

a year in Paris

nicole canham ~ clarinet :: anthony smith ~ piano



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Sonata for Clarinet and Piano :: Poulenc

- 1 Allegro Tristamente · 5:48
- 2 Romanza · 5:33
- 3 Allegro con fuoco · 3:24

Pastorale :: Carmichael

- 4 3:13

Le Tombeau de Ravel Valse-Caprices :: Benjamin

- 5 Introduzione. Allegro Molto. Poco Lento · 2:56
- 6 Presto, volante. Andante, semplice. Allegro, Vigoroso · 5:03
- 7 Allegretto, preciso. Finale · 6:06

Pastorale Cévenole :: Cahuzac

- 8 5:32

Des pas sur la neige :: Debussy, ed. Prorvich

- 9 3:46

Phosphoric Variations :: Stanhope

- 10 4:40

Danza :: Brumby

- 11 2:08

Cantilène :: Cahuzac

- 12 5:07

Tema con Variazioni :: Françaix

- 13 8:53

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Preface

To spend a year in Paris, living in the roof of an old building, playing my clarinet every day was a beautiful experience. The opportunity to have any type of cultural exchange where one is left with both a feeling of appreciation for another way of doing things, and an enhanced view of one's own way is both inspiring and illuminating. Paris is an amazing place: a place of boundless possibilities where astounding beauty mixes with everyday life in a landscape of fascinating people and atmospheres.

My studies at the Versailles Conservatoire were steeped in history in every sense, taking classes in the shadow of the famous Versailles Château. In this setting I learned many stories behind the music I studied, as information from Cahuzac, Poulenc and Francaix was passed onto me by my teacher Philippe Cuper.

One of the best aspects of returning home after such an experience is having the chance to share it with others, and I am grateful to the Ian Potter Cultural Trust, The Australian Music Foundation and CAPO for assisting me in undertaking both the study and this recording project. Life would not be the same without the beauty of music.



About the performers

Nicole Canham

Versatile clarinetist Nicole Canham received her initial training at the Australian National University Institute of the Arts, obtaining a Bachelor of Music degree majoring in Clarinet Performance. In 2000 and 2002, Nicole was the recipient of grants from artsACT, The Ian Potter Cultural Trust, and was the winner of the Australian Music Foundation's Young Australian Musician Award, enabling her to undertake further study with Philippe Cuper, specialising in French repertoire and traditions of interpretation and performance. She obtained her Prix de Perfectionnement from the Conservatoire Nationale de Region de Versailles in June 2003.

Nicole's professional experience is extensive and varied, including orchestral work with Opera Australia, the Tasmanian and Canberra Symphony Orchestras, the Canberra Chamber Orchestra, the Canberra Choral Society and for the Australian and Kiev Ballet Canberra seasons.

She is a founding member of Clarity, Canberra's highly successful chamber ensemble of international reputation, performing around Australia and abroad in the UK, Belgium and France to acclaim. Concerts with Clarity have included opening an all night outback Rock concert in the Northern Territory, performing at London's famous St-Martin-in-the-Fields, and presenting concerts throughout Belgium

for Jeunesses Musicales. Nicole has performed as a recitalist for the Namur Theatre, Belgium, Stopera, and the National Gallery of Australia. Her discography includes recordings for The Anthology of Australian Music and the Tall Poppies label.

Anthony Smith

Anthony Smith graduated from the ANU School of Music with Bachelor of Music, First Class Honours in 2000. Majoring in piano performance, his principal teachers were Gábor Rózsa and Susanne Powell. While there, he was the recipient of numerous prizes, including the Sir Geoffrey Yeend Honours Scholarship, the Winifred Burston Prize and other prizes for accompaniment and chamber music. Other studies within the degree programme included conducting, fortepiano and Alexander Technique.

Since graduation, Anthony has focused on collaborative work. In addition to his long-standing collaboration with clarinetist Nicole Canham, he has formed a duo, ChAnt sans paroles, with cellist Charlotte Winslade. Anthony has also held official accompanist positions with many different organizations,

and there is always strong demand for his skills in the Canberra region. He has been a preferred accompanist at the ANU School of Music since graduation.

