



Music for Piano Duet
by
Alkan
Chaminade
Chausson
Godard
Massenet
Ropartz

FOUR HANDS FOR FRANCE

Stephanie McCallum and Erin Helyard
1853 Erard piano

INCLUDES FIRST RECORDINGS

FOUR HANDS FOR FRANCE Music for Piano Duet

ERNEST CHAUSSON

Sonatinae pour quatre mains, Op. 2 (1879)* **20:53**

Sonatine No. 1 in G major (1878) **6:24**

1 I Gaïment 1:37

2 II *Andante* 2:59

3 III Finale 1:48

Sonatine No. 2 in D minor (1879) **14:29**

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5 II Variations sur un thème danois, transcrit par Niels Gade 5:44

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GUY ROPARTZ

Petites Pièces (1903)* **25:30**

Pour Gaud

7 No. 1 *Andante* 1:35

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Sons de Cloches

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JULES MASSENET***Pièces pour le Piano à 4 Mains: 1re Suite, Op. 11* (1867)* **8:14****[17] No. 1 *Andante* 2:55[18] No. 2 *Allegretto quasi allegro* 3:13[19] No. 3 *Andante* 2:06**CHARLES-VALENTIN ALKAN**[20] ***Saltarelle, Op. 47*** (1856) **7:03****CÉCILE CHAMINADE*****Pièces romantiques, Op. 55*** (1890)[21] No. 1 *Primavera* 2:41[22] No. 3 *Idylle arabe* 2:43[23] No. 4 *Sérénade d'automne* 2:59**BENJAMIN GODARD*****Deux morceaux, Op. 137*** (1893)* **2:45**[24] No. 1 *Pastorale mélancolique* 1:39[25] No. 2 *Marche villageoise* 1:06**Stephanie McCallum (primo) and Erin Helyard (secondo)****TT 72:51****Piano Erard 1853**

* FIRST RECORDINGS

FOUR HANDS FOR FRANCE: MUSIC FOR PIANO DUET

Stephanie McCallum

Our starting point is in France. We gather together a tangentially linked group of composers from several generations who all studied at the Paris Conservatoire; a Parisian straight-strung Erard piano from 1853 on which any of these pieces could have been played in the nineteenth century; and the piano-duet textures which were used ubiquitously in the domestic setting, including childhood study, flirtatious dalliance in the salon, and the serious work of composers trying out and sharing works in transcription in the privacy of their studio. Erard was an innovative and leading piano manufacturer in the nineteenth century, and it produced the favoured piano of many composers working in France at that time. Whereas today we are used to hearing pianos with the bass strings laid diagonally over some of the upper strings to enhance blend of sound, Erard pianos and other pianos of the early nineteenth century had the strings laid parallel to one another (hence the term straight-strung). The effect is of sweet clarity and more contrast through the different sections of the piano registers, from low to high notes.

ERNEST CHAUSSON

Sonatines pour quatre mains, Op. 2 (1878–79)

Ernest Chausson (1855–99) studied briefly with Massenet from 1879 and then continued with César Franck at the Conservatoire. These *Sonatines*, never published, were among his first efforts at composition, when he was in his early twenties. They were written immediately before a life-changing hearing of Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer* which sparked his decision to move from law into music. Other early works include a sonata and five fantasies for piano solo. The song *Lilas* (1877), also unpublished, which pre-dates the *Sonatines* (1878 and 1879), may have been

an unacknowledged Op. 1. The nomenclature ‘Op. 2’, which appears on the title page of the manuscript of the *Sonatines*, was later co-opted for *Sept Mélodies* for voice and piano, published in 1882.¹ At the salons of Mme Jobert and then of Mme Saint-Cyr de Rayssac, the wealthy and well-connected Chausson met d’Indy and heard works by Schubert, Schumann and Mendelssohn, as well as Beethoven symphonies in piano-duet form.²

Sonatine No. 1 in G major (1878) is dedicated ‘A Mesdemoiselles Marie et Alice André’. As with the dedicatees of *Sonatine* No. 2, their links with Chausson have not been traced but both works appear to be dedicated to siblings and may well have been written for the children of friends or acquaintances to play. The first movement, ‘Gaïment’ [1], opens with a texture reminiscent of hunting horns. The movement captures conversational exchanges between the registers of the piano and a cantering, out-of-doors feeling of lightness and charm. The central *Andante* [2] moves easily and frequently between minor and major tonalities. A brooding opening expands to warmly expressive harmonic details. The conversations between high and low take on a more intimate tone. Carefree and slightly humorous, the boisterous energy of the finale [3] pauses on a descent sternly striding across the range of the piano before resuming its frivolity.

