

NAXOS

SAINT-SAËNS

Violin Concertos

Fanny Clamagrand, Violin
Sinfonia Finlandia Jyväskylä
Patrick Gallois



Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921) Violin Concertos

Like Mozart and Mendelssohn, Camille Saint-Saëns showed remarkable precocity as a child, first exhibited in piano lessons from his great-aunt at the age of two and a half. He coupled with his musical interests a wide general enthusiasm for learning of all kinds, literary and scientific, and was, as a composer, to produce music of many genres during a career that spanned the second half of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth, starting in a period that knew Mendelssohn and continuing beyond the death of Debussy.

Saint-Saëns was born in Paris in 1835, the son of a clerk in the government service, who died shortly after the birth of his only child. He was cared for by his mother and her adoptive aunt, whose husband had recently died. It was she who gave him his first piano lessons. Thereafter he studied with Camille Stamaty, a pupil of Kalkbrenner and of Mendelssohn, and appeared in public concerts as a child, having, by the age of ten, memorised all the Beethoven piano sonatas. At the same time he showed an aptitude for and interest in a great variety of subjects. In 1848 he entered the Conservatoire, studying the organ with Benoist and composition with Halévy, and continuing to show his gifts as a pianist, organist and composer. His intellectual curiosity led him to espouse the cause of contemporary music, as well as the revival of music by earlier composers.

A member of the circle of Pauline Viardot, a valued friend, Saint-Saëns taught briefly at the newly established Ecole Niedermeyer, where his pupils included Gabriel Fauré, a musician with whom he established a close relationship. In 1871, after the disasters of the Franco-Prussian war, he was instrumental in the foundation of the Société Nationale de Musique, with its aim of propagating French music, Ars Gallica. His great-aunt died in 1872 and three years later he contracted a marriage that came to an abrupt end six years later, after the earlier death of his two sons. The death of his mother in 1888 left him alone and he spent much of his later life travelling, accompanied by his dog and a loyal manservant. By the time of his own death in Algeria in 1921 he had to some extent outlived his

reputation at home. In France this was the age now of Les Six. Debussy was dead, Fauré was near the end of his life, and Stravinsky had already, some eight years before, scandalized Paris with his *Rite of Spring*. Saint-Saëns continued to compose, although Ravel unkindly suggested that in war-time he might have been more productively employed. Abroad he retained something more of his earlier fame. Once known as the French Mendelssohn, he had written music that appealed to audiences in much the same way as his predecessor's, for its clarity of texture and its attractive powers of invention, calculated to delight rather than to shock.

Violin Concerto No. 1 in A major, Op. 20, was, in fact, the second of the three violin concertos of Saint-Saëns, written in 1858, a year after the *Violin Concerto No. 2 in C major, Op. 58*. The *Amajor Concerto* was written for the young Spanish violinist Pablo de Sarasate, to whom he was to dedicate his third concerto and the popular *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso*. The concerto is cast in one movement. The soloist enters at once with a series of strongly marked chords. Trills lead to the *cantabile* second subject, set first in C sharp minor rather than the dominant key of E major. A development of the thematic material is followed by a cadenza and the D major *Andante espressivo*, the soloist accompanied principally by muted strings. The themes of the first part of the movement return in reverse order, the second theme making its appearance in D minor, modulating to allow the return of the opening A major theme. The concerto was published in 1868.

The first concerto, in order of composition, the *Violin Concerto in C major, Op. 58*, has enjoyed less success and was not published until 1879. It was dedicated to the painter and musician Achille Dien, who played the work at a soirée given by Saint-Saëns at the Salle Erard in 1860. The first movement, marked *Allegro moderato e maestoso*, allows the soloist to enter in the third bar with a dramatic theme, establishing the virtuoso nature of the work. To this a second thematic element provides a brief contrast. The orchestra presents its own version of the opening and a

secondary theme. The soloist leads to the second subject of the movement, in E major. The material is developed, returning in a varied recapitulation before an elaborate cadenza. The A minor second movement, *Andante espressivo*, entrusts the main theme to the soloist, after its brief and tentative foreshadowing by the orchestra. There is a contrasting central section and the main theme returns, played in octaves by the soloist and further elaborated, before leading to the final *Allegro scherzando quasi allegretto*, a rondo, its principal theme stated by the solo violin and recurring to frame contrasting episodes, including an excursion into the contrapuntal. The work ends with an *Allegro vivace* coda of cross-rhythms.