Anthony was appointed Pianist at The Casals Academy of Music in 2003. As well as teaching his ever-growing piano studio there, he features in almost every concert of the Academy's celebrated Faculty Recital Series.

About the works

Francis Poulenc - Sonata

French composer and pianist, Poulenc (1899-1963) showed a partiality to writing for wind instruments throughout his career, from the very early Sonata for Clarinet and Bassoon in 1922, to the popular Sextet for Piano and Wind in 1939. The final three sonatas for woodwind (like the last three chamber works of Debussy) form part of a set that Poulenc did not live to complete.

Poulenc began composing the clarinet sonata, beginning at the slow movement during August 1959. In October, he considered never finishing the work, remarking that the slow movement could be published by itself as Andantino Tristamente. He did finish it in the summer of 1962 however, and wrote to his longtime friend Pierre Bernac; "It is good." Both sonatas were dedicated to the memory of a fellow member of Les Six, Arthur Honegger, and the first performance was given on

10 April 1963, by Benny Goodman and Leonard Bernstein. Poulenc himself had died two and a half months earlier.

The Clarinet Sonata has three movements. The first, Allegro Tristamente has at its heart a page of exquisite sentiment, of serene and tender sad poetry. Clarinetists will note some different notes at several cadence points in this movement – there are discrepancies between the published score and the manuscript in both the first and the third movements. The second movement is a melancholy Romance. An Allegro, its verve sweeping away all sadness, ends the work with youthful impetuosity.

John Carmichael – Pastorale

Born in Melbourne in 1930, John Carmichael studied piano with two of Australia's most accomplished performers, Margaret Schofield and Raymond Lambert. He also studied composition at the Melbourne Conservatorium with Dorian Le Gallienne, and in 1951 was awarded his Diploma of Music with Honours. Carmichael continued his studies in Paris in 1952 at the Paris Conservatoire with Marcel Ciampi, then composition in London with Arthur Benjamin and Anthony Milner. He also regularly contributed reviews and criticism

to the international magazine 'Music and Musicians', and in 1954 he became one of the first to work in music therapy in Britain.

Carmichael has written for stage, television and the concert hall, and his large scale orchestral works have been recorded both nationally and internationally. He currently resides in London, and frequently returns to Australia to record and attend performances of his music.

The Pastorale was written in 2002 and is dedicated to Malcolm Williamson.

Arthur Benjamin – Tombeau de Ravel

Born in Sydney, Benjamin (1893-1960) completed his general education at Brisbane Grammar School, and traveled to the Royal College of Music at 18 to study composition with Stanford. In 1914 he joined the infantry, and after the war returned to Australia to teach piano at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. In 1921, his thirst for European musical life brought him back to London, and in 1926 he joined the staff of RCM. He was soloist for the premiere performances of his own Piano Concertino (1926), Howell's Piano Concerto no.1 (1913) and Lambert's Piano Concerto (1931).

During his travels as an examiner for the Associated Board, Benjamin was influenced by Latin American music, and wrote works integrating various elements of this style. The Jamaican Rumba (1938) is one of his best known pieces of this genre. Benjamin also wrote five operas, of which The Tale

of Two Cities was broadcast by BBC radio, and Manana was commissioned by BBC television. He wrote many orchestral and chamber works, and even a film score for An Ideal Husband. Benjamin was a well respected teacher as well as performer/composer, and Britten was among his pupils. In 1956 he was recognized by the Worshipful Company of Musicians with the Cobett Medal.

Le Tombeau de Ravel is a tribute to French composer Maurice Ravel. (1958) Constructed as a set of Valse-Caprices, there is some scope for latitude on the part of the performer. This is not to say, however, that the score is not sufficiently indicative of what the composer intended given that the work's skillful changes of pace and atmosphere effectively lead the listener through each movement. There are two versions of the piece, one for viola and one for clarinet.



