



BRUSSELS PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Brussels Philharmonic Orchestra

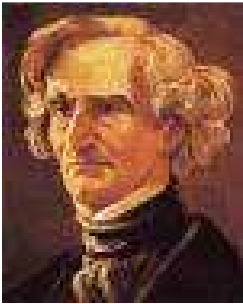
Conductor: Roger Bausier

Public Relations: Clare Roberts

French Music

28th JANUARY 2011 - 20:00

Saint-Michel Theatre - Etterbeek/Brussels



Hector Berlioz



Michel Lysight



Claude Debussy



Georges Bizet

Presto Vivace asbl | vzw, 7 Rue Théo Coopmanstraat, B-1030 Bruxelles | Brussel
Tel : FR + 32 2 241 81 43 | NL UK + 32 2 268 70 81 | Delta Lloyd 132-5179735-73
info@bpho.be | www.bpho.be

French Music

Conductor: Roger BAUSIER

Soloist: Ronald VAN SPAENDONCK
Clarinet

Friday 28th January 2011 – 20:00

Saint-Michel Theatre/Brussels

3 Rue Père Eudore Devroye, 1040 Etterbeek

Roman Carnival, opus 9 (overture)

Hector BERLIOZ

Concerto for clarinet

Michel LYSIGHT

La Mer, opus L 109

Claude DEBUSSY

L'Arlésienne (Suite n° 2)

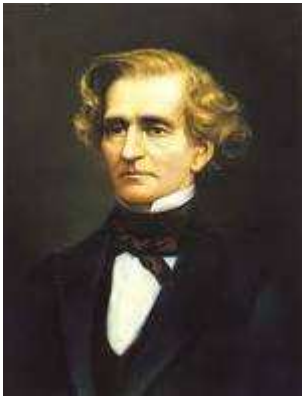
(The girl from Arles)

Georges BIZET



Daniel Pearl

WORLD MUSIC DAYS



Hector Berlioz was French, a composer, writer and critic. He was born on 11th December 1803 in Côte-Saint-André (Isère) and died on 8th March 1869 in Paris.

He is considered one of the great pioneers of European Romanticism although he rejected the term "Romantic" because for him it had no significance. He actually viewed himself as a classical composer. His music had the reputation of not respecting the rules of harmony, something that can be felt even if the listener closely studies his scores.

Hector Berlioz was a distant royal descendant as his family stemmed from the Dauphin of France. His father, Louis Berlioz, was a doctor and his mother, a devout catholic. At the age of 6, Hector was sent to a seminary to study, to be in the priesthood. Once this establishment closed down in 1811, his father decided to educate his son himself, with the aim of young Hector becoming a doctor. This did not prevent him receiving musical training and at the age of 12, he started to compose.

Enrolled in the Paris school of medicine, he left his family home and attended courses for one year, before writing to his father to confess he preferred the arts to medicine: "I feel my passion for music growing to such an extent that it is exceeding my desire to please my father"

In 1823 he studied composition at the Paris Conservatoire and by 1834, he had started to make a name for himself as a critic in the "*Gazette musicale*" (a music magazine) and later in the *Journal des débats* (a French newspaper), in which he continued to promote his own musical system, in which musical expression is favoured over harmony.

Whilst on the other side of Europe Berlioz was being hailed a hero of Romanticism, he remained an enemy in Paris a city in which music was above all an instrument of politics, of power, alliances and betrayal.

A great Romantic figure with an outrageous sense of humour, Berlioz was nevertheless very rigorous in his writing and intense in his musical expression. His work gradually detached itself from the academic musical structure of his era moving towards a rich orchestration of colours and tones, using his individual contrapuntal style and edging towards what would eventually become a strong preference for extremely large orchestral formations.

In 1838, following his opera "Benvenuto Cellini", which had been a flop in France (there were only seven performances in total), Berlioz composed a large symphonic work based on two short themes from the first act of the opera.

Far from a replacement of the original overture, his "Roman Carnival" is a short work which implements the contemporary, very grand use of implementation and orchestration of works published that same year.

Composed in 1843-1844, from the very first performance in February 1844, the Roman Carnival overture was a hailed one of Berlioz's most popular works and has remained so ever since. Berlioz often had it performed in his concerts abroad.

