

**Concerts of Thursday, May 23, and Saturday, May 25, 2019, at 8:00p**

**Donald Runnicles, conductor**

**Kim-Lillian Strebel, soprano**

**Darius Milhaud (1892-1974)**

***Le bœuf sur le toit*, Opus 58 (1919)**

**Joseph Canteloube (1879-1957)**

**Excerpts from *Songs of the Auvergne* (1923)**

“La Pastoura als Camps”

“Baïlèro”

“Trois Bourrées”

Kim-Lillian Strebel, soprano

**Intermission**

**Claude Debussy (1862-1918)**

**Excerpts from *Préludes*, Books I (1909-10) and II (1912-13) (orch. Colin Matthews)**

*Minstrels* (1909-10) (orch. 2003)

“*Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l’air du soir*” (1909-10) (orch. 2005)

*La Puerta del Vino* (1912-13) (orch. 2003)

*Général Lavine—eccentric* (1912-13) (orch. 2004)

***La mer (The Sea)*, Three Symphonic Sketches (1905)**

I. *De l’aube à midi sur la mer (From Dawn until Noon on the Sea)*

II. *Jeux de vagues (Play of the Waves)*

III. *Dialogue du vent et de la mer (Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea)*

English surtitles by Ken Meltzer

## **Notes on the Program by Ken Meltzer**

### ***Le boeuf sur le toit*, Opus 58 (1919)**

**Darius Milhaud was born in Aix-en-Provence, France, on September 4, 1892, and died in Geneva, Switzerland, on June 22, 1974. The first performance of *Le boeuf sur le toit* took place at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, France, on February 21, 1920. *Le boeuf sur le toit* is scored for piccolo, two flutes, oboe, two clarinets, bassoon, two horns, two trumpets, trombone, bass drum, tambourine, guiro, cymbals, and strings. Approximate performance time is eighteen minutes.**

### **These are the First Classical Subscription Performances.**

French composer Darius Milhaud first conceived of *Le boeuf sur le toit* (*The Bull on the Roof*) as music to accompany a silent film. When that project didn't come to fruition, Milhaud collaborated with Jean Cocteau to create a ballet from the score. *Le boeuf sur le toit* premiered at the Paris Théâtre des Champs Élysées on February 21, 1920. Cocteau authored the scenario for the ballet, featuring costumes by Guy-Pierre Fauconnet, and stage designs by Raoul Dufy. The ballet takes place at a "Nothing Doing Bar" in Manhattan (Prohibition went into effect in the United States in 1920). The "plot" involves the surrealistic comings and goings of various characters, some portrayed at the premiere by the Fratellini clowns.

For the score, Milhaud called upon melodies he heard while serving as Paul Claudel's secretary, when the writer was a French diplomat in Brazil during WWI. "Le boeuf sur le toit" was the title of a Brazilian hit song. Milhaud explained that he "assembled a few popular melodies, tangoes, maxixes, sambas, and even a Portuguese fado, and transcribed them with a rondo-like theme recurring between each successive pair." During the course of the brief work, Milhaud explores all 12 major keys, and most of the minor ones as well. But there is nothing academic about the impact of a score that is teeming with melody, seductive rhythmic energy, and humor.

### **Excerpts from *Songs of the Auvergne* (1923)**

**Joseph Canteloube was born in Annonay, France, on October 21, 1879, and died in Grigny, France, on November 4, 1957. The featured songs are collectively scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, trumpet, timpani, piano, and strings. Approximate performance time of the excerpts is seventeen minutes.**

**First Classical Subscription Performances: May 25-27, Frederica von Stade, mezzo-soprano, Yoel Levi, Conductor.**

**Most Recent Classical Subscription Performances: January 19-21, 1995, Frederica von Stade, mezzo-soprano, Yoel Levi, Conductor**

The French composer Joseph Canteloube was a prolific artist, whose large catalogue of works encompasses a wide variety of musical genres, both instrumental and vocal. However, he is today best remembered for a single group of compositions, his arrangements of folksongs known as the *Songs of the Auvergne*.

