

# CONCERT 2

THURSDAY 27 NOVEMBER, 7PM

## ROUSSEAU VS. RAMEAU

|  |  |     |
|--|--|-----|
| <b>Jean-Phillipe RAMEAU (1683-1764)</b>    | Overture from <i>Castor et Pollux</i> (1737)                               | 4'  |
| <b>Claude DEBUSSY (1862-1918)</b>          | String Quartet in G Minor, op. 10 (1893)                                   | 26' |
| <i>i. Animé et très décidé</i>             |  |     |
| <i>ii. Assez vif et bien rythmé</i>        |  |     |
| <i>iii. Andantino, doucement expressif</i> |  |     |
| <i>iv. Très modéré</i>                     |  |     |
| <b>André CAPLET (1878-1925)</b>            | <i>Conte fantastique</i> (1908)  | 32' |
| <b>INTERVAL</b>                            |  | 20' |
| <b>Jean-Jacques ROUSSEAU (1712-1778)</b>   | Overture from <i>Le devin du village</i> ('The Village Soothsayer') (1752) | 3'  |
| <b>Maurice RAVEL (1875-1937)</b>           | Violin Sonata No. 2 in G Major (1923-27)                                   | 18' |
| <i>i. Allegretto</i>                       |  |     |
| <i>ii. Blues. Moderato</i>                 |  |     |
| <i>iii. Perpetuum mobile. Allegro</i>      |  |     |
| <b>Darius MILHAUD (1892-1974)</b>          | <i>La Création du monde</i> , op. 81 (1923)                                | 16' |
| <b>Germaine TAILLEFAIRE (1892-1983)</b>    | Partita (1957)   | 3'  |

Approximate duration: 1 hour and 20 minutes with a 20-minute interval.

## ANAM MUSICIANS

|                                      |   |   |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| RAMEAU                               | <b>Adam Chalabi</b> director / violin<br>(ANAM Resident Faculty <sup>+</sup> , Head of Violin)<br><b>ANAM Strings</b>   | ROUSSEAU  | <b>Adam Chalabi</b> director / violin<br><b>ANAM Strings</b>  |
| DEBUSSY                              | <b>Olivia Kowalik</b> * (NSW) violin<br><b>Jasmine Milton</b> * (SA) violin<br><b>Hanna Wallace</b> * (NSW) viola<br><b>Max Wung</b> * (WA) cello   | RAVEL   | <b>Sophia Jones</b> * (QLD) violin<br><b>Timothy O'Malley</b> * (VIC) piano   |
| CAPLET                               | <b>William Nichols</b> (guest) harp<br><b>Lydia Sawires</b> * (NSW) violin<br><b>Lili Stephens</b> * (QLD) violin<br><b>Helena Burns</b> * (QLD) viola<br><b>Heesoo Kim</b> * (QLD)                     | MILHAUD   | <b>Timothy Young</b> director / piano (ANAM Resident Faculty <sup>#</sup> , Head of Piano)<br><b>ANAM Musicians</b> |
| <b>RAMEAU &amp; ROUSSEAU STRINGS</b> | Violin<br><b>Olivia Kowalik</b> * (NSW)<br><b>Lydia Sawires</b> * (NSW)<br><b>Olivia Bartlett</b> * (WA)<br><b>Jasmine Milton</b> * (SA)<br><b>Miriam Niessl</b> * (QLD)<br><b>Sophia Jones</b> * (QLD) | Viola<br><b>Hanna Wallace</b> * (NSW)<br><b>Daniel Casey</b> * (VIC)  | Cello<br><b>Max Wung</b> * (WA)<br><b>Fergus Ascot</b> * (VIC)  |
| <b>MILHAUD ORCHESTRA</b>             | Flute<br><b>Emica Taylor</b> * (NZ)<br><b>Braden Simm</b> * (QLD)   | Bassoon<br><b>William Hanna</b> (VIC)                                 | Double Bass<br><b>Maddison Furlan</b> * (VIC)   |
|                                      | Oboe<br><b>Joshua Webster</b> * (NZ)  | Horn<br><b>Emily Miers</b> * (NSW)                                    | Percussion<br><b>Steven Bryer</b> * (QLD)<br><b>Jonathan Parker</b> * (WA)  |
|                                      | Clarinet<br><b>Georgia White</b> * (VIC)<br><b>Karen Chen</b> * (NSW)   | Trumpet<br><b>Lewis Grey</b> * (NZ)<br><b>Stephen Mosa'ati</b> * (NZ) | Violin<br><b>Ian Chiao</b> * (NZ)<br><b>Lachlan MacLaren</b> * (VIC)  |
|                                      | Alto Saxophone<br><b>Lola Schueles</b> (guest)  | Tenor Trombone<br><b>Toby Sward</b> * (TAS)                           | Cello<br><b>Ariel Volovelsky</b> * (NSW)  |
|                                      |   |   | Double Bass<br><b>Allan McBean</b> * (SA)   |

<sup>+</sup>Position supported by the Patricia H Reid Foundation

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# IT'S NOT JUST THE ITALIANS, IT'S PERSONAL

"I conclude that the French have no music and cannot have any; or that if ever they do have any, so much the worse for them" –Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1753.

It seems a bit disingenuous to call a battle of ideas a war, yet the quarrel between two composers encapsulates the intellectual skirmishes leading up to the French Revolution. French vs Italian styles, the old school vs the new, as stand-ins for loyalists vs revolutionaries... the performances of one Italian troupe at the Paris Opéra had far-reaching consequences.

