant role in determining the pieces' structure. Gentle melodic curves flow into one another in elegant, flowing clarity. *Arabesque No. 1 in E Major* captivates the listener with its mellow, pastoral mood. Outer parts in contrary motion, contrasting with stereotypical accompaniment figures in the center, work together to produce an impressive rhythm in several simultaneous layers. Wistful, almost étude-like, the *Second Arabesque in G Major* features a four-note motif. Reminiscent of birdsong, it determines the piece's entire musical progression.

### *Pour le Piano* *Prélude* *Sarabande* *Toccata*

The toccata is also the genre Debussy chose for the initial and final pieces of the suite *Pour le Piano*, which he worked on between 1894 and 1901. This suite harks back to Baroque standards in terms of global structure and individual movement titles, but Debussy transposed the basic premises of a suite into his own personal musical idiom. The opening *Prélude* is full of lively bravado, with forward movement provided by a relentless motor drive. Flowing ever onward in haste, dark- and light-green vines of musical ivy encircle the music, with the frequent intrusion of hymn-like, hammered chords. In the placid *Sarabande*, Debussy transcends the stately elegance of this Baroque court dance to paint a more universal portrait of days of old. The piece sounds like a reminiscence of memories recovered from oblivion, evoked with the sonorities and musical means of nascent musical modernity. The final *Toccata* takes up the initial piece's gesture of perpetual motion: brimming with a profusion of rhythmic and harmonic sleights of hand, the music attains such noble grandeur that in the midst of extreme velocity it still finds room to deploy a series of sentimental, quasi-Romantic gestures.



## CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835–1921)

*Six Bagatelles op. 3**Poco sostenuto**Allegro animato quasi presto**Poco adagio**Moderato assai**Allegro molto**Poco sostenuto – Adagio*

"Monsieur Saint-Saëns has had the rare honor of becoming a classic during his lifetime", as French author and music critic Romain Rolland pointed out in 1901. Indeed, Saint-Saëns had acquired great fame as a composer and even more so as a pianist – particularly in France. Although he successfully wrote several symphonies and concertos, he did not leave a single solo piano sonata to posterity. "What can one write after Beethoven?" he asked. He therefore preferred brief formats such as the genre pieces in *Six Bagatelles*, op. 3 (1855).

*Album op. 72**Prélude Poco allegro, tempo rubato**Carillon: Moderato tranquillo**Toccata: Allegretto**Valse: Allegro grazioso e con moto**Chanson Napolitaine: Andantino**Finale: Allegro quasi minuetto*

Camille Saint-Saëns wrote approximately twenty solo piano works: their melodious, elegant Neo-Classical style must have fit in perfectly with the atmosphere cultivated in Paris salons. Made up of six brief miniatures, the *Album op. 72* is from the year 1884. Its style is technically challenging, almost concertizing: most of the pieces are in rapid tempo. They include the vivacious *Prélude*, with flowing movement throughout, the *Toccata*, with its forward drive in perpetual motion, a lively, whimsical *Waltz*, and an energetic *Finale* that ends in a joyful climax. In contrast, the dreamlike *Carillon* forms a lyrical caesura: its ostinato motif in thirds suggests the sound of bells. The *Neapolitan Song's* reticent, somber initial theme contrasts with a sharp, dramatic second theme and a further series of brilliant crescendos.

*Valse canariote op. 88*  
*Valse langoureuse op. 120*  
*Valse gaie op. 139*

Short waltzes were among the first pieces Saint-Saëns ever composed, even when his hands were too small to play them. However, he only published a total of seven waltzes for solo piano in the course of his lifetime. Although he composed and published each waltz individually over a period of one and a half decades, they can nevertheless be taken together as a quasi-homogeneous cycle.

*Gavotte op. 23*

Camille Saint-Saëns was well-versed in the arts and sciences. As a musicologist, he oversaw the first complete edition of the works of Jean-Philippe Rameau. And, as a composer, he paid a fitting tribute to the Baroque age. Thus he wrote the *Gavotte*, *op. 23* as a single-movement work at the age of 35, in 1871. With strong rhythmic accents and a tendency to saturate each chord with quasi-Romantic fullness, the outer sections nevertheless render an appropriate homage to the courtly manner of the old masters. The same musical gestures and themes are maintained in the middle section. In spite of this tendency to travel back in time, Saint-Saëns manages to maintain an aloof, current stylistic perspective vis-à-vis the aesthetic of a long-gone age which he found both familiar and remote.