- *The first theme, andante sostenuto, taken from the cantilena by Cellini Ô Térésa, "You whom I love the most in my life" is entrusted to a solo cor anglais, followed by the subtle orchestration for a duet by Cellini/Térésa (viola/smaller woodwind instruments i.e. flute, oboe and clarinet).*
- *The second, a lively Roman dance, is a fast-paced saltarello in 6/8 time, which is reminiscent of the Roman Carnival and appears towards the end of the first act. It is from this theme that the composer took the title of the work.*

Listeners should note the reappearance of the first theme in the form of a canon (a fugato played by the cellos, altos, bassoons, flutes, oboes, violins) based on the accompanying rhythm of the saltarello.

Concerto for Clarinet

Michel LYSIGHT



Michel Lysight is a Belgian composer and conductor and was born on 14th October 1958. After two years studying History of Art, (Free University of Brussels, 1976-1978), he entered the Royal Brussels Conservatoire. He was awarded his first prize for composition in 1989 at the Royal Mons Conservatoire in Paul-Baudouin Michel's class.

His discovery of musicians such as Steve Reich and Arvo Pärt would prove to be essential for the evolution of his own musical voice and he would become a figurehead of the postmoderne trend (Nouvelle Musique Consonante or in English, New Music Consonant).

Michel Lysight is a member of la SABAM, the Belgian association of authors, composers and publishers, and of the Belgian Centre of Musical

Documentation.

His discography includes "Enigma" (Dux edition CD), which is dedicated to his works for clarinet(s) and piano played by Ronald Van Spaendonck, Jean-Marc Fessard and Éliane Reyes.

Having studied music theory and modern languages, Michel Lysight is now professor at Royal Brussels Conservatoire.

Composed in 2002 at the request of the great clarinettist Ronald Van Spaendonck (to whom the word is dedicated), the Concerto for clarinet and orchestra is comprised of three movements.

With regard to the instrumentation, the first movement focuses on the strings and harp, in the second the keyboard percussion instruments (xylophone, vibraphone, glockenspiel) whilst the third movement employs the xylophone in the slow beginning section and percussion (snare drum, bongos, temple blocks and tom toms) then joins for the finale.

The virtuosic clarinet part was written in close collaboration with the dedicatee and forms alternately a partner then opponent of the orchestra.

The World premiere took place in Moscow on 1st April 2005 with Ronald Van Spaendonck as soloist; the orchestra was conducted by the composer.



La Mer opus L 109

Claude DEBUSSY



Claude Debussy was born in his family home in Saint-Germain-en-Laye on 22nd August 1862. His family then moved to Paris in September 1867. It is clear that it was in Cannes that the young Achille-Claude first discovered the world of music. His aunt Clémentine first spotted his affinity to music and instructed a music teacher on his behalf. He then studied under Madame Mauté, an excellent pianist who was convinced of the young Debussy's musical talent.

After a year of lessons with Madame Mauté, Achille-Claude made such good progress he was admitted to the Conservatoire on 22nd October 1872, where he studied for more than ten years. Debussy's first compositions supposedly date from 1879. Debussy then enrolled on a composition course.

One might have expected he would want to be taught by Massenet, who had a very good reputation but Debussy preferred to go to the class of the newly qualified Ernest Guiraud. The years 1880 - 1882 were pivotal for Debussy, who composed with ease at this time and who had real ambitions to succeed.



In 1884, the young musician was awarded first prize in Rome for his cantata *L'Enfant prodigue* (*The Prodigal Son*) and, in accordance with the rules of the competition, obtained a scholarship and a three year stay at the French Academy in Rome, Villa Médici. After two years, Debussy left the Conservatoire and returned to France.

In 1890 came his *Suite bergamasque* for piano, his first success which was probably inspired by Paul Verlaine and influenced by Gabriel Fauré. This was followed by the *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* (Prelude to the Afternoon of a faun) for orchestra, which paraphrases a poem by Stéphane Mallarmé.

Group photograph taken at the Villa Médici in Rome

It was, however, the work *Pelléas et Mélisande* which really sealed Debussy's reputation internationally as a composer.

