



Gaubert's *Madrigal for flute and piano* (1908) is a brief, unassuming yet sweetly expressive piece and refers to the musical/poetic genre that reached its apogee during the Italian Renaissance and typically dealt with themes of a pastoral and/or amorous nature. The opening bars recall Franck's Violin Sonata, while the melodic shape suggests Fauré.

**Piano Trio No. 1 in G minor, Op. 11 (1881)**

**Cécile Chaminade (1857-1944)**

Chaminade's *Piano Trio in G Minor* is a precocious work from a long life and career; its composer was only 23 years old and would ultimately live to be 87. Chaminade wrote this first of her two trios in 1880, just one year after Fauré's celebrated C Minor Piano Quartet. For all her youth, Chaminade exhibits considerable technical mastery and infectious Gallic charm in her most important chamber composition. Like the chamber music of Saint-Saëns and Fauré, it is poised, elegant, classically oriented and breathes an unmistakably French atmosphere.

Though cast in the minor mode, Chaminade's trio evokes more gentle melancholy and sweet sentiment than serious drama or actual suffering. Three of the four movements are in fairly regular and easily followed sonata form, though with piquant, late-Romantic harmonies and some exotic key relationships. The third movement scherzo is a rondo with two contrasting episodes.

A sparkling piano part gives evidence of Chaminade's career as a keyboard virtuoso, but interestingly it is the cello that particularly shines here, repeatedly getting first crack at the most lyrical melodies. Chaminade conscientiously evolves much of her material from brief motives that are cleverly developed and transformed. With the last movement, she also follows Beethoven's familiar optimistic trajectory by bringing a minor key work to a final close on a major chord.

**Cello Sonata (1915)**

**Claude Debussy (1862-1918)**

Near the end of his life Debussy planned a cycle of six sonatas for various combinations of instruments. He completed only the first three. This was not a happy period in the composer's life. He was suffering from the cancer that would eventually kill him, and World War I was raging across Europe.

The *Sonata for Cello and Piano* by Claude Debussy is the most forward-looking and experimental of his works. Indeed, its startling modernity must have been shocking for the ears of the concert-going public in 1915. The cello writing uses varied effects: harsh pizzicati that nearly rip the strings off the cello, glassy *ponticello* passages in measured tremolo, floating *flautandi* high up the fingerboard.

The rhythmic language is full of imprecations and interjections, short bursts of accented notes, sudden changes of tempo. And the harmonic language veers far enough from tonality to escape it altogether for long stretches.

Structurally, the first movement can be heard as a transformed allegro-sonata form. The exposition contains a first theme in D minor and a second in F major (creating a key relationship that is indeed classical).

The *Prologue* begins in the style of the French Overture, proud and majestic. Then a passage filled with anxious worry marked *animando poco a poco* brings back the initial theme in D major. The development employs classical tools to create and sustain drama, although its harmonic language is utterly modern.

The second and third movements are much freer in construction, more improvisational and varied – seemingly more modern and less classical. The second movement *Sérénade* takes the role of the Scherzo in a classical sonata. Scherzo means “joke” in Italian. And indeed, this movement is full of humor and wit and even irony, expressed by the cello playing habanera rhythms, fast pizzicati, slides and harmonics, mimicking the mandolin.

The third movement *Finale* is a dance (like many last movements in classical pieces) evoking Spain. Again and again, throughout the sonata Debussy finds a myriad of ways of inserting modernity within a classical framework. Working feverishly over a few weeks in the summer of 1915, he created one of the supreme masterpieces of the cello repertoire.

### **‘La Captive’ Op. 12 (1832)**

**Hector Berlioz (1803-1869)**

*La Captive* is the second setting by Berlioz of Victor Hugo's Orientales poem series (1829). With *La Captive*, Berlioz and Hugo seem to enjoy a meeting of minds as to the attractions of orientalism, that affection for exotic subject matter so à la mode in Paris of the late 1820s and 1830s. Hugo's text treats the reveries of a young woman captured for the harem of some Turkish pasha. She sits on a beach idly pondering her lot, guarded by a saber-wielding eunuch--an altogether useless companion and a poor conversationalist. Not a few aspects of her situation might be pleasant enough, she reasons wishfully, if only she had her freedom and a virile young man with whom to share her evenings.