*Feuillet d'album op. 169 (Album Leaf)*

"I represented the future", Saint-Saëns commented toward the end of his life. "In my early years I was decried as a rebel; now, at my age, I can only be considered an ancestor". At the age of 85, in the year of his death, he composed the brief *Album Leaf op. 169*, which became his very last published solo piano work. Here he pays nostalgic homage to the Romanticism of the past: dreamlike, but not sentimental; yearning, but not melancholy. A way of remembering happiness without bitterness.

## CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835–1921)

*L'Attente* (1855) (Victor Hugo)*La Coccinelle* (1868) (Victor Hugo)*Rêverie* (1851) (Victor Hugo)*Guitare* (1851) (Victor Hugo)*Si vous n'avez rien à me dire* (1870) (Victor Hugo)*Viens* (ca. 1855) (Victor Hugo)*Tournoiement* (1870) (Armand Renaud)*Danse macabre* (1873) (Henri Cazalis)*La cigale et la fourmi* (ca. 1860) (Jean de La Fontaine)*El Desdichado* (1871) (Jules Barbier)*Guitares et mandolines* (1890) (Camille Saint-Saëns)*Grasselette et maigrelette* (1920) (Pierre de Ronsard)*Pastorale* (1855) (Philippe Néricault Destouches)

Camille Saint-Saëns, creator of the immortal *Carnaval of the Animals*, the strikingly pleasing *Danse Macabre*, and the renowned opera *Samson et Dalila*, also wrote an astounding quantity of artsongs in the course of his long, eighty-six-year-old life: more than 150 are still preserved. The texts stem from a wide variety of sources: he set both old and new poems to music and had a great interest in the French poets of his own day, Victor Hugo in particular. In setting his native French tongue to music, Saint-Saëns applied the utmost care: spoken French tends to gloss over a series of mute syllables that nevertheless have to be carefully pronounced when sung. Saint-Saëns's musical career began with aplomb at a very early age: hailed as a child prodigy, the "new Mozart" wrote his first works at the age of five and gave his first public concert at eleven. Like Mozart, however, he had to battle for recognition once he entered adult age. For a long period of time, his contemporaries tended to find his works extravagant or too "academic" (in the climate that reigned under Napoleon III in Paris, the latter adjective practically sounded like an insult). Only for

a short period of time – in the late 1800s – was Saint-Saëns's output regarded as innovative; however, once the 1890s set in, he started to be outranked by Debussy. The next generation of composers in the orbit of Francis Poulenc even regarded Saint-Saëns as reactionary. Thus, until today, Saint-Saëns's extensive, multi-faceted output remains mostly unknown; a closer look nevertheless reveals that he was certainly one of the most fascinating musicians of his time.

Saint-Saëns composed his first song when he was only five years old: it already featured an impressively effective accompaniment part. He wrote his last song in May 1921, seven months before his death. He was sixteen when he set Victor Hugo's poem *Rêverie* to music. Perhaps, as a teenager, Saint-Saëns had already been introduced to Schumann lieder: here, a finely wrought melodic line unfurls over a background of delicately pulsating quavers. In the same year, 1851, the young composer also wrote the song *Guitare*, further proof of his immense talent. The *accelerando* in the first bars of the piano part sounds quasi-improvised. The vocal line is wide-ranging: for instance, in one sole dramatic gesture, it spans the interval of a tenth. The artsong *L'Attente* from the year 1855 gives the impression of a meticulously conceived instrumental scherzo movement. In the poem, Victor Hugo spans a great breadth of subject matter: a squirrel is asked to climb up a larch in order to watch out for the arrival of the yearningly awaited beloved. Saint-Saëns imbues the poem with restless perpetual motion. In the year 1868, two well-known composers, Saint-Saëns and Georges Bizet, each produced their own respective versions of Hugo's poem *La Coccinelle*. Saint-Saëns narrates the story in a plain, charming, and likewise aloof manner, applying a great economy of means and featuring crystal-clear accompaniment. In his setting of Hugo's poem *Si vous n'avez rien à me dire*, one might have the impression that Saint-Saëns is anticipating turn-of-the-century salon music. The