At the start of the 20th century, to ensure a stable life for his family, Debussy varied his activities. He therefore published a number of articles in newspapers and glossy critical music reviews under the pseudonym "Monsieur Croche".

Among his new acquaintances Debussy struck up a friendship with Igor Stravinsky, who was still a young man at the time.

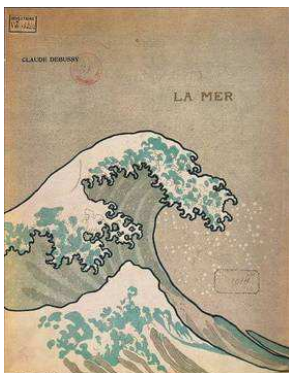
Around 1910, Debussy was diagnosed with cancer. His health deteriorated rapidly and he was in increasing pain. He rarely left his house and finished his last works. Claude Debussy died on 25th March 1918.



Claude Debussy's tomb – Passy Cemetery (Paris)

Even though it may be difficult to associate Debussy with one particular artistic trend, he is generally referred to as an "impressionist", a label which he himself never requested and which has been pretty much abandoned these days.

His ingenious orchestration and acute attention to instrumental colours justified Debussy as successor of Berlioz and contemporary of Ravel. Messiaen, Takemitsu, Dutilleux and numerous other prominent figures of twentieth century music acknowledge that whilst Debussy may not be their joint Master, Western music as a whole can thank him for introducing an excellent new form of "Renaissance".



La Mer, Three symphonic Sketches for Orchestra or simply *La Mer* is an orchestral work (opus L 109) by the French composer Claude Debussy (1862-1918). Started in 1903 in France, the composition of *La Mer* was finished in 1905 during Debussy's stay in the English coastal town of Eastbourne. The work was performed by the Orchestre Lamoureux, conducted by Camille Chevillard on 15th October 1905 in Paris. The piece was not well received at the time (mainly because of the poor performance), but over time it has become one of the most-played orchestral works that Debussy wrote.

La Mer has three movements:

1. *De l'aube à midi sur la mer* (From dawn to midday on the sea - Very slowly).
2. *Jeux de vagues* (Play of the waves) - Allegro.
3. *Dialogue du vent et de la mer* (Dialogue between wind and waves - Animated and tumultuous).

Because of the skill with which the work was created, it strongly resembles a symphony, even though it is not labelled as such.

L'Arlésienne (The Girl from Arles) (suite n° 2)

Georges BIZET



Georges Bizet was a 19th Century French composer. He was born in Paris on 25th October 1838 and died in Bougival on 3rd June 1875.

He composed one of the most popular French operas ever written: *Carmen* (1875).

His mother was a pianist and taught him the basics of the instrument. His uncle, François Delsarte, was a singing teacher, a specialist in Gluck, and was famous all over Europe. Opera and the piano therefore made a mark on this young man's destiny very early on.

At a young age, Georges displayed a gift for music and entered the national superior Conservatoire of music and dance in Paris at age 9.

In autumn 1855, barely seventeen years old and within the space of a month, he composed his first symphony.

At 19, he won the great Rome prize for music composition with his "Clovis et Clotilde" cantata, which was a prestigious springboard at the time for a career as a composer and for which the prize is a three year stay at the Villa Médici.

Upon his return to France, he devoted himself to teaching and to composing. On 1st October 1872, he put on *L'Arlésienne* at the Vaudeville Theatre, but the work was withdrawn from the playbill after twenty performances. Bizet then wrote an orchestral suite based on the work and also reworked a shorter version for piano for four hands. The orchestral suite was performed in November 1872 at the Padeloup Concerts and met with undeniable great success.

In 1875 he moved to the small village of Bougival in order to finish the orchestration of *Carmen*.

On 3rd March 1875 he was knighted, the same day as the première of *Carmen*, which turned out to be a disaster. The audience and the critics were outraged by the violence of emotion in the work, which also received damning reviews by the press the following day due to its "immoral" nature. Bizet was devastated by this. He contracted a throat infection but insisted on remaining at home at Bougival, contrary to everyone's advice. On 29th May 1875, he went for a dip in the icy water of the Seine and was struck down the following day with rheumatic fever. His health deteriorated and during the night of 2nd to 3rd June he suffered cardiac complications and died of a heart attack, aged just 36.

