

LSO St Luke's

CHAMBER MUSIC

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SPANISH CONNECTIONS
ALBAN GERHARDT & STEVEN OSBORNE

Thursday 22 February 2024 1-2.05pm
Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

Claude Debussy Élegie
Claude Debussy Sonata for Cello
Gaspar Cassadó Suite for Solo Cello
Manuel de Falla Suite populaire espagnole
Maurice Ravel Alborada del gracioso
Maurice Ravel Pièce en forme de Habanera

Alban Gerhardt cello
Steven Osborne piano

Recorded for future broadcast on BBC Radio 3

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THE CRYPT CAFÉ & BAR

The Crypt café and bar is open from one hour before concerts and during the interval (where applicable). Please note, card payments only. Only cold drinks are permitted inside the Jerwood Hall.

PROGRAMME NOTE WRITER

Kate Hopkins is English-language editor (concerts) for Salzburg Festival. She has written articles for organisations including the London Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonia, the Salzburg Festival and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and book reviews for *NB Magazine* and *The Wagner Journal*.

In accordance with the requirements of Islington Council persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any gangway.

The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are strictly forbidden without formal consent from LSO St Luke's.

Please make sure that digital watch alarms and mobile phones are switched off during the performance.

Élégie

Claude Debussy



1915



3 minutes

Claude Debussy wrote this short piece in 1915, during the second year of World War I. It was one of his last solo piano compositions, and was published in a war-memorial album honouring the work of women in wartime, dedicated to Queen Alexandra, the widow of Edward VII of England. It is marked 'lent, douloureux ... mezza voce, cantabile espress.' (slow, sorrowful, hushed and in an expressive, singing style) and is characterized by falling phrases, spare textures and mournful chromatic harmonies.

Sonata for Cello

Claude Debussy



1915



11 minutes

- 1 **Prologue: Lent, sostenuto e molto risoluto**
- 2 **Sérénade: Modérément animé**
- 3 **Finale: Animé, léger et nerveux**

World War I awakened strong nationalist sympathies in Claude Debussy. He started to plan a set of six sonatas for various instruments, in which he intended to

reject Austro-German Romanticism and pay homage to French Baroque composers such as François Couperin and Jean-Philippe Rameau.

Sadly, he completed only three of these works before his death in 1918. The Cello Sonata was the first to be written, in July 1915. Debussy was very pleased with it, informing his publisher Durand that it was in 'almost Classical form in the best sense of the word'. According to some accounts, he initially planned to give it the ironic title *Pierrot fâché avec la lune* (Pierrot [the melancholy clown from the Italian commedia dell'arte] on bad terms with the moon).

In the opening Prologue, soulful outer sections characterised by song-like cello writing contrast with a brief, dramatic central episode. The guitar-like pizzicatos (plucked notes) for the cello in the witty Sérénade contain a hint of Spain; the movement also calls for flautando bowing, where the cellist lightly moves their bow near to the fingerboard to create a delicate sound. The Sérénade leads directly into the Finale, in which a dance-like recurring theme alternates with more reflective episodes. It contains much lively dialogue between cello and piano and closes the Sonata in high spirits.

Suite for Solo Cello

Gaspar Cassadó



1926



13 minutes

- 1 **Preludio-Fantasia**
- 2 **Sardana**
- 3 **Intermezzo e Danza Finale**

Gaspar Cassadó was one of the 20th century's leading cellists. His many compositions for cello include the popular *Requiebros* (1934), three sonatas, a concerto and this Suite, which he wrote in 1926. His main inspirations were Johann Sebastian Bach's Suites for solo cello – to which he had been introduced by his teacher Pablo Casals – and Spanish folk music.

The Suite's three dance movements each represent a different region of Spain. The Preludio-Fantasia is a Zarabanda (Sarabande) representing Castilla-La Mancha, the Sardana is a round dance representing Catalonia, and the Danza Finale is a jota representing Andalusia (where this dance originated; it later became popular in Aragon). Notable features include the use of the cello's different registers to create a dialogue in the ardent Preludio-Fantasia, the mimicking of a flaviol (high flute) in the lively Sardana, and the elements of flamenco in the exhilarating jota.

Suite populaire espagnole

Manuel de Falla



1914



13 minutes

- 1 **El paño moruno**
- 2 **Asturiana**
- 3 **Jota**
- 4 **Nana**
- 5 **Canción**
- 6 **Polo**

In 1914, Manuel de Falla composed *Siete canciones populares españolas*, a setting of seven Spanish folk songs to which he added original piano parts. Each song came from a different region of Spain. The piece proved so popular that in 1925 de Falla and the violinist Paul Kochanski arranged six of the songs – omitting the 'Seguidilla murciana' – for violin and piano. The following year the cellist Maurice Maréchal and de Falla made a new arrangement for cello and piano.

