



Mimi Stillman, Artistic Director

DSE Presents

Dolce Suono Trio: Love and War in French Music



Sunday, January 26, 2020 at 3:00pm
Trinity Center for Urban Life
22nd and Spruce Streets, Philadelphia

Mimi Stillman, Artistic Director



DOLCE SUONO ENSEMBLE *Presents*



The Season of the Word

Throughout 2019-2020, Dolce Suono Ensemble will be exploring the spoken word integrated with music. Works by Saint-Saëns, Berio, and Fang Man will feature DSE artists and a guest actor as narrators.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2019 AT 3:00PM

Bach Masterworks

Cantatas, concertos, suites, and sonatas

Old Pine Street Church

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2019 AT 3:00PM

Power Wind Quintet Redux

Taffanel, Berio, Ligeti, Fine

Trinity Center for Urban Life

SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 2020 AT 3:00PM

Dolce Suono Trio: Love and War in French Music

Debussy, Rameau, Ravel, Saariaho

Trinity Center for Urban Life

SUNDAY, MAY 3, 2020 AT 3:00PM

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Dolce Suono Trio - Jasper String Quartet - Sarah Shafer, soprano - Mimi Stillman, flute
Katherine Needleman, oboe - Ricardo Morales, clarinet - Doris Hall-Gulati, clarinet
William Short, bassoon - Jeffrey Lang, horn - Amy Oshiro-Morales, violin
William Polk, violin - Che-Hung Chen, viola - Kerri Ryan, viola - Gabriel Cabezas, cello
Arlen Hlusko, cello - Mary Javian, bass - Charles Abramovic, piano, harpsichord
Natalie Zhu, piano - Christopher Patrick Mullen, narrator

Dolce Suono Ensemble Presents

Dolce Suono Trio: Love and War in French Music

Mimi Stillman, *flute*

Gabriel Cabezas, *cello*

Charles Abramovic, *piano*

PROGRAM

Selections from Pièces de clavecins en concerts

La Lapopelinière

La Marais

Tambourin

Dolce Suono Trio

Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764)

Romance for cello and piano, Op. 69

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Élégie for cello and piano, Op. 251

Darius Milhaud (1892-1974)

III. from Trois pieces for cello and piano

Vite et nerveusement rythmé

Cabezas, Abramovic

Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979)

Le Merle noir for flute and piano

Stillman, Abramovic

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)

Sonatine

Modéré

Mouvement de menuet

Animé

Dolce Suono Trio

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

(arr. Charles Abramovic)

Intermission

Romance for flute and piano, Op. 37

Stillman, Abramovic

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

Douze notations for piano

Abramovic

Pierre Boulez (1925-2016)

Treizième Concert

Stillman, Cabezas

François Couperin (1668-1733)

Selections from Pelléas et Mélisande

Dolce Suono Trio

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

(arr. Hubert Mouton)

About the Program – Notes by Mimi Stillman

Welcome back to DSE Presents 2019-2020 “The Season of the Word,” throughout which we will be integrating music with the spoken word, in pieces that include narration and readings related to the music. Today’s program features our flagship ensemble Dolce Suono Trio in a program of French music with wide-ranging selections highlighting aesthetic connections and controversies. The world of French music has been subject to heated debates since the 18th century, when a series of three “opera wars” broke out in Paris. These debates focused on the merits of Lully vs. Rameau and French vs. Italian music, and were connected to broader Enlightenment examinations of the origins and purpose of music. In one of the most dramatic incidents in this quarrel, the philosopher and composer Jean-Jacques Rousseau was burned in effigy outside the Paris Opera. One can only admire a society in which music mattered so much!

In the 19th and 20th centuries, musical controversies erupted over stylistic issues and sometimes political ones, as France suffered defeat by Germany in the Franco-Prussian War and then was engulfed in two devastating world wars. Musical issues including the academic style of the Paris Conservatory and the influence of Wagner were further inflamed by events such as the Dreyfus Affair, in addition to the wars. During the Nazi occupation of France in World War II, many French musicians tried to emigrate, especially Jewish ones in danger for their lives, and those who stayed in France faced the dilemma of collaboration with or resistance to the Vichy regime and the Nazis.

