

ANAM RECITAL: STEVEN BRYER (PERCUSSION) A re-imagining of Ravel

FRIDAY 1 NOVEMBER 11AM
ROSINA AUDITORIUM, ABBOTSFORD CONVENT

Maurice RAVEL (1875-1937) arr. **BRYER** *Ma mère l'Oye* (1911) 19'

- i. Pavane de la Belle au bois dormant*
- ii. Petit Poucet*
- iii. Laideronette, Impératrice des Pagodes*
- iv. Les entretiens de la Belle et de la Bête*
- v. Le jardin féerique*

Steven Bryer (QLD) percussion
Louisa Breen (ANAM Associate Faculty) piano
Karen Chen * (NSW) clarinet
Sam Battock (guest) bassoon

RAVEL arr. **BRYER** *Pavane pour une infante défunte* (1899) 9'

Steven Bryer (QLD) percussion
Karen Chen * (NSW) clarinet
Sam Battock (guest) bassoon
Prudence Russell (guest) horn

RAVEL arr. **BRYER** *Assez vif – très rythmé* from String Quartet in F Major (1903) 9'

Steven Bryer (QLD) percussion
Jamie Willson (TAS) percussion
Aditya Bhat * (VIC) percussion
Jesse Vivante * (WA) percussion

Approximate duration: 50 minutes

ABOUT STEVEN BRYER

Born in Brisbane/Meanjin, Steven Bryer has wanted to play percussion ever since he heard the hammer played in Mahler's Sixth Symphony. In 2022, Steven graduated with a Graduate Certificate in Music Studies (Percussion) from Queensland Conservatorium, where he also completed his Bachelor of Music in Performance under the guidance of Synergy Percussion founding member, Michael Askill. In 2024, Steven is in his second year at ANAM, continuing his studies under both Peter Neville and John Arcaro. Find out more at anam.com.au/musicians

Louisa Breen's Associate Faculty position is generously supported by Igor Zambelli.

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PROGRAM NOTES

This program is particularly exciting for me, as it is something I have wanted to do in some form for a long time. I have always felt somewhat unsatisfied with the offerings of music written for percussionists in recent times, but have always had an appreciation for the works that many of my peers play. Playing a program of music written entirely for other instruments has been a goal of mine since first learning the Prelude of Bach's Cello Suite in G Minor on marimba in my first year of undergraduate study.

I started out this program knowing I wanted to play Maurice Ravel's *Mother Goose* suite, as it is an amazing piece and was my first orchestral experience at ANAM. The instrumentation I chose to arrange for came mostly from who I wanted to work with, as well as instruments which I hadn't seen in combination with percussion often before. Choosing this suite reminded me that I had attempted to arrange the second movement of Ravel's string quartet for percussion a few years ago, so I decided I wanted to update it a little and give it a second chance. Now with two Ravel pieces, I decided it was only natural to do a complete Ravel program – *Ravel Reimagined!* To pick the final piece, I decided to ask around and see what other Ravel pieces that my peers enjoyed. In my listening to suggestions, when I came across the *Pavane for a Dead Princess*, I thought it would be perfect to flesh out my program. It was written whilst Ravel was studying under Gabriel Fauré, to whom Ravel coincidentally dedicated his string quartet. It was also first written as a piano solo – which further ties it into my program as this is similar to the *Mother Goose* suite, which was first written for piano four-hands.

Ravel's *Mother Goose* suite (*Mère l'Oye* in the original French) is a suite of five movements that was originally written as a duet for piano and was first premiered on April 20th, 1910. Each of the movements is based on a different children's story - which are:

- i. Sleeping Beauty
- ii. Little Tom Thumb
- iii. The Green Serpent
- iv. Beauty and the Beast
- v. (possibly, again) Sleeping Beauty

Pavane for a Dead Princess (*Pavane pour une infante défunte*) was written in 1899 whilst Ravel was studying at the Conservatoire de Paris. He described that piece as being mildly inspired by "a pavane that a little princess might, in former times, have danced at the Spanish court." Ravel was asked by composer-conductor Manóah Leide-Tedesco why he chose the title, and Ravel apparently smiled coyly and replied, "Do not be surprised, that title has nothing to do with the composition. I simply liked the sound of those words and I put them there, *c'est tout*."

The second movement of Ravel's string quartet, following its inspiration from Debussy's quartet, is a scherzo with a pizzicato opening, which is what originally drew me in to arrange the piece for percussion. One of the challenges of course for percussion is that we have very little sustain on many of our instruments. The middle slow section is quite interesting as all of the parts play what seems completely independently at times, playing cross rhythms in two and three with accents on different parts of the beats to really throw off the regularity of the rest of the movement.

Written by Steven Bryer