Joseph Canteloube was born in Annonay, in south central France. Canteloube's family was of Auvergne descent. As a child, Canteloube often accompanied his father on walks through various Auvergne villages. The young Canteloube was enchanted both by the spectacular mountain vistas and the folk songs and dances of the Auvergne people.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Canteloube moved to Paris to study with French composer Vincent d'Indy (1851-1931). D'Indy taught a group of young composers who, like their mentor, believed folksong should play a pivotal role in contemporary French concert music.

Canteloube spent a great deal of time collecting and studying folksongs from various regions and cultures throughout France. He arranged many of these songs for performance, including the pieces known as the *Songs of the Auvergne*. All told, Canteloube published five Series of these *Songs*. The first two were completed in 1923, and published the following year. Series Three followed in 1927, followed three years later by Series Four. The Fifth and final Series (1954) was published in 1955.

Canteloube arranged the various *Songs of the Auvergne* for solo voice and orchestra. In those arrangements, the composer quite often couched the earthy Auvergne folk songs in elaborate and quite sophisticated harmonies and orchestrations.

Canteloube's richly-colored arrangements earned him criticism in some circles. In a 1941 article, "Utilization of Popular Song," Joseph Canteloube defended his approach:

Just because the peasant sings without accompaniment, that is not sufficient reason to imitate him. When the peasant sings at his work, or during the harvest, there is an accompaniment which surrounds his song which would not be felt by those whose interest is purely academic. Only poets and artists will feel it... It is nature herself, the earth which makes this, and the peasant and his song cannot be separated from this... If you suppress this atmosphere, you lose a large part of the poetry. Only the immaterial art of music can evoke the necessary atmosphere, with its timbres, its rhythms and its impalpable, moving harmonies.

The continued popularity of *Songs of the Auvergne* is testament to the composer's philosophy. Canteloube's heartfelt tribute to the music of his people

and homeland continues to charm music lovers around the world.

### **La Pastoura als Camps (First Series, No. 1)**

Quon lo pastouro s'en bo os cams,  
Quon lo pastouro s'en bo os cams,  
Gardo sèi mountounadoï,  
Tidera la la la la la loï!  
Gardo sèi mountounadoï!

Guèlo rèscountr' un moussurèt,  
Guèlo rèscountr' un moussurèt,  
Lou moussou l'ogatsavo,  
Tidera la la la la la loï!  
Lou moussou l'ogatsavo.

“Ah! Daïssa mè bous ogasta!  
Ah! Daïssa mè bous ogasta!  
Sès ton poulido filho!  
Tidera la la la la la loï!  
Sès ton poulido filho!”

“Estaco boustré cabalet,  
Estaco boustré cabalet,  
O lo cambo d'un' aôbré,  
Tidera la la la la la loï!  
O lo cambo d'un' aôbré!”

È lo perdri, quan lo tènio,  
È lo perdri, quan lo tènio,  
Guèlo s'en ès onado,  
Tidera la la la la la loï!  
Guèlo s'en ès onado!

### **The Shepherd Lass in the Fields**

When the shepherd lass goes off into the fields,  
She tends her little sheep,  
Tidera la la la la la loï!  
She tends her little sheep!

She meets a fine gentleman,  
The gentleman looks at her,  
Tidera la la la la la loï!  
The gentleman looks at her.

“Ah, let me look at you,

You are so pretty,  
Tidera la la la la la loi!  
You are so pretty!"

"Then tie up your horse,  
Tie him to this tree,  
Tidera la la la la la loi!  
Tie him to this tree!"

When he thought he held the beauty,  
She got away,  
Tidera la la la la la loi!  
She got away!

### **Baïlèro (First Series, No. 2)**

Pastré, dè dèlaï l'aïo,  
A gaïré dé boun tèn?  
Dio lou baïlèro lèrô, baïlèro, lô!  
È n'aï pa gaïré, è dio, tu?  
Baïlèro lèrô, baïlèro, lô!

Pastré, lou prat faï flour,  
li cal gorda toun troupèl!  
Dio lou baïlèro lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, baïlèro, lô!  
L'erb' ès pu fin' ol prat d'oiçi!  
Baïlèro lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, baïlèro, lô!

