



THREE RIVERS MUSIC SOCIETY 2017-2018

Wednesday 29 November 2017

Rickmansworth Baptist Church WD3 1EH

PURCELL SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Heather Brooks, harp; Sophia Jin, voice; Serguei Gonzalez Pavlova, violin;
Ibai Pijoan Markaida, cello; Bradley Ng, piano;
Staff Accompanist: Daniel Swain

Marcel Grandjany (1891–1975) Rhapsodie, op.10

Wolfgang Mozart (1756-1791)

Violin Concerto No.3 in G major, 1st movement (Allegro)

Franz Liszt (1811-1886) Tarantella

Franz Liszt (1811-1886) Es muss ein Wunderbares sein, S.314

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) Les berceaux, op.23/1

Jonathan Dove (b.1959) Adelaide's aria from 'The Enchanted Pig'

Gaspar Cassadó (1897-1966) First movement from Suite for Solo Cello (1926)
Preludio -- Fantasia

In telling the audience about the composers performed today, I have tried to concentrate on their youth and early careers, thinking it apposite to today's performers. Steven Halls

The renowned harpist, composer, and teacher **Marcel Grandjany** began his harp studies at the age of 8 and at 11 he was admitted to the Paris Conservatoire, where he won the Premier Prix at age 13. When he was 17, he performed his first public recital at the Salle Erard and his first concertante performances with the Concerts Lamoureux Orchestra. These concerts were very successful and launched the young man on an international solo career, including a recital with Maurice Ravel in Paris in 1913, his London debut in 1922, and his New York debut less than two years later. Grandjany was also a professional organist, playing during the First World War I at the Sacré-Coeur Basilica in Paris. As a teacher his influence is immense: his teaching method is taught all over the world, and his many pieces for harp solo and for harp in ensemble are acclaimed. The 8-minute *Rhapsodie* for harp was composed in 1921, intended to be accompanied by orchestra, and is based on a theme of a Gregorian Easter chant.

In his youth, **Wolfgang Mozart** made many journeys in Europe where he and his sister performed as child prodigies. In 1762, his trip to the court of the Prince-elector Maximilian III of Bavaria in Munich and to the Imperial Court in Vienna and Prague extended to almost three and half years, for he also visited many other European cities, including London. During these trips Mozart met other composers such as Johann Christian Bach, and studied their compositions. In Italy with his father in December 1769, he was made a member of the reputed 'Accademia Filarmonica'. For Milan, he wrote the operas 'Mitridate, re di Ponto' (1770) 'Ascanio in Alba' (1771) and 'Lucio Silla' (1772). After returning home in 1773, Mozart was

appointed to the court of the ruler of Salzburg, Prince-Archbishop Hieronymus Colloredo and he produced a mass of work in different genres, including five violin concertos. The third concerto subtitled "Straßburg" was composed in 1775 when he was only 19.

Franz Liszt was born on 22 October, 1811, in Raiding, Hungary and his multi-instrumentalist father taught him to play the piano so well that, by the age of six young Franz was recognized as a child prodigy; by the age of 8, he was composing elementary works; by the age of 9 he was appearing in concert halls. His father worked as a secretary for Prince Nicholas Esterházy and, after the boy played for a group of wealthy sponsors, he asked the Prince for extended leave so he could devote his time to enriching his son's musical education. They travelled to Vienna and Antonio Salieri, Mozart's old rival, quickly became an admirer of Liszt's genius. Upon hearing the boy play at a private home, he offered to train him in composition free of charge. For several months, the young pianist performed for both musicians and kings, and he impressed everyone with his ability to improvise an original composition from a melody suggested by an audience member. At the age of 12, Liszt travelled with his father to Paris to seek admittance to the Paris Conservatory but the admissions council denied him a place in the school on the grounds that he was not French. Despite this, Liszt became one of the most famous musicians of any age, lionized and applauded by all ranks and classes. Liszt's 10-minute **Tarantella** is one of many works written in this form by various composers. The tarantella is a lively dance, often accompanied by tambourines, whose name derives originally from the Southern Italian town of Taranto. It is characterized by light, quick steps for the couples in 6/8 time. The tarantella's origin is also connected with tarantism, a psychological illness characterized by an extreme impulse to dance that appeared in Italy in the 15th to the 17th century. It was obscurely associated with the bite of the tarantula spider; victims seemingly were cured by increasingly frenzied dancing, reflected in the instrumental compositions.

Es muss ein Wunderbares sein ('It must be something wonderful') is one of Liszt's most popular songs. The Bavarian poet Oscar von Redwitz-Schmölz became famous in his twenties for his sentimental epic *Amaranth* from which the Princess Augusta of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach (later Queen of Prussia and German Empress) extracted two stanzas in July 1852 for Liszt to set to music.

Berceaux means 'cradles' in French, and there is an easy connection between the rocking of a cradle and the rocking of a ship and an obvious contrast between a gently rocking cot and a storm-tossed vessel. This song was composed in 1879 to a text by Sully-Prudhomme and Fauré has written a combination of a *berceuse* (cradle song) and a *barcarolle* (Venetian gondola song, characterized by a rhythm reminiscent of the gondolier's stroke, almost invariably in 6/8 *moderato*). The rocking of cradles is heard in the accompaniment in triplets undulating between the hands, and we are faced with the drama of women who wait at home with babies and men away for weeks at a time on the sea. In the central section, we suddenly hear the heartbreak of the women left behind, as well as their anger at the sea, but this explosion of feeling subsides as suddenly as it has occurred.

The Enchanted Pig was commissioned by The Young Vic with a libretto by Alasdair Middleton based on a Romanian Folktale and it received its première in London on 1 December 2006. It has since delighted audiences of all ages in more than 150 performances in the UK and USA.

In the opera, a King goes off to war, telling his daughters not to go into a locked room containing the Book of Fate. Naturally, the daughters don't listen and one of them ends up marrying a pig. Now, when you are a princess called Flora in a fairy tale, you expect a fairy tale wedding but you don't expect your husband to be hairy, smelly and a genuine pig. The pig, of course, is an enchanted prince but Flora loses him almost as soon as she finds him. Taking her fate into her own hands, she ventures to the ends of the earth and even into the sky until at last she frees him from the evil spell.

Gaspar Cassadó was a Spanish contemporary of the great cellist Pablo Casals. In fact, he may have been Casals' youngest pupil, when he studied with him in Paris in 1910. He was born in Barcelona, the son of a church musician. His father started teaching him music when he was five, and at the age of seven he began cello lessons with a prominent Barcelona cellist, who worked at the Mercedes Chapel with his father. When Cassado was nine years old, he played his first public performance, where he was heard by Casals, who immediately offered to give him lessons. He was given a scholarship by the city of Barcelona to go to Paris and study with Casals there. He also studied composition with Manuel de Falla and Maurice Ravel. The ten-minute Suite for solo cello is a tribute both to his playing and his compositional abilities.

**Both of our next two concerts are in the Baptist Church, Rickmansworth.
The first again features Purcell School performers at 1pm on Wednesday 7 February 2018.
For the second, we have invited the astonishing young pianist, Julian Trevelyan, to perform
a solo recital on Friday 16 February at 7.30pm.**