



**White Rock
Concerts
*Presents***

PASCAL ROGÉ



Friday, April 1, 2005

PASCAL ROGÉ

Pascal Rogé exemplifies the finest in French piano. His playing of Poulenc, Satie, Fauré, Saint-Saëns, and especially Ravel, is characterized by its elegance, beauty and stylistically perfect phrasing. Born in Paris, *Mr. Rogé* became an exclusive Decca artist at the age of seventeen. Since then, he has won many prestigious awards including two Gramophone Awards, a Grand Prix du Disque and an Edison Award for his interpretations of the concerti of Ravel and Saint-Saëns. His Satie recording Piano Dreams was transformed into a Platinum Disc. Other recordings feature a Ravel cycle, a Debussy cycle, a Bartók cycle with the London Symphony Orchestra, and for Decca's 1999 Poulenc Edition: both piano concerti, Aubade, and the Concerto Champêtre for harpischord and orchestra, all conducted by Charles Dutoit.

Pascal Rogé has performed in almost every major concert hall in the world. Orchestral appearances include the Montreal Symphony, Toronto Symphony, all the major London orchestras, Orchestre de Paris, Orchestre National de France, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Royal Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Netherlands Philharmonic, The Hague Residentie Orkest, Oslo Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Zurich Tonhalle, Vienna Symphony and the NHK Symphony Orchestra in Tokyo, to name a few.

Mr. Rogé made his United States debut in 1974. Since then he has returned almost every season, appearing in both recital and concert, most notably with the orchestras of Philadelphia, Chicago, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Washington, Indianapolis, Buffalo, Seattle and St. Louis. In addition to frequent guest appearances in Latin America and Mexico, *Mr. Rogé* has made extended recital and chamber music tours of New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore and Japan. He has recently concluded a German tour with the Stuttgart Radio Orchestra under Carl St. Clair and was a guest artist at the International Piano Series in London's Queen Elizabeth Hall.

Mr. Rogé's recent release on the Oehms label of piano concertos by Ravel and Gershwin was highly praised in BBC Music Magazine as a superbly virtuosic and richly enjoyable interpretation.

Programme

G Faure	Barcarole Nos. 1 and 2
G. Faure	Impromptu Nos. 3 and 4
M. Ravel	Impromptu in A flat major
E. Satie	2 Gnoissiennes
F. Poulenc	3 Pieces for Piano

Intermission

C. Debussy	Preludes for Piano, Book 2
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1. Brouillards
2. Feuilles mortes
3. La Puerta del Vino
4. Les fées sont d'exquises danseuses
5. Bruyères
6. Général Lavine — eccentric
7. La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune
8. Ondine
9. Hommage à S. Pickwick Esq
10. Canope
11. Tièrces alternées
12. Feux d'artifice

PROGRAMME NOTES

Gabriel Faure

Barcarolle for Piano Nos. 1 & 2

The first Barcarolle is a gentle, songful piece, quite in keeping with the Italian vocal origins associated with the barcarolle form. It opens with a lovely melancholy theme played against a caressing, swaying rhythm. While there are echoes of Chopin here and of an Italianate character, as well, this mournful melody is quite Fauré's own. The middle section features a Romantic variant mostly played in the upper register, its passion blossoming into a more ravishing, more ecstatic, more animated beauty than that of the subtle but equally attractive main theme. When the latter is reprised, it is somewhat transformed, adopting a warmer, less melancholy manner.

Gabriel Faure

Impromptu No. 2 in F minor

Fauré's Second Impromptu is a brilliantly nonchalant tarantella which gives way, over a still voluble accompaniment, to one of those breathtaking lyrical felicities with which his early and middle period works are studded. A virtuosic return of the opening whirl brings again the lyrical flight of confiding rapture, set off now by the tarantella's melodic outline, to finish with a dazzling flourish.

Gabriel Faure

Impromptu No. 3 in A flat major

The first three of Fauré's Impromptus work the same vein of lyric charm and superficial brilliance and each strikes more deeply than the last. The Third Impromptu is the gem among these early essays. Over a harmonically diffident arpeggio in perpetual motion, a long, even cantilena teasingly unfolds, to finish with a rapid pianissimo flourish. Beginning hesitantly, the central molto meno mosso section introduces a tentatively arching melody which soon acquires an animated, octave-articulated tone of dreamlike passion. As it is muted, a shimmering run leads into the perpetual motion arpeggio of the opening, trailing its cantando blitheness, and, for a moment, the music wavers between dreaming introspection and lyric gaiety before deciding upon the latter to end with a mercurial flourish.. An ineffable poetry laces this Third Impromptu — at once effervescent and evanescent — and takes one, in the briefest moment, by delighted surprise.

