

PERTH EASTER FESTIVAL of CLASSICAL MUSIC

Sat 27 Mar - Fri 9 Apr
filmed live at Perth Concert Hall

Wednesday 7 April: 1pm

Maximiliano Martin, *clarinet*
Scott Mitchell, *piano*

in co-production with



Chausson: Andante and Allegro
Saint-Saëns: Clarinet Sonata
Poulenc: Clarinet Sonata
Bernstein: Clarinet Sonata

Despite only turning to a musical career in his mid-twenties and dying at the age of forty-four just as his career was taking off, the French composer Ernest Chausson managed to develop his own highly original musical language. This was largely the result of two contrasting influences — his traditionally grounded education at the Paris Conservatoire, and his deep love for the music of Richard Wagner. At the time, these represented two disparate aesthetic poles, and Chausson was one of a group of young French composers who sought to unify them in their compositional approaches. Jules Massenet, Chausson's teacher at the Conservatoire, described him as 'an exceptional person and a true artist', though his pupil's music perhaps owed more to the models of César Franck than his own.

Chausson's *Andante and Allegro* dates from 1881, the year in which he decided to withdraw from the Conservatoire. The *Andante* opens with a brooding, chorale-like theme heard in the piano's lower register. The clarinet's entry introduces greater tonal colour, introducing an almost improvisatory feel to the texture, with the two instruments engaged in a back-and-forth dialogue, before coming together in a gentle triple-time dance. The *Allegro*, by contrast, explodes into action with an immediate burst of energy, calling on the clarinetist to traverse the instrument's entire compass, while always retaining Chausson's innate sense of lyricism. Although the *Andante and Allegro* was to be Chausson's only work for solo clarinet and remained unpublished at his death, it has since become an important work in the clarinet repertoire, admired for the way that each of its two parts highlights different facets of the instrument's expressive capacities.

Born twenty years before Chausson, Camille Saint-Saëns outlived his compatriot by some twenty-seven years. But though he was often compared by his contemporaries to Mozart, in light of his virtuosity at the keyboard and his instinctive musical craftsmanship, Saint-Saëns' music was far from conservative. He invariably responded in fresh and original ways to the diverse stylistic developments he witnessed during his extensive career.

Written in 1962, Francis Poulenc's **Clarinet Sonata** was the second of an intended series of sonatas for all the orchestral woodwind instruments. In the end, however, Poulenc only completed three before his death (the other two being for flute and oboe). But they have each nonetheless come to be regarded as modern masterpieces within the chamber music repertoire. Poulenc's compositional voice draws on many of the same French and Neoclassical elements heard in this programme in Chausson's and Saint-Saëns' works. However, Poulenc's sonata, with its jazz inflections, has an altogether more riotous tone. It never pulls its punches, fully indulging in jagged dissonances and incessantly repeating successive series of compact, visceral rhythmic cells — while also, in marked contrast, revealing a more tender and sensuous side to Poulenc's musical character.

The sonata's opening movement is based on a rapid five-note figure that eventually gives way to a soaring melody. This leads into the hushed central section marked *Très calme*, which is punctuated by a series of oscillating arpeggios for the clarinet. The second movement is also marked *Très calme*, and returns to the same register, picking up some of the melodic materials introduced in the previous movement — in particular, the dotted turning figure (a common ornament in eighteenth-century music, known as a mordent). However, the closing movement returns to the mercurial, introducing a series of short musical fragments that always seem to be contending for the listener's attention — and continuously truncating the rhythmical patterns Poulenc sets up and, in turn, successively dismantles.

Leonard Bernstein's **Sonata for Clarinet and Piano** was, in fact, to be his first published work. It dates from 1941, with Bernstein having been inspired to write it after working with clarinetist David Oppenheim at the famed Tanglewood summer school. Comprised of just two short movements, it demonstrates the two main influences that the young Bernstein was beginning to reconcile — the European central modernist tradition and the more direct American style, consolidated by his mentor Aaron Copland. Bernstein's opening movement grows out of a meandering melodic line, which makes frequent use of a triplet figure, with the piano largely responsible for filling in the textural detail beneath. The second movement opens with a meditative introduction, before the *Vivace e leggiero* arrives with a jolt, suddenly introducing a series of compelling percussive rhythms which foreshadow the kind of dynamic momentum that would characterise Bernstein's later music, such as in *West Side Story*. The sonata received its premiere on 21 April 1942 at Boston's Institute of Modern Art, with David Glazer (clarinet) and the composer at the piano.

