

LSO St Luke's

CHAMBER MUSIC

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**SAINT-SAËNS' CIRCLE:
PAVEL KOLESNIKOV
& SAMSON TSOY**

Friday 18 March 2022 6pm
Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

Camille Saint-Saëns The Swan from
'The Carnival of the Animals'
Jean-Philippe Rameau arr Camille Saint-Saëns
La Boucon from 'Pièces de clavecin en concerts'
Camille Saint-Saëns arr Claude Debussy
Pavane from 'Étienne Marcel'
Camille Saint-Saëns Variations on a Theme of
Beethoven Op 35; Berceuse Op 105
Georges Bizet Selections from 'Jeux d'enfants'
Gabriel Fauré Selections from 'Dolly Suite'
Leonid Desyatnikov Du côté de chez Swan

Pavel Kolesnikov piano
Samson Tsoy piano

The Swan from 'The Carnival of the Animals' Camille Saint-Saëns

This series based around the music of Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921) continues with a two-piano programme, opening with the famous 'Swan' movement from *The Carnival of the Animals*. Saint-Saëns composed his 'grand zoological fantasy' for two pianos and miscellaneous other solo instruments purely for his own amusement in 1886, while he was at work on his massive Organ Symphony. He first performed it privately with a few friends, but afterwards banned all public performances, fearing it might damage his reputation as a serious composer. Only the meltingly beautiful 'Swan', originally scored for solo cello with rippling piano accompaniment, was performed and published in his lifetime. It became an instant hit.

La Boucon from 'Pièces de clavecin en concerts' Jean-Philippe Rameau arr Saint-Saëns

Saint-Saëns was not only a brilliant keyboard player and a prolific composer, but was also keenly interested in a variety of intellectual pursuits ranging from mathematics to philosophy, archaeology, astronomy and musicology. He applied himself to editing the works of Baroque French composers such as Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683–1764), whom he described as 'the greatest musical genius that France ever produced'. 'La Boucon' is his two-piano arrangement of a piece from the second Concert (a short suite) in Rameau's *Pièces de clavecin en concerts*, originally published in Paris in 1741. Described as an 'air gracieux', this elegant little piece is a musical portrait of Rameau's pupil Anne-Jeanne Boucon, a brilliant harpsichordist who regularly performed in aristocratic French salons. She and her composer husband were the subjects of matching portraits by the 18th-century painter Quentin de la Tour.



Pavane from 'Étienne Marcel'

Camille Saint-Saëns arr Claude Debussy

Saint-Saëns was a traditionalist at heart, and didn't think much of avant-garde contemporaries such as Claude Debussy. Nevertheless, in 1890, the younger composer transcribed for two pianos seven 'airs de ballet' from Saint-Saëns' opera *Étienne Marcel*, an opulent historical drama composed in 1879 for the Grand Theatre of Lyons. This minor-key Pavane has a charming, 'olde-world' feel.

Variations on a Theme of Beethoven Op 35

Camille Saint-Saëns

Saint-Saëns' output of solo piano music spanned almost 70 years. Most are salon pieces such as waltzes and caprices, and strangely, he never wrote a piano sonata. His *Variations on a Theme of Beethoven Op 35* for two pianos was composed in 1874. It was first performed in March that year by the husband-and-wife duo Alfred and Marie Jaëll at a concert of the Société Nationale de Musique, which Saint-Saëns had helped to found in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War, with the aim of promoting contemporary French music. The theme, which appears after a brief introduction, is taken from the trio section of the third movement (Menuetto) of Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op 31 No 3, known as the 'Hunt'. It is followed by eight contrasting variations, some delicate and sparkling, others – including the seventh, a funeral march – more sombre. The piece is rounded off by an academic-sounding Fugue, leading into a brilliant Presto and Coda.

Berceuse Op 105

Camille Saint-Saëns

Childhood is the connecting theme of the next three items. Saint-Saëns composed his *Berceuse* (Lullaby) in 1896 for a young mother, the Marquise de Balleroy, for whose parents' wedding years earlier at the Parisian church of La Madeleine he had written a *Bénédiction nuptiale* for organ. The *Berceuse* has an added poignancy in view of the composer's own tragic experience of parenthood some two decades before: his two infant sons died within weeks of each other, one accidentally, the other through illness, resulting in the irreparable breakdown of his marriage.

Selections from 'Jeux d'enfants'

Georges Bizet

The other pieces come from two well-known sets of miniatures. Georges Bizet's *Jeux d'enfants* (Children's Games) of 1871 look back to Robert Schumann in their charming evocation of childhood innocence. Pavel Kolesnikov and Samson Tsoy have selected four of the twelve pieces in the set, beginning with 'Les chevaux de bois' (Wooden horses), a scherzo suggesting children either riding on a carousel or galloping around on hobby horses. Next comes the rondino 'Les bulles de savon' (Soap bubbles), followed by a charming impromptu, 'La toupée' (The spinning top). The last number is a delicate *fantaisie*, 'Le volant', suggesting a game of 'battledore and shuttlecock' – a children's version of badminton.

Selections from 'Dolly Suite'

Gabriel Fauré

Saint-Saëns' favourite pupil Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924) composed the six pieces in his 'Dolly' Suite to mark birthdays and other significant events in the early life of Régina-Hélène ('Dolly') Bardac, the infant daughter of his married mistress, beginning with a Lullaby for her first birthday in 1893. Today we hear Nos 3 and 6 from the suite. 'Le jardin de Dolly' (Dolly's Garden), a charming Andantino which quotes Fauré's own First Violin Sonata, was presented to the little girl on New Year's Day 1895, while 'Le pas espagnol' is a lively dance in the popular Spanish style.

