

public as a paid artist. His devotion to composition during his life was monumental: over 1300 works in virtually every genre. But the piano remained Liszt's favorite medium, and he basked in the instrument's technical and expressive possibilities.

The three *PETRARCH SONNETS* pay homage to the Italian poet, and each work is published with the particular sonnet that inspired it. The Sonetto 104 speaks of the poet's quest for inner peace. Liszt's tone-poem reflects this struggle. The introspective, lyrical theme expands to a dramatic and tumultuous statement, but then peacefully subsides to a final whisper of yearning resignation.

Liszt's many operatic transcriptions provided a new arena for him to exploit his technical arsenal: every facet of virtuosity is explored! The *RIGOLETTO PARAPHRASE* of 1859 is an elaborate version of the famous quartet from the opera. Liszt's arrangement is intimate and conversational, depicting the various emotions of the characters: romantic zeal, coquetry, jealousy and bleak despair.

The Spanish composer MANUEL INFANTE lived and played concerts in Paris for most of his life, and wrote numerous pieces for piano, mostly based upon popular Spanish themes such as "El Vito," a popular street song. The *THREE ANDALUSIAN DANCES*, written in 1921, are dedicated to his wife. They are imbued with the sun-splashed hues and infectious rhythms of southern Spain.

WITOLD LUTOSLAWSKI's creative variations explore once again the virtuoso possibilities of Paganini's famous and versatile theme. There are twelve variations and a coda occupying less than half as many minutes. The brilliance of the piano writing is fired by pungent harmonic and rhythmic astringencies. Even the most dedicated Dervish would be hard-pressed to match this musical maelstrom!

CAMILLE SAINT-SAENS may not have been the greatest French musician but he was probably the most roundly gifted and most conspicuously successful one. He began his career as a child prodigy at the age of nine by playing a piano recital in Paris. And later, his intellectual precocity would project towards affinities for the world of paleontology, astronomy and literature.

In his operas, symphonies, concertos and in his chamber music, Saint-Saens had a singular knack for creating an equation of emotion and pathos, brilliance and humor, all in the right proportion and all in the right place.

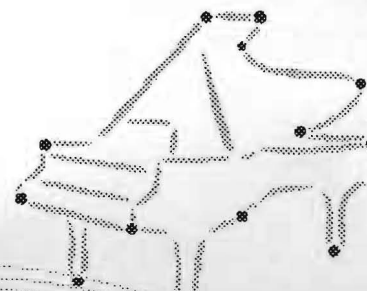
The 1886 *CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS* was written quickly, on a recreational weekend. He dubbed the suite of tonal pictures about animals as a "grand zoological fantasy." The ironic and not-too-flattering portrait of "Pianists" in this zoo is characteristic of the composer's bent for satire. Typical as well is the skillful interpolation of musical quotation throughout the score. Among the "lucky" (or the ill-fated, depending upon your opinion) are Saint-Saens in his own *Danse Macabre*, Rossini in his "*Barber of Seville*," Berlioz in the *Ballet of the Sylphes*, Mendelssohn in his Scherzo from "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*."

Saint-Saens was stunned by the instant popularity of this particular work. He banned its public performance during his lifetime, worried that his many other works would be eclipsed. But he did allow "*The Swan*" to be performed. Today we know that Saint-Saens has achieved his mark as an important and versatile composer, and that he need not toss fitfully in the marble orchards over additional performances of his delightful "*Carnival*."

[Notes by Robin McCabe]

M3274
1994
4-21

The University of Washington
School of Music
and Mortar Board
present



IT'S A GRAND NIGHT FOR PIANOS

Robin McCabe, *pianist*

Rachelle McCabe, *pianist*

Jim French, *guest narrator*

April 21, 1994

8:00 pm, Meany Theater

DAT
12,367

CASS
12,368

PROGRAM

DAT
103 SONATINE (1905) (11'46) Maurice Ravel
Modéré (1875-1937)
Menuet
Animé

104 "L'ISLE JOYEUSE" (6'11) Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

106 PETRARCH SONNET NO. 104, "PACE NON TROVE" (6'56) Franz Liszt
(1811-1886)

In memory of William Bergsma

107 CONCERT PARAPHRASE ON "RIGOLETTO" (6'19) Franz Liszt
Robin McCabe, piano

INTERMISSION

CASS SIDE A
SIDE B

111 from THREE ANDALUSIAN DANCES, "SENTIMIENTO" (8'30) Manuel Infante
(1883-1958)

112 VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY PAGANINI (5'47) Witold Lutoslawski
(1913-1994)

114 THE CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS (28'25) Camille Saint-Saens
(1835-1921)
Introduction and Royal March of the Lions
Hens and Roosters
Wild Asses
Tortoises
The Elepbant
Kangaroos
Aquarium
People with Long Ears
The Cuckoo in the Depths of the Forest
Aviary
Pianists
Fossils
The Swan
The Finale

Verses by Ogden Nash
Narrated by KIRO radio host, Jim French

ABOUT THE MUSIC...

MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937) was an admiring contemporary of Claude Debussy, but the possessor of a much more independent personality. Unlike Debussy, or Liszt, for that matter, Ravel remained true to a musical vision which was less dependent upon outside influence or suggestion. Ravel's bent for precision was empowered by a natural gift for pristine articulation and rhetoric. His musical language sought above all clarity and luminosity of intent. Often seen as an aloof and cold person, Ravel rather wore much of his emotions beneath his customary elegant velvet vest. In reality he was passionate about many things even outside the world of music: politics, philosophy, gardening, cooking, cats, toys, and even the collecting of rather preposterous bits of bric a brac.