Sonatine No. 2 in D minor (1879) is dedicated ‘A Messieurs Alfredo et Giulio Césaire’. The opening ‘Mouvement de marche’ [4] has a characteristic jauntiness that is reminiscent of Schubert’s *Marches militaires*. The central section, in the relative major, uses conversational motifs tossed between the players, as in the first *Sonatine*, before a dramatic transition to an embellished return of the march. The central movement is a set of ‘Variations sur un thème danois, transcrit par Niels Gade’ [5], in which a short,



¹ Laurence Davies, *César Franck and his Circle*, Barrie & Jenkins, London, 1970, p. 179.

² Jean Gallois, ‘Chausson, (Amédée-)Ernest’, *Grove Music Online*, 2001; accessed 4 April 2021.

wistful folk theme, in G minor (Ex. 1), is followed by ten contrasting variations, packing emotional depth into tiny spans. The closing cadence drifts upwards to the sweetness of a final major chord. Niels Gade (1817–90) was the major Danish composer of the middle part of the nineteenth century, a friend of Mendelssohn and Schumann, and influential as a teacher of both Grieg and Nielsen.

Ex. 1

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece, likely a variation of a theme. It is written in G minor, 6/8 time. The score consists of two staves: a treble clef staff for the right hand and a bass clef staff for the left hand. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and some grace notes. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. Dynamic markings include 'p' (piano) at the beginning, 'sfz > p' (sforzando then piano) in the middle, and 'p' at the end. There are also hairpins indicating volume changes.

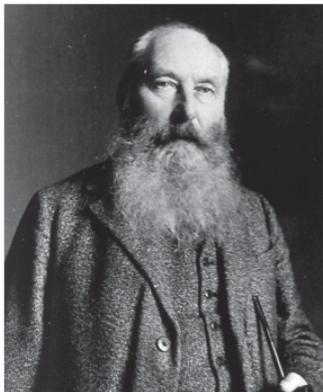
Marked ‘avec simplicité’, the warmth of the gently lapping theme of the ‘Rondeau-Allegretto’ [6] embraces the listener on each return, recalling the charm of Weber’s rondos and completing the work calmly in D major rather than the minor of the opening movement. A contrasting central section renews the imitations between registers. The increasingly chromatic lines strive upward and are recalled in the closing bars.

GUY ROPARTZ

Petites Pièces (1903)

Probably Chausson’s most famous work, the *Poème* for violin and orchestra, Op. 25 (1896), provides a link to Guy Ropartz (1864–1955), since he, as director of the Nancy regional conservatoire, was responsible for organising and conducting its premiere, with his friend, Eugène Ysaÿe, as soloist. Like Chausson, Ropartz moved from law to study music at the Paris Conservatoire from 1885 under Massenet and later Franck. A highly prolific composer, Ropartz was also a poet, and played organ, piano, horn, bugle and

double bass, skills which must have helped equip him for his later role as conductor. He married in 1892 and took up the post as director of the Nancy Conservatoire in 1894, remaining until 1919; there he promoted his fellow composers as well as the Breton music and literature of his family background. His compositions encompassed all forms, from small-scale pieces, via chamber music and orchestral tone-poems to his 1912 opera, *Le Pays*, based on a Breton novel, *L'Islandaise*, by Charles Le Goffic.³



The *Petites Pièces* (1903) fall into three groups, with the first set entitled 'Pour Gaud' – Gaud being Ropartz's first child, born on 15 February 1893 and so aged ten when these duets were published. 'Gaud' is the Breton equivalent of the French name 'Marguerite' and features in a poem by Charles Le Goffic, 'La Bretonne de Paris', and as the heroine in other Breton tales. The pieces give simple unison five-finger positions to the upper player but have warmly chromatic harmonisations for adult hands in the lower voices. The first piece, *Andante* [7], marked 'Doux', and the finale, *Allegretto* [9], a more cheerfully playful piece, embody gentle innocence and naivety in C major. Ropartz indicates that the central *Lento* [8] uses a popular Breton theme (Ex. 2) and its characteristic sadness moves to the tonality of C minor.