accompaniment consists in a brief, hypnotic ostinato motif: even without any particularly salient characteristic, it gradually manages to engrave itself in our memory. Five years younger than Saint-Saëns, French poet and orientalist Henri Cazalis was fascinated with Buddhism. Saint-Saëns's 1873 setting of Cazalis' poem *Danse macabre* is not very well-known, but the melody certainly rings a bell, since it went on to form the basis of Saint-Saëns's famous symphonic poem with the same title. The artsong for voice and piano is the earliest version: the piano accompaniment sets in with several instances of the jarring "devil's interval", the tritone. Although the song provides pure enjoyment for listeners, it represents a formidable challenge to any performer: particularly in view of the rapid diction required to perform the French text, and also because of the octave passages in the piano part (which a virtuoso such as Saint-Saëns must certainly have tackled with aplomb). La Fontaine's well-known fable *The Ant and the Grasshopper* is from the year 1667. We do not know when Saint-Saëns's setting dates from, but his music certainly provides a fitting setting of La Fontaine's trenchant, incisive, ironic style. The musical version is brimming with masterful details: a scuttling motif for the diligent ant, a pathetic appoggiatura on the word "famine", and a brief, self-indulgent cantilena sung by the grasshopper. The cheerful song *Grasselette et maigrelette* is representative of Saint-Saëns's efforts to reconcile old tendencies with modern ways, thereby revealing the assured hand of a musical master. Any vocalist whose mother tongue is not French will find this "babbling song" an enormous challenge. It describes two women whose virtues are quite different. The text stems from Pierre de Ronsard, the most well-known French poet of the late Renaissance.

## CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

*Voici que le printemps* (1884) (Paul Bourget)

*Clair de lune* (1882) (Paul Verlaine)

*Clair de lune from: Fêtes galantes I* (1891) (Paul Verlaine)

*from: Ariettes oubliées* (1888 rev. 1903) (Paul Verlaine)

*C'est l'extase*

*Il pleure dans mon cœur*

*Chevaux de bois*

*Le Faune from: Fêtes galantes II* (1904) (Paul Verlaine)

*from: Cinq Poèmes de Baudelaire* (1889)

(Charles Baudelaire)

*Le jet d'eau*

*Recueillement*

*Chansons de Bilitis* (1899) (Pierre Louÿs)

*La flûte de Pan*

*La chevelure*

*Le tombeau des Naïades*

*Ballade des femmes de Paris* (1910) (François Villon)

*Noël des enfants qui n'ont plus de maisons* (1916)

(Claude Debussy)

Debussy was admitted at a very young age into Paris Conservatory, where he would be more successful as a student of composition than as a pianist. After two attempts he finally won the coveted Prix de Rome, the aspired crowning of every young composer's career. The prize not only brought wide esteem, but was also associated with a two-year residence at Villa Medici in Rome, along with a stipend to cover it. Although Debussy accepted the stipend, he would later place the following words in the mouth of Monsieur Croche, his

alter ego: "Among all of France's glorious institutions, do you know of any other as ridiculous as the Prix de Rome?" The prize certainly hadn't worked to Debussy's disadvantage – not only thanks to the comfortable financial situation it provided. While in Rome, Debussy had also been thrilled to discover the Masses written by Palestrina, the Renaissance composer; he had the opportunity to meet Franz Liszt, and found spare time to compose a great number of works. Apart from those required by the Académie des Beaux-Arts, he wrote several additional songs, including the Ariettes based on poems by Paul Verlaine. Debussy published the songs as a collection in 1888 in Paris. He revised them in 1903 and published them again, this time under the title *Ariettes oubliées*, and featuring a dedication to Mary Garden, the Scottish soprano who had premiered the role of Mélisande one year earlier in the only opera Debussy ever wrote. Debussy held Verlaine, the first major poet of the Symbolist movement, in high esteem: between 1882 and 1904, he set twenty of Verlaine's poems to music. The poems that form the basis of *Ariettes oubliées* depict moods of nature. They are full of wistful sadness, while avoiding any sort of passionate outbreak. Debussy's settings are in a similar mood: simple, transparent, and reticent. Rococo paintings by Antoine Watteau had provided the inspiration for the young Verlaine's poem collection entitled *Fêtes galantes*. The title stands for an aristocratic festivity; for Watteau, it comprised an entire pictorial genre that could include courtly celebrations, pastoral scenes, and other related settings. Debussy set the cycle's first poem, the melancholy *Clair de lune*, for the first time in 1882 along with other poems from *Fêtes galantes*. Later he composed an entirely new setting that was included in a collection of artsongs with the same title: *Fêtes galantes I*. A comparison of the 1882 and 1891 versions reveals that Debussy's style thoroughly transformed itself in the course of that nine-year period. The first setting is still rather conventional in terms of structure: it

