

LE VOYAGEUR SANS BAGAGE

Chamber music for clarinet, strings, and four-hand piano

DARIUS MILHAUD

Suite for violin, clarinet, and piano (1937)

Incidental music from "LE VOYAGEUR SANS BAGAGE" (The Traveller Without Luggage) by **Jean Anouilh**

Actor – Yoann Bretonnet Violin – Tracey Tsang Clarinet – Andrew Kennedy Piano – Benjamin Chan

I Overture

II Divertissement (Diversion)

III Jeu (Game)

IV Introduction et Final

A French soldier loses his memory in the Great War, and, 17 years later, having met with hundreds of families, desperate to claim him, there are just five possibilities left. Finally he meets the Renauds, who relate convincing stories of his supposed past, painting a considerably less than romantic and rosy picture.

Milhaud is known for quirky, sunny, humorous music. When teaching the musical giants Dave Brubeck and Burt Bacharach, he impressed upon them the importance of having a memorable tune. Observe the fun and wit of the music in the movement and communication of the performers.

The characters, in order of appearance

<i>Gaston</i>	A soldier who has failed to recover his memory in an asylum after two decades
<i>Georges Renaud</i>	... claims that Gaston is his missing brother, Jacques
<i>Madame Renaud</i>	The matriarch of an elite family
<i>The Chauffeur</i>	A servant to the Renauds for many years
<i>Valentine Renaud</i>	... married to Georges, but formerly conducted an affair with his brother
<i>Gaston/Jacques</i>	A man with no memory but who now understands his self and his past

MAX BRUCH

Eight pieces for clarinet, viola, and piano

Pieces number 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (Rumänische Melodie), and 7

Clarinet – Andrew Kennedy Viola – Michelle Urquhart Piano – Kian Woo

Bruch's *Eight Pieces* use a rare combination of two instruments with identical ranges and remarkable blending qualities. The clarinet and viola are equals - they soliloquize, converse, reflect, and affirm each other throughout. Listen for the musicians taking turns as soloist, next backing away to support the others, and at other times uniting to fill out glorious harmony. This is best observed in live performance, as the audience can readily grasp the connection and intimate teamwork between musicians. The piano is treated like an accompanying orchestra, occasionally embellishing like a rippling harp, sighing over the top like flutes, oboes and violins, or providing a huge brass-like force at climactic points.

1 – Imagine a curtain opening on two lovers in an unsettled, forlorn operatic duet. Lush arpeggios at the end from the piano, now in a comforting major key, create a mystical, heavenly mood.

2 - An ominous rolling beginning, perhaps a swirling green stormy ocean, settles to a serene reassuring calm by the end. Frantic tumbling notes from the piano are sometimes tactful, and sometimes smothering.

3 - The viola plays angry recitative in a very bright C sharp minor, railing against fate and humanity. This is alternated with a soothing, enlightened line from the soaring, placating clarinet. This hymn is so gentle that the violist must quell all rage, and the listener is forced to shorten their breath to hear its whisper.

4 - Pecky, militaristic rhythm, violent trills and punishing accents in D minor create desperation, once again giving way to carefree flowing delight near the end, in D major.

5 – Only this "Rumänische Melodie" has a title beyond a mere number. Bruch adapted other folk music in this opus of miniatures - we can guess at Scottish, Swedish, Hebrew, Welsh, Russian, and Celtic tunes. Picture stories of a gypsy family being passed down by the fire, with great freedom of rhythm and incredible passion.

7 - Such sparkling mood is a refreshing salve after a lot of intense music. It is a rondo, and as customary the very first musical idea will be played again and again. You can also hear a small bridge that evokes a trumpet blast, and a less gregarious second tune, asking for some restraint and poise. Despite the call for elegance, the day will eventually belong to the fun of theme one.

INTERVAL - 20 minutes

ROBERT SCHUMANN

Sonata no. 2 in D minor for violin and piano

Violin – Tracey Tsang Piano – Benjamin Chan

I Ziemlich langsam – Lebhaft II Sehr lebhaft III Leise, einfach IV Bewegt

This work was a response to Schumann's lack of personal enthusiasm for his first Sonata in A minor, composed immediately prior. While both were written in under one week, and were unquestionably the result of a tormented mind, in contrast to the brooding darkness and of the first, this *Sonata No. 2* moves from pure shadow to allow glimpses of positivity.

The first movement, "*Slowly, then lively*", begins with a sentimental introduction, then abruptly shifts to tempestuous bluster, with constant racing dialogue, and competition between the two instruments for thematic material. The second movement, "*Very animated*", is in 6/8 and feels much lighter and more elegant. The piano generates much of the momentum from which the violin springs and dances, until the heartfelt contrast of the "trio", where the violin is allowed to show its glowing expressive best.

The third movement, "*Softly, Simply*", includes pizzicato triple-stops, almost like a lullaby played on a ukele, and develops into a poised, beautiful melody. Schumann adds double stops, as if the violin were playing a reverential duet with itself. The fourth movement, "*Moving along*", is quite fast and begins profoundly, with the two instruments again competing for the thematic material. While the initial ideas are regularly revisited in a classic rondo form, the intervening developmental sections travel to distant harmonic areas, as well as exploring distinct new textural approaches. The work concludes with a flourish of forceful triumph, with optimism conquering darkness at last.

ANDREW BALL

View of a Fractured City (2015)

WORLD PREMIERE COMMISSION

Bass Clarinet – Andrew Kennedy
Viola – Michelle Urquhart

Violin – Tracey Tsang
Piano – Kian Woo and Benjamin Chan

View of a Fractured City is an abstract representation of the composer's recent experience of structural aspects of North American cities. It is inspired by the detail and nuance found in large-scale distant and birds-eye perspectives of these cities; the complex array of buildings and roads analogised as a single, densely fragmented superstructure. We hear this concept in the displacement and permutation of harmony, rhythm and motif. Elements of crossrhythm, polyrhythm, and additive rhythm depict the abstraction of physical structure. In other sections, the visceral impression of various cities' characters are alluded to - the angular melodic gestures of the busy intensity and abrupt change of larger metropolises, to the relatively organic flow of smaller towns.

ANDREW KENNEDY

Poema de la Despedida (Poem of Farewell) (2015) - after the poem by Cuban author Jose Angel

Buesa

WORLD PREMIERE COMMISSION

Bass Clarinet – Andrew Kennedy
Viola – Michelle Urquhart

Violin – Tracey Tsang
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I Waking in Havana II Fishing boats III Sunset hymn IV All-night revelry

I tell you goodbye, and perhaps, with this farewell,
My most beautiful dream dies inside me...
But I tell you goodbye, for all my life,
Although all my life I will continue thinking of you.

Poema describes a full day, soon after a gut-wrenching and torturous breakup. A lonely lover awakens in Havana to the sound of churchbells and plainchant, and hums a regret-tinged love song as he walks the darkened alleys. The boats push out onto the water, and amongst the heightening waves nets fly and fish are caught. At sunset, the boats return safely, and the citizens hear a thankful hymn drifting from the cathedral. The lover prepares for a night of revelry. Walking the streets, he stumbles firstly on a cool jazzy lounge bar, then a bright family street party, and is swallowed by the shadows, lost in the echoing narrow lanes. Finally, he reaches the oceanfront where at the beach party a mambo underpins the song of lost love. He drinks, sings and dances all night long, until the churchbells begin the cycle again.