Du côté de chez Swan

Leonid Desyatnikov

The title of the final piece in today's programme, by composer Leonid Desyatnikov (b 1955), is an allusive piece of wordplay. On the surface, it seems to refer to the opening book in Marcel Proust's great hymn to *fin-de-siècle* nostalgia, *À la recherche du temps perdu* (In Search of Lost Time). The apparent misspelling of *Du côté de chez Swann* (Swann's Way) is in fact a give-away – the 12-minute piece, which dates from 1995, was inspired not so much by Proust's Swann, as by Saint-Saëns' *Swan*. Desyatnikov is noted for his film scores and theatre work. *Du côté de chez Swan* was written for his close friend and collaborator, the pianist Alexei Goribol.

Pavel Kolesnikov

piano

The London-based pianist Pavel Kolesnikov was born in Siberia into a family of scientists. He studied both piano and violin for ten years, before concentrating solely on the piano. He has studied at Moscow State Conservatory with Sergey Dorensky, at London's Royal College of Music with Norma Fisher and at Brussels' Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel with Maria João Pires, thanks to the generous support of Mr Christopher D Budden, the RCM Scholarship Foundation and the Hattori Foundation. In 2012, Kolesnikov took home the world's largest piano prize at the Honens International Piano Competition. He is also the recipient of the Milstein Medal, the RCM Benjamin Britten Piano Fellow, and was a member of BBC Radio 3's New Generation Artists from 2014 to 2016.

Kolesnikov has given recitals at the Wigmore Hall and Queen Elizabeth Hall in London (as part of the international Piano Series), at Carnegie Hall in New York, Berlin's Konzerthaus, the Louvre and Salle Gaveau in Paris, Suntory Hall in Tokyo, and at the Muziekgebouw in Amsterdam. In recent years he has performed at La Roque d'Antheron festival, the Musiq3 Festival in Brussels, Piano aux Jacobins in Toulouse, and the Aldeburgh Festival, among others.

An avid ensemble player, Kolesnikov regularly performs in a piano duo with Samson Tsoy and collaborates with other musicians including cellist Narek Hakhnazaryan, the Hermes String Quartet and the Calidore String Quartet. In 2019 he performed the complete cycles of Brahms violin and viola sonatas with Lawrence Power. He formed Trio Aventure with Elina Buksha and Aurelien Pascal.

Kolesnikov records for Hyperion, his repertoire ranging from rarely heard harpsichord pieces by Louis Couperin to Tchaikovsky's *The Seasons*. His Chopin Mazurkas album won a Diapason d'Or de l'annee. His sixth album, Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, was released in Autumn 2020. He collaborated with legendary Belgian dancer Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker on a new choreographic work based on the *Goldberg Variations*, which was premiered in August 2020 at the Wiener Festwochen.

In 2019, together with Samson Tsoy, Kolesnikov started the Ragged Music Festival at the Ragged School Museum: Dr Barnado's former 'ragged school' in London's East End. In the same year he won the Critics' Circle Young Talent Award (2019) for piano.

Samson Tsoy

piano

Pianist Samson Tsoy has performed with renowned conductors and orchestras, including with Alexander Vedernikov and the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Diego Masson as part of Philharmonia Orchestra's 'Stravinsky: Myths and Rituals' series, Junajo Mena and the Real Filharmonía de Galicia, and Roberto Minczuk and the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra.

He has appeared as a soloist and chamber musician at prestigious venues and festivals around the world. These include the Barbican, Royal Festival Hall and Queen Elizabeth Hall in London, Théâtre de la Ville and Salle Gaveau in Paris, Aldeburgh Festival, Berlin's Konzerthaus, Kilkenny Arts Festival, Verbier Festival, Sala Verdi, Montreux September Musical Festival, Plush Festival, Honens Festival and the Rostropovich Festival. In September 2019, together with his duo partner Pavel Kolesnikov he launched a 'seriously edgy, admirable and a must-see' (*Classical Music* magazine) festival in East London: 'the Ragged Music Festival'. The launch received a five-star review in *The Independent*.

During the summer of 2020, Samson Tsoy performed at the Wigmore Hall lockdown recital series in June, at Fidelio Orchestra Cafe in July and at Bold Tendencies' multi-storey car park in August and September. The recitals received five-star reviews in *The Sunday Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, the *Daily Mail*, *The Observer* and on *The Arts Desk* website.

Presented by the BBC Radio 3 as a rising star, highlights of the summer 2021 included debuts with the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Maxim Emelyanychev, playing both Brahms concertos in one evening, and solo recital debuts at Wigmore Hall, East-Neuk, Ryedale and Norwich and Norfolk Festivals.

Samson Tsoy graduated from the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory and the Royal College of Music in London, and subsequently worked under the guidance of Maria João Pires and Elisabeth Leonskaja. He is a laureate of the Santander Paloma O'Shea International Piano Competition, a winner of the Campillos International Piano Competition and a recipient of the Milstein Medal Award. He was a City Music Foundation Artist from 2015 to 2019.

Coming Up

SAINT-SAËNS' CIRCLE: NASH ENSEMBLE

Friday 25 March 2022 1pm
Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

Saint-Saëns Caprice sur des airs danois et russes
Saint-Saëns Tarantelle in A minor Op 6
Fauré Piano Quartet in G minor Op 45

Nash Ensemble

GOULD PIANO TRIO

Friday 25 March 2022 6pm
Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

Fauré Piano Trio in D minor Op 120
Saint-Saëns Piano Trio No 2 in E minor

Gould Piano Trio