imbues Verlaine's verses with a bright, optimistic mood, brought about by major mode and by triads in the piano part that cascade downward like waterfalls. The later version is much more somber, with the use of minor mode and the pentatonic scale. Later on, Debussy returned to texts by Verlaine and composed a second collection, *Fêtes galantes II*. The songs in the new anthology are good examples of the plain, more restrained style typical of late Debussy. Like many other French composers, he embarked on a summer pilgrimage to Bayreuth to hear Wagner's operas: Debussy managed to visit the German festival twice, in 1888 and 1889. He was quite taken with Wagner's music, and the "endless melody" and Wagner's full instrumental texture found their way into Debussy's setting of *Five Poems by Baudelaire*, based on texts stemming from *Les Fleurs du Mal*. They exemplify Debussy's veritable "Wagner fever": one of the songs is called *Le Jet d'eau* and truly sounds like a fountain with figures that represent sparkling waves. Just as in Baudelaire's text, the fountain's murmur serves to accompany a plaintive lament. The chromaticism and the quasi-instrumental vocal line are all Wagner-inspired. However, after having published that collection of Baudelaire settings, Debussy's enthusiasm for the German composer started to wane: in fact, he became a vehement opponent who ridiculed the general fascination with "old Klingsor's ghost, alias Wagner", as he mockingly described him in a letter. From 1893 on, Debussy became very good friends with author Pierre Louÿs, a fervent Wagner admirer. Louÿs did not mix in much with the Symbolists; instead, he was fascinated by his own idea of a sort of model Antiquity where placid well-being reigned supreme. It was probably Louÿs who nudged Debussy in the direction of Classicism. The three *Chansons de Bilitis* feature a shepherdess as narrator. In *La flûte de Pan* she tells about her love for the God Pan, who gives her a syrinx and teaches her to play the flute. The trilogy closes with a sad song: *Le tombeau des Naïades* evokes a bleak winter. The satyrs and

the water-nymphs are dead; indeed, the frozen spring has become the water-nymphs' tomb. Parallel major thirds in the piano stand for immobilized nature; the vocal part's monotone declamation is of unspeakable sadness. Deliberately reticent in terms of vocal power, the *Chansons de Bilitis* are intimate musical gems. In 1909, Debussy was diagnosed with intestinal cancer. By 1915 the illness had progressed to the point that he had to be operated. Shortly after having undergone the surgical intervention, in the midst of World War I, he wrote a text called *Christmas Carol of the Homeless Children* and set it to music. The song met with great success. Quite aware of its somewhat sensationalistic character, Debussy described it to his friend and colleague Paul Dukas with the following words: "'Mama is dead; Papa is off to war; we have no more little shoes; we would like bread more than toys'; and to conclude: 'Victory to the children of France.' It's no more cunning than that, but it goes straight to the heart of the citizenry!" This patriotic song is the last artsong Claude Debussy ever wrote.

## CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

*Trio for piano, violin and cello in G Major*  
*Andante con moto allegro*  
*Scherzo. Moderato con allegro*  
*Intermezzo. Andante espressivo*  
*Finale. Appassionato*

The *Trio for piano, violin and cello in G Major* is the earliest instrumental piece by Claude Debussy that is still preserved. For many decades it was said to be lost, and has only been available in a complete edition since 1986. When he was only eighteen, Debussy wrote this circumstantial work while spending the summer of 1880 in the idyllic little town of Fiesole, set in the hills overlooking the city of Florence. Debussy was engaged as piano accompanist and piano teacher by the family of Nadezhda von Meck, otherwise well-known as Tchaikovsky's maecenas. Debussy accompanied Nadezhda and her daughters on a voyage across Switzerland and Italy. He was still a conservatory student; his parents and teachers regarded him as a failed child prodigy. Thus it is only natural that Debussy had not yet found his personal voice as a composer. He was still in thrall to the world of salons and Romanticism, which he would later vehemently reject and abandon. The *Trio in G Major* captivates the listener with its luxuriant texture, poignant abandon, and youthful insouciance. Full of yearning, the first movement combines three themes and culminates in passionate intensity, like a ballad. The second movement opens with ghostlike pizzicatos, leading to a shimmering alternation between an elegant *danse macabre* mood and that of a serenade. In the third movement, the piano dreamily prepares the terrain for ebullient cantilenas enounced by the cello and on the violin. The finale, a rondo, is not only brimming with dark, urgently pressing passion, but also with inspired poignancy. In a refreshingly bold manner, Debussy weaves a series of magnificently contrasting episodes into the structure to lighten the load.

## ERNEST AMÉDÉE CHAUSSON (1855–1899)

*Concert for violin, piano and string quartet in D Major op. 21*  
*Décidé*  
*Sicilienne*  
*Grave*  
*Finale. Très animé*

In the late 1800s, one of the most highly regarded venues where Paris artists gathered to meet was the salon of composer Ernest Chausson. Maurice Ravel could often be seen in that illustrious circle, and likewise Debussy, with whom Chausson cultivated a meaningful friendship. For instance, the two studied the score of Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* and marveled together at its thoroughly unusual sonorities. In contrast with his younger friend and colleague, Chausson was never able to leave Romanticism completely behind him – partly also due to the fact that he died a very untimely death in the wake of a bicycle accident. Although Chausson remained in thrall to the aesthetic of César Franck, his teacher, and was thoroughly fascinated by the music of Wagner, he nevertheless succeeded in occupying a multi-faceted, highly original position as intermediary between an age that was drawing to a close and Modernism, which was dawning on the horizon. Deliberately ambiguous in terms of musical genre, the *Concert for violin, piano and string quartet in D Major* was composed by Chausson between 1889 and 1891. The first movement unfolds on the basis of a three-note motif; the melodic thread is spun out in an almost Wagnerian manner. This provides a somber, solemn entrance into Chausson's subject matter: a musical manifesto in favor of the dark glow of Romanticism. Conversely, the second movement sways and floats in a melancholy, occasionally almost self-indulgent manner. The wanly beginning third movement turns into a mournful lamentation. A ray of compassionate solace occasionally seems to break

through the clouds, but the darkness inevitably gathers once more and thickens, invading upon such moments with increasing fierceness. The final movement sports such a degree of forward drive that it occasionally turns almost cheerful, intermittently finding a space to follow certain thoughts wherever they may lead. With inspired passion, the music ultimately decides to home in on a euphoric conclusion.



# MUSICIAN BIOGRAPHIES

## SERGEI REDKIN

Sergei Redkin began to play the piano at the age of five. At the age of six he began to study music. At the same time he began training in the disciplines of improvisation and composition. In 2004 he gained admittance to Rimsky Korsakov Conservatory at Saint Petersburg, initially in the school for young gifted musicians, then, from 2009, as a regular student in the class of Alexander Sandler. In the meantime he pursued his training in composition under the guidance of Alexander Mnatsakanyan, one of the last great students of Shostakovich. In 2015 he won Third Prize and the Bronze Medal at the XV Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow. Valery Gergiev subsequently engaged him to concertize with the Mariinsky Orchestra in Paris, New York City, and Mexico; he also invited Redkin to take part in the Prokofiev marathon held in conjunction with Gergiev's MPHIL 360° Festival in Munich. In 2017, Sergei Redkin was selected by Maki Namekawa, Dennis Russell Davies and Philip Glass as the new Ruhr Piano Festival scholarship holder for the 2017-2018 season. Redkin's 2018 début performance at the Festival was a part of that scholarship prize.

