

Palazzo Contarini Polignac

Week-end Musical
29-30 novembre 2014, Venice



Autoportrait, 1882

*En l'honneur du cent cinquantième de la naissance de
Winnaretta Singer
Princesse Edmond de Polignac
1865- 1943*

Winnaretta Singer

Princesse Edmond de Polignac (1865-1943)

La Princesse Edmond de Polignac, née Winnaretta Singer, décédée à Londres en 1943, a vu le jour aux Etats-Unis, à Yonkers près de New-York, le 8 janvier 1865, c'est-à-dire il y a bientôt 150 ans.

A la veille de cet anniversaire, sa famille a souhaité célébrer sa mémoire en organisant deux concerts dans la demeure qui fut durant près d'un demi-siècle sa résidence vénitienne.

Vingtième enfant de l'inventeur Isaac Singer, qui perfectionna la machine à coudre et donna son nom à la célèbre compagnie, Winnaretta élevée en France et en Angleterre se passionna très tôt pour les arts, en particulier la peinture et la musique. Ayant elle-même un talent certain d'artiste-peintre, elle opta cependant pour l'activité où elle estima être la plus utile avec les moyens considérables dont elle put disposer à sa majorité, son père étant mort lorsqu'elle avait dix ans, d'où son mécénat concernant un large éventail d'activités humaines.

En symbiose avec sa culture familiale elle baignait depuis l'enfance dans un climat d'intense effervescence intellectuelle et artistique, tournée vers l'inventivité, l'activité, éveillée aux façons de participer aux réalisations et préoccupations humaines. C'est naturellement vers les domaines où la conduisaient ses passions artistiques, en premier lieu la musique, que Winnaretta entendit consacrer en priorité sa vie et son mécénat. Son mari, le prince Edmond de Polignac qu'elle épousa en 1893, était lui-même compositeur, et jusqu'à sa mort en 1901 ils menèrent ensemble une œuvre d'accueil, de commandes, de soutien aux artistes, et permettant à leurs œuvres d'être jouées. Ce mécénat commencé par Winnaretta dès sa jeunesse et avant son mariage, fut poursuivi par elle toute sa vie, et même au delà de sa propre mort, à travers la Fondation Singer Polignac qu'elle avait créée en 1928.

Les lieux majeurs de cette action se situent dans les deux principales résidences de Winnaretta que furent à Paris son hôtel de l'avenue Georges Mandel, aujourd'hui siège de la Fondation Singer-Polignac, et à Venise le palazzo Contarini dal Zaffo qu'elle acquit en 1900, à la suite de plusieurs séjours précédents dans la cité, à laquelle elle vouait une particulière ferveur.

Après la Princesse de Polignac, le palazzo Contarini Polignac a pu rester dans sa famille. Il avait été construit au 15^e s, marquant une transition architecturale par sa façade, d'ordonnance encore quelque peu gothique mais au décor romano-florentin, ce qui le rend un maillon important pour la compréhension des palais vénitiens. Après avoir appartenu deux siècles à la branche dal Zaffo de l'illustre famille dogale des Contarini, il avait changé plusieurs fois de mains à partir du 18^e s. Sa façade a été restaurée au début du 21^e s, et la famille continue l'entretien nécessaire du palazzo.

Les concerts des 29 et 30 novembre sont programmés autour d'œuvres que la Princesse aimait écouter ou interpréter, dont les auteurs ont été concernés par son mécénat, et pour la plupart accueillis par elle dans ces murs.

L'événement traduit une volonté de la famille de maintenir vivantes dans ces lieux la création et les activités artistiques. Une telle dynamique est d'ailleurs sensible à plusieurs égards, en particulier: la restauration des pianos d'origine à l'initiative d'un membre de la famille et pour la première fois de nouveau en service, la participation d'une cantatrice membre de la famille parmi les interprètes et plus largement la poursuite d'activités créatives et artistiques dans la maison et la famille, en particulier à travers l'un de ses membres artiste-peintre professionnel, dont l'atelier se trouve à l'étage.

L.D.