The third of the concertos, the *Violin Concerto in B minor, Op. 61*, was written in 1880 and dedicated to Sarasate, who was not at first enthusiastic about the work, taking it more fully into his repertoire only after he had

heard a performance of it by Eugène Ysaÿe. The soloist enters almost at once with an emphatic and dramatic theme, to which other material offers contrasts. The B flat major second movement, *Andantino quasi allegretto*, is pastoral in mood, dominated by its gently lilting principal theme, and ending in a coda allowing the soloist a *molto tranquillo* series of harmonic arpeggios in accompaniment. The final movement starts *Molto moderato e maestoso* with a recitative that is to return later in the movement. This leads to an *Allegro non troppo*, with a well defined melody for the violin, to which there is a contrast in a more lyrical theme and a calmer *cantabile* section, introduced by the orchestra and taken up by the soloist. The opening recitative returns, followed by the main theme and a more emphatic version of the secondary theme, leading to a triumphant final *Più allegro*.

Keith Anderson

Photo by Laetitia Carrette



Fanny Clamagirand

Considered to be one of the best violinists of her generation, Fanny Clamagirand has made her mark at the most prestigious international venues and festivals. She has performed with numerous renowned orchestras, shortly to include both the Vienna and London Philharmonic Orchestras. Her elegance, the brightness of her playing, and the sensitivity and authority of her interpretations have been warmly received by critics and public alike. Born in 1984, Fanny Clamagirand studied the violin with Larissa Kolos before joining, at the age of sixteen, Jean-Jacques Kantorow's postgraduate course at the Conservatoire de Paris. She obtained her Artist Diploma under Itzhak Rashkovsky at the Royal College of Music, London, and was subsequently coached by Pavel Vernikov at the Vienna Conservatory. She is currently supported by Anne-Sophie Mutter. She has won numerous prizes and awards, notably First Prize at the Monte-Carlo Violin Masters (2007) and Fritz Kreisler (2005, Vienna) and Adami Classical Revelation (2006) competitions, as well as the Yehudi Menuhin Special Prize (2000). She collaborates with artists such as Tugan Sokhiev, Gidon Kremer, Igor Tchetuev and the Ysaÿe String Quartet. She is a regular guest on French and foreign radio and TV programmes. Her first recording, of the *Six Solo Sonatas* by Ysaÿe (Nascor, 2007) was highly acclaimed by the press. She plays a 1700 Matteo Goffriller violin.



Patrick Gallois

Patrick Gallois belongs to the generation of French musicians leading highly successful international careers as both soloist and conductor. From the age of seventeen he studied the flute with Jean-Pierre Rampal at the Paris Conservatoire and at the age of 21 was appointed principal flute in the Orchestre National de France, under Lorin Maazel, playing under many famous conductors, including Leonard Bernstein, Seiji Ozawa, Pierre Boulez, Karl Böhm, Eugen Jochum, and Sergiu Celibidache. He held this post until 1984, when he decided to focus on his solo career, which has subsequently taken him throughout the world. He regularly performs and records with leading conductors and collaborates in chamber music with musicians such as Yuri Bashmet, Natalia Gutman, Peter Schreier, Jorg Demus, the Lindsay Quartet and formerly with Jean-Pierre Rampal and Lily Laskine. He has been invited to appear as a soloist with major orchestras in Europe and in Asia, and in leading international festivals, with tours to Germany, Japan and Israel, and annual master-classes at the Accademia

Chigiana in Siena. For twelve years after establishing his own orchestra in Paris, the Académie de Paris, Patrick Gallois has developed a conducting career which has taken him to Japan, Scandinavia, Italy, Portugal, the United States and Bulgaria, in addition to appearances as a conductor in France. In 2003 he was appointed Musical Director of the Sinfonia Finlandia Jyväskylä and tours regularly with the orchestra. Both as a conductor and as a flautist he has a wide repertoire, with a strong taste for contemporary music, and many new works have been dedicated to him. His recordings include an award-winning series for DGG. For Naxos he has recorded the complete flute concertos of C.P.E. Bach (8.555715-16), Haydn's *Symphonies Nos. 1-5* (8.557571) and Gounod's *Symphonies* (8.557463), among other works.



Sinfonia Finlandia Jyväskylä

Leader: Harri Forstén

Sinfonia Finlandia Jyväskylä was founded in 1955 and has operated in its present form since 1965. Since 2003 the French flautist and conductor Patrick Gallois has been the Music Director of the orchestra, leading a group of 38 musicians in concerts in Finland and abroad, including tours to Japan, France, Spain, Poland and Norway. The orchestra has recorded extensively, among others for Naxos, with releases including a series of the early symphonies of Joseph Haydn, Franz and Karl Doppler's flute music, as well as Louis Spohr's violin concertos, performed by Simone Lamsma. The orchestra has also made a

platinum-selling recording together with the opera star Karita Mattila. More recent releases include music by Kai Niemiinen and George Gershwin (both released in 2009) and music from Joseph Martin Kraus's opera *Aeneas in Carthage* (2010).

