

Cantilena

diversions

Bach • Saint-Saëns • Poulenc • Borne • Prokofiev

Odinn Baldvinsson flute

Patricia Romero piano



| | | |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------|
| Johann Sebastian BACH (1685-1750) | | |
| | Flute Sonata no. 6 in E major, BWV 1035 | [10.25] |
| 1 | <i>Adagio ma non tanto</i> | [1.59] |
| 2 | <i>Allegro</i> | [1.39] |
| 3 | <i>Siciliano</i> | [3.24] |
| 4 | <i>Allegro assai</i> | [3.21] |
| Camille SAINT-SAËNS (1835-1921) | | |
| 5 | Romance in D flat major, op. 37 | [5.58] |
| Francis POULENC (1899-1963) | | |
| | Sonata for Flute and Piano | [12.26] |
| 6 | <i>Allegro malinconico</i> | [4.11] |
| 7 | <i>Cantilena</i> | [4.26] |
| 8 | <i>Presto giocoso</i> | [3.48] |
| François BORNE (1840?-1920?) * | | |
| 9 | Fantaisie Brillante sur "Carmen" | [12.25] |
| Sergei PROKOFIEV (1891-1953) | | |
| | Sonata for Flute and Piano, op. 94 | [23.47] |
| 10 | <i>Moderato</i> | [8.15] |
| 11 | <i>Scherzo: Presto</i> | [4.50] |
| 12 | <i>Andante</i> | [4.05] |
| 13 | <i>Allegro con brio</i> | [6.35] |
| Total playing time | | [65.04] |

*there is some uncertainty about the dates for Borne – usually given as 1840-1920, but sometimes shown as 1862-1929.

BACH: Flute Sonata no. 6 in E major, BWV 1035

The six flute sonatas of J.S.Bach (BWV 1030-1035) are thought to have been written between approximately 1717 and 1741 at a time when the recorder was being superseded by the transverse flute. From around 1725 compositions for recorder became increasingly rare, and in these sonatas Bach took full advantage of the technical and expressive qualities and tonal colours that were now available to him.

In the first three sonatas Bach provided a concertante keyboard part, apart from the occasional passage where he reverts to a figured bass. Sonatas 4-6 are for flute and basso continuo (i.e. the keyboard part consists of a figured bass only). The first three are regarded as more forward-looking in style and have three movements each; sonatas 4-6 have a four movement structure, with the first movement having a generally slow tempo.

It is unclear when the *Sonata in E major* was written; however, in an early manuscript copy found in the 19th century is written "Following the autograph of the author, which was written by him for the chamberlain Fredersdorf in the year 17-, when he was in Potsdam", suggesting that Bach composed this work during his visit to Potsdam in 1741. While he did not meet Frederick the Great on this journey, Bach did encounter the king's chamberlain, Michael Gabriel Fredersdorf. Like the king, Fredersdorf was an accomplished flautist, and this manuscript copy seems to indicate that Bach wrote the work for the chamberlain during this visit. The light texture and freer form of this piece seems fitting for the tastes that prevailed in Frederick's court at that time.

The first movement, marked *Adagio ma non tanto* the expressive qualities of the flute are heard in a beautiful singing melody. The second movement – a lively *Allegro* – is followed by a *Siciliano*, involving canonic episodes in C sharp minor. This movement modulates to F sharp minor: the tonality of this movement is more unusual than in Bach's other flute works. The sonata concludes with a movement marked *Allegro assai*.

SAINT-SAËNS: Romance, Op. 37

One can hardly imagine a less likely memento of the Franco-Prussian War and its grisly aftermath than the sweetly yearning *Romance* for flute and piano in D flat. Saint-Saëns composed other pieces alluding to these events – a cantata, *Chants de Guerre*, for example, recomposed as the orchestral *Marche Héroïque*, but it is the *Romance* that has proved evergreen.

News of the French defeat at Sedan reached Paris in September 1870. With his fellow composers Bizet, Duparc, d'Indy and Fauré, Saint-Saëns joined the National Guard and served during the Siege of Paris, which ended with an armistice on January 28, 1871, and the Germans' triumphal parade down the Champs-Élysées on March 1. Toward the end of that bleak January, Saint-Saëns' close friend, the talented painter Henri Renault, was killed by a stray German bullet. Redressing French humiliation – culturally at least – Saint-Saëns and Conservatoire Professor Romain Bussine met with Duparc to establish the Société Nationale de Musique, under the rubric “Ars Gallica”, for the performance and promotion of French music.

With the German withdrawal, the Paris Commune was established, in defiance of the Republican government. Knowing that the anti-bourgeois Commune did not speak for him, Saint-Saëns left on the last train to leave Paris for the Channel. On a visit to London in 1880 he was to play before Queen Victoria, but in 1871 he arrived as a penniless émigré. However it was at this time that he completed the *Romance in D flat* – the manuscript is dated March 25, 1871 – lending a new facet to his famed facility. He returned to Paris after the collapse of the Commune in 1871.

