

LSO ST LUKES

BBC
RADIO 3

LUNCHTIME CONCERTS

Friday 10 April 1–2.05pm
Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

SIMON CRAWFORD-PHILLIPS AND FRIENDS

Vers la vie nouvelle

A selection of works by **Nadia Boulanger**,
Lili Boulanger, **Gabriel Fauré**,
Camille Saint-Saëns, **Francis**
Poulenc, **Jeanne Landry** and
Charlotte Sohy

Sophie Bevan soprano
Malin Broman violin
Simon Crawford-Phillips piano

Recorded for future broadcast on BBC Radio 3

LSO

Today's Programme

The Hawksmoor Space is open from one hour before the concert, selling hot and cold drinks. Please note, we can accept card payments only. Only cold drinks will be permitted inside the Jerwood Hall.

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

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Nadia Boulanger

Vers la vie nouvelle

Lili Boulanger

Nocturne and Cortège

Gabriel Fauré

Les berceaux

Camille Saint-Saëns

Violons dans le soir

Gabriel Fauré

Mandoline

Francis Poulenc

Sonata for Violin and Piano

Jeanne Landry

Mort quand tu me viendras prendre

Charlotte Sohy

Chants de la lande Op 4 No 3, 'Anathème'

Lili Boulanger

Le retour

Nadia Boulanger

Soleils couchants

Lili Boulanger

D'un matin de printemps

Programme Note

The common thread linking each of the composers featured in today's concert is Nadia Boulanger. Born into Parisian musical royalty in 1887, Boulanger became one of the 20th-century's most influential composition teachers. Her sister, Lili, was an early pupil but died at just 24, leaving a precious collection of works that Nadia championed throughout her life.

Five Boulanger miniatures bookend today's concert. **Vers la vie nouvelle** (Towards a new life) for solo piano was written at a time of deep despair for Nadia: World War I was raging, and Lili's illness was progressing inexorably. This backdrop contrasts keenly with the darkness-to-light narrative of the work, whose thunderous opening melts into a hopeful reverie. Soon after Lili's death Nadia abandoned composition, but her song **Soleils couchant** (Sunsets) offers a taste of her early output, written when she actively promoted her own music. Here she sets a text by symbolist Paul Verlaine and, very much in the tradition of French mélodie art song, subtly captures the poem's sunrise – sunset ambiguity with overlapping scale patterns that shift between standard and modal tonalities.

Lili Boulanger was also a gifted songwriter, and her *Clairières dans le ciel* is a major achievement in the art song genre. **Le retour**, written two years earlier, anticipates that cycle in a richly evocative setting of Georges Delaquays' poem, perfectly capturing Ulysses' sea-swept nostalgia. The **Nocturne and Cortège** are similarly fresh and

high-spirited, infused with Impressionistic influences (the former quotes directly from Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*) and unexpected harmonic twists. In **D'un matin de printemps**, one of Lili's last completed works, best known today in its symphonic version, there is a cheek and sparkle that nods to the music of younger contemporaries.

Two regular visitors to the Boulanger household were Gabriel Fauré and Camille Saint-Saëns, both friends of the girls' father. Fauré, who also taught Nadia, wrote some 100 songs in his lifetime and was a leading figure in the development of mélodie. **Les berceaux** (The cradles) makes use of an undulating piano accompaniment to intimate the rocking of cradles, which in Sully Prudhomme's text are likened to those cursed vessels that steal fathers away to sea. **Mandoline** (Mandolin) is the first song in a Verlaine cycle that Fauré began while holidaying in Venice. The sunny locale shines through in twinkling staccatos and a whimsical melody that floats untroubled on the warm breeze. Written much later, Saint-Saëns' **Violons dan le soir** features an obbligato violin which dances elegantly around the vocal line, enhancing the sensual, melancholy atmosphere of Anna de Noailles' text, at times responding directly to it.

The final three composers featured today would have known Nadia Boulanger primarily as a teacher and conductor. Charlotte Sohy was a friend and direct contemporary who moved, along with her conductor husband, in similar Parisian circles. One of her *Songs of the Moor* – all

Programme Note (continued)

of which set her own texts – **Anathème** is a fiery showcase for soprano that bubbles with operatic intensity. Francis Poulenc, another close friend of Nadia, wrote his **Sonata for Violin and Piano** after two aborted attempts. Cast in three movements, the work is dedicated to the memory of Spanish poet Federico Lorca, executed by Nationalist forces during the Civil War. The sound of Lorca's guitar is summoned in the sultry middle movement, while the third movement's splintered coda seems to echo the futility of his struggle. And finally, a fleeting gem by Canadian composer Jeanne Landry, who studied with Boulanger in Paris. Tender, dreamy and almost English in its pastoral imagery **Mort quand tu me viendras prendre** (Death, when you come to take me) meditates on the fleeting nature of our existence.

Programme Note Writer

Timmy Fisher is an editor within the BBC Proms Publications team and co-host of *The Classical Music Pod*. His arts journalism has appeared in *BBC Culture*, *The i Paper*, the *Financial Times*, *Radio Times* and *VAN*.

