

Flute and Piano Recital - Magic Spells for Life...?
13th July, 2021 (Tue) 1:15pm St. Brides Church EC4Y 8AU

Flute: Karen Wong

Piano: Jan Willem Nelleke

Ian Clarke (b. 1964)

Touching the Ether

André Jolivet (1905-1974)

Cinq Incantations

A. Pour accueillir les négociateurs - et que l'entrevue soit pacifique

Sigfrid Karg-Elert (1877-1933)

Selections from Suite Pointillistique & Impressions

Exotiques

III. Scherzo (Diabolina und Innocenz)

III. Colibri

IV. Lotus

V. Evocation of Brahma

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D. Pour une communion sereine de l'être avec le monde

Béla Bartók (1881-1945)

Suite Paysanne Hongroise for flute and piano

Vieilles danses No.1-9

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Ian Clarke: Touching the Ether

Ian Clarke (b. 1964) is a flautist, composer and professor and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He has established a reputation as one of the leading player and composers in the flute world. He is acknowledged as one of the UK's most innovative flautists with a particular interest in contemporary works and techniques.

Dedicated to his mother, *Touching the Ether* was written in 2006. The work explores man-nature relationship, specifically the countless lateral and eternal connections between people, cross boundary and generations. The piece also resonances and makes me question one's existence and its meaning. With the use of extended techniques such as notes bending and finger vibrato, there is constant change in tone colour, as if the fluidity and complex consequential interactions around us. Rock and roll elements and cuts are used. I would like to welcome you to the recital with this extraordinary sound world.

André Jolivet: Cinq incantations

A. Pour accueillir les négociateurs - et que l'entrevue soit pacifique

(To welcome the negotiators – may the meeting may be peaceful)

D. Pour une communion sereine de l'être avec le monde

(For a serene communion of humankind with the world)

André Jolivet (1905-1974) is a French composer who was greatly inspired by antiquity and magic. Music triumphed over all other arts he became acquainted in young age. He was then studied seriously with the avant-garde composer Edgard Varèse. He also had a strong interest for atonality. Attempted to re-establish a more human and less abstract form of composition, he founded La Jeune France with Olivier Messiaen. Jolivet was often attracted to the flute for its associations with life and breath.

In 1936, the *Incantations* was composed a few weeks after his mother's death. Through carefully measured combinations of rhythm, pitch, dynamic and harmony, Jolivet wanted to provoke a feeling similar to the panic impulses of primitive man. The first incantation is a conversation between duality. Two distinct voices differentiated by register, timbre and meter. Repetition is an important element to be spell-like and powerful. It is concluded in an agreed statement. The fourth incantation is a lyrical one, originally called *Pour intégrer sa joie dans le grouillement vital universal* (To integrate one's joy in the universal vital teeming). Indicated 'very within' at the start, the movement explores individual, spiritual and religious connections with the world. Its musical material is very complex and tightly woven. The work is anguish yet hopeful.

Sigfrid Karg-Elert: Selections from Pointillistique & Impressions Exotiques

- III. Scherzo (Diabolina und Innocenz)
- III. Colibri
- IV. Lotus
- V. Evocation of Brahma

Fascinated by the introduction of Boehm flute, Sigfrid Karg-Elert (1877-1933) exploited its virtuoso potential in his compositions with inspiration from flautist Carl Bartuschat, his long-time friend from the regimental band. He also wrote for harmonium, organ and piano. He was appointed for composition and theory professor at the Leipzig Conservatory in 1919, the same year that both Suite Pointillistique and Impressions Exotiques were written. They consist of self-contained short works with explicit programmatic elements.

Diabolina und Innocenz is selected from Suite Pointillistique. The music portrays contrasting characters as if pointillism puts sharp colour dots next to each other to create a blend in mind for viewers. It is in scherzo and trio form. "With a tinge of Mephistopheles", the light, cheeky and waltz-like outer sections represent the devil. The calm and hymn-like middle section shows the sweet and naive innocence. The middle movement of Impressions Exotiques is titled *Colibri* (Hummingbird), and is played on piccolo. Native to the Americas, Hummingbird symbolizes enjoyment and playfulness in life. Trills and flutter-tonguing are common bird-imitating devices. On top of that, lightness and restlessness are captured in tight rhythm and ever-changing tonality. *Lotus* seems to be paired with the last movement, *Evocation à Brahma*, as the God of Hindu is born from and sit on the Lotus flower. Lots of tone colour is explored in the slow movement, delicate, pale and even quasi celesta for the piano. In the solemn final movement, special use of continuous sforzando markings mimics a strong calling for the divine. Atmospheric cluster of chords imitate sound of the tam-tam. Exoticism is created with Eastern imagery.

Béla Bartók/ arr. Paul Arma: Suite Paysanne Hongroise for flute and piano (Vieilles danses No.1-9)

The Suite originates from Fifteen Hungarian Peasant Songs, a collection of authentic short folk melodies arranged for piano by Hungarian composer and ethnomusicologist Béla Bartók (1881-1945). It was composed between 1914-18. Deploring the changes brought about by WW1, Bartók was determined to recover the folksongs, as well as the country's culture before they faded into extinction. "For an artist it is not only right to have his roots in the art of some former times, it is a necessity...it is peasant music which holds our roots..." Bartók orchestrated the piece in 1933, commonly known as Magyar parasztdalok. It was then transcribed for flute and piano in 1952 by his student in the Budapest Academy, Paul Arma.

Today's recital is closing with the last nine bucolic sections, grouped under the title "Vieilles danses" - Old Dance Tunes. The piece is full of characters and colours, such as pesante, dolce and intenso. The finale even evokes an exciting bagpipe performance. It has lots of freedom in recreating the style, in terms of rhythmic stresses, phrasing thoughts and articulations approach.