

LUNCHBREAK CONCERT
In association with:
THE SOUND FESTIVAL 2011
PANDY ARTHUR Soprano
MARGARET PRESTON Flute
WINNIE FOSTER Piano
THE COWDRAY HALL
Thursday, 27 October 2011

Thursday's Lunchbreak concert was a change of programme and with only one living composer on the programme Michel Legrand, it was only loosely associated with sound. However, it made a wonderfully refreshing palate cleansing sorbet between courses in the main festival. It was actually one of the best and certainly the most refined of Lunchbreak performances for some time. In an all French programme, soprano Pandy Arthur, flautist Margaret Preston and pianist Winnie Foster gave superbly well controlled and intricately delicate performances.

The programme opened with three compositions by Camille Saint-Saëns. Pastorale, originally for two voices and piano was beautifully arranged for soprano, flute and piano. The astonishing refinement of all three performers was instantly apparent. Pandy Arthur read the introductory verse by Ogden Nash to *The Swan* from *Carnival of the Animals* before a soaringly smooth performance by Margaret and a dazzlingly transparent accompaniment from Winnie. In *Une Flûte Invisible*, Margaret played offstage and Pandy gave a remarkable demonstration of intricate vocal control. Fauré's *Après Un Rêve* was full of warm intimacy then, after Winnie and Margaret performed the *Entr'acte* from *Carmen*, Pandy unleashed the vampish allure, though not overdone, of the main character in her enticing Séguidilla.

Pandy gave an equally well staged performance of two songs from Offenbach's *La Périchole* especially the second, where she informed us teasingly "Ah! Que les hommes sont bêtes". Margaret responded with two movements by Louis Ganne with a marvellous cadenza for flute leading from the Andante into a sparkling Scherzo. Gustave Charpentier (1860-1956) not to be confused with the other French Charpentier, Marc-Antoine (1643-1704), is chiefly remembered for just one aria from his opera *Louise, Depuis Le Jour*. It sounded remarkably seductive in Thursday's setting for soprano, flute and piano.

Michel Legrand's *What are you doing the rest of your life?* Was not as I had expected presented as a song but rather as a duet for flute and piano with a splendid piano interlude played by Winnie Foster. The trio concluded with *La Flûte Enchantée* from Ravel's song cycle *Shéhérazade* with text by Tristan Klingsor, born Léon Leclère he borrowed his name from two Wagner Operas. Described in Larousse as an amiable dilettante, he was a writer, composer and painter. This wonderfully evocative setting by Ravel performed by the magnificent trio made a fine exotic conclusion to a splendid Lunchbreak.