Coexisting and perhaps fueled by the existence of such fundamental probing of musical heritage and identity is a tremendous legacy: the greatness of French music from the Baroque to today. Our program celebrates this legacy with a broad selection of works highlighting the relationships of teachers, students, and influences, as well as a diverse range of styles. Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel emulated the music of Rameau and Couperin in their neoclassical works, especially in the face of German aggression before and during World War I, when Debussy signed his scores “*musicien français*,” and Ravel paid tribute to fallen friends and French Baroque music in *Le Tombeau de Couperin*. In 1871, Camille Saint-Saëns and Gabriel Fauré founded the Société Nationale de Musique to defend contemporary French music against what they perceived as too much German influence, a move prompted by the Franco-Prussian War. Debussy considered Saint-Saëns to be a bastion of tradition who represented everything that was ossified and academic about French music, and attacked his music in his articles under the name of his alter ego Monsieur Croche. In his letters, Saint-Saëns severely criticized Debussy’s musical innovations.

Gabriel Fauré embodied both tradition and innovation in his music and in his career as director of the Paris Conservatory and supporter of new music. Fauré influenced Debussy, and taught both Ravel and Nadia Boulanger, who in turn was one of the most important musical pedagogues of the 20th century. Among Boulanger’s many international students are Aaron Copland and Astor Piazzolla. Though not Jewish, Boulanger was also one of many French composers who emigrated to the United States during World War II and only returned after the liberation.

Darius Milhaud represents the group of composers known as *Les Six*, which also included Francis Poulenc and Germaine Tailleferre. They worked together on projects starting with the *L’Album des Six*, a collection of piano pieces, in 1920, though this was the only project on which all six worked together over the next several decades. They came together to reject the music of Wagner, Debussy, and Ravel in favor of a neoclassicism they thought reflected their times, referencing popular genres such as cabaret. Like most of

the French art scene of their time, they were influenced by the music of Stravinsky and the impressive, pioneering work of Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes.

Olivier Messiaen was influenced by Debussy and Ravel, studied and later taught at the Paris Conservatory, and was an important leader of the musical avant garde. He is known for incorporating disparate influences including Balinese gamelan, Japanese music, birdsong, Catholic theology, serial music, and aural-visual synaesthesia in his music. He taught Pierre Boulez, who was notably influenced both by Messiaen and the second Viennese school of Schoenberg, Webern, and Berg transmitted by his teacher René Leibowitz.

The Works and Chronology

François Couperin, *Treizième concert* from *Les Goûts réunis, ou Nouveaux concerts* (1721) – Like many of his works, Couperin composed this piece for the court of Louis XIV. This is the thirteenth piece in a set of fourteen chamber works that Couperin published in two groups. A collection of Baroque dances intended to unify the styles of French and Italian music, the music demonstrates Couperin's expressive ornamentation and refined phrases within flowing, gently pulsating meters.

Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Pièces de clavecin en concert* (1741) – Rameau is known for his operas, keyboard works, and treatise on harmony. Our selections come from a set of chamber works in which the harpsichord plays a fully composed part rather than a basso continuo part, or a figured bass line on which the harpsichordist would improvise. Rameau often named movements for people, such as his patron and Enlightenment salon host Alexandre la Riche de la Poupelinière and the composer Marin Marais. The Tambourin is a dance that was traditionally accompanied by tambourines. The music is characteristic of Rameau's virtuosic writing and rhythmic vitality.

Camille Saint-Saëns, *Romance* (1874) – a concert piece originally for flute and orchestra which demonstrates Saint-Saëns's mastery of melodic, Romantic style within a traditional harmonic language.

Gabriel Fauré, *Romance* (1894) – prime example of Fauré's soaring melodies and lush harmonies and signature use of modality (modes other than major and minor).