Winnaretta Singer

Princess Edmond de Polignac (1865-1943)

Princess Edmond de Polignac died in London in 1943. She was born Winnaretta Singer in Yonkers, New York, USA, on January 8 1865 - close to 150 years ago. As her anniversary approaches, her family wishes to celebrate her memory with two concerts in what was her Venetian home for almost half a century.

Twentieth child of Isaac Merritt Singer, the inventor of the sewing machine and founder of the world-famous Singer Company, Winnaretta grew up in France and England. She developed a passion for the arts early in life, especially painting and music. Her father died when she was only ten and she came into a considerable fortune. Though she was undoubtedly gifted as a painter and musician in her own right, she nonetheless chose to commit herself to tireless philanthropy in a wide variety of fields.

Thanks to her family, Winnaretta was from an early age immersed in a profoundly cultural climate, tense with intellectual and artistic concerns. As a result, she was always energetic and imaginative, constantly seeking ways to take part in and encourage all kinds of human endeavour. Inevitably her passion for the arts, above all for music, led her to focus her life and her patronage principally in that field.

In 1893 she married Prince Edmond de Polignac, himself a composer, and until his death in 1901 they embarked together on an unceasing program of sponsorship. They always gave a warm welcome to composers, helping them financially, commissioning numerous works and arranging for them to be performed. Winnaretta's patronage of the arts flourished during her marriage to Edmond, no less so than before her marriage. It continued for the rest of her life - and indeed beyond, thanks to the still very active Fondation Singer Polignac she set up in 1928.

The headquarters of her great enterprise were the two places where Winnaretta mostly lived. One was her Paris residence in the what is now the Avenue George Mandel, to this day the seat of the Fondation Singer Polignac. The other was the Palazzo Contarini dal Zaffo in Venice which she bought in 1900. She had visited Venice several times in the late 19th century and was particularly attached to the city.

When the Princesse de Polignac died, the palazzo Contarini Polignac, as it is now known, remained in her family. It had been built in the 15th century, its façade an architectural link between two periods. Though outwardly gothic in feel, it has distinct Roman-Florentine decorative schemes. These unique transitional elements make it one of the most noteworthy Venetian palaces. After belonging for two centuries to the dal Zaffo branch of the Contarini, a great dogal family, it changed hands several times from the 18th century onwards. The façade was restored at the beginning of the 21st century, and the family remains committed to the ongoing preservation of the building.

The concerts on the 29th and 30th November are devoted to works that the Princess was fond of listening to or keen to interpret. Most of their authors benefited from her sponsorship, so she hosted many of the early performances within these very walls.

The concerts also express the family's determination to keep creativity and artistic activity alive here at the palace. We can see this family dynamic at work in several ways in the planning of these concerts. Thanks to the initiative of a family member, the four splendid pianos have been restored and are again in service. Another family member, one of the performers in this event, is a singer. And in general there is a considerable amount of creative activity at Palazzo Contarini Polignac, particularly since one family member is a professional painter, with his studio here, in the house.

L.D.

A Life in Music

Dr. Sylvia Kahan, Professor of Musicology, City University of New York; author,
Music's Modern Muse: A Life of Winnaretta Singer, Princesse de Polignac