Ex. 2



³ Le Goffic (1863–1932) wrote widely on issues of Breton culture and Celtic identity more generally. The ten 'nouvelles' he published under the title *Passions Celles* (Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, Paris, 1912) were influential in the Breton cultural revival. It was one of these short stories that he dramatised, at Ropartz's request, to form the libretto of *Le Pays*.

The next set bears the title ‘Sons de Cloches’ (‘Bell Chimes’). In 1889 Ropartz and Louis Tiercelin together edited *Le Parnasse Breton contemporain*, an anthology of Breton poetry.⁴ These three evocative and beautifully constructed pieces are each prefaced by a brief quotation from ‘Les Cloches’ by the Breton poet, Edouard Beaufile (1868–1941), included in that volume. The poem ‘behind’ No. 4, ‘L’Angelus’ [10], ‘Cloches des vieilles tours...’ (‘Bells in old towers...’), continues:

Cloches des vieilles tours, cloches crépusculaires,
Pleurez votre souffrance en vos robes felées,
Et vos gémissements aux calmes envolées
Berçerons nos dédains, nos mépris, nos colères.⁵

*Bells in old towers, twilight bells,
Weep out your suffering in your crazed gowns,
And your vibrations, sent forth on the calm air,
Will cradle our scorn, our contempt, our anger.*⁶

The Angelus is rung three times a day inviting prayers to the Virgin Mary. The bell can be heard sounding three times three chimes at the opening, by way of introduction. Throughout the remainder of the piece the Secondo then plays an ostinato bell sound with a characteristic asynchronisation. No. 5 is ‘Le Glas’ [11] and bears the superscription ‘Vous sonnez de longs glas aux lassées de la vie...’ (‘You sound a long knell for those weary of life...’).⁷ ‘Le glas’ is the traditional funeral knell, a single slowly repeating chime, a recent example being the sounding of the glas in Notre Dame in Paris in 2015 for the victims of the Charlie Hebdo massacre. Here low octave C sharps frame the piece, with contrasting high bell figures in a central lament. The textures are cleverly written to simulate the dislocated quality of bell chimers. In No. 6, ‘Cloches du Soir’ [12] – inscribed

⁴ Le Merre, Paris/Caillièrre, Rennes. The entire publication can be found online at https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Livre:Tiercelin_-_Ropartz_-_Le_Parnasse_breton_contemporain,_1889.djvu.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁶ Jennifer Janice Millar, ‘Regionalist Themes in “Breton” Operas, 1850–1954: Four Case Studies’, Ph.D. thesis, Music Department, The Open University, Milton Keynes, 2010, p. 368.

⁷ *Le Parnasse Breton contemporain*, p. 8.

‘Cloches, cloches du soir, cloches mélancoliques...’ (‘Bells, evening bells, melancholy bells...’)⁸ – the mood is captured in a flowing A minor *Allegretto* by an ostinato of three repeating descending notes throughout.

The final, untitled, group of pieces again includes prefatory quotations for each from Edouard Beaufils’ poetry, No. 7, Choral [13], with ‘Voici la nuit qui vient, la nuit calme et sereine...’ (‘Here is the coming night, the calm and serene night...’).⁹ Like his similarly early piano solo, *Choral varié* (1904),¹⁰ also in E major, the sound world here recalls the organ. The central section has high decorative passagework sparkling above the serenely moving low chorale melody in a texture especially suited to the clarity and sweetness of a straight-strung Erard piano. No. 8, ‘Tristesse’ (‘Sadness’) [14], bears the inscription ‘Comme vivre nous pèse, ô pauvres que nous sommes...’ (‘How life weighs on us, oh poor ones that we are...’). This short piece in B minor builds to a moment of extreme anguish before gently dissolving to a haunting and ambiguous cadence (Ex. 3).

Ex. 3

The musical score for Ex. 3 is presented in two systems. The top system features a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The piano part begins with a melodic line in the right hand, marked *poco rit.*, consisting of a series of eighth notes that descend and then level off. The organ part in the right hand consists of a steady, descending triplet of notes (G4, F#4, E4) repeated throughout. The bottom system features a bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The piano part continues the melodic line from the top system, also marked *poco rit.*. The organ part continues the descending triplet. The score concludes with a final cadence marked *ppp* (pianissimo) in both parts.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁹ Beaufils published several other books of poetry, but Repartz’s score does not give specific sources for those he quotes.