Claude Debussy, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902) – arranged for flute, cello, and piano by Hubert Mouton. Debussy's only opera, based on a play by Maurice Maeterlinck, influenced a generation of artists. Paul Dukas, Vincent D'Indy, and Romain Rolland were among its vocal admirers. The masterwork embraces a Symbolist aesthetic in which Debussy's sublimely subtle use of timbre and leitmotif (an influence of Wagner) creates a powerful dramatic experience. The Belgian-born **Hubert Mouton** (1872-1954) was a composer and arranger who also created chamber versions of selections from Wagner, Saint-Saëns, and D'Indy operas.

Maurice Ravel, *Sonatine* (1903-1905) – arranged for flute, cello, and piano by Charles Abramovic. An example of Ravel's exquisite piano writing in its original version. The work reveals Ravel's emulation of the French baroque, such as in the Menuet movement based on a traditional dance form but with Ravel's characteristic harmonic language and delicate timbral nuances.

Nadia Boulanger, *III from Trois pièces for cello and piano* (1911) – an energetic movement shifting between duple, triple, and 5/8 meters. Boulanger gives the opening motif in the cello a Spanish flavor due to the Phrygian mode, an interesting connection with the famous works Bizet, Debussy, and Ravel wrote in Spanish style.

Darius Milhaud, *Élégie* (1945) – written at Mills College in California, one of the institutions Milhaud taught at while in the United States as a refugee from World War II. It is a lyrical work with modal and jazz elements.

Pierre Boulez, *Douze notations for piano* (1945) – see program note by Charles Abramovic, below. Pierre Boulez discusses this work in videos at www.beyondthescore.org

Olivier Messiaen, *Le Merle noir* (1952) – written as a *Morceau de concours*, a contest piece for the annual competition at the Paris Conservatory. Many important French flute and piano works originated in this way. An example of Messiaen's interest in birdsong, it is almost entirely comprised of blackbird songs he heard and transcribed.

Pierre Boulez was one of the towering musical figures of the 20th century. Active as a composer, conductor, and writer, he was known for his uncompromising approach to musical language and interpretation. *Douze Notations* is a series of twelve brief pieces for piano composed in 1945 when the composer was only 20. The work was later turned into a more extended orchestral work. A unique feature of these piano pieces stems from the first word of the title– *Douze*, or twelve. Each of the twelve pieces is based on the same twelve-tone row (used rather freely) and is only twelve measures long. The musical language references many stylistic traits that Boulez would develop later in his career and reflect the influences of his principal mentors, Olivier Messiaen and René Leibowitz, as well as the serial music of Schoenberg.

– *Charles Abramovic*

The Artists

Mimi Stillman, flute

"Ms. Stillman is not only a consummate and charismatic performer, but also a scholar. Her programs tend to activate ear, heart, and brain." (*The New York Times*); Founding Artistic Director of Dolce Suono Ensemble; Internationally acclaimed soloist and chamber musician; Yamaha Performing Artist and Clinician; Winner, Young Concert Artists International Auditions, Bärenreiter Prize for Historical Performance for Winds; Author on music and history; Recording artist; Media and radio host; BM, Curtis Institute of Music, MA in history, University of Pennsylvania; Artist-in-Residence, Temple University, Curtis Summerfest

Gabriel Cabezas, cello

"An intense player who connects to music naturally, without artifice." (*The Oregonian*); soloist with orchestras of Chicago, Cleveland, Philadelphia, New York, Los Angeles; Chamber musician, member of yMusic sextet with collaborations with Ben Folds, tours with Musicians from Marlboro; Co-founder of Duende, new music and dance collective; Involvement with the Sphinx Organization, Chicago's Citizen Musician movement; BM, Curtis Institute of Music

Charles Abramovic, piano

"Sensitive orchestra-invoking powers on piano" (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*); Solo, chamber, and recording artist, composer; Performances with the Pittsburgh Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, and at international festivals in Berlin, Salzburg, Bermuda, Dubrovnik, Aspen and Vancouver; Recordings of the works of Babbitt, Schuller, and Schwanter; BM, Curtis Institute of Music, MA, Peabody Conservatory, DMA, Temple University; Professor of Keyboard Studies, Temple University

