

CONCERT 4

FRIDAY 28 NOVEMBER, 7PM

IN SEARCH OF LOST TIME

Louise FARRENC (1804-1875) Nonet in E-flat Major, op. 38 (1849)

31'

- i. Adagio - Allegro*
- ii. Andante con moto*
- iii. Scherzo. Allegro*
- iv. Adagio - Allegro*

Mélanie Hélène BONIS (1858-1937) *Scènes de la fôret*, op. 123 (1927)

16'

- i. Nocturne*
- ii. À l'aube*
- iii. Invocation*
- iv. Pour Artemis*

INTERVAL

20'

Pauline GARCIA-VIARDOT (1821-1910) Six Morceaux (1867)

7'

- i. Romance*
- vi. Tarantelle*

Gabriel FAURÉ (1845-1924) Piano Quartet No. 1 in C Minor, op. 15 (1879)

33'

- i. Allegro molto moderato*
- ii. Scherzo. Allegro vivo*
- iii. Adagio*
- iv. Allegro molto*

Approximate duration: 1 hour and 30 minutes with a 20-minute interval

ANAM MUSICIANS

FARRENC	Braden Simm * (QLD) flute Ethan Seto * (QLD) oboe Josephine Daniel * (QLD) clarinet Stephanie Sheridan * (WA) bassoon Tom Allen * (VIC) horn Olivia Bartlett * (WA) violin Angelina Kim * (QLD) viola Fergus Ascot * (VIC) cello Damien Eckersley double bass (ANAM Deputy Artistic Director, Faculty, Double Bass and Head of String Chamber Music (Acting))
BONIS	Emica Taylor * (NZ) flute Oliver Harris * (NSW) horn Timothy O'Malley * (VIC) piano
GARCIA-VIARDOT	Jasmine Milton * (SA) violin Liam Furey * (NZ) piano
FAURÉ	Po Goh * (VIC) piano Ian Chiao * (NZ) violin Jamie Miles * (VIC) viola Ariel Volovelsky * (NSW) cello

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ONE LITTLE PHRASE

Through Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, there's a little melody that keeps reappearing. An arpeggiated major chord in second inversion, then to the subdominant to stretch the heartstrings, before stepping back down to the tonic. This *idee fixé* (literally 'fixed idea', or motif) is Berlioz's representation of the protagonist's unrequited love – a barely-disguised representation of Berlioz himself and the object of his mad passion, actress Harriet Smithson.

In earlier concerts, the deep influence of literature on music has been a recurring theme – but this influence runs both ways. In Marcel Proust's seven-volume masterpiece *À la recherche du temps perdu* ('In Search of Lost Time'), art and especially music play pivotal roles, signalling changes and representing emotions. Today's concert takes inspiration from the most famous of these, the "little phrase" from the fictional composer Vinteuil's violin sonata, which represents the love between Charles Swann and the courtesan Odette.

Vinteuil is one of four fictional artists who Proust dedicates long sections to describing, amongst a host of real composers, painters and authors. The prevalence of art through the work both signifies the educated nature of the cast, and creates rich symbolism both in the way the works are described and in their implicit meanings, anchoring to the action or relations between characters. So detailed is the use of art that the completion of a fictional septet runs in tandem to the redemptive arc of the narrator – intricately described as Vinteuil's unfinished septet, constructed from incomplete themes like the narrator is constructed of his memories and experiences.

Based on absolutely nothing but my own musical imagination, to me, Vinteuil's 'little phrase' symbolising Swann and Odette's love sounds just like the *idee fixé* from Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*. But Proust devotees, music aficionados and academics have all attempted to 'discover' what Vinteuil's *actual* 'little phrase' is, convinced that it is a composer's real phrase. Like so much of this speculative reasoning, each argument has only so much to stand on, especially since Proust has mentioned most significant composers of his time – Wagner, Fauré, Franck, Beethoven, Debussy and more all mentioned by name, with many of their works either compared directly to Vinteuil's or pivotal in their own right to plot points – such as the use of Beethoven's op. 132 string quartet, notably when a bird whistles the *Heiliger Dankgesang* melody.

The strongest contender for a real-life Vinteuil, despite being mentioned and having his own works performed in the novel, is **Gabriel Fauré**. The composer's early career was plagued by the broken engagement to Marianne Viardot, daughter of Pauline. Marianne broke off the engagement feeling only "affection mixed with fear," and the deep heartbreak resulted in some of his greatest early works, including today's piano quartet, but also intensified his self-doubt and depression, with dreams of grander works curdling as he wasn't able to construct them, intensifying his own despair. It wasn't until the 1890's, when his works started to receive recognition, that his self-confidence started to come back. But the themes of the third movement capture Fauré's own longing and despair, and their aching beauty make them a fine contender for what Vinteuil's 'little phrase' could be like.

Though Proust's work captures the Romantic artist's spirit and the endless creativity of the time, there's a glaring blind spot in his survey of the end of the nineteenth century. His idea of greatness is that of the Romantic genius, men who were driven to their art through their emotions as if led by a divine hand. The works preceding Fauré's piano quartet better represent the musical activity leading up to Proust's time, one where several women won wide-spread acclaim for their compositional output, often in tandem with unbelievable instrumental virtuosity.

Louise Farrenc's Nonet took Paris by storm when the young Joseph Joachim performed its premiere in 1850. Coming from a long line of royal artists, she was a virtuoso pianist whose rich catalogue of compositions steadily won her fans across Europe. Her piano études were made compulsory study for the Paris Conservatoire's students, and her symphonies, though unpublished during her lifetime, were performed throughout Europe, and spent much of her life as the only woman holding a permanent chair at the Paris Conservatoire as the professor of piano.

Mélanie Bonis published under the nickname Mel, undoubtedly using the androgynous shortening to circumvent the constant bias against women in the arts. Coming from a working-class background, she taught herself piano and defied the odds of class and gender to study in Cesar Franck's class alongside Claude Debussy. Stuck in an arranged marriage with a man who did not care for music, she still wrote over 300 works which are slowly gaining their rightful place in the musical canon. *Scènes de la forêt* are a series of woodland scenes, beautifully painted in Romantic character and colour through the unique ensemble of flute, horn and piano.

Finally, **Pauline Viardot**: a composer whose life seems too vibrant to be true. An operatic sensation who undertook concert tours in which she accompanied herself in performances of her original works, she was connected to nearly every notable composer in Western Europe at the time, and wrote operas, songs and piano works whilst maintaining a busy life of touring, teaching, and raising four artistically gifted children. The *Morceaux* are both her academic study of several forms, each still displaying her virtuosity and creativity, with rhythmic flair and singing melodies.