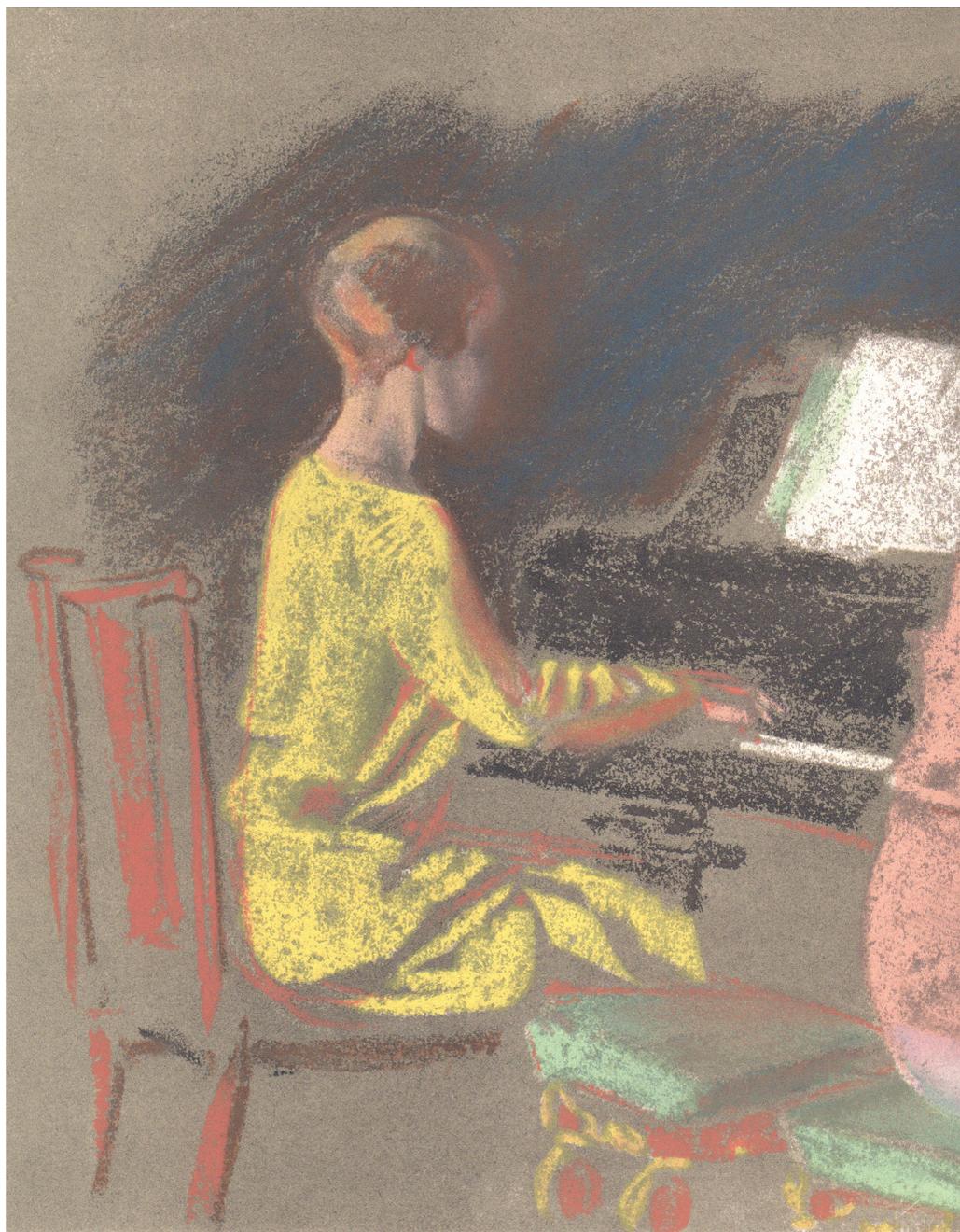
The magnificent room in which we find ourselves, here in the Palazzo Polignac, has a hallowed past, one that echoes through the history of twentieth-century music. For it was here that Winnaretta Singer, Princesse de Polignac, held her summer salon, and where so many of Europe's great artists performed new works by emerging composers and where violin concertos by Vivaldi hidden for more than a century in obscure libraries were heard for the first time in the twentieth century. The owner of the palazzo, Winnaretta Singer, dedicated her life to perpetuation of music. For her it was a psychological necessity. Equally imperative was annual refuge from the hustle and bustle of Paris life, and she found it here, in the magnificent edifice, where the effervescent sounds of Bach and Stravinsky were accompanied by the gentle movement of the Canale Grande.