Pastré, couçi foraï,  
Èn obal io lou bel riou!  
Dio lou baïlèro lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, baïlèro, lô!  
Espèromè, té baô çirca!  
Baïlèro lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, baïlèro, lô!

### **Baïlèro**

Shepherd, across the river,  
You don't seem to be having a good time,  
Sing the Baïlèro, etc.  
I am not, and you too,  
Sing the Baïlèro, etc.

Shepherd, the meadow is in bloom,  
Come over here!  
Sing the Baïlèro, etc.  
The grass is greener on this side!  
You come here, Baïlèro, etc.

Shepherd, the stream separates us,  
And I can't cross it!  
Sing the Baïlerò, etc.  
Wait for me, I'm coming to look for you!  
Baïlerò, etc.

### **Trois Bourrées (Series 1, No. 3)**

#### **A. L'aïo de rotso**

L'aïo dè rotso té foro mourir, filhoto!  
L'aïo dè rotso té foro mourir!  
Nè té cal pas bèir' oquèl', aïo, quèl' aïo,  
Mès cal prèndr'un couot d'oquèl' aïo dè bi!

S'uno filhoto sè bouol morida, pitchouno,  
S'uno filhoto sè bouol morida,  
Li cal pas douna d'oquèl' aïo dè rotso,  
Aïmaro miliour oquèl' aïo dè bi!

#### **A. This Spring Water**

This spring water will kill you, little girl!  
This spring water will kill you!  
Don't drink clear water,  
But take a glass of wine!

When a girl gets married, little one,  
When a girl gets married,  
She should not be given water,  
She will love much better after some wine!

#### **B. Ound' onorèn gorda?**

Ound' onorèn gorda, pitchouno droùlèto?  
Ound' onorèn gorda lou troupèl pèl moti?  
Onorèn obal din lo ribèirèto,  
Din lou pradèl l'èrb è fresquèto;  
Païssarèn loï fèdoï pèl loï flours,  
Al louón dèl tsour nous forèn l'omour!

Ogatso louï moutous, pitchouno drooulèto,  
Ogatso louï moutous, lèis obilhé maï nous!  
Ogatso louï fèdoï què païssou l'èrbo,  
E lèis obilhé què païssou loï flours;  
Naôtres, pitchouno, què soun d'aïma,

Pèr viouvr' obon lou plosé d'omour!

### **B. Where Will We Find Our Flock?**

Where will we find our flock, little girl?  
Where will we go looking for the flocks in the morning?  
We'll go down by the river,  
Where the grass is so green;  
We'll find our sheep among the flowers,  
And we will make love all day!

Look at the sheep, little girl,  
Look at the sheep, at the bees, and at us!  
Look at the sheep, which feed on the grass  
And the bees, which feed on the flowers;  
But we, little one, we who are lovers,  
We live for the pleasures of love!

### **C. Obal din lou Limouzi**

Obal din lou Limouzi, pitchoun' obal din lou Limouzi,  
Sé l'io dè dzèntoï drolloï, o bé, o bé,  
Sé l'io dè dzèntoï drolloï, oïçi, o bé!

“Golon, ton bèlo què siascou lèï drolloï dè toun pois,  
Lous nostrès fringairès èn Limouzi,  
Saboun miliour counta flourèt' o bé!”

“Obal, din lou Limouzi, pitchouno, sé soun golons,  
Oïçi en Aoubèrgno, din moun poïs,  
Lous omès bous aïmoun è soun fidèls!”

### **C. Down Below in Limousin**

Down below in Limousin, little one, down below in Limousin,  
There are lots of pretty girls, o bé, o bé  
But there are lots of pretty girls here, too, o bé!

“Young man, however beautiful the young girls are in your country,  
Our men in Limousin  
Are much better at making love, o bé!”

“Down below in Limousin, little one, the young men are gallant,  
Here in Auvergne, in my country,  
Our men love us and are faithful!”