DOLCE SUONO ENSEMBLE has been thrilling audiences and invigorating the music world since its founding by flutist and Artistic Director Mimi Stillman in 2005. Hailed as "**an adventurous ensemble**" (*The New York Times*) and "**One of the most dynamic groups in the US!**" (*The Huffington Post*), the ensemble presents critically acclaimed chamber music concerts on its home series in Philadelphia, performs on tour, commissions important new works, makes recordings, and engages in community engagement partnerships.

Dolce Suono Ensemble presents dynamic and innovative programs of Baroque to new repertoire with historian Mimi Stillman's curatorial vision setting the music in its broadest cultural context. Some of its artistically and

intellectually powerful projects include the celebrated Mahler 100 / Schoenberg 60, Debussy in Our Midst: A Celebration of the 150th Anniversary of Claude Debussy, A Place and a Name: Remembering the Holocaust, Dolce Suono Ensemble Goes to the Opera, Women Pioneers of American Music, and Música en tus Manos (Music in Your Hands), our engagement initiative with the Latino Community. **“All programs should have this much to say and say it so well.”** (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*)

Dolce Suono Ensemble has performed at venues including the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, Southern Exposure New Music Series (SC), Brooklyn’s Roulette, University of Pennsylvania, Brandywine River Museum, Merkin Hall, University of Virginia, New York Flute Club, Great Hall Series (MA), Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, University of North Carolina, Bard College, Eastman School of Music, National Flute Association, Chicago Flute Club, Virginia Tech, Kingston Chamber Music Festival, Princeton University, Brandeis University, Cornell University, Howland Chamber Music Circle, Reading Friends of Chamber Music, Michigan State University, and Penn State University. The ensemble enjoys a partnership with the Washington National Opera Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program at the invitation of Plácido Domingo.

Dolce Suono Ensemble has contributed major new works to the chamber music repertoire through commissioning, giving 54 world premieres in 14 seasons. Some of today’s most eminent composers have written for the ensemble including Jennifer Higdon, Steven Stucky, Shulamit Ran, Richard Danielpour, Steven Mackey, David Serkin Ludwig, and Zhou Tian. The ensemble’s recordings *Freedom*, music for flute, piano, and the human spirit, *Odyssey: 11 American Premieres*, both featuring Mimi Stillman, flute and Charles Abramovic, piano, and *American Canvas* featuring Dolce Suono Trio (Innova Recordings), have been critically acclaimed. Dolce Suono Ensemble concerts and recordings are broadcast internationally.

The ensemble has won grant awards including from the National Endowment for the Arts, William Penn Foundation, Philadelphia Cultural Fund, Musical Fund Society of Philadelphia, The Presser Foundation, Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, Koussevitzky Music Foundation, The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Yamaha Music USA, and the Knight Foundation. www.dolcesuono.com

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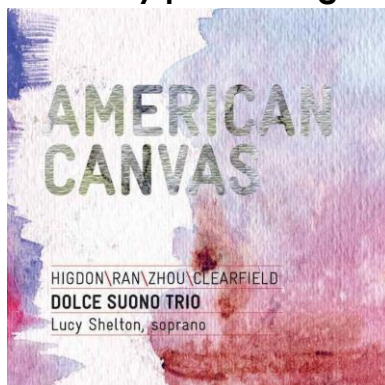
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The official registration and financial information of Dolce Suono Ensemble, Inc. may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement

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### **Acknowledgments**

With gratitude to the Dolce Suono Ensemble Board of Directors, and especially Chairman Ronni L. Gordon, for their steadfast support and vision. Thank you to Ron and Raquel Lane, publicity support; David Osenberg, Host and Music Director, WWFM The Classical Network, for broadcasting DSE Presents concerts; Jacobs Music, season sponsor

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