Les berceaux

Text

Le long du quai les grands vaisseaux,
Que la houle incline en silence,
Ne prennent pas garde aux berceaux
Que la main des femmes balance.

Mais viendra le jour des adieux,
Car il faut que les femmes pleurent,
Et que les hommes curieux
Tentent les horizons qui leurrent.

Et ce jour-là les grands vaisseaux,
Fuyant le port qui diminue,
Sentent leur masse retenue
Par l'âme des lointains berceaux.

Translation

Along the quay the great ships,
Listing silently with the surge,
Pay no heed to the cradles
Rocked by women's hands.

But the day of parting will come,
For it is decreed that women shall weep,
And that men with questing spirits
Shall seek enticing horizons.

And on that day the great ships,
Leaving the dwindling harbour behind,
Shall feel their hulls held back
By the soul of the distant cradles.

Poetry by Sully Prudhomme (1839–1907),
translated by Richard Stokes

Violons dans le soir

Text

Quand le soir est venu que
tout est calme enfin
Dans la chaude nature,
Voici que naît sous l'arbre
et sous le ciel divin
La plus vive torture.

Sur les graviers d'argent,
dans les bois apaisés,
Des violons s'exaltent.
Ce sont des jets de cris, de
sanglots, de baisers,
Sans contrainte et sans halte.

Il semble que l'archet se
cabre, qu'il se tord
Sur les luisantes cordes,
Tant ce sont des appels
de plaisir et de mort
Et de miséricorde.

Et le brûlant archet enroulé de langueur
Gémit, souffre, caresse,
Poignard voluptueux qui
pénètre le coeur
D'une épuisante ivresse.

Archets, soyez maudits pour
vos brûlants accords,
Pour votre âme explosive,
Fers rouges qui dans l'ombre
arrachez à nos corps
Des lambeaux de chair vive!

Translation

When evening has fallen
and all's at last quiet
In warm nature,
There stirs beneath tree
and heavenly sky
The most painful agony.

On silver gravel, in hushed woods,
Frenetic violins are heard,
A stream of cries, of sobs and kisses,
Unrestrained and unremitting.

The violin bow seems to rear and writhe
Across the shining strings
For these are true cries
of pleasure, death
And mercy.

And the burning bow in its affliction
Groans, suffers and caresses,
A voluptuous dagger that
pierces the heart
With exhausted ecstasy.

May you bows be cursed for
your scalding chords,
For your explosive soul,
Molten swords that at night
rip from our bodies
Shreds of living flesh!

Poetry by Comtesse Anna de Noailles
(1876–1933), translated by Richard Stokes

Mandoline

Text

Les donneurs de sérénades
Et les belles écouteuses
Échangent des propos fades
Sous les ramures chanteuses.

C'est Tircis et c'est Aminte,
Et c'est l'éternel Clitandre,
Et c'est Damis qui pour mainte
Cruelle fait maint vers tendre.

Leurs courtes vestes de soie,
Leurs longues robes à queues,
Leur élégance, leur joie
Et leurs molles ombres bleues,

Tourbillonnent dans l'extase
D'une lune rose et grise,
Et la mandoline jase
Parmi les frissons de brise.

Translation

The gallant serenaders
And their fair listeners
Exchange sweet nothings
Beneath singing boughs.

Tircis is there, Aminte is there,
And tedious Clitandre too,
And Damis who for many a cruel maid
Writes many a tender song.

Their short silken doublets,
Their long trailing gowns,
Their elegance, their joy
And their soft blue shadows,

Whirl madly in the rapture
Of a grey and roseate moon,
And the mandolin jangles on
In the shivering breeze.

Poetry by Paul Verlaine (1844–96),
translated by Richard Stokes

Mort quand tu me viendras prendre

Text

Mort quand tu me viendras prendre
Revêts couleur d'herbe tendre
Ton souffle me soit léger.
Ô toi que j'ai nommée
Mort-de-Mai.

Translation

Death, when you come to
take me, Clothe yourself in the
colour of tender grass.
May your breath be gentle upon me
O you whom
I have named May-Death.

Chants de la lande Op 4 No 3, 'Anathème'

Text

Soleil astre maudit pourquoi
chasses-tu les ténèbres?
Soleil astre maudit,
va-t'en loin de ces lieux!

Hélas! Plainte stérile, hélas!
Vœux superflus.
Rien ne peut empêcher le jour,
Rien ne peut empêcher la fuite
des fées au premier rayon.
Tant d'êtres attendent sa venue.
Soleil, astre cruel, parais,
mais épargne la lande, hélas!
L'ombre s'enfuit.
Déjà ce monde mystérieux s'efface
dans la lumière blafarde
et maudite du jour.

Soleil, astre maudit, pourquoi
chasses-tu les ténèbres?
Soleil astre maudit,
va-t'en loin de ces lieux.

Translation

Sun, accursed star, why do you
drive away the darkness?
Sun, accursed star,
Go far away from these places!