Like the original songs, the *Suite populaire espagnole* covers a wide range of moods, from the irony of 'El paño moruno' and the fury of 'Polo' to the playfulness of 'Jota' and the tenderness of 'Nana'. Maréchal's arrangement makes striking use of the cello's different registers and features techniques such as pizzicato (plucking the strings) and double and triple stopping (playing two or three notes at once). It has proved enduringly popular.

Alborada del gracioso

Maurice Ravel



1919



7 minutes

'Alborada del gracioso' is the penultimate movement of Maurice Ravel's piano suite *Miroirs* (1904–05). The Spanish title roughly translates as 'jester's morning song'. The piece's spirited outer sections evoke strumming guitars and the rhythms of the seguidilla (a moderately fast triple-time dance from southern Spain); its central episode is more lyrical and romantic.

'Alborada del gracioso' was orchestrated by Ravel in 1919. This version for cello and piano is arranged by the Italian composer and pianist Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco.

Pièce en forme de Habanera

Maurice Ravel



1907



3 minutes

Pièce en forme de Habanera began life as *Vocalise-étude en forme de Habanera*, a wordless study for voice and piano that Ravel wrote in 1907. The Habanera is a slow, sensual dance that originated in Havana, Cuba; it became very popular in France after Georges Bizet used it for the heroine's entrance aria in his opera *Carmen* (1875). Ravel's *Habanera* is notable for its melodic beauty and for the opportunities it offers for virtuoso display. It has been arranged many times for instrumentalists; this version is by the cellist Paul Bazelaire.

Alban Gerhardt

cello



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Having launched his career with the Berliner Philharmoniker and Semyon Bychkov in 1991, Alban Gerhardt has since gained recognition as one of the world's most versatile cellists, highly regarded for his technical mastery, profound musicality, and insatiable artistic curiosity. His gift for shedding fresh light on familiar scores, along with his appetite for investigating new repertoire from centuries past and present, truly set him apart from his peers.

Notable orchestral collaborators include the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, all the British and German radio orchestras, Berliner Philharmoniker, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, Orchestre National de France, Orquesta Nacional de España as well as the Cleveland Orchestra, and the Philadelphia, Boston and Chicago symphony orchestras, under conductors such as Christoph von Dohnányi, Kurt Masur, Klaus Mäkelä,

Christian Thielemann, Simone Young, Susanna Mälkki, Vladimir Jurowski and Andris Nelsons.

Alongside an extensive repertoire comprising all the core concertos, Gerhardt is also the go-to soloist for contemporary composers. Most recently, he premiered Julian Anderson's Grawemeyer Award-winning cello concerto, *Litanies*, with the Orchestre National de France, as well as Brett Dean's Cello Concerto which he premiered with Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Berliner Philharmoniker, and played with the New York Philharmonic, Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and London Philharmonic Orchestra amongst others.

Highlights in the 2023/24 season include performances with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Marin Alsop, Gürzenich-Orchester Köln with Susanna Mälkki, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra with Andrew Manze, and Sydney Symphony Orchestra with Simone Young.

Steven Osborne

piano



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College of Music in Manchester.

He is Visiting Professor at the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Patron of the Lammermuir Festival and in 2014 was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. He was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to music in the 2022 Queen's New Year Honours.

Steven Osborne's insightful and idiomatic interpretations of diverse repertoire show an immense musical depth. His numerous awards include The Royal Philharmonic Society Instrumentalist of the Year, two *BBC Music Magazine Awards* and two *Gramophone Awards*. His residences at London's Wigmore Hall, Antwerp's deSingel, the Bath International Music Festival, the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra are a testament to the respect he commands.

Steven Osborne won first prize at the prestigious Clara Haskil Competition (1991) and the Naumburg International Competition (1997). Born in Scotland he studied with Richard Beauchamp at St Mary's Music School in Edinburgh and Renna Kellaway at the Royal Northern

FUTURE CONCERTS

Thursday 29 February 1pm

BERTRAND CHAMAYOU & FRIENDS

Felix Mendelssohn Variations concertantes
Benjamin Britten Cello Sonata
Felix Mendelssohn Cello Sonata No 2

Bertrand Chamayou piano
Sol Gabetta cello

Friday 1 March 1pm

BERTRAND CHAMAYOU: SOLO PIANO

Maurice Ravel Jeux d'eau
Unsus Chin Six Piano Études
Maurice Ravel Gaspard de la nuit elix

Bertrand Chamayou piano

Thursday 11 April 1pm

BERTRAND CHAMAYOU & FRIENDS

Johannes Brahms Two Songs for Voice,
Viola and Piano Op 91

Plus music by **Clara Schumann**, **Robert Schumann** and **Joseph Joachim**.

Bertrand Chamayou piano
Fleur Barron mezzo-soprano
Tabea Zimmermann viola

Friday 12 April 1pm

BERTRAND CHAMAYOU: SOLO PIANO

Music by **Erik Satie** and **John Cage**

Bertrand Chamayou piano

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