

Franck at 125

CÉSAR FRANCK (1822-1890)

Prélude, choral et fugue

- I. Prelude
- II. Chorale
- III. Fugue

Sinae Lee **Piano**

FRANCK

Piano Quintet in f minor

- I. Molto moderato quasi lento - Allegro
- II. Lento con molto sentimento
- III. Allegro non troppo ma con fuoco

Andrea Gajic, Justine Watts **Violin**

Andrew Berridge **Viola**

Alison Wells **Cello**

Sinae Lee **Piano**



Fridays at One

16 October 2015

The theme of today's concert is the music of César Franck, commemorating 125 years since his death. He was one of a tiny handful of famous composers to have come from Belgium, along with Henri Vieuxtemps and Eugène Ysaÿe, also a famous violinist and conductor. As Franck spent most of his time in Paris as a teacher and organist, he had many French pupils such as Vincent d'Indy, Ernest Chausson and Henri Duparc.

The first piece, 'Prélude, Choral et Fugue' (1884) remains one of his best known works of piano repertoire. Apparently, Franck's intention was simply to write a prelude and fugue in the style of Bach, and it was only after beginning the composition that he discovered that something was missing between the end of the fast-moving first section and the commencement of the fugue. Hence the hauntingly beautiful chorale in the middle. This new structure proved to be too experimental for his contemporaries. Saint-Saëns's remarks on this 'Prélude' seemed provocative enough: "The chorale is not a chorale, and the fugue not a fugue". Worse still, Saint-Saëns found the whole thing "uncouth and tiresome to play". I have to disagree with Saint-Saëns wholeheartedly; it is pianistically well written with solid structure, yet with spontaneity and profound emotions.

The second piece, Piano Quintet in F minor (1879) is much more rarely performed. In fact, none of our Quintet members had ever played this piece prior to preparing for today's concert, and we have been thoroughly enjoying our rehearsals, as the Quintet has a dazzling variety of drama and poetry. It also led to another episode between Franck and his contemporary, as he asked Saint-Saëns to premiere the Quintet, but in the end Saint-Saëns basically sight-read it on stage. As he played on, the content of the work seemed to be gradually impinging on his sensibilities for the first time, causing him to experience a mild attack of nausea. When the performance was over, the unsuspecting Franck went up to offer his congratulations, at the same time making over the dedication of the new Quintet to his friend. This was altogether too much for the scowling Saint-Saëns, who stomped noisily off the platform, leaving the manuscript still standing on the piano. Undoubtedly upset and heartbroken by such an ill-mannered gesture, Franck changed the dedicatee of this Quintet to his pupil, Pierre Onfroy de Bréville.

The Quintet has three movements, all of which are in sonata form. The first movement starts in a slow tempo with contrasts between the dramatic opening in the strings and the poised and reflective piano part, all of which soon develops into fast moving 'Allegro'. The second movement is essentially a lied, which is painstakingly beautiful, especially the second subject in D flat major, in which you can almost taste the second movement of Beethoven's Fifth Concerto, the 'Emperor'. The last movement has plenty of excitement and lilt in a rather breathless style of writing. Later on, in the 'Ritenuato un pochettino il tempo', the second subject of the first movement reappears in a calm mood. But this soon changes into a dramatic and exhilarating conclusion of the piece.

Sinae Lee

Andrew Berridge was born on the Wirral and grew up in Leeds where he studied violin from the age of five. After further studies with Peter Mountain and Eta Cohen he read Law for a year at the University of Liverpool before transferring to Music. He won an Arts Scholarship that enabled him to study at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, first on violin with Ben Holland and then viola with Roger Bigley and Scott Dickinson. There he won prizes for viola and chamber music before embarking on a freelance career in the North of England playing with all the major orchestras. He joined the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra in 2003 - its youngest member at the time - as Co-principal Viola. He has also appeared regularly with the Scottish Ensemble.

Andrea Gajic received her early musical training at St Mary's Music School, Edinburgh. When she was twelve, she performed the Bruch *Scottish Fantasy* at St James' Palace, London for Yehudi Menuhin's sixtieth birthday celebration. Two years later, she was invited by Sylvia Rosenberg to study with her at the Peabody Institute, Baltimore, where she won first prize at the American String Teachers' Association Violin Competition.

From 1990, Andrea studied for five years at the Gnessin Russian Academy of Music, Moscow with Khalida Akhtiamova where she gained her Masters Degree and Diploma in Solo Performance. She subsequently went on to study at the Royal College of Music for Post-Graduate with Dr Felix Andrievsky. Throughout her studies, Andrea received generous financial assistance. She was the youngest recipient of The Scottish International Education Trust and also received awards from the Martin Trust and Sir James Caird Travelling Scholarships.

Andrea has performed as soloist in the UK, USA, Russia, Lithuania, Finland, Germany, France and has been invited for three successive years to give recitals and masterclasses in Serbia and Malta at the Victoria International Arts Festival. She has led various chamber ensembles including the Fibonacci Sequence and recorded for the BBC, STV, Bavarian Radio, Lithuanian Radio and Yugoslavian Radio and Television. Andrea currently teaches violin at the RCS, St Mary's Music School and the Music School of Douglas Academy.