Alas! A futile lament, alas!
Futile wishes.
Nothing can stop the day,
Nothing can prevent the fairies
from fleeing at the first ray.
So many beings await its coming.
Sun, cruel star, appear,
but spare the moor, alas!
The shadow flees.
Already this mysterious world
is fading into the pale
accursed light of day.

Sun, accursed star, why do you
drive away the darkness?
Sun, accursed star,
Go far away from these places!

Poetry by Charlotte Sohy (1887–1955)

Le retour

Text

Ulysse part la voile au vent,
Vers Ithaque aux ondes chéries,
Avec des bercements la
vague roule et plie.
Au large de son coeur la
mer aux vastes eaux
Où son oeil suit les blancs oiseaux
Egrène au loin des pierreries.
Ulysse part la voile au vent,
Vers Ithaque aux ondes chéries!

Penché oeil grave et coeur battant
Sur le bec d'or de sa galère
Il se rit, quand le flot est
noir, de sa colère
Car là-bas son cher fils
pieux et fier attend
Après les combats éclatants,
La victoire aux bras de son père.
Il songe, oeil grave et coeur battant
Sur le bec d'or de sa galère.

Ulysse part la voile au vent,
Vers Ithaque aux ondes chéries.

Translation

Ulysses sets out, sails to the wind,
Towards Ithaca on beloved waves,
Which rise and fall and sway.

Before the open sea of his
heart, the vast ocean,
Where his eyes follow the white birds
Scatters in the distance precious jewels.
Ulysses sets out, sails to the wind,
Towards Ithaca on beloved waves!

Leaning, with serious gaze
and beating heart
On the golden prow of his boat
He laughs at his anger
when black waves threaten
For yonder his dear
devout and proud son awaits,
After astounding victories,
his triumphant father.
He dreams, with serious
gaze and beating heart,
By the golden prow of his boat.

Ulysses sets out, sails to the wind,
Towards Ithaca on beloved waves.

Poetry by Georges Delaquys (1880–1970),
translated by Richard Stokes

Soleils couchants

Text

Une aube affaiblie
Verse par les champs
La mélancolie
Des soleils couchants.
La mélancolie
Berce de doux chants
Mon cœur qui s'oublie
Aux soleils couchants.
Et d'étranges rêves,
Comme des soleils
Couchants sur les grèves,
Fantômes vermeils,
Défilent sans trêves,
Défilent, pareils
À des grands soleils
Couchants sur les grèves.

Translation

A faint dawn
Sheds on fields
The melancholy
Of setting suns.
The melancholy
Lulls with sweet songs
My heart lost in
The setting suns.
And strange dreams,
That seem like suns
Setting on shores,
Roseate ghosts,
Drift endlessly,
Are drifting still, like
Mighty suns
Setting on shores.

Poetry by Paul Verlaine (1844–96),
translated by Richard Stokes

Sophie Bevan

soprano



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Recognised as one of the leading lyric sopranos of her generation, Sophie Bevan studied at the Royal College of Music where she was awarded the Queen Mother Rose bowl for excellence in performance. She was the recipient of the 2010 Critics' Circle Award for Exceptional Young Talent, The Times Breakthrough Award at the 2012 South Bank Sky Arts Awards, Young Singer Award at the 2013 inaugural International Opera Awards and was made an MBE for services to music in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2019.

Bevan works regularly with leading orchestras worldwide and with conductors including Sir Antonio Pappano, Daniel Harding, Andris Nelsons, Edward Gardner, Laurence Cummings, Sir Mark Elder, Ivor Bolton and Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla. She lives in Oxfordshire with her husband, three children and two cocker spaniels.

Malin Broman

violin



© Malin Broman

Malin Broman is a violinist much in demand as a soloist, artistic director, chamber musician, teacher and orchestral leader. Born in Kungsbacka, Sweden, Broman began playing the violin at the age of five. She studied with Lisbeth Vecchi and Milan Vitek before winning a scholarship to study with David Takeno at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Early in her career, Broman was a prizewinner at numerous competitions including in the Carl Nielsen International Violin Competition, Denmark. At the Washington International Competition for Strings, she gained both First Prize and the Audience Prize.

Broman has since forged a successful solo career. Highlights include performances with the Gothenburg Symphony, Copenhagen Philharmonic, BBC Scottish Symphony, Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields and the Swedish Radio Orchestra, working with conductors such as Neeme Järvi, Alan Gilbert and Daniel Harding.

Simon Crawford-Phillips

piano



© Matthew Johnson

Simon Crawford-Phillips has built a unique career as a conductor, pianist and creative programmer.

Crawford-Phillips has held positions such as Chief Conductor of Västerås Sinfonietta (2016–28) and Conducting Fellow of the NDR Elbphilharmonie, and in 2023 made a critically acclaimed debut with the Stockholm Royal Opera conducting Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In 2025, he was made Artistic Director of the Swedish National Orchestral Academy (SNOA) at Gothenburg University. His revealing and eclectic programming is reflected in an extraordinarily varied career and a passion for championing contemporary and undiscovered repertoire.

His chamber ensembles include The Nash Ensemble (he is Co-Artistic Director alongside Adrian Brendel), The Kungsbacka Piano Trio and Stockholm Syndrome Ensemble.