

Dawid Venter and Ben Schoeman

Friday 30 August 2019

Regent Hall, London

Flute and Piano Recital



Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714 – 1788): Concerto for Flute or Violoncello or Harpsichord, Strings and Basso continuo in A major, Wq. 168 (1753)

1. Allegro
2. Largo mesto
3. Allegro assai

Composed for Frederick the Great in 1753, the Concerto in A Major must have presented the emperor, though an able flautist, with considerable challenges. Perhaps Frederick's lack of appreciation of his flute concertos accounts for the alternative versions of this work for harpsichord, and cello. CPE Bach extended his father's practice of rearranging established works, but he tailored the virtuosic passagework to suit each solo instrument better. He believed passionately in rhetorical delivery and the creation of stirring and ever-shifting Affects. Bach railed against polished yet unemotional performers who 'astound us with their prowess without ever touching our sensibilities'. He strove to cultivate an exciting juxtaposition of true cantabile and drama and 'to pass skilfully from the singing style to the startling and fiery' in which he considered instruments surpassed the voice.

Carl Reinecke (1824 – 1910): "Undine" Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 167 (1882)

1. Allegro
2. Intermezzo. Allegretto vivace. Più lento, quasi Andante. Allegretto vivace
3. Andante tranquillo. Molto vivace. Andante tranquillo
4. Finale. Allegro molto agitato ed appassionato, quasi Presto. Più lento

Carl Reinecke's Sonata in E minor is based on the German Romantic tale by Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué. The tale depicts Undine, a water spirit, who longs for an immortal soul which can only be

obtained through true love with a mortal man. The first movement portrays Undine in her underwater world with flute melodies evoking watery sounds. She leaves the water kingdom in search of love and is discovered as a child by a fisherman and his wife who raise her as their own. The second movement paints a picture of Undine's cheeky nature as she is growing up, depicted through the piano and flute's playful melodic interplay. The piano's proud folk-like solo section represents the knight Huldebrand who falls in love with Undine when sheltered from a storm by the fisherman. The third movement represents the couples' happy marriage. They both befriend Bertalda, who is revealed to be the true daughter of the fisherman and his wife. There is a moment of agitation when a fountain is uncovered where Undine's uncle, a water spirit, rushes out, beckoning her not to continue this relationship with a mortal. Peace is restored when suddenly a boulder is dropped over the fountain. In the fourth movement, all three good friends take a trip on the Danube, which rouses the anger of the water spirits. Huldebrand states his regret about his marriage with Undine, for his life is constantly in danger from spirits. In shock at this revelation, Undine falls overboard and sinks to the bottom. Thinking she is dead, Huldebrand makes plans to marry Bertalda. On the night of his wedding Undine returns as a spirit and kills him with a kiss.

Pierre Sancan (1916-2008): Sonatine for Flute and Piano (1946) Moderato – Andante espressivo – Animé

Along with Olivier Messiaen and Henri Dutilleux, Pierre Sancan was a crucial figure in the transition between modern and contemporary eras of music in France. The *Sonatine* was conceived as one of the annual examination pieces for flute students at the Paris Conservatoire. Sancan dedicated the piece to Gaston Crunelle, who was the flute professor at the time. The opening section introduces a peaceful yet expressive theme that reappears later in the piece. The *Andante espressivo* is much more sombre and introspective, relaxing into a flute cadenza which builds up and bursts into the final *Animé* section. Exciting and full of energy, the rapid *Animé* introduces a new triplet figuration and references the opening theme before its climactic ending.

Philippe Gaubert (1879 – 1941): Fantaisie for Flute and Piano (1920)

Gaubert was one of the leading flautists of his day – the favourite pupil of Paul Taffanel - professor of that instrument at the Paris Conservatoire, principal conductor and, later, artistic director of the Paris Opera and winner of the *Prix de Rome* for composition in 1905. His *Fantaisie*, written for the Conservatoire's 1920 Concours, was dedicated to Léopold Lafleurance, friend and fellow flute student. The opening section is similar to a concerto cadenza, with virtuosic, improvisatory passages for both instruments. A slow passage ushers an elaborate theme for the flute before the start of the *Vif* section, wherein the initial melodies sound very much like incomplete scales, lending a sense of indeterminacy. There are abrupt dynamic changes as the pianist plays trills and rapid chord patterns to support the flautist's exploration of his entire range.

Dawid Venter

Hailed by the South African press as a world class performer, flautist Dawid Venter enjoys a multifaceted career as orchestral player, soloist and chamber musician. He has performed concertos with the prominent orchestras in South Africa and his playing is often broadcast on radio and television. He has been praised for his "colourful tone, brilliance and delicacy". He held positions as principal flautist in several symphony orchestras, including the National Chamber Orchestra and the New Arts Philharmonic Orchestra Pretoria. Over the years, he has performed under the baton of renowned conductors such as Gérard Korsten, Douglas Boyd, Carlo Franci and Ralph Gothoni. His experience in the field of contemporary music has given him the opportunity to perform in the *Orchestre des flûtes français* and the *Ensemble Alternance* in Paris. Dawid Venter was born in Stellenbosch where he completed his undergraduate studies. He holds the prestigious Diplôme de Concertiste (à l'unanimité du jury) from the Ecole Normale de Musique de Paris Alfred Cortot and he

obtained a Master's Degree in Music Performance from the University of Pretoria with distinction. His teachers include Eva Tamassy, Devy Erlih and Pierre-Yves Artaud. He is a recipient of various prestigious awards and scholarships in South Africa, France and Great Britain. He currently lives in London with his wife and sons, where he holds the position of Principal Flautist in the Band of Her Majesty's Grenadier Guards. In this capacity, he has received medals and awards for excellence from the Corps of Army Music as well as the Worshipful Company of Musicians. He frequently appears as soloist with the Band and has been privileged to perform in prominent state functions such as the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations, the opening of the Olympic Games in London, the royal wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, as well as numerous investitures and performances abroad. He regularly performs recitals, notably with his duo partner Ben Schoeman.

Ben Schoeman

Steinway Artist and pianist Ben Schoeman has won several awards, including the first prize in the 11th UNISA International Piano Competition, Pretoria, the gold medal in the Royal Over-Seas League Music Competition, London, the contemporary music prize at the Cleveland International Piano Competition, USA, and the H Rupert Prize from the South African Academy of Arts and Sciences. He has given solo, chamber music and concerto performances in such prestigious concert halls as the Wigmore, Barbican, Cadogan and Queen Elizabeth Halls in London, and other major venues throughout the world. In 2016, he obtained a doctorate in music from City, University of London and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama with a thesis on the piano works of the eminent South African composer Stefans Grové. His solo album, featuring works of Liszt, was released by TwoPianists Records. His performance with Tessa Uys of Scharwenka's piano duet transcription of Beethoven's 9th Symphony was recorded for national television. Schoeman is a senior lecturer in music at the University of Pretoria, where he received the laureate award.