His opera *Carmen* is one of the most played works in the world.

Georges Bizet is buried at the Père-Lachaise Cemetery.



Tomb of Georges Bizet - Père-Lachaise Cemetery, Paris

Georges Bizet's L'Arlésienne is a piece of theatre music composed for the three-act play by Alphonse Daudet; it was performed in Paris at the Vaudeville Theatre on 1st October 1872. Whilst the work received mostly positive reviews, Daudet's play was a complete flop.

In the month that followed this theatrical fiasco, Bizet reused four acts from his music, restructuring and adapting them to form a suite of four movements for symphony orchestra. On 10th November 1874, the first performance at the Cirque d'Hiver (Winter Circus) was a great success and has remained so ever since.

In 1879, four years after his death, one of Debussy's friends, Ernest Guiraud, adapted a new suite based on his theatre music. He also added in a minuet taken from the third act of La Jolie Fille de Perth (the Fair Maid of Perth), the 1866 opera based on the novel by Sir Walter Scott.

The two suites were written as small symphonies from the classical era, in four movements. In order to fit concert format, they do not follow the chronological order of Daudet's play. The second suite is comprised of the following:

- *I. Pastorale - Andante sostenuto assai / Andantino / Tempo primo*
- *II. Intermezzo - Andante moderato ma con moto / Allegro moderato / Tempo primo*
- *III. Menuetto - Andantino quasi Allegretto*
- *IV. Farandole - Allegro deciso (Tempo di marcia) / Allegro vivo e deciso*

The farandole for the festival of Saint-Éloi is performed at "fortissississimo" (quadruple forte), which is deafening but pretty impressive. The traditional symphony orchestra is enriched by the most recent musical invention, the saxophone.

Ronald Van Spaendonck - clarinet.



Ronald Van Spaendonck is considered one of the best clarinetists of his generation. In September 2000, he was chosen as the BBC's New Generation Artist and was invited to perform with the BBC Scottish Symphony, BBC Philharmonic Orchestra and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, with whom he made his debut at the PROMS in July 2002. He has given recitals and concerts at the Wigmore Hall, Djanogly Hall, St George's in Bristol as well as at festivals in Chester, Brighton, Buxton, City of London and including the prestigious Edinburgh Festival where he has been invited back repeatedly. Ronald Van

Spaendonck has played some of the biggest European concert venues with orchestras such as the Liege Philharmonic Orchestra, the Porto Clássica Orchestra, the Orchestra of the city of Oulu in Finland, the Zurich Symphony Orchestra, the Luxembourg Philharmonic Orchestra, the German Symphony Orchestra in Berlin, The Brabant Orchestra, The Belgian Radio Orchestra and the National Orchestra of Belgium.

In 2002, he made an acclaimed debut in Japan, when he was invited to perform five concerts, one of which was at the Suntory Hall in Tokyo as part of the 'JAL Classic Special New Artist Series'.

His chamber music partners include the Skampa, Ysaye, Belcea, Szymanowski, Aviv, the Royal string quartets, the pianists Alexandre Tharaud, Jérôme Ducros and Muhiddin D. Demiriz, the violinists Gidon Kremer and Catherine Leonard, the viola player Lawrence Power, the cellist Marie Hallynck, and many more.

Ronald has received numerous international awards: European; First Prize at the International TROMP competition, First Prize at the Dos Hermanas International Competition and First Prize at the A.Gi. Mus Wind Instruments International Competition in Rome. He was also made a 'Laureat Juventus' in 1991 and a 'Rising Star' in 1998, which gave him the opportunity to play in the world's greatest concert halls.

Ronald Van Spaendonck studied the clarinet with Léon Jacot, Walter Boeykens, Anthony Pay (London) and Karl Leister (Berlin).