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Louis Cahuzac – Pastorale Cévenole, Cantilène

Louis Jean-Baptiste Cahuzac (1880-1960) is one of the most renowned clarinet virtuosos of the 20th century, alongside Benny Goodman. Cahuzac was known for his full, rich timbre, in both the lower and upper registers, and for his faultless sense of phrasing. Born in Quarante, Cahuzac was the eldest in the family. His father taught him the basics of the instrument, and then sent him to the Conservatoire de Paris at the age of 17, where he joined the class of Cyrille-Chrysogone Rose (a pupil of the famous Hyacinthe-Eleonore Klosé.) He also studied composition with Paul Vidal, and in 1901 began playing with Opera de Paris, where he continued to play for over 30 years. He traveled extensively as a soloist throughout Europe, and was one of the first to champion works of Brahms, Berg and Schoenberg.

Cahuzac played Debussy's *Première Rhapsodie* with the composer himself at the piano, and also worked with Dukas, Bartok, Ibert, Prokofiev, Khachaturian, Copland, Schoenberg, and Milhaud to mention a few. He premiered many

works, such as Honneger's *Sonatina* and Milhaud's *Concerto for Clarinet*. Cahuzac was the principal conductor at the Casino in Luchon, and also conducted radio orchestras at Toulouse, Lille, Strasbourg, Lyon, Marseille and Nice. He also composed many works for the clarinet, including the *Pastorale Cévenole* and the *Cantilène*. He was an internationally renowned teacher, with the majority of his pupils also becoming highly regarded in the professional world; Gilbert Voisin, Robert Vandoren, David Weber, Hans-Rudolf Stadler, E. Brunner, Gervase de Peyer, to name a few. He is remembered as a charismatic and charming man who contributed enormously to the history of the clarinet, particularly in its establishment as a solo instrument of similar importance to the violin or the piano.

Pastorale Cévenole and *Cantilène*.

Both these works are in a fantasia style, allowing the performer freedom to express the different moods of each piece. Cahuzac liked some freedom in his approach to his own music – each piece has several different manuscript versions with alterations to the melodic line. Consequently, the *Cévenole* is performed as it appears on the score, but in the *Cantilène* other variations on the melody written by Cahuzac contained in his manuscripts but not in the published version, are included at the suggestion of Philippe Cuper, an authority on Cahuzac's life and works.

Claude Debussy – Des pas sur la neige

Debussy (1862-1918) is regarded as one of the greatest 20th-century composers, both by reason of his own achievement and by the paths he opened for others to explore. Later composers such as Boulez, Messiaen, Webern, Bartók, Stravinsky, and many others pay great homage to him. His use of block chords, of harmony with a modal flavour, combined with the delicate colours of his orchestration, his technique of 'layering' sounds, the declamatory yet wholly lyrical style of his vocal writing, especially in *Pelléas*, all proclaim him an innovator of the first degree who revolutionized French writing. Born in Paris, as a child his obvious musical talent was channelled into piano lessons with Mme. Mauté de Fleurville, leading to his entry into the Paris Conservatoire in 1872. In 1884 he won the Prix de Rome with the cantata *L'Enfant prodigue*. He then travelled to Villa Medici, Rome, where he met Liszt, Verdi, and Boito. At this time he came into contact with many influential figures of the 'Impressionistic Movement,' such as Mallarmé.

The next years were particularly productive. Works of 1904-5 include *De l'aube à midi sur la mer* for orchestra, and the first set of *Images* for piano. His considerable output includes works for stage, orchestra,

chamber and solo works, as well as choral writing, and a large collection of piano works, including the two books of Piano Preludes (1910-1913) from which this arrangement of Footsteps in the Snow is adapted. In this arrangement by Prorvich, the clarinet takes the melody played in the right hand of the piano part, the darkness of the middle register of the clarinet blending with the piano to evoke Debussy's suggestion of the cold and icy winter countryside.

Paul Stanhope – Phospheric Variations

Paul Stanhope (b.1969) completed doctoral studies at the University of Sydney, under the direction of Peter Sculthorpe, and also studied at the Guildhall School of Music in London. He won the 2004 Toru Takemitsu Composition Prize, chosen out of 129 international entries. Stanhope's music constructs a personal response to place and time within the context of contemporary culture and, as such, is inspired by a diverse array of material ranging from the topographical through to quirky aspects of popular culture. He writes: "My music presents the listener with an optimistic, personal geography...

whether this is a reaction to the elemental aspects of the universe (both the celestial and terrestrial) or the throbbing energy of the inner-city." (24 Hours, May 1998.)