South Korean-born **Sinae Lee** leads a busy life as a soloist, chamber musician and lecturer based in Glasgow. Since her UK début with Royal Scottish National Orchestra she has also played with Korean Symphony, St James Orchestra, Glasgow Orchestral Society as well as the RCS Orchestra and Wind Ensemble. She has frequently appeared in concerts in New York, St Petersburg, Riga, London, Edinburgh and Glasgow as well as cities in her native Korea such as Seoul, Suwon and Busan.

In Korea, she studied piano at Yewon School and Seoul Arts High School. While studying in Seoul, she won many prestigious prizes, such as the Chung-Ang Daily Newspaper competition, and the Korean Music Association for Overseas competitors. After graduating Seoul National University with Distinction, Sinae was offered a place to study at RCS with a full scholarship awarded by the Inches Carr Trust, obtaining her MMus with Distinction one year later. Her prizewinning career continued in UK where she won the London Intercollegiate Beethoven competition as well as numerous RCS Prizes including A Ramsay-Calder Debussy Prize, Bach Prize, Governors' Recital Prize, Concerto Competition Prize, Ian D Watt Award and the Dunbar-Geber Prize. Sinae studied piano with Hwa-Young Yi, Hyoung-Joon Chang in Korea, and Philip Jenkins in UK.

In 2006, Sinae recorded Karol Szymanowski's complete piano works on four CDs, released by Divine Art Record Company, marking the first complete recording. This, her début recording, received highly acclaimed reviews from *Gramophone* (Recommended Recording), *BBC Music Magazine* (Benchmark Recording), *MusicWeb International* (Recording of the Month), *Pianist Magazine* (Recommended Recording), *All Music Guide* (Classical Editors' Best of the Year 2007) and Res Musica. A studio recording of the complete 'Années de Pèlerinage' by Liszt, celebrating the composer's 200th anniversary, was released by Nimbus Alliance in July 2012 and received rave reviews from *The Classical Reviewer* and *MusicWeb International* (Recording of the Month, April 2014).

As a keen collaborator, she enjoys performing chamber music with fellow pianists Aaron Shorr, Fali Pavri and Jonathan Plowright as well as violinists such as Ilya Gringolts and Andrea Gajic. Sinae has also been in demand for giving world premieres for solo piano and ensemble works by composers including Marek Pasieczny, Gordon McPherson, Rory Boyle, Vera Stanojevic, Alasdair Spratt, Jay Capperauld and James Wilson. Recently, she was invited to join Glasgow New Music Expedition (GNME), a contemporary ensemble group lead by Jessica Cottis. Sinae's next concert will be GNME at *The Piano* on 6 November 2015 at Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, premiering three piano duo compositions by Richard Greer, Jay Capperauld and Euan Ferguson, with duo partner James Willshire.

Since 2001, Sinae has been teaching piano as a Lecturer in the department of Keyboard and Collaborative Piano at the RCS. For further information on Sinae's performing schedule and more, please visit www.sinaeleethepianist.com

Justine Watts studied at the Royal Academy of Music, London and won many prizes including The Principal's Prize, The Beare Prize (a gold-mounted bow) and Distinction for the Recital Diploma. She then gained The Countess of Munster Award for study abroad and went to America where she gained a Masters' Degree in Music, studying with renowned violinist Sergiu Luca. At this time she won the Concerto competition and was Leader of the Texas Chamber Orchestra.

On returning to Britain, Justine joined the RSNO where she became Co-Leader for ten years. She is now the Leader of the Scottish Ballet Orchestra and the Scottish Philharmonic Orchestra where she has recently performed many solos and concertos including 'The Lark Ascending' and Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. Recently Justine has been a guest with the City of Birmingham Symphony, the Hallé, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, the Scottish Ensemble and guest leader of the Ulster Orchestra.

Alison Wells recently returned to the UK after many years in the USA, where she was on the faculty of the Cleveland Institute of Music and the Peabody Institute. Before that she taught at Trinity College of Music and the Purcell School and on the specialist music scheme at Wells. A graduate of Cambridge University, Royal Academy of Music and Yale University, she studied with Ralph Kirshbaum, David Strange and Aldo Parisot. She made her South Bank recital debut in 1989, supported by the Maisie Lewis Charitable Trust. Ms Wells was a founder member of the Pirasti Trio, performing throughout the UK, Europe and the USA, and recording for ASV. In the summers she participates in festivals in the USA, returning to the Heifetz International Institute for many years, and, more recently, to the Madeline Island and Green Mountain Chamber Music Festivals. She is passionate about teaching and the physiology of cello playing and has been involved with many technique workshops, including annual contributions to the Aria International Festival. Former pupils have been winners at competitions internationally and hold positions in orchestras across the world.

Ms Wells is an advocate for increasing access to musical training. She was involved with several inner-city initiatives in Baltimore and served as Chair of the Board of TUBA: The Uganda-Baltimore Alliance, providing mentorship to a brass band project in rural Uganda.