He has recorded extensively (Harmonia Mundi, Naxos, Supraphon,...) to great unanimous critical acclaim. Michael Lysight's 'Concerto for clarinet and orchestra' was dedicated to him and he performed the world premier of the work in Moscow on 1st April 2005, directed by the composer himself. Ronald Van Spaendonck is artistic advisor for Buffet Crampon company, "Gold Performing Artist" for the Rico reeds and accomplished teacher at the Mons and Brussels Royal Conservatoires. He is also teacher "Honoris Causa" at the Guangzhou Conservatory (China).

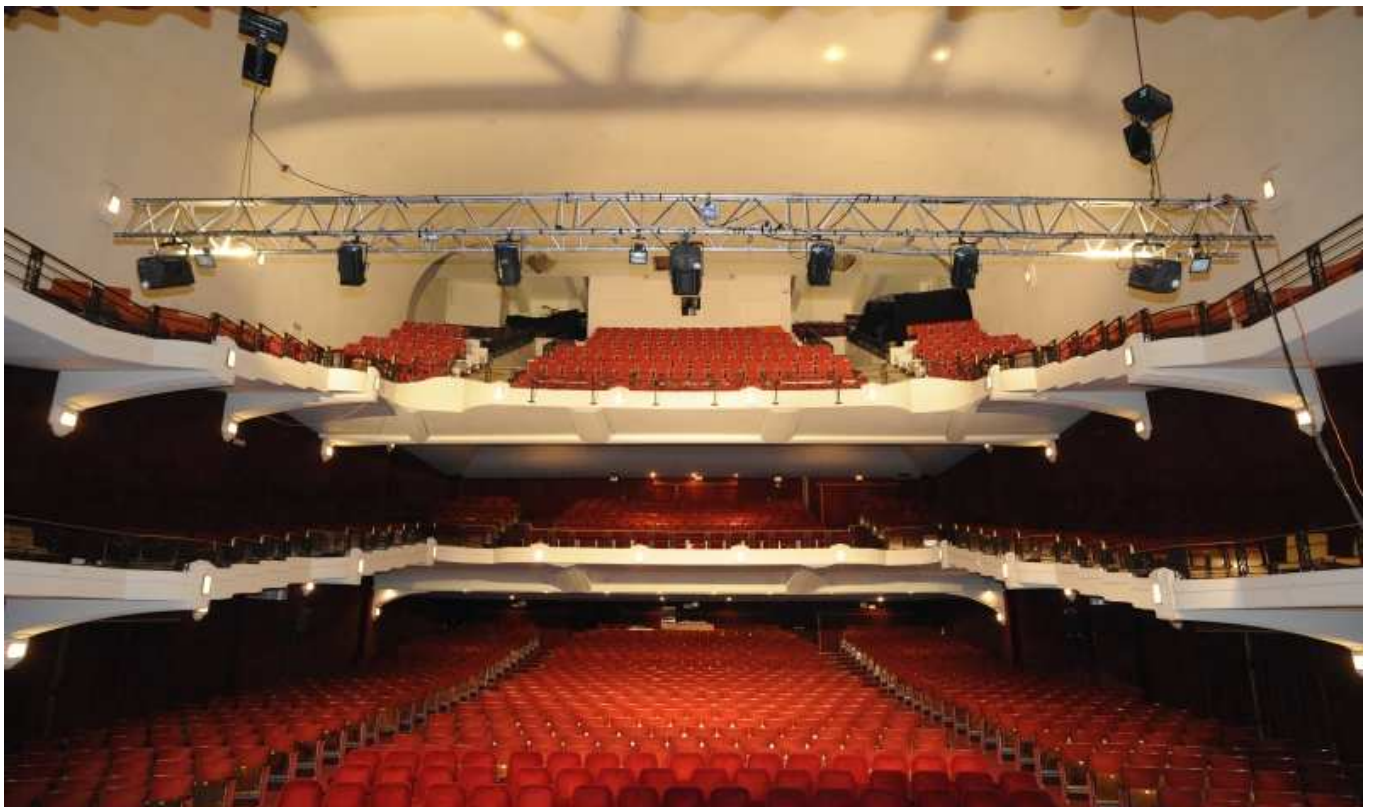
www.vanspaendonck.be



The Brussels Philharmonic Orchestra at the Saint-Michel Theatre in Brussels



Roger Bausier



Concert hall at the Saint-Michel Theatre