¹⁰ Recorded by this author on Toccata Classics TOCC 0326.

No. 9, 'Intimité' [15] – 'Du silence, de l'ombre et du recueillement...' ('Silence, shadow and contemplation...') – returns to E major for ruminative inner *cantabile* voices surrounded by slow bass harmonies and high, slowly fluttering *tremolandi* in an atmosphere of peace and stillness. No. 10, 'Par les Champs' ('Through the Fields')¹¹ [16] – 'Au dehors, c'est Avril qui chante et qui sourit...' ('Outside it's April, singing and smiling...') – ends the set with cheerful well-being in G major. The central E minor section, marked *più vivo*, has modulations roaming as far afield as A flat minor, where the theme appears in augmentation in the bass (Ex. 4).

Ex. 4

The musical score for Ex. 4 consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. Both staves are in the key of E minor. The upper staff features a tremolo pattern of eighth notes, while the lower staff has a slower, more melodic line. A large slur encompasses both staves, suggesting a continuous melodic flow. The piece is marked with a piano 'p' dynamic.

¹¹ The capital C notwithstanding, the music would seem to suggest that it is fields which are involved here, not the Champs-Élysées.

This overcast moment seems then to suggest running for cover from brief April showers (Ex. 5).

Ex. 5

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The first system consists of a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a supporting line. The music is marked with a forte-forte (*ff*) dynamic. The second system continues the piece, featuring similar textures and dynamics, with markings for *ff* and *8va* (octave) in both staves.

JULES MASSENET

Pièces pour le Piano à 4 Mains: 1re Suite, Op. 11 (1867)

As with Chausson and his duets, Jules Massenet (1842–1912) wrote his *Pièces pour le Piano à 4 Mains, 1re Suite, Op. 11 (1867)*, in his mid-twenties, as part of early efforts with small-scale forms, adapting the first two from pieces for cello and piano he had written the previous year. Massenet had trained first as a pianist and was teaching piano at this time, although his enormous and longstanding success as a composer of opera began in the same year, 1867, with his first effort in that form, *La grand'tante*. The Op. 11 suite is dedicated to Saint-Saëns, who was at that time a highly successful pianist



and organist but still emerging as a composer. The opening accompaniment texture of No. 1, *Andante* [17], recalls Bach (Ex. 6), a composer not then much in favour but much loved by Saint-Saëns (and his organ-teacher, Alexandre Boëly). Highly detailed score-markings suggest constantly expressive and varied dynamics and *rubati*. The final shimmering trills show off the top register of the Erard piano before a final low cadential idea recalling the opening Bach-like texture.

Ex. 6

The image shows a musical score for an example labeled 'Ex. 6'. The score is written for piano and consists of four staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo is marked 'Andante'. The score is divided into two measures by a vertical dashed line. In the first measure, the piano part has a long, low drone note (C) in the bass clef, and the right hand has a series of eighth notes. In the second measure, the piano part continues with a similar texture, but the right hand has a more complex melodic line with trills. The score includes various dynamic markings: 'p' (piano) in the first measure of the second system, 'tres liè' (trill) above the right hand in the second measure, and 'pp e sostenuto' (pianissimo e sostenuto) below the left hand in the second measure. The score also features a variety of note values, including eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and trills.

Peppered with accents, spiky dotted rhythms and long drone notes, No. 2, *Allegretto quasi allegro* [18], is a curiosity evoking the sound of bagpipes with much verve. Dreamily entering over rolled D flat chords, No. 3, *Andante* [19], seems disconnected from the previous two (in F and G major respectively) and, after a brief surge of emotion marked *appassionato*, it returns to its previous calm, drifting off into nothingness through a D flat chord spanning almost the entire piano range. The piece illustrates Hugh Macdonald's

comment that, in his piano music, Massenet ‘felt musical motifs in a thoroughly French tradition to be expressive gestures, not structural materials.’¹²

CHARLES-VALENTIN ALKAN

Saltarelle, Op. 47 (1856)