Much of Winnaretta Singer-Polignac's musical activity was generated with the intent of honoring the memory of her beloved husband, Prince Edmond de Polignac (1834-1901), himself a composer, for whom the palazzo was purchased as a birthday present in 1900. The couple had little opportunity to enjoy their Venice life together before illness brought the prince's life to an end in August 1901. Prince Edmond had been a creator of daring works using alternative scales, and it was his innovative and forward-thinking approach to composition that inspired Winnaretta to perpetuate new music for the rest of her life. Newness, in general, was one of the things that Winnaretta valued most. In 1904, she renovated her Paris mansion, creating a music room large enough to comfortably accommodate a chamber orchestra and 200 guests. The large living room of 43 Avenue Henri Martin was reserved for major orchestras and renowned artists, while the atelier of the rue Cortambert offered street concerts with organ accompaniment and more intimate musical evenings. Meanwhile, the salon of the Princess de Polignac reflected the thriving artistic activity of his time. A dozen times a year, artists and aristocrats would gather for a sumptuous dinner and then they went into the music room to enjoy a wonderful musical event. The princess became "Tante Winnie" and it was an honor to maintain a level of excellence that her friends were invited to share, not for their social status or wealth, but for their talents or, more importantly, their love for music.

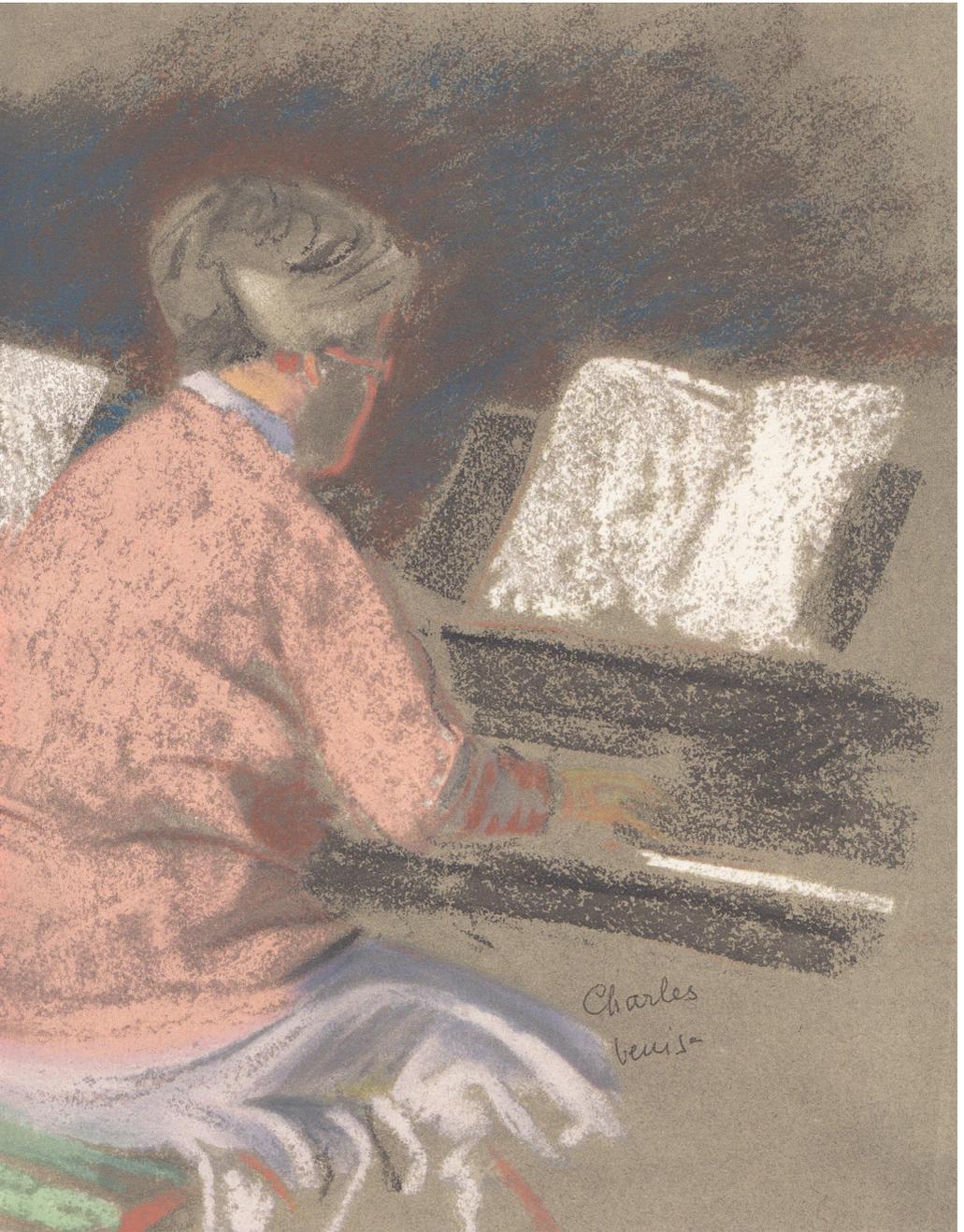
During World War I, Winnaretta began a project of commissioning works by young composers, such as Stravinsky, Poulenc, Satie, Falla, Milhaud, and Weill, among others. She used the Singer Sewing Machine fortune to promote modern French music, building up a repertoire of nearly twenty commissioned works, most of which had their first performances in her salons, and which are still in the active repertoire today. Winnaretta spent a part of every year in Venice, where she welcomed musicians from every corner of Europe. During her stays during the summer and autumn months, she hosted musical gatherings that became as renowned as those held in her Paris salons. Pianists Clara Haskil and Renata Borgatti and violinist Olga Rudge (Ezra Pound's lover) performed there so frequently that they were practically "house musicians." Diaghilev and Cole Porter were regulars, as were members of Les Six. Arthur Rubinstein spent his honeymoon at the Palazzo Polignac. Toscanini was often in attendance at the musical gatherings; after the concerts, he would go to the kitchen to help prepare the spaghetti. Vladimir Horowitz lived there for a number of years, and he and Winnaretta became close friends.

