

Thursday 27 July 2023, 12pm – 1pm
St Mary's Church, Petworth

Royal Academy Lunchtimes: Clara Orif (soprano) & Daniel Silcock (piano)

PROGRAMME NOTES

Siete canciones populares Españolas

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)

- 1 El paño moruno
- 2 Seguidilla murciana
- 3 Asturiana
- 4 Jota
- 5 Nana
- 6 Cancion
- 7 Polo

The songs of Manuel de Falla have secured much affection, none more so than his Paris-conceived collection of Seven Spanish Folksongs from 1914. Drawn from ancient tunes, its melodies set anonymous texts of everyday life and love. 'El paño moruno' (The Moorish cloth) is a lively and sardonic song (from Murcia) in which a haberdasher laments the loss in value to a stained cloth. 'Seguidilla murciana' (The Seguidilla of the woman from Murcia) admonishes those who 'throw stones in glass houses'. 'Asturiana' is a lament from the north of Spain and 'Jota' (originally from Aragon) conveys a painful but temporary separation of two lovers. 'Nana' is an Andalusian lullaby while 'Cancion' is a resigned love song and the final 'Polo', also from Andalusia, expresses the pains of love.

Cinq mélodies populaires grecques

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

- 1 Le reveil de la mariée (The awakening of the bride)
- 2 Là-bas, vers l'église (Yonder, towards the church)
- 3 Quel gallant m'est comparable (What Gallant can be compared with me?)
- 4 Chanson des cueilleuses de lentisques (Song of the Lentil gatherers)
- 5 Tout gai! (All are Merry!)

These Five Greek folksongs were written to oblige the music critic and writer Michel Calvocoressi who had asked for some national melodies to illustrate a series of lectures. So subtly is Ravel's musical personality allied to the original Greek folk tune, one might imagine both accompaniment and melody are the composer's own work. 'Le reveil de la mariée' concerns a marriage proposal, while a sense of devotion to the Virgin Mary suffuses 'Là-bas, vers l'église'. A bravura manner evokes the gallant soldier in the third song and a yearning troubadour is suggested in the fourth. A rousing nonsense song concludes the set. It was for another lecture in 1909 that Ravel conceived the accompaniment to *Tripatos*, a lively song, despite its serious content, with numerous meaningless syllables.

V národním tónu (In folk tone), Op.73

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

- 1 Dobrú noc (Good night)

- 2 Žalo dievča (The Mower)
- 3 Ach, není tu (The Maiden's Lament)
- 4 Ej, mám já koňa faku (Possession and loss)

Dvořák's quartet of songs were written for his publisher in 1886 by way of easing the fee he had requested for his Seventh Symphony. Setting one Czech and three Slovakian folk poems, the first is an affectionate lullaby, the second expresses parental disapproval of a daughter's love for the boy next door. An unhappy marriage to a loveless widower occupies the third song, while the fourth concerns the affection between a young man and his horse.

The last rose of summer

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

Few composers have arranged folk songs so imaginatively as Benjamin Britten. His early settings were written for recitals with Peter Pears when they were touring Canada and the United States in the 1940s. *The last rose of Summer* belongs to Britten's fourth volume of folksong arrangements (1960) devoted to Moore's Irish Melodies

Métamorphoses FP121

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

- 1 Reine des Mouettes (Queen of Seagulls)
- 2 C'est ainsi que tu es
- 3 Paganini

French surrealist poets were the inspiration behind nearly 150 songs by Poulenc, conceived over a thirty-year period, many written for the renowned baritone Pierre Bernac. Completed in 1943, *Métamorphoses* sets words by Louise de Vilmorin, the song's Gallic charm and gaiety a world away from wartime traumas. A lovelorn seagull is evoked in the spirited 'Reine des Mouettes', while Poulenc's insouciance is conveyed in the tender 'C'est ainsi que tu es'. 'Paganini' is a virtuosic torrent of words, its *joie de vivre* matching the poet's vivid imagination.

Mädchenblumen Op.22

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

- 1 Kornblumen (Cornflower)
- 2 Mohnblumen (Poppies)
- 3 Epheu (Ivy)
- 4 Wasserrose (The Waterlily)

Richard Strauss's legacy of some two hundred songs were mostly written between 1885 and 1901. Of these, *Mädchenblumen* sets words by Felix Dahn who, in four flower-titled songs, rhapsodises over young girls. The first is modest, the second playful, the third tender and the last a serene evocation. While the composer had doubts about these texts, they inspired some of his most lyrical creations.

David Truslove, 2023

This event is kindly sponsored by the Anstruther Family



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