Charles-Valentin Alkan (1813–88) is an elder in this group of composers, but his life intersected with theirs through César Franck and the common Conservatoire background. Alkan was a judge at the Conservatoire in 1838 for César Franck’s piano *prix* exam, and mutual respect is clear from a later dedication to him of one of Franck’s *Six Pièces* in 1860. In spite of their difference in age, Alkan, Massenet and Franck had a common organ teacher in François Benoist. This connection with Franck provides links to Massenet, Chausson and Ropartz, who were his students. In 1857 when Alkan published his *Sonate de concert*, Op. 47, for cello and piano, its brilliant finale, a *Saltarelle*, Op. 47 (1856), in E minor [20], must have recalled for Alkan his enormous public success with an earlier *Saltarelle*, Op. 23 (1844), for solo piano, also in E minor. The Roman saltarella is distinguished from the similarly manic and better-known Italian dance, the southern tarantella, by its jumps (the Italian word ‘to jump’ is ‘saltare’). The dotted rhythm and restless accents of the opening go through rondo-style sections to climax in some visually spectacular jumps across the keyboard, and across the other player (Ex. 7). Later jumps involve one of Alkan’s bizarre repeating *acciaccatura* textures (Ex. 8). The energy flags in a woozy section marked *stanco* (‘tired’) before rallying for a terrifying coda.

The year 1857 also saw the publication of an unprecedented number of major solo-piano works, including the great *Douze études dans les tons mineurs*, Op. 39, emerging



¹² Hugh Macdonald, ‘Massenet, Jules’, *Grove Music Online*, 2001; accessed 4 April 2021.

Ex. 7

Musical score for Example 7, consisting of three systems of music. The first system features a treble clef staff with a melodic line starting on a half note G4, followed by eighth notes, and a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The second system features a bass clef staff with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking and a long slur over the first two measures. The third system features a bass clef staff with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking and a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. The score is in 2/4 time and includes various articulations such as slurs and accents.

Ex. 8

Musical score for Example 8, consisting of four systems of music. The first system features a treble clef staff with a piano piano (*pp*) dynamic marking and a complex melodic line with many slurs. The second system features a bass clef staff with a piano piano (*pp*) dynamic marking and a melodic line with slurs. The third system features a bass clef staff with a piano piano (*pp*) dynamic marking and a melodic line with slurs. The fourth system features a bass clef staff with a piano piano (*pp*) dynamic marking and a melodic line with slurs. The score is in 2/4 time and includes various articulations such as slurs and accents.

from Alkan's long period of seclusion from public life. Also published at this time were the *Trois Marches*, Op. 40, for piano four hands. At the time he wrote to a pianist friend, Ferdinand Hiller, saying he wished to try Op. 40 out with him. Perhaps he had the same partner in mind for this version of his *Finale*. The last of only three major chamber works by Alkan, the *Sonate de concert*, Op. 47, was first performed on 27 April 1857 by the composer and his friend, Auguste Franchomme, the dedicatee of Chopin's earlier G minor Cello Sonata.

The lightness and sound variety of the Erard straight-strung piano allows for perfect balance, speed and clarity across the piano range; all essential elements for an effective performance of this fast and furious piece. Alkan is particularly associated with Erard pianos, since he practised and performed on them, often at the Salle Erard in Paris. The Parisian Erard piano we play here would have been four years old at the time of the first performance of Alkan's *Sonate de concert*.

CÉCILE CHAMINADE

Pièces romantiques, Op. 55 (1890)

Adhering to her father's idea of propriety for women, Cécile Chaminade (1857–1944) – and so born in the year in which Alkan's *Sonate de concert* was premiered – did not enter the Conservatoire to gain qualifications but studied privately with its staff, including Benjamin Godard, who also frequented her parents' musical salon gatherings. Her first serious compositions date from the 1880s and she later became popular abroad as composer and pianist, particularly in England, where she frequently toured, but also in the USA, publishing around 400 pieces. In 1913 she became the first female composer to be awarded the title of Chevalier in the Légion d'honneur. Towards the