Winnaretta was also influential in making sure that the works of French composers whom she patronized were given places in the summer festivals. She was the honorary president of the International Festival of Music of the 1932 Venice Biennale, and it was thus that Poulenc's Two-Piano Concerto and Falla's El Retablo de Maese Pedro were featured at the Festival. Stravinsky wrote Winnaretta a Piano Sonata as a "thank you" for her support, and that work, too, was premiered in Venice, in 1925.

Winnaretta's annual visits to the palazzo were cut short by the advent of World War II. She died in London during the Blitz, in November 1943. But her memory lives on in the palazzo's halls. Today, her family honors her by filling those halls, once again, with beautiful music.



Marie-Blanche et la Princesse Edmond de Polignac jouant à quatre mains au Palazzo Polignac, à Venise.
Pastel par Comte Charles de Polignac



Charles
Lewis

*Soirée
musicale*

Programme

Palazzo Contarini Polignac
Samedi 29 novembre 2014

29.11

Sylvia Kahan, piano
Cécile de Montebello, soprano
François Le Roux, baryton
Aurélien Pontier, piano

- Gabriel Fauré** Cinq Mélodies de Venise, op. 58
Mandoline
En sourdine
Green
À Clymène
C'est l'extase
Cécile de Montebello, Aurélien Pontier
- Maurice Ravel** Pavane pour une infante défunte
Aurélien Pontier
- Reynaldo Hahn** Quand la nuit n'est pas étoilée
Chansons grises
Tous deux
L'allée est sans fin
L'heure exquise
François Le Roux, Sylvia Kahan
- Gabriel Fauré** Puisqu'ici-bas toute âme
Cécile de Montebello, François Le Roux, Aurélien Pontier
- Pause*
- Igor Stravinsky** Trois mouvements de Pétrouchka, arr. pour deux pianos
Danse russe
Chez Pétrouchka
La semaine grasse
Aurélien Pontier, Sylvia Kahan
- Hugo Wolf** Italienisches Liederbuch, extraits
Auch kleine Dinge (Même de petites choses)
Nun laß uns Frieden Schließen (Faisons la paix maintenant)
Heb' auf dein blondes Haupt (Lève ta tête blonde)
Mein Liebster singt am Haus im Mondenscheine
(Mon amoureux chante devant la maison au clair de lune)
Benedeit die sel'ge Mutter (Que bénie soit ta mère)
O wär' dein Haus durchsichtig wie ein Glas
(Oh si ta maison était transparente comme du verre)
Cécile de Montebello, François Le Roux, Sylvia Kahan
- Francis Poulenc** Mazurka
Les Chemins de l'amour
Cécile de Montebello, François Le Roux, Sylvia Kahan