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921)

Concertos pour violon

Comme Mozart et Mendelssohn avant lui, Camille Saint-Saëns fut un enfant d'une remarquable précocité musicale, qui se manifesta alors qu'il n'avait que deux ans et demi, dès les premiers leçons de piano que lui donna sa grand-tante. En plus de s'intéresser à la musique, il s'enthousiasmait pour toutes sortes de matières littéraires et scientifiques, et durant sa carrière de compositeur, il allait produire des pages dans les genres les plus variés au fil d'un parcours englobant la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle et les deux premières décennies du XXe, depuis l'époque de Mendelssohn jusqu'à la disparition de Debussy.

Saint-Saëns naquit à Paris en 1835 ; son père était fonctionnaire et mourut peu de temps après la naissance de son unique enfant. Le petit Camille fut élevé par sa mère et la tante adoptive de cette dernière, qui avait récemment perdu son mari. C'est elle qui lui donna ses premières leçons de piano. Par la suite, il étudia avec Camille Stamaty, un élève de Kalkbrenner et de Mendelssohn, et donna, encore enfant, des concerts publics, ayant, dès ses dix ans, mémorisé toutes les sonates pour piano de Beethoven. Dans un même temps, il manifesta des dons et un intérêt pour une grande diversité de sujets. En 1848, il entra au Conservatoire, étudiant l'orgue avec Benoist et la composition avec Halévy, continuant d'exploiter ses talents de pianiste, d'organiste et de compositeur. Sa curiosité intellectuelle le mena à épouser la cause de la musique contemporaine et à promouvoir la redécouverte de pages de compositeurs plus anciens.

Membre du cercle de Pauline Viardot, l'une de ses proches amies, Saint-Saëns enseigna brièvement à l'École Niedermeyer nouvellement fondée, où il eut pour élève Gabriel Fauré, musicien avec lequel il entretenit une relation suivie. En 1871, après la débâcle de la guerre franco-prussienne, il fut l'un des fondateurs de la Société Nationale de Musique, qui avait pour but la diffusion de la musique française, l'Ars Gallica. Sa grand-tante mourut en 1872, et trois ans plus tard, il contracta un mariage qui s'acheva brutalement au bout de six ans, à la suite du décès

prématuré de ses deux fils. Quand sa mère mourut, en 1888, il se retrouva seul et passa une bonne partie du reste de sa vie à voyager, accompagné de son chien et d'un loyal serviteur. Lorsqu'il s'éteignit à son tour en Algérie en 1921, sa réputation en France s'était pour ainsi dire éteinte avant lui. Son pays était désormais à l'heure des Six. Debussy n'était plus, Fauré n'allait pas tarder à mourir à son tour, et il y avait déjà près de huit ans que Stravinsky avait scandalisé Paris avec son *Sacre du Printemps*. Saint-Saëns continuait de composer, même si Ravel insinua peu charitablement qu'il aurait pu participer de façon plus productive à l'effort de guerre. A l'étranger, sa célébrité d'antan ne s'était pas encore démentie. Autrefois connu comme « le Mendelssohn français », il avait composé des pages qui séduisaient le public un peu à la manière de son devancier, et ses textures limpides et son attrayante inventivité visaient plus à ravir qu'à choquer ses auditeurs.

Le *Concerto pour violon n° 1 en la majeur op. 20* fut en fait le deuxième des trois concertos pour violon de Saint-Saëns, écrit en 1858, un an après le *Concerto pour violon n° 2 en ut majeur op. 58*. Il fut composé à l'intention du jeune violoniste espagnol Pablo de Sarasate, à qui Saint-Saëns devait dédier son troisième concerto et la populaire *Introduction et Rondo Capriccioso*. Ce concerto comporte un seul mouvement. Le soliste entre d'emblée, avec une série d'accords fortement marqués. Des trilles mènent au second sujet, *cantabile*, qui commence en ut dièse mineur plutôt qu'en mi majeur, la tonalité de dominante. Un développement du matériau thématique est suivi d'une cadence et de l'*Andante espressivo* en ré majeur, le soliste étant principalement accompagné par les cordes avec sourdine. Les thèmes de la première partie du mouvement reparaissent en sens inverse, le second thème faisant son apparition en ré mineur et modulant pour permettre le retour du sujet initial en la majeur. Ce concerto fut publié en 1868.