end of her life she retired to Monaco but suffered poverty when the royalties from her Jewish publisher were denied her by the Nazis. Chaminade dedicated each of her *Pièces romantiques*, Op. 55 (1890), to a female pianist, with the last in the set performed here dedicated to Mme Théodore Dubois, wife of the Conservatoire educator and composer who, in 1902, commissioned Chaminade's famous flute concertino. No. 1, 'Primavera' ('Springtime') [21], is a delicate *Allegretto* in F major. An inventive return of the theme in the tenor in D flat transitions to a *dolcissimo* Coda. The picturesque orientalism of No. 3, 'Idylle arabe' [22], is manifested in the musical equivalent of swaying palm leaves, exotic cross-rhythms and crotale-like sounds reminiscent of Mozart's 'Turkish Rondo'. No. 4, 'Sérénade d'automne' [23], a more substantial ternary form and coda in D major, also employs a rustling hemiola cross-rhythm in its $\frac{6}{8}$ time-signature, with detailed shifts of direction in its accompanying quavers. The central *leggiero poco animato* moves to the tonic minor and a quick succession of modulations before anxious, high diminished-seventh chords melt to a *ben tranquillo* return with attractive revoicing and a new high register. The coda recalls the central material before a startling gust of wind marked *forte stringendo* disturbs the closing calm. The simplicity of the sentiments expressed in these pieces disguises the detail and fine complexity of their craft.

An article by Ward Stephens from 1899 gives some personal insights into Chaminade.¹³ He mentions playing duets with her on her Erard grand piano and continues:

as I got to know Mlle. Chaminade better I found her to be one of the loveliest characters I have ever met. She is frank in her manner and thoroughly in earnest with her work. She has no bitter words for anybody. She says that Wagner's music is not singable and does not appeal to her. She thinks Massenet a very great man musically, and also in point of technic. Saint-Saëns also, she has great respect for, and is a warm admirer of Godard.

¹³ Ward Stephens, 'Cecile Chaminade', *Etude Magazine*. June 1899, online at <https://etudemagazine.com/etude/1899/06/cecile-chaminade.html>.

BENJAMIN GODARD

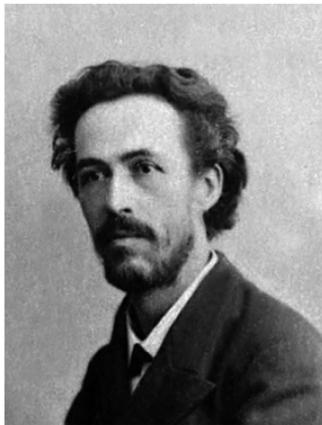
Deux morceaux, Op. 137 (1893)

Benjamin Godard (1849–1895) was highly regarded by many in his day, as illustrated by his shared *Prix de la ville de Paris* in 1878 with Théodore Dubois, an earlier winner of the *Prix de Rome* and later director of the Conservatoire (a Franck pupil, Augusta Holmès, was runner-up). He trained with Vieuxtemps as a violinist and, while pursuing his composition career, also taught chamber music from 1887 at the Paris Conservatoire. Although he died early (from tuberculosis), Godard left a wide-ranging output, from small-scale pieces and chamber music to symphonies and operas. The few pieces that have survived in the repertoire are valued for melodious lightness and charm. The *Deux morceaux*,

Op. 137 (1893), are slight but beautifully crafted. No. 1, ‘Pastorale mélancolique’ [24], sets a limping lament over mainly static harmony in D minor with the melody, first outlined in the soprano, moving to the bass for a more expressive and chromatically decorated repeat. No. 2, ‘Marche villageoise’ [25], was published with the following advice:

Avoid giving the beginning of this march the character of a kind of night round [*Ronde de nuit*], by exaggerating the indicated marking of piano; the rhythm and the sonority must, on the contrary, be brought out, frankly luminous and merry. It must sound like a festive noise which crosses the sunny village and disappears little by little to final extinction, fading away in the neighbouring alleys.

Erin Helyard has been acclaimed as an inspiring conductor, a virtuosic and expressive performer of the harpsichord and fortepiano, and as a lucid scholar who is passionate about promoting discourse between musicology and performance. He graduated in harpsichord performance from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music with first-class honours and the University Medal. He completed his Masters in fortepiano performance



and a Ph.D. in musicology with Tom Beghin at the Schulich School of Music, McGill University, Montreal.

He was named the Westfield Concert Scholar (Cornell University) on fortepiano for 2009–10 and from 2003 to 2012 he was a central member of the award-winning Ensemble Caprice in Montreal.