*Matinée
musicale*

Palazzo Contarini Polignac
Dimanche 30 novembre 2014

30.11

Sylvia Kahan, piano
Marc Coppey, violoncelle
François Le Roux, baryton
Aurélien Pontier, piano

J. S. Bach

Suite n° 3 en do majeur pour violoncelle seul, BWV 1009
Prélude
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Bourrée I & II
Gigue

Marc Coppey

Robert Schumann

Six Études en forme de canon, op. 56
Pas trop vite
Avec beaucoup d'expression
Andantino
Espressivo
Pas trop vite
Adagio

Sylvia Kahan, Aurélien Pontier

Gabriel Fauré

Élégie, op. 24
Romance, op. 69
Papillon, op. 77

Marc Coppey, Sylvia Kahan

Pause

Igor Stravinsky

Sonate pour piano
Comodo
Adagietto
Finale

Sylvia Kahan

J. S. Bach

Air, "Komm, süßes Kreuz", de La Passion selon St.-Mathieu, BWV 244

Jules Massenet

Amours bénis

Léon Boëllmann

Notre amour

François Le Roux, Marc Coppey, Aurélien Pontier

Manuel de Falla

Suite populaire espagnole
El paño moruno (Le drap mauresque)
Nana (Berceuse)
Canción (Chanson)
Polo
Asturiana (Asturienne)
Jota

Marc Coppey, Sylvia Kahan

Les quatre pianos de Winnaretta Singer

Le Palazzo Contarini Polignac possède quatre pianos historiques : un piano Pleyel 1898, deux pianos Erard – trois-quart queue 1885 et droit 1892, et un piano portatif à cinq octaves provenant des ateliers JB Cramer de Londres en 1898.

Ces instruments, restaurés cette année par Gérard Fauvin à Pétignac, ont été régulièrement utilisés par de nombreux virtuoses lors de concerts organisés au Palazzo : Gabriel Fauré, Reynaldo Hahn, Francis Poulenc, Darius Milhaud, Manuel de Falla, Maurice Ravel, Jacques Février, Nadia Boulanger, Clara Haskil, Vladimir Horowitz....

Le Pleyel demi-queue, modèle 3bis, portant le numéro 119.839 était en exposition chez M. Schindler, grand marchand parisien. C'est chez ce dernier que la princesse en fit l'acquisition, le 30 octobre 1900. La caisse de cette très belle pièce a été réalisée en ébène et acajou plaqué. Le piano est décoré d'une lyre travaillée, de pieds tournés aux motifs de feuille d'acanthé.

Vantés et joués par Chopin, ces modèles furent connus pour leur robustesse, leur timbre « orchestral » et leur capacité à soutenir une ligne mélodique délicate. Francis Poulenc a joué sur cet instrument le concerto pour piano en sol de Ravel, tandis que Jacques Février réalisait la partie d'accompagnement orchestral sur le trois-quart Erard.

Le piano Erard, trois-quart queue, modèle N° 2, numéro 58784, enregistré comme « noir gravé », est sorti de fabrication en février 1884, il porte les initiales de Winnaretta. Il a été acheté par Madame Winnaretta Singer le 4 avril 1897. C'est un bel exemple du travail exceptionnel d'Erard à cette période. La caisse est en ébène et acajou verni au tampon noir, ornée de décorations florales. Ses trois pieds élégants sont tournés et décorés de fines cannelures, une des caractéristiques d'Erard à cette période. L'instrument dispose d'une gamme dynamique impressionnante et colorée, très prisée de Liszt.