## JAMINA GERL

When she was only fifteen, Jamina Gerl was accepted as a full student at the Hochschule für Musik und Tanz in Cologne, where she studied under the guidance of Roswitha Gediga and Eduard Zilberkant. She continued her studies with a full scholarship at the University of Alaska. She received further inspiration from masterclasses with renowned artists including Paul Badura-Skoda, Menahem Pressler, and Jerome Rose. In national and international music competitions in Germany, Italy and in the US, Jamina Gerl has garnered no less than 14 prizes. Engagements have led her to concertize in a number of European countries, as well as in Japan, China, and the United States. 2018 marked the year of her début performance at the Ruhr Piano Festival.

## MAO FUJITA

Japanese pianist Mao Fujita studied at Tokyo College of Music under the tutelage of Profs. Minoru Nojima, Kazuko Sumi, and Hiroo Sato. In 2010 he gave his public concert début with the Kanagawa Philharmonic Orchestra, followed by appearances with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, Utah Symphony Orchestra, Lausanne Chamber Orchestra, and Macao Orchestra. In 2017 he won the Clara Haskil International Piano Competition in Switzerland, along with the Audience Award and the "Prix Modern Times" for the best interpretation of the work composed for the competition: *Tenebrae* by Nicolas Bacri. Mao Fujita performed his début at the Ruhr Piano Festival in 2018.

## JUAN CARLOS FERNÁNDEZ-NIETO

Juan Carlos Fernández Nieto performed his concerto début at the age of sixteen with the Orquesta Ciudad de Granada (OCG). He holds degrees from the Yale School of Music, where he studied with Boris Berman. Juan Carlos has given recitals and concerts in his native Spain, the US, the UK, Germany, Holland, and Central America, performing in major venues including the Steinway Halls of New York and London, the Chicago Cultural Center and the Palau de la Música in Barcelona. Juan Carlos Fernández-Nieto has reaped a series of prizes at international competitions including the Iturbi International Piano Competition, the 56th Jaén International Piano Competition, the CSMTA Young Artists Competition, and the National Piano Competition in León. He was heard for the first time at the Ruhr Piano Festival in 2018.

## INGA FIOLIA

Georgian-German pianist Inga Fiolia's musical path led her initially to Moscow, where Prof. Alexey Nasedkin taught her in the venerable tradition of the piano school of Heinrich Neuhaus. She continued her studies in Cologne under the tutelage of Vassily Lobanov. As a prizewinner of several important international competitions in Italy, Belgium, and Germany, she has been invited to concertize in the United Kingdom, France, Japan, Russia, Morocco, Austria, Panama, and Switzerland. She performs as soloist with renowned orchestras including Junge Symphonie Berlin, the Brussels Philharmonic, the Georgian State Chamber Orchestra and National Philharmonic, the Bergische Symphoniker, and the South Westphalia Philharmonic. The Ruhr Piano Festival audience had the pleasure of hearing her for the first time in 2018.

## GRAHAM JOHNSON

Long before Graham Johnson was created an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 1994, he had already become a living institution as vocal accompanist. At the age of seventeen he arrived in London to receive training from his legendary predecessors Gerald Moore and Geoffrey Parsons. At the age of 22, he accompanied a masterclass imparted by tenor Peter Pears, which brought him into contact with Benjamin Britten on the same occasion – an encounter that had a formative impact on his artistic career. Soon he was collaborating onstage with illustrious vocal artists such as Peter Pears, Elizabeth Schwarzkopf, Brigitte Fassbaender, and Peter Schreier. In 1976, in collaboration with several outstanding vocalists, he formed The Songmakers' Almanac, the goal of which is to explore neglected areas of piano-accompanied vocal music. Over the next decades, Johnson thus learned and performed more than 250 different artsong programmes. Graham Johnson is Senior Professor of Accompaniment at Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and gives a great number of masterclasses worldwide. In 2014 he received the Hugo Wolf Medal, not only in honor of his achievements as vocal accompanist, but also to salute his unflagging commitment as music researcher. The Ruhr Piano Festival had already awarded him its Annual Prize in 2001 for his life work. In 2018, Graham Johnson gave his 50th recital at the Festival!