As Artistic Director and co-founder of the celebrated Pinchgut Opera and the Orchestra of the Antipodes (in Sydney), he has forged new standards of excellence in historically informed performance in Australia. The company won Best Rediscovered Opera (2019) for Hasse's *Artaserse* at the International Opera Awards in London. Operas under his direction have been awarded Best Opera at the Helpmann Awards for three consecutive years (2015–17).

He has received two Helpmann Awards for Best Musical Direction: one for a fêted revival of *Saul* (Adelaide Festival) in 2017 and the other for Hasse's *Artaserse* (Pinchgut Opera) in 2019. As a conductor he has distinguished himself in dynamic performances with the Sydney, Adelaide, Tasmanian and Queensland Symphony Orchestras and the Australian Haydn Ensemble.

He regularly collaborates with Richard Tognetti and the Australian Chamber Orchestra and duets on historical pianos with Stephanie McCallum and with the baritone David Greco. In 2020 Richard Tognetti and Erin Helyard won 'Best Classical Album' at the Australian Independent Record awards and also an ARIA Award for their ABC Classics release of Mozart and Beethoven sonatas.

In 2018 he was recognised with a Music and Opera Singers Trust Achievement Award (MAA) for contribution to the arts in Australia. He is a part-time lecturer at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

<http://erinhelyard.com>

In a performing and recording career over four decades, **Stephanie McCallum** has become renowned for a pianistic practice based on refined control of sound, nuanced artistic instincts and fearless virtuosic control. Whether playing the 'Alps and Himalayas of pianism' (Hugh Macdonald), Alkan's monumental Op. 39, the demanding complexities of Boulez, Xenakis or Ferneyhough, the poetic miniatures of Schumann or a previously undiscovered Beethoven bagatelle, her performances are notable for their acute sense of colour, carefully moulded line and subtle interpretative insight.

A graduate of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music under Gordon Watson and subsequently a student of the Alkan authority Ronald Smith, she gave what *The Times* described as ‘an impressive debut’ at the Wigmore Hall and developed a concert career in the UK and Europe. Her early recordings focused on nineteenth-century solo virtuosity and contemporary avant-garde and Australian works, and she has gone on to record an impressive catalogue of 22 solo albums and a large number of ensemble discs. Described by *Hi-Fi News and Record Review* as ‘a formidable and insightful pianist’, she has championed not only the music of Liszt, Weber and Alkan but also many other French masters, renowned and neglected, including Erik Satie, Alexandre Boëly (Toccat Classics rocc 0471), Albéric Magnard and Guy Ropartz (Toccat Classics rocc 0326).

She was a founding member of the contemporary-music ensemble AustralYSIS and the Sydney Alpha Ensemble and has performed with the Australia Chamber Orchestra, Elision and as concerto soloist with leading Australian orchestras, not least in Elena Kats-Chernin’s *Displaced Dances* which was specially written for her.

Her recent recordings and performances have explored historic instruments. Her Toccat Classics 2018 album of piano music by Alexandre Boëly had Scott Noriega of *Fanfare* describing her as the ‘perfect advocate of this music [...] her choice of Érard piano perfectly matches the sound of this music; and her playing is technically polished and musically convincing.’

Stephanie McCallum and Erin Helyard in duo

Formed in 2014 to explore duo repertoire on historic keyboard instruments, the duo has performed in concert in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and London. Their first album, on the Dutch label TRPTK, *Le Prophète* (2016), attracted warm reviews, a critic for *Early Music* writing of their ‘breathtaking performances’: ‘Overall, this is no doubt one of the most riveting discs I have heard all year and I rate it five stars for performance, choice of repertoire, instruments, recording quality and presentation (stylish and engaging liner notes):’



Photograph: Brett Boardman



Recorded on 20 and 21 January 2021 at Phoenix Central Park, Sydney

Piano: Erard 1853

Piano technicians: Frits Janmaat (restoration), Curtis Wilkinson (technician and tuner)

Recording engineer: Jonathan Palmer

Recording producer: Ralph Lane OAM

Editing: Ralph Lane OAM and Stephanie McCallum

Mastering: Bob Scott

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Stephanie McCallum appears courtesy of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney, and Erin Helyard courtesy of Pinchgut Opera.

Booklet essay: Stephanie McCallum

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