His works have been performed by some of Australia's leading ensembles, including The Australian String Quartet, The Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Southern Cross Soloists, Perihelion, The Song Company, and the Australia Ensemble. His works have also been well received in the USA, at the Sonic Boom Festival by the New York New Music Ensemble, and in 2000 two of his works featured in the Heads-Up 100 Festival in London as a part of the Centenary of Federation celebrations.

Phospheric Variations. The title of this work is derived from a series of word-associations: Phosphorescent: luminescent green vibrancy and nature. Spherics: spherical, circular, cyclical cycles and seasons. Phospheric: cycles of nature, cycles of life. This work comprises a set of variations structured around the repetition of a simple ground bass. The term 'Variations' is used somewhat loosely and does not conform to the strict connotations of the classical 'Theme and Variations' form. Rather, it is used in the sense that the presented themes are decorated and varied over a repeated ground bass in much the same way as in a Chaconne.

Colin Brumby – Danza

Colin Brumby was born in Melbourne in 1933. He graduated from the Melbourne University Conservatorium of Music in 1957, and studied composition with Philipp Jarnach in Spain and Alexander Goehr in London. Upon returning to Australia, he joined the staff of the Music Department at the University of Queensland. He was founding Musical Director of the Queensland Opera Company from 1968 to 1971, and conducted Australian premieres of such works as Haydn's *L'infedeltà* delusa and Bizet's *Dr. Miracle*. He also wrote a series of highly successful one-act children's operettas for the Queensland Opera Company. In 1972 he undertook further studies in advanced composition with Franco Evangelisti in Rome, having received his Doctorate of Music the previous year from the University of Melbourne. Upon his return to Australia he was commissioned by Musica Viva (Australia) to compose a work for the 1974 tour of the Academy of St Martin-in-the Fields under Neville Marriner. Many of Brumby's original songs have proven immensely popular in schools, and in choirs of all levels. His larger works include operas, solo concerti, chamber works, and numerous choral works. He has also written for film and ballet. He was awarded one of the first Advance Australia Awards in 1981 for his services to music, and in 1998 retired as Associate Professor from the School of Music at the University of Queensland. *Danza* is a lighthearted work

for clarinet and piano skipping effortlessly from its presto opening, through a contrasting middle section with cadenza like moments, to a return of the opening theme for its joyful conclusion.

Jean Françaix – Tema con Variazioni

Jean Françaix (1912-1997) was a French composer and pianist. Born into a musical family, his mother was a singer and teacher, and his father was a composer, pianist, musicologist and director of the Le Mans Conservatoire. His precocious gifts were recognised by Ravel, who stated that; “Among the child’s gifts I observe above all the most fruitful an artist can possess, that of curiosity.” He studied piano at the Paris Conservatoire with Isidore Philipp, and became known as a dazzling pianist, giving regular public performances of his works. His daughter Claude, also a pianist, was often his duet partner. They toured together performing his Concerto for Two Pianos (1965) in Berlin, London, New York and Boston. Françaix’s output was rich and diverse, and amounts to over 200 pieces. He wrote for theatre, film, and opera, as well as having a large output of orchestral, vocal, chamber and solo instrumental works. His music is charming and eclectic, with incessant jocular dialogues breaking out like animated conversation throughout. This undeniable sense of

humour is revealed in Françaix’s comments on his music; he vows that its aim is to ‘give pleasure...that is, to be jolly most of the time, even comical.’ His expressive harmonic language, combined with his colourful melodic writing has claimed him a position among neo-classical composers. The Theme and Variations were composed for the Concours du Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris. As such, the work would have been required to exploit the full capabilities of the clarinet, in its function as a ‘test piece’. Françaix dedicated the work to his grandson, Olivier, and the opening theme is a musical speaking of the name Olivier in the first entry of the clarinet. This reappears throughout the work in various guises; settings that might provide accompaniment to the range of moods and activities of a young boy, from boisterous enthusiasm to tenderness.

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