The Société Nationale gave its first concert in November, and the *Romance* received its premiere at an SNM concert in the Salle Pleyel with renowned flautist Paul Taffanel accompanied by Saint-Saëns on April 6, 1872. By 1878 the composer had arranged the work for orchestra. The *Romance* has remained a repertoire staple, containing Saint-Saëns' characteristic mixture of elegant melancholy with brilliance, the caressing first and final strains enclosing a more animated elegy.

POULENC: Sonata for Flute and Piano

Poulenc is possibly remembered most as “le moine et le voyou”, the “*half bad boy, half monk*”, a tag that was attached to his name throughout his career by the critic Claude Rostand in a Paris-Presse article in July 1950. He was a member of “Les Six”: a group of French composers including Auric, Durey, Honegger, Milhaud and Tailleferre – all under the eye of Satie – and his style perhaps remained truest to the group’s original stimulus. Their new music was inspired by the observation of everyday life, and the principal qualities are dryness, wit and brevity, with influences from jazz and the music hall.

Poulenc composed the *Sonata for Flute and Piano* in Cannes between December 1956 and March 1957. However, a letter sent by Poulenc in 1952 to his close friend, the baritone Pierre Bernac, indicates that he had in fact been intending to write a flute sonata for some time prior to its eventual composition.

In April 1956, in anticipation of a festival later in the year, Harold Spivacke – a spokesman for the Coolidge Foundation at the Library of Congress – offered Poulenc a commission for a piece of chamber music. Poulenc did not take up this offer immediately, being pre-occupied with the completion of his opera “The Carmelites” and its imminent premiere in Milan. After this, he did respond, and suggested a Sonata for Flute and Piano, provided that he could reserve the premiere for the Strasbourg Festival in June 1957. He was granted his request with the piece also being dedicated to the memory of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, an American patron of chamber music.

Jean-Pierre Rampal recalls that in a telephone call Poulenc told him about the commission. “Jean-Pierre,” said Poulenc: “you know you’ve always wanted me to write a sonata for flute and piano? Well, I’m going to. And the best thing is that the Americans will pay for it! I’ve been commissioned by the Coolidge Foundation to write a chamber piece in memory of Elizabeth Coolidge. I never knew her, so I think the piece is yours.”

The completed manuscript was mailed to the Library of Congress on 7th June. Although the official premiere was not until the 18th June, an unofficial premiere was given at the Strasbourg Festival by the composer and Rampal the previous day, following a request from Arthur Rubenstein, who was determined to hear it before his departure.

The American première took place in the Coolidge Auditorium at the Library of Congress in February 1958. In a letter to Poulenc, Spivacke described the occasion as a rousing success.

Poulenc gave other performances of this sonata before his death in 1963. It has a three-movement structure – *Allegretto malinconico*, *Cantilena*, *Presto giocoso* – and is characterised by expressive directness, generosity of spirit and chirpy playfulness. It has since become one of the most well-loved works in the entire flute repertoire.

BORNE: Fantaisie Brillante sur “Carmen”

Not a great deal is known about François Borne. It is thought he was born in Belgium in 1862, and became professor of flute at the Toulouse Conservatoire and was highly regarded by French flautists in the 1880's. Borne was well known for his essays on flute design, and collaborated with the French instrument maker Djalma Jullot in inventing many devices which improved the Boehm-system flute, such as the split-E mechanism found in the modern flute.

Borne's aim was to make the flute more versatile and responsive, and his *Fantaisie Brillante sur Carmen* demonstrates that perfectly with its virtuosity, elaborate ornamentation and decorative treatment of the melodic line. At this time, when the “French Salon” pieces were in vogue, most solo instrumentalists would have written their own sets of variations on popular music of the day. Most of these enjoyed only temporary popularity, but some survived to this day, including Borne's transcription of some of the most famous melodies from Bizet's opera.

Borne allows the flute to embellish the music in a way that seems to be improvisation, as per the form of a “fantasie”. The piece begins with a dramatic statement of the menacing fate theme – an omen of death – on the piano. After a brief reference to a theme in a later part of the opera the flute takes up this theme and after a brief cadenza and a further quotation from Act 1 we hear the theme of the Habanera with variations on the flute. This is followed by music from the gypsies dance in Act 2 before the work comes to an exciting conclusion with the song of the Toreador.

PROKOFIEV: Sonata for Flute and Piano, Op. 94

In 1943 Prokofiev was living in Perm in the Ural Mountains, one of several locations where the Soviet government was keeping him and other prominent artists out of harm's way while war was raging between the Soviet army and the Germans. While there, he wrote his only *Sonata for Flute and Piano* between 1942 and 1944, a task he described in a letter to a friend as "perhaps inappropriate at the moment, but pleasant". The work was commissioned by the Committee on Artists Affairs. Prokofiev said "I have long wanted to write a work for the neglected flute, and I wanted this sonata to have a delicate, fluid classical style".

Much of this work has an elegance and sweetness that is reminiscent of French Impressionism. Perhaps this is no coincidence, since Prokofiev is said to have been inspired to write it by the playing of French flautist Georges Barrere. Written in classical sonata form (even to the repeat of the exposition), it is unashamedly diatonic – almost as firmly rooted in tonic and dominant as anything written a century and a half before. The themes are simple and engaging, as are the rhythms he uses, ultimately to portray direct emotions and to be resolutely optimistic.