M. Ravel

Sonatine for Piano

Ravel began composing his Sonatine when the magazine *Weekly Critical Review* conducted a competition for the first movement of a sonata. When the magazine went bankrupt, Ravel added two more movements to the piece, and thus completed his Sonatine. The work is bright and clear. Using fluidity, light coloring, and the intervals of the fourth and fifth as unifying features, the work is written using primarily the three middle octaves of the piano. The opening *Modéré-doux et espressif* — is written in strict sonata form, has a first theme around the tonality of F sharp minor, a second around D major and B minor, and a development section of intense excitement. The second movement is an uncomplicated minuet in D flat, which flowers in its final measures. The work closes with virtuoso writing marked *Animé*. Moving nervously between 3/4 and 5/4, waves of music pour forward with a few horn calls in the left hand.

Erik Satie

2 Gnossiennes

In the *Gnossiennes* we see a further musical development of the style of the famous *Gymnopédies*. The structure is similar: lonely melodies against an accompaniment of long bass notes in combination with chords in the middle register. In the *Gymnopédies* this was often coloured by the dissonance - here it is almost continuously based on simple triads. The atmosphere of Greek antiquity of the *Gymnopédies* has been replaced by a kind of plaintive exoticism.

Claude Debussy

Preludes for Piano, Book II

The works in Debussy's second book of *Préludes* look ahead to Debussy's later style, in which the composer's earlier impressionistic, almost Romantic poetry was supplanted by a greater concentration upon technique and neoclassical objectivity.

1. *Brouillards* (Mists): Quietly teeming, delicate, and atmospheric, the texture is dominated by sweeping arpeggios that require a high degree of control on the part of the pianist. Harmonically, the work is quite advanced, with a strong suggestion of polytonality.

2. *Feuilles mortes* (Dead Leaves): The theme of this *Prélude* is so similar to that of *Sounds and Scents Mix* in the *Evening Air* from Book I, it seems

an intentional parody. The overall mood likewise recalls that of the earlier work.

3. *La Puerta del Vino* (The Gateway of the Alhambra Palace): One of the most effective *Préludes* of the set, this Spanish-inflected work has the rhythm of a habanera throughout.

4. *Les fées sont d'exquises danseuses* (The Fairies are Exquisite Dancers): The wispy, delicate figuration of this work calls for extraordinary facility and lightness on the part of the pianist.

5. *Bruyères* (Heaths): Similar in mood and style to *La fille aux cheveux de lin* from Book I, *Bruyères*, is a depiction of an idyllic English landscape

6. *Général Lavine* — eccentric: In this *Prélude*, Debussy portrays the famous American juggler with enormous wit, making ingenious use of incisive rhythms and sudden contrasts.

7. *La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune* (The Terrace of the Audiences of Moonlight): This *Prélude* is based on a phrase from the children's song "Au clair de la lune." The many artfully constructed mood changes require great sensitivity on the part of the pianist.

8. *Ondine*: Debussy depicts the legendary water sprite with a subtly changing atmosphere, as in the previous *Prélude*. Typical "water-like" arpeggiated figuration alternates with scherzando outbursts.

9. *Hommage à S. Pickwick Esq., (after Dickens' Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club)*: The protagonist of Dickens' novel is musically personified by imitations of whistling, echoes of an English music hall, and a quote from *God Save the Queen*.

10. *Canope*: This *Prélude* is a mournful depiction of an Egyptian burial urn.

11. *Tièrces alternées* (Alternating Thirds): This is a brilliant study in thirds that anticipates the style of the *Études* (1915). Debussy achieves great effect through a subtle rise and fall of dynamics, using a minimum of musical material.

12. *Feux d'artifice* (Fireworks): The last of Debussy's *Préludes* is a musical portrait of a fireworks display over Paris. Brilliant arpeggios, trills, and rapid chord passages characterize this, the most technically challenging of the *Préludes*. The work comes to an effective close with a distant quote of *La Marseillaise* sounded over a hushed tremolo.

A Message from the President

Welcome to the finale our 2004-2005 season. We are pleased to present the Ambassador of French Music and one of the giants of the piano, Pascal Rogé. We are truly fortunate to be able to present an artist of such immense stature.

I would take this opportunity to thank you all for being such a wonderful audience yet again this year. Time after time, artists tell me that this is one of the best, most knowledgeable and warmest audiences that they have ever performed in front of.

Also, as you know, this is a non-profit all-volunteer organization. I am the spokesman but thanks should go to the entire Board – Erika Bennedik, Elvina Stewart, Paula Shore, David Cann, Martha Gambrel, Val Marten, Olive Moffett, Eileen Reid and Emerson Reid, Mai Clark, and of course to our legendary Artistic Director George Zukerman.

Next season is one of the finest that we have ever offered, featuring marvelous artists from all over the world.

Our volunteers will be in the lobby tonight to take your renewals. Please remember that we are able to offer renewals only until the end of this month, when will be offering subscriptions to those on our waiting list and to members of the public. Take a brochure for a friend and tell them about the series. We will accept new subscriptions in the mail now, but we will process them only after May 1st, in order of receipt, until we are fully subscribed.

A quotation for the children in the audience, of all ages:

“Ah, music. A magic beyond all we do here! “ (J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, 1997)

Rick Gambrel
President White Rock Concerts



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