**Claude Debussy was born in St. Germain-en-Laye, France, on August 22, 1862, and died in Paris, France, on March 25, 1918.**

**Excerpts from *Préludes*, Books 1 (1909-10) and II (1912-13) (orch. Colin Matthews)**

**The Matthews orchestrations featured in these concerts are collectively scored for two flutes, alto flute, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, alto saxophone, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, side drum, tenor drum, tambourine, triangle, glockenspiel, tam-tam, tubular bells, xylophone, castanets, cymbals, suspended cymbal, two harps, celesta, and strings. Approximate performance time is fourteen minutes.**

**These are the First Classical Subscription Performances.**

French composer Claude Debussy created two sets of twelve *Préludes* for solo piano (1909-10, 1912-13). For the opening concert of the Hallé Orchestra's 2001-2 season, contemporary English composer Colin Matthews (b. 1946) created orchestrations of three of the Debussy *Préludes*: *Ce qu'a vu le vent d'Ouest* (I, 7), *Feuilles mortes* (II, 2), and *Feux d'artifice* (II, 12). Over the next five years, Matthews orchestrated all 24 of the Debussy *Préludes*, completing the project in the spring of 2007.

Colin Matthews notes that in creating these orchestrations, he vowed to "remain faithful" to Debussy's "remarkable sound-world." "But in order to avoid contriving a pastiche of Debussy's orchestral style I kept the sound in my head and did not look at a single orchestral score of Debussy's while working on the project." Matthews transposed the keys of some of the *Préludes* in order for them to function better in their orchestral guises. But with a few exceptions, Matthews's changes to Debussy's original music are minimal. The Matthews orchestrations of the Debussy *Préludes* are captivating, brilliant works, a respectful and affectionate tribute by a gifted modern composer to one of his great predecessors.

***Minstrels* (1909-10) (orch. 2003)**

**The first performance of the Matthews orchestration of *Minstrels* took place at Bridgewater Hall in Manchester, England, on March 16, 2003, with Edward Gardner conducting the Hallé Orchestra.**

*Minstrels* (I, 12)—Music inspired by Debussy's encounters with the song and dance musicians.

**"*Les sons et les parfums dans l'air du soir*" (1909-10) (orch. 2005)**

**The first performance of the Matthews orchestration of "*Les sons et les parfums dans l'air du soir*" *Minstrels* took place at Bridgewater Hall in**

**Manchester, England, on March 11, 2005, with Mark Elder conducting the Hallé Orchestra.**

*“Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l’air du soir”* (“*The Sounds and the Perfumes Turn in the Evening Air*”) (I, 4)—The title of this *Prélude* is the third line in Charles Baudelaire’s *Harmonie du soir* (*Evening Harmony*), a poem Debussy used as the text for an 1889 song. Matthews transposes Debussy’s leisurely 5/4 waltz from A to C Major.

***La Puerta del Vino* (1912-13) (orch. 2003)**

**The first performance of the Matthews orchestration of *La Puerta del Vino* took place at the Assembly Rooms, Derby, England, on February 18, 2004, with Kristian Järvi conducting the Hallé Concerts Society.**

*La Puerta del Vino* (*The Wine Gate*) (II, 3)—This *Prélude* was inspired by a picture postcard of a gate in the Alhambra, sent to Debussy by fellow composer Manuel de Falla. Debussy noted the music’s “brusque contrasts between violence and impassioned sweetness.” In the Matthews orchestration, the key is transposed from D-flat to E-flat Major.

***Général Lavine—eccentric* (1912-13) (orch. 2004)**

**The first performance of the Matthews orchestration of *Général Lavine—eccentric* took place at Bridgewater Hall in Manchester, England, on November 18, 2004, with Cristian Mandeal conducting the Hallé Orchestra.**

*Général Lavine—eccentric* (II, 6)—A musical portrait of the American clown, Edward Lavine, whom Debussy saw perform in 1910 at the Champs-Élysées Théâtre Marigny. Lavine was billed as someone who spent his life as a soldier (thus, the “General” reference). Debussy’s *Prélude*, “in the style and motion of a cake-walk”, includes references to the Stephen Foster song, “Camptown Races.”