Le piano droit Erard, modèle N° 8, à cordes obliques, portant le numéro 69.255, a été fabriqué en 1892. Son ébénisterie est en palissandre. Il est verni au tampon « façon ébène ». Il a été vendu à Madame W. Singer le 9 décembre 1892 à Paris. Caisse ébène, pupitre dépliant à l'intérieur. 4 chandeliers, aucun manquant, ni cassé. Le clavier comprend 7 octaves, de La à La. Les touches blanches sont en ivoire et les noires en ébène. Il est doté de deux poignées en bronze, une de chaque côté, pour le transport, ou plutôt pour les déplacements liés aux changements de position.

Le piano portable Cramer, fabriqué en 1896 et portant le n° 27.366, est une pièce originale «très anglaise». La caisse est plaquée en chêne. L'originalité du piano réside dans son clavier basculant, d'une tessiture de cinq octaves. Winnaretta acquit l'instrument peu de temps après sa fabrication et l'un de ses premiers amis à le jouer fut Gabriel Fauré. En 1900, peu de temps avant d'avoir acheté le Palazzo Contarini Polignac, Winnaretta s'est rendue à Venise avec un certain nombre d'amis dont Marcel Proust et Reynaldo Hahn. Lors d'une soirée mémorable, le piano a été installé sur une gondole et Reynaldo Hahn divertit la compagnie, au clair de lune, au son de ses mélodies.

The 4 Pianos of Winnaretta Singer

The Palazzo Contarini Polignac has four important pianos in its collection, an 1898 Pleyel, an 1885 Erard, an 1882 Erard upright and a five-octave portable piano made by JB Cramer of London in 1898.

The instruments were owned by Winnaretta Singer and have been expertly restored this year by Gérard Fauvin in Pétignac. All three were played at various times by an impressive roll-call of virtuosos. Among these were Gabriel Fauré, Reynaldo Hahn, Francis Poulenc, Darius Milhaud, Manuel de Falla, Maurice Ravel, Jacques Février, Nadia Boulanger, Clara Haskil and Vladimir Horowitz.

The Pleyel (No. 119839), manufactured in 1898, is a fine piece, made in ebony and veneered mahogany and has distinctive acanthus-leaf pedestals. Much praised and played by Chopin, Pleyel models of this type were known for their robust 'orchestral' timbre but were nevertheless capable of sustaining a delicate melodic line. Francis Poulenc played through Ravel's Piano Concerto in G on this instrument - while Jacques Février provided the orchestral accompaniment on the Erard.

The Erard (No. 58784), manufactured in 1884 is a fine example of the manufacturer's work of this period, made in ebony and veneered mahogany and adorned with floral decorations bearing Winnaretta's initials. It has elegant, fluted pedestals - very much an Erard feature of the period. The instrument has an impressive and colourful dynamic range and was much favoured by Liszt.

The Erard upright piano (No. 69255) was manufactured in 1892 and sold to Winnaretta Singer in the same year in Paris. The seven-octave instrument is made of ebonized rosewood with an ivory and ebony keyboard. Interesting characteristics include four perfectly preserved candlesticks and a pair of bronze handles. The handles were designed to facilitate the transportation of the instrument. They are also useful for moving it easily and quickly around a household for different types of musical events.

The Cramer portable piano, manufactured in 1896 (No. 27366) is a distinctly English piece made in veneered oak with a pearwood five-octave keyboard. Winnaretta acquired the instrument shortly after its manufacture and among the first of her friends to play it was Gabriel Fauré. In 1900, shortly before she bought the Palazzo Contarini Polignac, Winnaretta visited Venice with a number of friends including Marcel Proust and Reynaldo Hahn. On one memorable evening, the piano was installed on a gondola and Hahn entertained the company with moonlit renditions of his songs.

Sylvia Kahan, piano

Pianist Sylvia Kahan is Professor of Music at the Graduate Center and the College of Staten Island, City University of New York, where she is a member of the Piano and Musicology faculties. She has performed as concerto soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician in all of New York's major halls and throughout North America and Europe. Her concerts have been broadcast on National Public Radio (US) and she has participated in the Tanglewood, Aspen, Waterloo, Delta, and Nancy festivals. As a collaborative pianist, she has partnered world-renowned artists including Roberta Peters and Shirley Verrett as well as members of the English Chamber Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. Highlights of 2014 include concerto performances with members of the Tonkünstler Orchestra in Vienna and the Metro Chamber Orchestra in New York; a series of solo piano recitals; and a New York recital with cellist Marc Coppey.