## SORAYA MAFI

Young soprano Soraya Mafi studied in Manchester, then at the Royal College of Music in London. She attracted the attention of audiences and critics at several vocal competitions; among others, she won the Susan Chilcott Award in 2016, as well as 2nd Prize at the Kathleen Ferrier Awards in 2015. During her time at RCM she was already making regular appearances onstage; for instance, she performed the title role in *Arianna in Creta* for the London Handel Festival. Débuts at Grange Park Opera and at the Théâtre du Châtelet soon followed. Soraya Mafi also makes regular appearances in artsong recitals; for instance, she has already given a solo vocal recital accompanied by Graham Johnson in London. She gave her first performance at the Ruhr Piano Festival in 2017.

## FRANÇOIS LE ROUX

François Le Roux is one of France's most renowned classical singers. He has set new standards in his flagship role in Debussy's opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*. His vast repertoire comprises all of the baritone roles in Mozart operas, as well as a great number of roles in Italian opera, Baroque opera, and contemporary musical theater. In artsong recitals his stage partners include renowned pianists such as Graham Johnson, Roger Vignoles, and the late Irwin Gage. In 1996, François Le Roux was named Knight of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres; in 1997, the Circle of French Music Critics selected him as Musician Personality of the Year. His book *Le chant intime* on the subject of French artsong interpretation was awarded the 2004 René Dumesnil Prize of the French Academy of the Arts. Parallel to his career onstage, Le Roux is deeply committed in passing on his art and his knowledge to the younger generation of singers. He has been teaching at

the Saint-Jean-de-Luz Maurice Ravel Academy since 2006. He gives masterclasses on a regular basis worldwide and is artistic director of the Francis Poulenc Academy in Tours. 2018 marked the third occasion upon which François Le Roux performed at the Ruhr Piano Festival.

## SARAH FOX

Soprano Sarah Fox was educated at Giggleswick School, London University, and the Royal College of Music. She is a winner of the Kathleen Ferrier Award and the John Christie Award. Roles at Covent Garden Royal Opera House have included Micaela/Carmen, Zerlina/Don Giovanni, and Woglinde/Der Ring des Nibelungen. Sarah Fox has also performed at the opera houses of Munich, Barcelona, Cincinnati and Glyndebourne, as well as at Salzburg Festival and Aix-en-Provence Festival. 2018 was the year she first performed at the Ruhr Piano Festival.

## THÉO FOUCHENNERET

At the age of 13, Théo Fouchenneret was admitted to Paris CNSM Conservatory, where he studied with Alain Planès and Hortense Cartier-Bresson. Concert engagements have led him to perform in a number of major venues in France, Italy, China, Japan and Taiwan. He has been invited to make appearances at outstanding French festivals including La Roque D'Anthéron and La Folle Journée, and he collaborates onstage with chamber music partners including Victor Julien-Laferrrière, Svetlin Roussev and Romain Descharmes. In October 2013 he won First Prize at the International Gabriel Fauré Competition. In 2014 he co-founded the Messiaen Ensemble, which is currently in residence at the Singer-Polignac Foundation in Paris. In 2018 he gave his début performance at the Ruhr Piano Festival.

## MI-SA YANG

Violinist Mi-sa Yang studied at Paris CNSM Conservatory and has already won a number of awards: First Prize in the Junior Category at the International Yehudi Menuhin Competition in the year 2000, along with Third Prize and the Special Jury Prize at Sendai International Music Competition in 2001. Mi-sa Yang gave solo appearances with renowned orchestras such as the London Mozart Players, Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, and the New Japan Philharmonic. With Adam Laloum and Victor Julien-Laferrrière she has founded the piano trio "Les Esprits", and they have performed together at venues including Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and the Rheingau Music Festival. Since 2014 she has been a member of the Ardeo String Quartet, with which she has performed at the Konzerthaus in Dortmund, in the Cologne Philharmonie, in Amsterdam, London, Paris, and Vienna. 2018 was the first occasion on which she appeared at the Ruhr Piano Festival.