***La mer* (*The Sea*), Three Symphonic Sketches (1905)**

**The first performance of *La mer* took place in Paris on October 15, 1905, at the Concerts Lamoureux, with Camille Chevillard conducting. *La mer* is scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, three bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, two cornets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, glockenspiel, tam-tam, cymbals, suspended cymbal, triangle, bass drum, two harps, and strings. Approximate performance time is twenty-four minutes.**

**First Classical Subscription Performances: December 1 and 2, 1961, Henry Sopkin, Conductor.**

**Most Recent Classical Subscription Performances: March 31 and April 2, 2016, Thomas Søndergård, Conductor.**

## **“I still have a great passion for the sea”**

The first mention of Claude Debussy's *La mer* occurs in a September 12, 1903 letter. There, Debussy informed composer André Messager: “I am working on three symphonic sketches under the title *La mer: Mer belle aux îles Sanguinaires; Jeux de vagues; and Le Vent fait danser la mer.*” (Debussy later changed the titles of the outer movements.)

In that same letter, Debussy confided: “You perhaps do not know that I was destined for the fine life of a sailor and that it was only by chance that I was led away from it. But I still have a great passion for the sea.” This “passion” may be traced as far back as Debussy's childhood visits to Cannes. And, the composer's fascination with the sea continued throughout his life.

In 1889, the young Debussy responded in a questionnaire that if he were not a composer, he would like to be “a sailor.” That same year, Debussy traveled with his friends—the brothers René and Michel Peter—to St. Lunaire, located on the north coast of Brittany. During the visit, Debussy and the Peters made a twenty-mile voyage in a fishing boat from St. Lunaire to Cancale. The trip occurred during a raging storm. René and Michel Peter feared for their lives—and for good reason.

Debussy, on the other hand, relished the experience: “Now here's a type of passionate feeling I have not before experienced—Danger! It is not unpleasant. One is alive!” After the travelers safely returned to St. Lunaire, the Peters did not see Debussy for several days. He left a note that read: “I have been smitten not with sea-sickness, but with sea-seeing-sickness.”

It is perhaps ironic that the majority of the composition of *La mer* took place when Debussy was at inland locations. However, Debussy did not view this as a handicap. As he told Messager:

(Y)ou'll reply that the Atlantic doesn't wash the foothills of Burgundy...! And that the result could be one of those hack landscapes done in the studio! But I have innumerable memories, and those, in my view, are worth more than a reality which, charming as it may be, tends to weigh too heavily on the imagination.

In fact, Debussy once admitted to a friend that he found it difficult to compose while in close proximity to the sea he loved so much.

The premiere of *La mer* took place in Paris on October 15, 1905, at the Concerts Lamoureux, with Camille Chevillard conducting. While critical reaction varied, most recognized the importance of *La mer* in the development of French musical expression. Debussy himself penned revisions to the score in 1909, although some conductors and orchestras continue to perform the 1905 version. Regardless, Debussy's *La mer* is a brilliant musical product of the composer's

lifelong fascination with the sea and its infinite mysteries. Debussy's *La mer*, like its subject, continues to elude description, all the while exerting a powerful attraction.

### **Musical Analysis**

I. *De l'aube à midi sur la mer (From Dawn until Noon on the Sea)*—A broad, mysterious introduction depicts the grandeur of the sea at dawn. Soon, the sea awakens and activity increases as Debussy introduces several masterfully orchestrated rhythmic motifs. A grand concluding section, containing a chorale theme that will appear again in the finale, radiates the magnificence of the sea glistening in the noonday sun.

II. *Jeux de vagues (Play of the Waves)*—If *From Dawn until Noon on the Sea* serves as the equivalent of a symphony's vibrant opening movement (with slow-tempo introduction), *Jeux de vagues* is the scherzo. The play of the waves is reflected in the orchestra's quicksilver introduction and exchange of rhythmic and melodic fragments. The peaceful conclusion of the movement is in sharp contrast to the almost frenetic activity that precedes it.

III. *Dialogue du vent et de la mer (Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea)*—The finale begins ominously, with a roll of the timpani and terse interjections by the lower strings, answered by the woodwinds. The music gathers strength, momentum, and at times, violence. A contrasting lyric section soon gains energy of its own. The chorale, first heard in the opening movement, heralds the climax of the finale.