

PROGRAM

Franck – Sonata in A Major

- (i) *Allegretto ben moderato*
- (ii) *Allegro*
- (iii) *Recitativo-Fantasia*
- (iv) *Allegretto poco mosso*

Michelle Urquhart (viola) | Keith Mitchell (piano)

Spike – Wombat Dance

Brian Martin (clarinet) | Kristofer Spike (piano)

Spike – Cheerful Traveller

Cathy Fraser (flute) | Kristofer Spike (piano)

INTERVAL

Poulenc – Sextet

- (i) *Allegro vivace*
- (ii) *Divertissement: Andantino*
- (iii) *Finale: Prestissimo*

Richard Tardif (flute) | Adele Haythornthwaite (oboe)
Lindsay Wanstall (clarinet) | Neil O'Donnell (French horn)
Petrina Slaytor (bassoon) | Keith Mitchell (piano)

Various – Four French Songs

- (i) *Saint-Saëns ~ Une Flûte Invisible*
- (ii) *Gaubert ~ Soir Païen*
- (iii) *Ravel ~ La Flûte Enchantée*
- (iv) *Diémer ~ Sérénade*

Allison Rowlands (soprano) | Cathy Wainwright (flute)
Susan Butler (piano)

César FRANCK (1822–1890) – Sonata in A Major

César Franck was a Belgian-French composer, organist and music teacher of the Romantic era. This sonata written in 1886 for violin and piano is his best known work aside from his *Symphony in D Minor*. It was composed for Eugène Ysaÿe, the famous Belgian violinist as a wedding present. As a result of its popularity various arrangements have been made of the sonata, including for flute, cello and even tuba. The work is cyclic in nature (influenced by the writings of Franz Liszt) where melodic themes recur throughout the entire work. Michelle and Keith enjoy performing and rehearsing on a regular basis and discovering more of the sonata repertoire for violin and viola.

Kristofer SPIKE (b. 1959) – Wombat Dance and Cheerful Traveller

Wombat Dance is dedicated to one of Australia's finest clarinetists, Deborah de Graff. The piece was written as a vehicle for technical display, and the rapid tempo of the opening humorously suggests a very lively and agile wombat. There is a hint of disco music in the melodic figurations which are traded between the clarinet and piano. The peaceful middle section is more reflective, but still punctuated by some highly virtuosic runs.

Cheerful Traveller was written in 2016 for the 70th birthday of the composer's friend, Brian Long. The first section of the piece is high spirited and expresses the joy of travelling. The slower middle section is about missing loved ones and is characterised by an intensely sentimental melody. The ending brings back this melody in a faster version to suggest the excitement of returning home.

Francis POULENC (1899-1963) – *Sextet*

This work was composed in 1931/32. Composers and critics of a conservative bent were prepared not to like it: composer and critic Florent Schmitt focused on its arbitrariness and vulgarity when he reviewed its premiere in *Le Temps*. But André Georges, in *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, heard it through ears steeped in nationalistic pride: “With Poulenc, all of France comes out of the windows he opens.” The piano joins a standard wind quintet; which Poulenc employs in a way that capitalizes on its acerbic potential. But the work is also anchored in the musical mainstream. In the first movement, the opening scales sweep upward like a curtain opening to reveal a busy stage, though the hustle and bustle does subside for moments of notable sweetness or, following the bassoon’s lead, haunting melancholy. Poulenc’s neoclassical tendencies are particularly evident in the Mozartean parody of the middle movement. The finale begins as “an Offenbachian gallop” (to quote the historian Wilfred Mellers) and ends, surprisingly, in a coda of reflective solemnity and a touch of grandeur, with shades of Ravel.

VARIOUS – *Four French Songs*

Saint-Saëns’ *Une Flûte Invisible*, is a setting of words by Victor Hugo, one of the most important French Romantic poets, novelists and dramatists of the 19th century. The poem was published in 1846 and Saint-Saëns composed this trio in 1885. We will hear with a lover’s ear the sounds of shepherds and birds as peaceful and joyous music, but of course it is the song of love our lover finds the most beguiling. Next is *Soir Païen* – Grecian Evening – by Philippe Gaubert. Gaubert was a distinguished flautist, conductor and composer. The song is set to a poem by Albert Samain and describes a scene from Greek mythology. The legend is that Diana, the goddess of the moon and the hunt, fell in love with the shepherd Endymion. Since Endymion was mortal, Diana asked Zeus to put him into an eternal slumber so she could always visit him. *La Flûte Enchantée* (from *Shéhérazade*) is set to a poem by Tristan Klingsor. As a depiction of romantic yearning, this song reminds us how lovers, though separated, can still form an immediate connection through music. The flowery sentiments of Gabriel Marc’s poetry in Diémer’s *Sérénade* combined with its picturesque ballad style place it in the heady world of the Parisian salons. The singer Léonce Valdec shared the dedication of this *Sérénade* with Paul Taffanel (the king of French flute playing at that time) and they performed it many times with Diémer.



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