The *Moderato* first movement develops two graceful, exuberant themes in a classical format with strong harmonies that suggest the influence of Mussorgsky. The delightful *Scherzo*, animated by exchanges of rhythmic patterns between the two instruments, is varied by a contemplative melody at its centre. The lovely *Andante* begins with a simple, serene melody, and after a more agitated section, the calm mood returns. Only in the final *Rondo* does the aggressive tone of Prokofiev's other "war-works" appear more dominant with vigorous energy.

The Sonata was first performed by flautist Nicolai Kharkovsky and pianist Sviatoslav Richter in December 7th, 1943 in Moscow, receiving great critical acclaim. Prokofiev then made a version for his close friend, the violinist David Oistrakh, following suggestions that it would "enjoy a more full-blooded life on the stage" if arranged for violin and piano. Oistrakh performed this version frequently. Josef Szigeti gave this version its American premiere in Boston in 1944 from a manuscript smuggled out of the Soviet Union. The Sonata has since become a regular part of the chamber repertoire for both flute and violin.

David Hanesworth

Born in London to parents who were both classical ballet dancers, Odinn was exposed to the atmosphere of predominantly classical music in his early formative years. He began his formal music training at the junior department of Trinity College of Music. On completing his course, having been awarded the Hambourg award for improvisation, he went to London College of Music, where he studied with Patricia Lynden and Rainer Schuelein, graduating with Honours.

Odinn's repertoire is wide and varied, ranging from Baroque to 20th. Century and contemporary, and includes most of the flute repertoire's popular major works. He has attended several master classes with William Bennett and most recently studied with the international flautist Susan Milan.

A winner of several competitions, including Croydon and Ealing festivals in the Solo Recital and Concerto classes and having played at the Purcell Room, Odinn made his recital debut in Reykjavik, Iceland. Since then, he has performed for music clubs, societies and festivals in England, Switzerland and France - including Paris - and has been offered several return visits due to popular demand. He performed in a series of concerts at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2006.

For a number of years Odinn has performed regularly for the local community in North and North West London, as well as in most of central London churches including St. Martin's in the Fields and St. James's Piccadilly where he appears regularly. As a soloist, he has played with the Brent Symphony Orchestra, and was principal flute with the Millennium Sinfonia. He runs a private teaching practice in North West London.

In 2007 he started a duo with the pianist Patricia Romero and they have given several concerts in and around London, including St. James's Piccadilly and St. John's in Harrow on the Hill. This is their first recording.

In 1994 the British-Mexican pianist Patricia Romero enjoyed a notable triumph in the performing of the complete solo piano works of Ravel in two recitals at the Purcell Room, and repeated the concerts in Mexico City in 1996 in the Sala M.M Ponce, Bellas Artes. She has also played at the Wigmore Hall, the Fairfield Halls, St. John's Smith Square, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Leighton House and St. James's Piccadilly.

Patricia studied at Trinity College of Music in London with Joseph Weingarten. While a student there she won several prizes, including the Herbert Shead prize for the best performance of a Romantic Sonata and obtained the Maud Seton Prize – the most important award for pianists – for outstanding performance in her final recital. She graduated with Honours, and subsequently made her London debut at the Wigmore Hall in a recital which was well received by the critics. She also took Master Classes with Angélica Morales, Bernard Flavigny, Jörg Demus and John Lil.

After college she studied for several years with the eminent pianist and teacher Louis Kentner and took part in several International competitions winning some awards, including the Clara Haskili prize for her Schumann interpretation. Patricia came to international prominence as the winner of the Yamaha International Piano Competition in Mexico City.

Since then she has pursued a busy international career, performing an extensive repertoire stretching from Bach to the Twentieth Century and including a detailed knowledge of the music of Spain and Latin America. She has performed widely in the British Isles, and her foreign travels have taken her to many parts of Europe, including France, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Italy, Greece and Turkey. Further afield, in 1998 Patricia toured Australia and New Zealand, following this later in the year with a tour of Scandinavia and Russia. In early 1999 she performed in Argentina and Brazil, followed by the Middle East in the autumn that same year. Since then she has continued to perform in the British Isles and Europe. Recently in the summer of 2006 she toured Berlin, Prague, Budapest and Vienna.

In addition to her solo concerts she has given lecture recitals, and also many chamber music recitals with a variety of performers including Rasma Lielmane, Nagi el Habashy, and most recently Odinn Baldvinsson. She was a founder member of the Maggini Piano Trio. Her appearances with orchestra have included performances with the Filarmonica del Bajío, the Orchestra of the University of Guadalajara, the Orchestra of Coyoacán, the Jupiter Orchestra, the Dartford Symphony Orchestra and the Hatfield Philharmonic.

Patricia Romero has broadcast on the B.B.C. She is a member of EPTA and the ISM and her biography appears in the International Who's Who in Music.

CANTILENA



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Cantilena II

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