The sonority of the text is languid, and the setting magnificent: it is nightfall, with stars and a gentle breeze; the sea laps at the maid's feet. This is precisely the sort of imagery that tended to seduce Berlioz, and his music for *La Captive*. Note especially the shape of the main melody: a pair of matched phrases growing at first toward a striking high point, then followed by the dramatic fall of an octave-and-a-half, then the return to tonic. It is a famously successful design in both contour and dramatic implication: naive yet impassioned, and admirably suited to the prosody of the text.

It pleased Berlioz to program so charming a melody for his Paris concerts, refashioning it again and again through six different versions. For the concert of 30 December 1832, *La Captive* was given a new cello part, ad libitum, written for the cellist Desmaret: simple arpeggiations at first, then surging up at the climax and receding again, like the play of surf at the captive maid's feet.

### **Violin Sonata (1917)**

**Claude Debussy (1862–1918)**

Debussy's *Violin Sonata* presents a superb balance of sweetness, fire, humor, and nostalgia. It is a work imbued with deep melancholy that also embodies other characteristic traits that make Debussy's work distinguishable from others: a sense of fantasy, freedom, and affective depth.

Written at the very end of the composer's life, the Sonata is one of the finest examples of Debussy's compositional and artistic dexterity. At the time of this composition, Debussy was already ill with terminal cancer. He had continued to write despite his failing health, partly for financial reasons.

It was in 1915 that he began a project of writing six sonatas for various instrumentations; the Violin Sonata was the third in the set, and the last work he completed before his death. Unlike classical sonatas, the two instruments here do not accompany each other per se, but challenge one another though their arguments ultimately bring them closer together.

For most of his life, Debussy stayed away from traditional forms like the symphony, the concerto or sonatas. For his violin sonata, he adapted sonata concepts to his uniquely personal expressive needs. He wrote, "I am more and more convinced that music, by its very nature, is something that cannot be cast into a traditional and fixed form. It is made up of colors and rhythms. The rest is a lot of humbug invented by frigid imbeciles riding on the backs of the Masters." Although the piece was written while he was dying, it is animated, whimsical and flamboyant.

#### **Chansons Madécasses (1925-26)**

#### **Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)**

The *Chansons Madécasses* come from late in Ravel's life, and they offer some of his most advanced music. In 1925 Ravel received a commission from the American patron of the arts Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge for a set of songs, and she made an unusual request: Ravel was free to choose the texts, but she asked that they be accompanied by an ensemble of flute, cello, and piano. Ravel accepted that condition, and also made a surprising choice of texts.

The title *Chansons Madécasses* means "Songs of Madagascar". For these songs, Ravel set three poems that Évariste Parry claimed to have translated from the original in 1787 under the title *Chansons madécasses, traduites en français, suivies de poésies fugitives*. Scholars have doubted the authenticity of these "fugitive poems," suggesting that rather than translating native poetry, Parry (1753-1814) wrote them himself while living in India and based their style on poems from Madagascar.

Whatever their origin, these songs and their shocking texts caused a sensation at their first performance on June 13, 1926 in Paris: the poems are surprising in their explicit sexuality and in their political sentiments, and some members of the audience walked out of that first performance. The almost visceral appeal of these songs was underlined by the lithographs that appeared in the first edition of the songs: dark, expressionistic, and violent, these crude woodcuts captured the spirit of the "native" songs perfectly.

Ravel himself described this music: "I believe the *Chansons madécasses* introduce a new element, dramatic—indeed erotic, resulting from the subject of Parry's poems. The songs form a sort of quartet in which the voice plays the role of the principal instrument. Simplicity is all-important." Ravel freely admitted being aware of Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* of 1912 when he wrote these songs.

The first song, *Nahandove*, is explicitly erotic. “Nahandove” is the name of the poet’s lover, and both poet and composer clearly like that name, lingering over it as much as they can. The poet waits for his lover in the moonlight. She arrives, they make love, then collapse together in the warm air; she leaves, and he is left alone, caught in the same longing he felt at the beginning. Ravel’s scoring is extremely spare here, and he often accompanies the singer with a single instrument.

If the first song was soft and erotic, the second song is violent and political. It opens with the singer’s shouted “Aoua!” and then she warns “Méfiez-vous des blancs”: beware of the white men who came making fine promises but who built forts and tried to subjugate the people. The piano plays a grim ostinato that drives the song to its climax when the natives revolt and drive out the white man; at this climax, the flute shouts out trumpet-like fanfares, but the song fades away on a final warning about the white man.

