

CONCERTS

AT THE UNIVERSITY

SPRING—SUMMER 2015

Friday 13 March 2015

1.10pm

Reid Concert Hall

Edinburgh Piano Duo

Margaret Wakeford and Simon Coverdale

Programme of works by **DEBUSSY, HINDEMITH**
and **SCHUBERT.**



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Edinburgh College of Art

Six Épigrapbes Antiques

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

1. *Pour invoquer Pan, dieu du vent d'été*
(To invoke Pan, god of the summer wind)

2. *Pour un tombeau sans nom*
(For a nameless tomb)

3. *Pour que la nuit soit propice*
(That the night may be auspicious)

4. *Pour la danseuse aux crotales*
(For the dancer with crotales [castanets])

5. *Pour l'Égyptienne*
(For the Egyptian woman)

6. *Pour remercier la pluie au matin*
(To give thanks to the morning rain)

An inscription carved on stone, or as a motto prefixed to a book or chapter, the epigraph of the title is the medium for Debussy's homage to his friend Pierre Louÿs, an authority on antiquity and Greek literature. Three of Louÿs' sensual mythological poems *Chansons de Bilitis* had been the inspiration for the composer's settings of 1899, and fifteen years later it would appear that their effect had been undiminished with the publication of the *Six Épigrapbes*, the similarities being more than coincidental. The texts are delicate in detail, beautiful but ethereal – it has been said that the works "seem like timid, nude, virgins, approaching with hesitant steps, uncertain whether their reception will be a gasp of admiration or a coarse grin". The songs of Bilitis are in fact clever forgeries masquerading as freshly unearthed poems from a relatively unknown Greek author, but under his skillful touch the question of authenticity seems to pale before the wealth of imagination and sympathetic understanding contained therein.

S.C./M.W.

Sonata (1938)

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)

Regarded as one of the most interesting contributions to the 20th-century piano duet repertoire, to be placed perhaps as the last of a line of four-handed masterpieces rather than the beginning of a new fashion. Whilst the tonality is allowed free range, nevertheless there is a distinct pull towards a home key at the conclusion of each movement. The style is intimate and expressive as opposed to strident and percussive apart from the march of the central movement.

Marked *moderato* the opening is simple and unaffectedly in 3/4 time, leading into the second theme, calmer, but characterised by a dotted rhythm. After a brief intertwining and development they reach a climax before the return of the main theme and a solemn coda based on second theme material.

Possibly reflecting the military rumblings of the time, the satirical off-beat second movement is an alert scherzo acting as a perfect foil to the real heart of the work which follows; in this last movement the poignancy of the main theme is heightened by the addition of a descant marked *pp*, pitched the interval of a twelfth above the theme, marked *mf*. After a strong close in E major the movement is interrupted by a fast 9/8 with the express instruction to sustain the gravitas previously established. Staccato woodwind over lower strings rising in unison can be imagined as they herald the return of the opening theme, this time in fugal form and even more intense. The work closes with peace and dignity.

S.C./M.W.

Eight Variations on a Theme from Hérold's opera 'Marie'

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Although remembered for scant else Ferdinand Hérold enjoyed considerable popularity with the success of his 1826 opera buffa *Marie*, performed in Vienna and evidently capturing the fertile imagination of Schubert who contrived to compose a series of eight variations upon one particular simple but memorable melody.

The simple *allegretto* theme in C major is lifted directly from the miller's song toward the end of the opera, harmonised by a drone bass suggesting the miller's wheel, which is also present in the opera setting. It is in two distinct sections, first legato then staccato, the latter "*tic tac*" representing a heartbeat quickened by the sight of the young lady on her way to buy bread from him.

The ensuing cameos radiate good humour, with even a hint of yodelling, initially alternating between gentle and martial. Variation 5 in *Ab* major is slightly slower in tempo, providing a broken chordal accompaniment suggestive of the turning machinery. After No. 6, marked *con forza*, No.7 is full of pathos, an *andantino* in *A* minor. The finale and longest variation has a strong Turkish March feel in which cascading scales and rumbustious dotted chords lead to a rousing coda.

S.C./M.W.

Edinburgh Piano Duo

Margaret Wakeford studied piano and accompaniment at the Royal Academy of Music London with George Rogers and John Streets, and later with Lawrence Glover in Glasgow. Since then her musical career has involved work for the BBC, teaching at the RCS, City of Edinburgh Music School, and currently at St. Mary's Music School where she is piano tutor, accompanist, chamber music coach and directs performance classes. She is also in demand as an adjudicator.

Simon Coverdale undertook early intensive musical education at St Paul's Cathedral London, subsequently studying piano with Michael Gough Matthews and Lawrence Glover at the RCS and RCM. As well as giving solo recitals, accompanying and adjudicating he regularly performs in a piano duet partnership with his wife Margaret Wakeford: this is combined with a busy schedule of tuition at the Ian Tomlin School of Music at Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh University and the City of Edinburgh Music School. For the best part of two decades Margaret and Simon have been frequent performers at music clubs and societies around Scotland and in demand for directing duet masterclasses; in 2010 they were invited to Washington State USA where they gave recitals and workshops.

FORTHCOMING CONCERT:

Tuesday 17 March

1.10pm

Reid Concert Hall, Bristo Square

EMMA LLOYD violin

KARIN SCHISTEK piano

BEETHOVEN Sonata for Piano and Violin in C minor Op.30/2

DEBUSSY Sonata for Violin and Piano in G minor L.140

ADMISSION FREE