The SONATINE, written for a competition in 1905, is a consummate example of Ravel's style in his first formative period. The piece is remarkable in its linear clarity and symmetry of form. To listen to this music is to gaze into cool, clear water. The modal inflections of the stately Menuet act in poignant reconsideration of the finely-chiseled first movement. The finale, marked Animé, flows effortlessly forward while the clever oscillation of the pulse, between 3 and 5 beats to the measure, contributes to the feeling of abundant spontaneous energy.

The term "impressionist" often lumps together CLAUDE DEBUSSY and Maurice Ravel, as well as many minor composers, despite the fact that their work is different in both means and ends. A far more accurate description of Debussy's esthetic is "symbolism" Debussy's poet friend, Stephane Mallarme, defined it this way: "To evoke in deliberate shadow the unmentioned object of allusive words."

Debussy, then, alludes to things, without clearly defining form or the classical parameters of thematic development. The opening of the "L'ISLE JOYEUSE" introduces a bold arabesque on the piano, which traverses the notes between C sharp and G natural. This undulant figure manages to repress the tonality of the piece until bar seven. Here begins a dance which will eventually culminate in ecstatic frenzy. Inspired by Watteau's lavish painting, "L'embarquement pour Cythere" Debussy musically portrays this canvas of a group of revelers who arrive by boats to a splendid island. Their purpose is to partake in Dionesian celebrations in honor of the goddess, Venus.

The piece is a dazzling toccata, "uniting force and grace," as Debussy described it. The work is full of small musical ideas that do not seem to go anywhere. These ideas rather iterate, intensify and gather adrenaline. Debussy uses orchestral textures and timbral shocks of contrasting vertical space to produce a canvas which steadily escalates in its intensity. At the climax, the entire palette of a boisterous orchestra comes forth, with the horns prominent in a fanfare theme and the trumpets brassy and exultant. The final vision projected is of turmoil, exuberant joy and of pagan libations.

FRANZ LISZT epitomized the nineteenth-century 'pianist-composer' figure, as a virtuoso whose absolute mastery of the keyboard was paralleled by a prodigious and life-long commitment to composition. Liszt had a compelling personality. Legends and biographies are filled with florid descriptions of his incredible musical prowess. The poet Heine once asked a physician whose specialty was treating women to explain the nature of the hysteria that Liszt created. Heine recounted that the physician spoke of magnetism, galvanism, and electricity; of contagion in a sultry hall filled with wax lights and some hundred perspiring people; of histrionic epilepsy, of the phenomenon of tickling, and of other indiscreet and unmentionable matters.

Such anecdotes are part of the general attitude towards Liszt the showman. But pyrotechnics were only part of Liszt's prismatic character. It is not generally known that Liszt stopped giving concerts at the height of his fame in 1847. Never after did he appear in

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS:

ROBIN MCCABE has performed for appreciative audiences on four continents, and has established herself as one of America's most communicative and persuasive artists. Her numerous prizes and awards include the International Concert Artists Guild Competition and a Rockefeller Foundation Grant. She recently made her fourth tour in Asia, performing as guest soloist with orchestra, in solo recital as well as lecturing and teaching at conservatories. The Japanese press declared her a "pianistic powerhouse" and a Prague critic claimed her to be "a musical magnet for the listener." Ms. McCabe's recordings have earned unanimous international praise. Stereo Review declared her album of Bartok to be "all we have come to expect of this artist, a first-rate performance!" A faculty member of the Juilliard School until 1987, Ms. McCabe then returned to her native northwest to accept as position as professor of piano at the University of Washington. Named a 1993 "Woman of Achievement" at Seattle's annual Matrix Table, Ms. McCabe was recently named Director of the University of Washington School of Music effective July 1994.

RACHELLE MCCABE enjoys an international career as a concert pianist and teacher. She made her orchestral debut with the Seattle Symphony in 1975, and recent solo recitals include performances in England, Singapore, Atlanta, Detroit, Seattle, as well as for American PBS. Rachelle McCabe is Associate Professor of Piano and Director of Keyboard Studies at Oregon State University. She often presents master classes and lectures at other universities and for music teachers' groups throughout the Northwest. In 1989 and 1991 she held residencies as artist-teacher in Singapore and Malaysia, and was named Affiliate Professor at La Salle, a college of the arts in Singapore. Rachelle McCabe recently returned from a sabbatical leave in Cambridge, England where she researched the piano styles and works of Chopin and Debussy.

Both Robin and Rachelle McCabe received their undergraduate degrees at the University of Washington, studying with Béla Siki.

JIM FRENCH has specialized in talking to interesting people for most of his radio career. Personalities caught by his microphone include former presidents Harry Truman and Jimmy Carter. His array of guests includes General Douglas MacArthur, Lee Iococca and Frank Sinatra. Jim interviews more than 3,000 newsmakers each year on his top-rated day time talk show, *The Jim French Show*, heard Monday through Friday from 9:30 AM to noon on KIRO Newsradio 710 AM.

French began as a disc jockey at KIRO in 1952, and has been on the air longer than anyone else in Seattle broadcasting. His career in radio owes much to his early skill as a pianist. In 1945, he was accompanying a singing group on a California radio station. When the station announcer failed to show up, Jim took over the announcing duties and was immediately given a position at the station even though he was only in junior high school. He has been on the air ever since.

In addition to his work on the air, Jim French has written and produced over 250 radio dramas and five movies. He is the author of two historical novels and currently writes and produces *The KIRO Mystery Playhouse* series which airs Sunday evenings at 9 PM.