David Lee

Biographies

Maximiliano Martin, clarinet

Spanish clarinetist, Maximiliano Martin has made his debut as a soloist and chamber musician in many of the world's most prestigious venues and international festivals including the BBC Proms and Wigmore Hall in London, Library of Congress in Washington, Mondavi Centre in San Francisco, Mozart Hall in Seoul, Laeiszhalle Hamburg in Germany, Durban City Hall in South Africa and Palau de la Música in Barcelona.

Principal Clarinet of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Maxi is also in constant demand as a soloist, chamber musician and teacher. As a concerto soloist he has performed with orchestras such as the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Real Filarmonía de Galicia, European Union Chamber Orchestra, Orquesta Sinfónica de Tenerife and Orquesta Filarmónica de Gran Canaria under conductors like Brügggen, Ticciati, Schuldt, Manze and Antonini. In May 2017 Maxi premiered a new Clarinet Concerto *Llanto* specially written for him and SCO by New Zealand composer Lyell Creswell to great critical acclaim. In July 2018 gave the premiere of a new commissioned clarinet Concerto, *Travesía*, by Spanish composer Gustavo Trujillo.

As a chamber musician, Maxi is a member of the London Conchord Ensemble and has collaborated with Cuarteto Casals, Christian Zacharias, Julian Milford, François Leleux, Jack Liebeck and Kris Bezuidenhout among others. Often invited as a guest principal clarinetist, Maxi has frequently appeared with Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Orquesta de Cadaqués, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and worked with conductors such as Abbado, Haitink, Colin Davis, Mackerras, Marriner, Ticciati, Krivine and Litton.

His extensive discography includes *Mozart and Weber Clarinet Concertos* with SCO (LINN), two recital discs, *Fantasia* and *Vibraciones del Alma* (LINN), *Divertimento* SCO Wind Soloists (LINN), Messiaen's *Quartet for the end of the Time* with Hebrides Ensemble (LINN), *Brahms Clarinet Sonatas* with Julian Milford (CHR), *Mozart and Brahms Clarinet Quintets* with the Badke Quartet (CHR) and two discs with London Conchord Ensemble, *From Vienna* (CHR) and *St Petersburg* (Orchid Classics). Future recordings include *R. Strauss Duet Concertino* with Peter Whelan and Robin Ticciati (LINN) and a Stephen Dodgson's chamber music disc (NAXOS).

Maxi is also active in the education field giving masterclasses all over the world, recent places include Royal College of Music, Royal Northern School of Music, Conservatorio Superior de Canarias, Malmo Academy of Music (Sweden) and University of Kangnam (Seoul, South Korea). He is one of the Artistic Directors of the Chamber Music Festival of La Villa de La Orotava, held every year in his hometown.

Maximiliano Martin is a Buffet Crampon Artist and plays with Buffet Tosca Clarinets.

Scott Mitchell, piano

Scotland-based pianist Scott Mitchell has performed extensively as a chamber music pianist and accompanist throughout Great Britain, Europe, South America and the Middle East. As a result of his varied chamber music activities, he performs regularly at St. John's Smith Square, Purcell Room and the Wigmore Hall in London. He has also appeared at many of the world's major festivals including the Edinburgh and the Festival Wiener Klassik.

As a recording artist Scott Mitchell has released CDs for Chandos Records, ASV, Collins Classics, Black Box and Tosca Records. He has recently recorded Dave Heath's Piano Concerto, *The Passionate*, with the BBC Concert Orchestra, recently released on the Freestyle classics label. He is a regular performer on BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM and has also appeared on Channel 4 and the satellite Arts Channel.

Scott Mitchell has performed with John Wallace (Trumpet), Michael Collins and Emma Johnson (Clarinets), Raphael Wallfisch (Cello), Andrew Watkinson (Violin), Richard Watkins (French Horn), James Bowman (Countertenor) and Andrew Kennedy (Tenor), also with the Duke Quartet. He performs regularly in a duo capacity with flautists Wissam Boustany, Katherine Bryan, Lorna McGhee, Alison Mitchell, Ruth Morley and Yvonne Paterson, also clarinettists John Cushing and Maximiliano Martin and saxophonist Simon Haram. In competitions he has been awarded the Lisa Fuchsova Prize for outstanding chamber music pianist and the Eric Rice Memorial Prize for outstanding accompanist, both at the Royal Overseas League Music Competition in London.

Scott Mitchell is a Senior Staff Accompanist and lecturer in Piano Accompaniment at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow where he was recently made a Fellow and where he also teaches piano at the Junior Department. He is also a member of the accompaniment staff at Napier University in Edinburgh and also one of the founding members of the Cantilena Festival on Islay, a Festival for strings taking place on the island of Islay every summer.



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