France was fighting a colonial war in Morocco when this song was premiered in Paris, and several members of the audience rose and walked out ostentatiously, proclaiming that they would not listen to such subversive music while their nation was at war.

*Il est doux . . .* is a song of complete ease and languor: the poet lies in the moonlight as women move around him, anxious to serve. This atmosphere is captured by the free flute solos and cello in harmonics, as the poet celebrates the “attitudes of pleasure” around him. The final line is all the more effective for being unaccompanied.

*Program notes written by Aude Castagna*

### **The Musicians**

**Aude Castagna, artistic director and cello**, hails from Paris, France, where she studied cello, music theory and chamber music at various music conservatories and obtained the highest performance degrees. She was a Teaching Assistant at UCSC, holds a MA in music performance from UCSC, and teaches in her cello studio and at Cabrillo College.

She also performs as a soloist (with local orchestras, cello and piano recitals), in local orchestras (Bay Shore Lyric Opera, Monterey Symphony, Monterey Jazz Festival Orchestra, Cabrillo Chorus) and in chamber music groups like the Paris String Quartet, which she founded in 1995. She founded and directed the first Santa Cruz Cello festival in October 2014 at Cabrillo College. This is her fourth program as cellist with the Santa Cruz Chamber Players.

**Shannon Delaney, violin**, has recently performed with Ensemble Monterey, Cabrillo Stage, The Western Stage, Santa Cruz New Music Works, and the Monterey Bay Symphony. Shannon holds a B.A. degree in Violin Performance from Stanford University. In addition, Shannon holds a M.A. degree in Education from the University of California, Santa Cruz and is currently a public school teacher at Westlake Elementary School in Santa Cruz, where she has been a faculty member since 2005.

**Lars Johannesson, flute**, performs and teaches in the San Francisco and Monterey Bay areas. Lars studied modern flute with Lloyd Gowen and Tim Day at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he also began playing Baroque flute. He pursued post-graduate studies in Baroque flute with Wilbert Hazelzet at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague, Holland. Over the years, Lars has performed with numerous West Coast early music ensembles and orchestras, as well as a variety of modern instrument groups.

Locally, Lars appears regularly with New Music Works, Santa Cruz Baroque Festival, Ensemble Monterey Chamber Orchestra and Santa Cruz Chamber Players. With an interest in different musical genres, Lars also performs Celtic, Swedish and other traditional music. As a studio musician, Lars has recorded for numerous CD releases, including many on the local Gourd Music label.

**Sheila Willey, soprano**, has performed with the Santa Cruz Baroque Festival, Opera Parallèle, Berkeley Opera, the Worn Chamber Ensemble, New Music Works, the Santa Cruz Chamber Players, and the newly formed Driftwood Consort, among others.

In opera, she has sung various leading roles throughout the Bay Area including Cundgonde in *Candide*, Constanza in *Abduction from the Seraglio*, and Cornelia in *Young Caesar*. Willey holds undergraduate degrees from the Peabody Conservatory and an MA from UCSC where she currently teaches voice.

**Susan Bruckner, piano**, is a pianist and teacher with degrees from the Eastman School of Music, the New School for Music Study in Princeton, NJ, and the San Francisco Conservatory. Susan regularly gives workshops on various music topics throughout the U.S. and abroad. She is author of the book *The Whole Musician*. Ms. Bruckner is director of the piano department at Cabrillo College and performs regularly with the Santa Cruz Chamber Players.

**Michael McGushin, piano**, is a professor of music at Cabrillo College and the coach/accompanist for the Music Department at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He is the conductor of the chamber choir Ariose and of Cabrillo's Westside Choir. He has served as music director for a number of theater and opera productions in the Santa Cruz area. Some of these include Shakespeare Santa Cruz's productions of *Princess and the Pea*, *Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty*; Cabrillo Stage's productions of *Cabaret*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *The Fantasticks* and *The Music Man*; *The Threepenny Opera* and *The Who's Tommy* for the Cabrillo College Drama Department; *Berlin to Broadway* with Kurt Weill and Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* (assistant Music Director) for UCSC Opera Theater; *Angels in America* (composer and music director), *A...My Name is Alice*, and *Oh Coward!* for Santa Cruz Actors' Theater.

As a pianist, Michael is a long-time member of the New Music Works Ensemble for which he also serves as an artistic advisor, and has appeared with many performing groups in the Santa Cruz and Monterey County areas. He is a featured performer on recordings of chamber music by Paul Bowles, Lou Harrison and Germaine Tailleferre.