Dans l'ordre de composition, le premier concerto fut le *Concerto pour violon en ut majeur op. 58* ; il rencontra moins de succès et ne fut publié qu'en 1879. Il fut dédié

au peintre et musicien Achille Dien, qui le joua lors d'une soirée donnée par Saint-Saëns en 1860 à la Salle Erard. Le premier mouvement, marqué *Allegro moderato e maestoso*, permet au soliste d'entrer à la troisième mesure avec un thème prenant, établissant ainsi la nature virtuose de l'ouvrage. Un deuxième élément thématique vient y apporter un bref contraste. L'orchestre présente sa propre version de l'ouverture, ainsi qu'un thème secondaire. Le soliste introduit le second sujet du mouvement, en mi majeur. Le matériau est développé dans une récapitulation variée avant une cadence recherchée. Le deuxième mouvement, un *Andante espressivo* en la mineur, confie son thème principal au soliste, après un présage bref et hésitant de l'orchestre. Vient ensuite le contraste d'une section centrale, et le thème principal reparait, joué en octaves par le soliste et développé davantage, avant de mener à l'*Allegro scherzando quasi allegretto* final, un rondo dont le thème principal est énoncé par le violon soliste, avec entre autres épisodes aux structures contrastées, une incursion contrapuntique. L'ouvrage se conclut par une coda *Allegro vivace* dont les rythmes s'entrecroisent.

Le troisième des concertos, le *Concerto pour violon en*

si mineur op. 61, fut écrit en 1880 et dédié à Sarasate, qui ne se montra guère enthousiaste, ne l'intégrant réellement à son répertoire qu'après avoir entendu Eugène Ysaÿe l'interpréter. Le soliste entre presque aussitôt avec un thème déclamatoire et dramatique, contrasté par du matériau supplémentaire. Le deuxième mouvement en si bémol majeur, *Andantino quasi allegretto*, est de caractère pastoral, dominé par son thème principal doucement berceur, et s'achevant par une coda qui permet au soliste une série d'arpèges harmoniques marquée *molto tranquillo* qui tient lieu d'accompagnement. Le mouvement final débute *Molto moderato e maestoso* avec un récitatif qui interviendra à nouveau au fil du mouvement. Il mène à un *Allegro non troppo*, avec une mélodie bien définie pour le violon, avec laquelle contrastent un thème plus lyrique et une section *cantabile* plus paisible, introduite par l'orchestre et reprise par le soliste. Le récitatif initial est repris, suivi du thème principal et d'une version plus emphatique du thème secondaire, menant à un *Più allegro* final triomphant.

Keith Anderson

Traduction française de David Ylla-Somers

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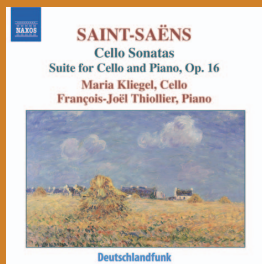
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Once dubbed 'the French Mendelssohn', Camille Saint-Saëns was a prodigiously gifted composer of sophisticated and appealing music much of which has been unjustly neglected in recent times. His three highly inventive and technically demanding violin concertos, of which the *Second* is arguably the most memorable and the *Third* the best known, abound in unforgettable melodies and expressive subtleties. The young Parisian violinist Fanny Clamagirand, who won First Prize at the 2005 Fritz Kreisler Competition in Vienna and First Prize at the 2007 Monte Carlo Violin Masters Competition, the competition of competition winners, is an ideal interpreter of this gorgeous French Romantic music.

Camille SAINT-SAËNS

(1835–1921)

Violin Concertos

Violin Concerto No. 3 in B minor, Op. 61

29:23

- 1 Allegro non troppo 9:06
 2 Andantino quasi allegretto 8:41
 3 Molto moderato e maestoso –
 Allegro non troppo 11:34

Violin Concerto No. 1 in A major, Op. 20

- 4 Allegro – Andante espressivo –
 Tempo 1 12:48

Violin Concerto No. 2 in C major, Op. 58

30:10

- 5 Allegro moderato e maestoso –
 Cadenza – A tempo più
 allegro 14:29
 6 Andante espressivo 8:42
 7 Allegro scherzando quasi
 allegretto 6:57



Fanny Clamagirand, Violin
 Sinfonia Finlandia Jyväskylä • Patrick Gallois



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