

Clare Hammond

Pittville Pump Room
Saturday 13 July

Clara Schumann	Three Romances, Op. 21	10'
Gabriel Fauré	Nocturne No. 12 in E minor	4'
Gabriel Fauré	Nocturne No. 8 in D flat major	5'
Sun Keting	Us, the most fleeting of all (2024)	8'
Ludwig van Beethoven	Sonata No. 14 in C sharp minor, Op. 27 No. 2 'Moonlight'	15'
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	Sonata in D major, K. 311	15'
Claude Debussy	'Reflets dans l'eau', 'Hommage à Rameau' and 'Mouvement' from Images, Book I	16'
Cécile Chaminade	'Impromptu' Étude de concert, Op. 35, No. 5	5'
Cécile Chaminade	Étude romantique, Op. 132	4'
Clade Debussy	L'Ise Joyeuse	6'

About the Programme

Clara Schumann Three Romances, Op. 21

Clara Schumann wrote of composition that "there is nothing that surpasses the joy of creation". However, the demands of eight children and a husband who, by his own admission, was "always living in the realm of imagination" meant that she was unable to dedicate as much time to the discipline as she wished. These Romances were written a year before Robert Schumann attempted suicide and was admitted, at his own request, into a sanatorium near Bonn. Towards the end of the first movement, Clara quotes Robert's *Romance* for oboe and piano Op. 94 No. 1.

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) Two Nocturnes *i. No. 12 in E minor, Op. 107 ii. No. 8 in D flat major, Op. 84 No. 8*

These two Nocturnes were written later in Fauré's life and when he started to suffer from deafness. They still show the charm and lyricism of his early works, but there is growing introspection and more enigmatic use of harmony. One unusual feature of Fauré's deafness was that the high and low registers of the keyboard sounded painfully out of tune. As a result, his later works are often confined to the central range. Fauré distrusted explicit virtuosity and said of purely virtuoso pianists that "the greater they are, the worse they play me".

Rockey Sun Keting *Us, the most fleeting of all (2024)*

"*Us, the most fleeting of all*" is a piece that reflects on time. It captures the essence of our fleeting yet indispensable nature, as Rilke contemplated the unique and unrepeatable moments that comprise the fabric of existence. Designed to be experienced "in its entirety, even if only once".

I want this piece to celebrate the ephemeral beauty of life and time." (Rockey Sun Keting)

Ludwig van Beethoven Sonata No. 14 in C sharp minor, Op. 27 No. 2 'Moonlight'

i. Adagio sostenuto ii. Allegretto iii. Presto agitato

Marked 'Quasi una fantasia', the first movement of this sonata embodies an improvisatory character. This is widely considered to be one of the earliest works of the Romantic era. In place of three evenly-weighted movements, as in a Classical sonata, the first two are much less substantial than the third. Charles Rosen described the third movement as "unbridled in its representation of emotion. Even today, two hundred years later, its ferocity is astounding". This sonata became one of Beethoven's most popular compositions for piano, to an extent that frustrated the composer. Its nickname, the 'Moonlight' Sonata, acquired after Beethoven's death, only enhanced its popularity.

INTERVAL

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Sonata in D major, K. 311

i. Allegro con spirito ii. Andante con espressione iii. Rondeau (Allegro)

Dissatisfied with the limited opportunities available to him at the Court in Salzburg, Mozart resigned his post as Konzertmeister of the Court Orchestra in 1777 to seek employment elsewhere. He travelled through Augsburg, Munich and eventually reached Paris after a prolonged stay in Mannheim, famous for the dramatic performance style of its Court Orchestra. The influence of the 'Mannheim School' is apparent in this sonata, with its unusual manipulation of thematic material and relatively extensive use of dissonance. We hear an affectionate love duet in the second movement while the Finale is a virtuosic rondo, carefree and vibrant.

Claude Debussy Selection from Préludes

<i>i. Les Collines d'Anacapri (Book 1)</i>	<i>ii. La Puerta del Vino (Book 2)</i>
<i>iii. Général Lavine (Book 2)</i>	<i>iv. Feux d'artifice (Book 2)</i>

Debussy's two books of Préludes are in many ways the culmination of his considerable output for piano and showcase the wide range of influences on his style. The titles of the preludes are presented at the end of each piece, almost as an afterthought. 'Les Collines d'Anacapri' is an exuberant and vigorous piece that evokes the heat, light and vivid colour of the Mediterranean island. In 'La Puerta del Vino', we travel to the Alhambra Palace near Granada, with an intense and tenacious habanera. 'Général Lavine' is a portrait of an American clown while 'Feux d'artifice' conjures up a vibrant fireworks display.

Cécile Chaminade Two Études *i. 'Impromptu' Étude de concert, Op. 35 No.ii. Étude romantique, Op. 132 1909*

Chaminade's musical talent was immediately evident from childhood yet her father did not permit her to study at the Conservatoire de Paris, arranging instead for her to study privately. She performed for Georges Bizet in 1869, who was impressed, and from 1878 started to give recitals exclusively of her own music. Chaminade toured widely, to great acclaim, in France, England and the USA. Elected a Chevalier of the National Order of the Legion of Honour in 1913, she made a number of gramophone recordings which are still highly sought-after. Chaminade described her style as "essentially of the Romantic school" as is borne out by these two études, the improvisatory and expansive 'Impromptu' and the Puckish 'Étude romantique'.

Claude Debussy L'Isle Joyeuse

This exuberant and joyful piece was inspired by a painting of Watteau, 'L'Embarquement pour Cythère', where a group of happy lovers walk through a glade on the island of Venus' birth. It was written in 1904, soon after Debussy met Emma Bardac who was to become his second wife. They secretly visited Jersey together for a holiday in July where Debussy made revisions to the piece. This music is virtuosic and passionate, full of brio and radiance.

Clare Hammond

Acclaimed as a "pianist of extraordinary gifts" (*Gramophone*) and "immense power" (*The Times*), Clare Hammond is recognised for the virtuosity and authority of her performances and won the Royal Philharmonic Society's Young Artist Award in 2016. This year sees her debuts at the BBC Proms, Konzerthaus Berlin, and Salle Bourgie in Montréal, alongside return visits to the Wigmore Hall, London's National Gallery, and Raritäten der Klaviermusik in Husum. She has also kindly written today's programme notes.