The seeds of the musical side of this dispute were planted years before, when in 1745 a young **Jean-Jacques Rousseau** attempted to present his new opera *Les muses galantes* to **Jean-Philippe Rameau**, the most celebrated music theorists of France and one of its most treasured composers. The young Rousseau's opera was extensively modelled on Rameau's *Les Indes galantes*, one of his most enduringly popular opera-ballets, which was a grave mistake – Rameau was insulted by the lack of originality and copycat nature of the work, and condemned it harshly, but not entirely, by saying:

"Part of *Les muses galantes* was by someone who was a master of the art and the rest by an ignoramus who did not understand the first thing about music"

Rousseau took it to heart ("Rameau claimed that he could see in me nothing but a little plagiarist without talent or taste," he wrote), and his admiration for the first man of French composition curdled. When the Italians did come to town, it provided the flashpoint for Rousseau's grievances to go explosively public.

Invited by the Paris Opéra to perform Giovanni Pergolesi's *La serva padrone*, the Bouffons, Eustachio Bambini's troupe of actors, became the pawns in a gambit to turn the Parisians against Italian opera. The administrators were sure their inexperience in large opera houses would see them fail spectacularly, finishing the foreign form once and for all, but apart from some opening night teething problems, the Parisians instead were won over by the Bouffons and they remained in Paris for over 150 performances of varied Italian repertoire. Rousseau's *Lettre sur la musique française* ('Letter on French music') came in the wake of the Bouffons' success, praising Italian opera and savagely critiquing the entire institution of French music, from the unsuitability of France's language to barely disguised attacks on Rameau's own *tragédies lyriques*:

"Pedantic pretensions of doctrine... which is distinguished today [by] melodical, stiff, untalented music, without invention or taste that they call in Paris 'written music par excellence', and which furthermore is only good to be written but never performed..."

"[The French] have no music... of even if they do have any, so much the worse for them."

Rousseau's attacks on the heart of French national identity were expectedly inflammatory, but in the anti-royalist atmosphere leading up to the French Revolution, Rameau quickly found himself alienated as intellectuals realigned with Rousseau. Though Rousseau's critiques of French opera having lost its "primal" connection to language and expression are decidedly conservative, being anti-French opera was easy when the style was so closely associated with the ruling House of Bourbon, and like a Facebook comments section, the pamphlet war took on a life of its own, drawing in the growing sociopolitical chaos in Paris.

The two overtures on this program are from some of each's most popular and enduring works. In particular, *Le devin du village* was an instant hit, becoming widely popular before *Lettre sur la musique française* was published. Even Louis XV was known to sing tunes from it around the palace. All this in the face of Rameau's seeming incapability to create a sensation – his works never took off until their second seasons.

And what of the more modern works on this program? Debussy and Ravel scarcely need introduction as the great fin-de-siècle composers of France, and Caplet and Milhaud are landmarks of the following generation, continuing the development of French music – but what of their pairings with the overtures?

Like trying to draw a line between Rameau as of the past and Rousseau as of the future, it's always a bit more complicated than simple binaries. Debussy in this case was the elder, Ravel the younger who at first held Debussy in such esteem that he was at first described as a "Debussyite," following the elder's stylistic lead. The breakdown in relations also came from a letter of Ravel's, though published without his consent, describing Debussy's études as 'offering nothing truly new' for the piano – a comment Debussy took offence at, especially given how he had mentored Ravel. But instead of coalescing around Ravel, the following generation saw Ravel's music as an artefact of a time gone by, holding Debussy's forward-thinking harmony as more in line with the coming emancipation of dissonance.

But in this moment, the outsider sound-world that **Maurice Ravel** and **Darius Milhaud** embrace is jazz. Ravel's violin sonata is sometimes referred to as the Blues sonata after its striking second movement, inspired by African American music traditions which Ravel deeply admired. *La Creation du monde* is the high point of Milhaud's own fascination with jazz, merging Baroque form (a prelude and fugue!) with a collision of big band and chamber ensemble instrumentation, and both Leonard Bernstein and Dave Brubeck praised the work for its authenticity in embracing jazz. Based on a French anthology of African creation myths, Milhaud makes no attempt at imitating music from any African cultures, instead, in his own words, "making wholesale use of the jazz style to convey a purely classical feeling."

Claude Debussy is far from a traditionalist, but his alignment with France's literary symbolists and his desire to create a more French sound in a world obsessed with German expressionism places him in Rameau's company. The harmonic colours of his string quartet are both antique and effortlessly contemporary for Debussy's time, moving from the home key of G minor to the archaic phrygian mode and modulating to the distant world of D-flat. **André Caplet** was a close friend of Debussy, winning renown as a conductor for his interpretations of Debussy's *Pelleas et Melisande*. Taking Debussy's symbolist colour-world further, Caplet pre-empted Messiaen in his mysticism and Catholic influences, which deepened after his experiences of trench warfare and gas-inflicted injuries in World War I. *Conte Fantastique* takes inspiration from a short story of Edgar Allan Poe, *The Mask of the Red Death*, which follows a nobleman trying to avoid a plague, personified by a masked individual at a frenzied masquerade ball. The parallels of being chased by an inevitable death are too apt a comparison to Caplet's own experiences on the Western Front.