

Winchelsea
Arts



Pascal Rogé *piano*

Ravel Satie Debussy

St Thomas' Church Winchelsea
Saturday 12th October 2024



PASCAL ROGÉ

Pascal Rogé exemplifies the finest in French pianism. Born in Paris, he was a student of the Paris Conservatory and was also mentored by Julius Katchen and the great Nadia Boulanger. Winner of Georges Enesco piano competition and 1st prize in the Marguerite Long Piano competition, he became an exclusive Decca recording artist at the age of seventeen. His playing of Poulenc, Satie, Fauré, Saint-Saëns and especially Ravel and Debussy is characterized by its elegance, beauty and stylistically perfect phrasing.

Pascal Rogé has performed in almost every major concert hall in the world and with every major orchestra across the globe and has collaborated with the most distinguished conductors in history, including Lorin Maazel, Michael Tilson Thomas, Mariss Jansons, Charles Dutoit, Kurt Masur, Edo de Waart, Alan Gilbert, David Zinman, Marek Janowski, Sir Andrew Davis, Raymond Leppard and others.

One of the world's most distinguished recording artists, Pascal Rogé has won many prestigious awards, including two Gramophone Awards, a Grand Prix du Disque and an Edison Award for his interpretations of the Ravel and Saint-Saëns concerti along with the complete piano works of Ravel, Poulenc Debussy and Satie.

Each season, he devotes more than fifty concerts in Europe to French music (Germany, Austria, Switzerland, England, Finland) as well as in the United States, New Zealand or Asia, and particularly in Japan where he teaches and plays regularly.

Pascal Rogé's interest in the younger generation of up-and-coming artists led him to be a chairman of the Geneva Piano competition. He enjoys dedicating his time to teaching and is visiting professor at the Trinity Laban College of Music and Royal Academy of Music in London. He also gives regular masterclasses in France, Japan, United States and the UK.

pascalroge.net

ERIK SATIE 1866 - 1925

Gymnopédie No. 1 (Lent et douloureux)

Gnossienne No. 3 (Lent)

Satie's mother was English, which may help explain his delightful eccentricity. Satie dropped out of the Paris Conservatory and worked for a time as a café pianist before resuming his studies at the Schola Cantorum. He developed a distinctive personal style, spare, playful, irreverent and witty. He sought to avoid pretentiousness and sentimentality in his music, to disclose an austere essence. Such aims are reflected in *Trois Gnossiennes* (1890), notated without bar lines or key signatures. Other early piano pieces, such as *Trois Sarabandes* (1887) and *Trois Gymnopédies* (1888), use novel chords. He was a pioneer in harmony. His influence on French composers of the early 20th century and on the later school of Neoclassicism was profound. He was a close friend of Debussy for over thirty years.



MAURICE RAVEL 1875 - 1937

Sonatine (1903-1905)

1. *Modéré*
2. *Mouvement de menuet*
3. *Animé*

Like his contemporary Debussy, Ravel's music is linked with impressionism, although both composers disagreed with any labels. Ravel's family moved to Paris soon after his birth and there he studied music and lived most of his life, immersed in the contemporary cultural scene, apart from several years of war service. Ravel studied

composition with Gabriel Fauré. Ravel's own composition students included Vaughan Williams in 1908. George Gershwin asked to study with Ravel, who declined, fearing that rigorous classical study would harm Gershwin's jazzy style.

The *Sonatine* started life as a competition entry. The magazine promoting the prize folded but Ravel completed the work regardless. The first movement takes a classical sonata form. The second movement, a graceful minuet, begins with a repeated couplet, like a traditional French harpsichord piece. The final movement (too difficult for Ravel to play to his own satisfaction) resembles a toccata, with fast-moving broken chords, and a fanfare motive. The accelerated coda fuses the various elements in a frenzied series of repetitions bringing the work to its conclusion.



CLAUDE DEBUSSY 1862 - 1918

Images, Book 2 (1907)

1. *Cloches à travers les feuilles*
2. *Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut*
3. *Poissons d'or*

L'Isle joyeuse (1904)

Debussy's talents were recognised while he was a child. After studies at the Paris Conservatoire, Debussy travelled between 1880 and 1882 as a pianist with the family of Nadejda von Meck, the Russian businesswoman who was Tchaikovsky's patron. Possibly Debussy encountered Russian music, by composers such as Rimsky-Korsakov and

Mussorgsky, during those travels. He drew inspiration from French poets such as Leconte de Lisle, Mallarmé, Baudelaire and Verlaine, as well as from contemporary French painters. Chopin was a significant musical influence.

Debussy composed two sets of *Images*. They conjure the visual ideas suggested by their titles. Debussy was famously enthused by the Gamelan players from Java who performed at the Paris Exposition in 1889, sounds subsequently reflected in his music.

L'Isle joyeuse may be Debussy's piano masterwork. He wrote to his editor Durand: "This is so hard to play... This piece seems to me to collect together all the possible ways to touch a piano, for it joins force and grace... if I may say so."

Debussy had luxurious tastes, seen in his Eastbourne sojourn in 1905 at the Grand Hotel, where he corrected the proofs of *La Mer* in the company of Mlle Emma Bardac.



INTERVAL



CLAUDE DEBUSSY 1862 - 1918

Préludes, Book 1 (1909-1913)

1. *Danseuses de Delphes*
2. *Voiles*
3. *Le vent dans la plaine*
4. *Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir*
5. *Les collines d'Anacapri*
6. *Des pas sur la neige*
7. *Ce qu'a vu le vent d'Ouest*
8. *La fille aux cheveux de lin*
9. *La sérénade interrompue*
10. *La cathédrale engloutie*
11. *La danse de Puck*
12. *Minstrels*

Debussy's *Préludes*, twenty-four pieces, continue a keyboard tradition going back to J. S. Bach. Debussy used all twenty-four musical keys in his *Préludes*, in no particular order. A distinctive feature is his use of poetic titles.



notes by R J Manuell

David Page 2024