## VICTOR JULIEN-LAFERRIÈRE

Cellist Victor Julien-Laferrrière studied at Paris CNSM Conservatory with Roland Pidoux, in Vienna with Heinrich Schiff, and at the Salzburg Mozarteum with Clemens Hagen. In 2017 he won First Prize at the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels, after already having won First Prize and several Special Prizes at the Prague Spring Festival Competition in 2012. In 2018 he was selected as Best Instrumental Soloist at the Victoires de la Musique (the French equivalent of the "Grammys"). Victor Julien-Laferrrière has appeared with renowned orchestras including the Brussels Philharmonic, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, and the Slovakian State Philharmonic. His chamber music recordings with pianist Adam Laloum have already garnered two Diapason d'Or awards. He gave his début performance at the Ruhr Piano Festival in 2018.

## BENJAMIN MOSER

Pianist Benjamin Moser gave his début performance at the Ruhr Piano Festival in 2011, and is now performing here for the sixth time in 2018. He studied at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Munich under the guidance of Michael Schäfer, and at Berlin University of the Arts with Klaus Hellwig. Benjamin Moser attracted international attention in June 2007 as a prizewinner in the prestigious Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, where he was awarded the prize for the best interpretation of Tchaikovsky, as well as the Audience Prize. In January of that year he also won First Prize in the International Young Concert Artists Audition in New York, which gave rise to a number of recital performances in Paris, Washington D. C., and New York City. He has concertized with the Munich and Bamberg Symphonies, as well as with Leipzig MDR Radio Symphony Orchestra. His chamber music partners include Nicolas Altstaedt, Julian Steckel, Danjulo Ishizaka, Andrej Bellow, and his brother, cellist Johannes Moser.

## LIZA FERSCHTMAN

Dutch violinist Liza Ferschtman received her formal training from Herman Krebbers at the Amsterdam Conservatory, Ida Kavafian at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia and David Takeno in London. Each season, she is entrusted with several performances at Amsterdam Concertgebouw, ranging from solo recitals to concertos with orchestra. She appears with the Concertgebouw Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony, and Israel Symphony Orchestra. Her chamber music partners include Nicolas Altstaedt, Nobuko Imai, Enrico Pace, and Elisabeth Leonskaja. In 2006 she was awarded the Dutch Music Prize; in 2007 she was named Artistic Director of the Dutch Chamber Music Festival in Delft. The Challenge Classics label has released a number of her recordings. Liza Ferschtman performed at the Ruhr Piano Festival for the first time in 2018.



## delian::quartett

The namesake of the delian::quartett is the Greek god Apollo, who was worshipped as god of the fine arts, the muses and especially music, and also named Delian after his place of birth, the island of Delos. Ever since 2007, when it was founded, the doors of major music venues and important festivals opened for the delian::quartett. The echo of the ensemble's first concerts catapulted them practically overnight to the center of the international concert scene. Their debut at the Berlin Philharmonie in 2009 sparked off genuine torrents of enthusiasm; the Quartet was received with standing ovations already after the opening piece. Since then the ensemble has performed, acclaimed by audiences and the press alike, in major concert seasons and venues all over Europe and – as artistic ambassadors of the Goethe Institute – in Africa. Apart from cultivating existing string quartet literature from the Baroque age to the present day, one of the delian::quartett's major commitments is the enlargement of string quartet repertoire. Thus they have premièred a great number of new works. The quartet's artistic partners include outstanding musicians such as Gilles Apap, Measha Brueggergosman, Gérard Caussé, Stella Doufexis, Bruno Ganz, Per Arne Glorvigen, the Henschel Quartet, Sergey Nakariakov, Menahem Pressler, and Anatol Ugorski. The ensemble's unconventional programmes, brimming with interconnections among works, draw the attention of critics and audiences. The delian::quartett soon shed their shooting star image to become regarded as a highly esteemed quartet from the first draw of chamber music ensembles on an international level. Ever since 2017, the members of the delian::quartett have also been Pirastro Artists in partnership with that renowned maker of strings for bowed instruments. Adrian Pinzaru plays a violin by Giovanni Battista Rogeri, generously provided by Christine Anderson; Andreas Moscho's violin is by Giovanni Francesco Pressenda, on

generous extended loan from the Paderborn families Lödige and Jacoby. The delian::quartett performed for the first time at the Ruhr Piano Festival in 2018; it appears on this recording by courtesy of OehmsClassics.