As a musicologist, Sylvia Kahan specializes in 19th- and 20th-century French music and culture. Her articles have appeared in *19th-Century Music*, *Bulletin Marcel Proust*, *Two Oranges*, and chapters on Nadia Boulanger, Fauré, Varèse, Wagner, and Debussy have been published in essay collections. Dr. Kahan's two books, *Music's Modern Muse* and *In Search of New Scales* (both published by University of Rochester Press) have received stellar reviews. *Music's Modern Muse* will appear in 2015 in French translation as *La Muse de la musique moderne* (Les presses du réel, Dijon). Sylvia Kahan has presented her research at scholarly conferences and in pre-concert lectures both nationally and internationally. In 2012, *Music's Modern Muse* was the inspiration for a "soirée" presented by The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (NY), in which Sylvia Kahan recreated the Paris salon of the Princesse Edmond de Polignac.

Sylvia Kahan earned degrees from the Oberlin Conservatory, Michigan State University, and the CUNY Graduate Center, and continued her studies in New York with renowned pianist Richard Goode. She has served as director and chair of Music programs for the 1e and 3e cycles in the City University of New York, and is the recipient of Winner numerous awards for outstanding scholarship and leadership within the university.

Cécile de Montebello, lyric soprano

Cécile de Montebello began studying voice in New York at the age of 16. In Paris, she studied with Yva Barthelemy and at the same time entered the Ecole Normale de Musique. She has participated in the master classes of Rudolph Pierney and Mitsuko Shirai. After winning First Prize in the Maîtres du Chant Français competition, Cécile de Montebello continued her studies with Graziella Sciutti in England, concentrating on the Mozartian repertoire. She has performed the roles of the First Witch in Purcell's "Dido and Aeneas"; Venus in Purcell's "King Arthur"; Despina in Mozart's "Cosi fan tutte"; and Gretel in Humperdinck's "Hansel and Gretel". Currently, Cécile de Montebello lives in London, where she follows the vocal method of the American vocal pedagogue David Jones. She is the proud mother of four children.

Marc Coppey, violoncelliste

French cellist Marc Coppey, winner of the two highest prizes at the 1988 Bach competition Leipzig at the age of 18 – first prize and special prize for the best interpretation of Bach, is considered to be one of the leading cellists of today. Lord Yehudi Menuhin discovered Marc's talent at an early age, and subsequently invited him to make his Moscow and Paris debuts by performing the Tchaikovsky Trio with himself and Victoria Postnikova, a collaboration documented on film by famous film director Bruno Monsiegeon. In 1989 Mstislav Rostropovich invited Marc to the Evian Festival and from that moment on his solo career took off.

A frequent soloist with the leading orchestras of today, Marc Coppey has collaborated with many distinguished conductors such as Eliahu Inbal, Emmanuel Krivine, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Michel Plasson, Yan-Pascal Tortelier, Jean-Claude Casadesu, Theodor Guschlbauer, Pascal Rophé, Yutaka Sado, John Nelson, Raymond Leppard, Erich Bergel, Alan Gilbert, Lionel Bringuier, Kirill Karabits, Paul McCreech and Asher Fisch. Mr. Coppey has appeared on numerous occasions in Europe, North and South America and Asia and in some of the most prestigious concert halls of the world such as Wigmore Hall in London, the Schauspielhaus in Berlin, the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, the Salle Pleyel, the Théâtre de la Ville, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, the Théâtre du Châtelet and the Cité de la Musique in Paris, the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, the National Concert Hall in Dublin, the Rudolfinum in Prague, the Liszt Conservatory Hall in Budapest, the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory in Moscow, the Capella in Saint-Petersburg, the Casals Hall in Tokyo or the Metropolitan Museum in New York. He is a regular guest of the festivals of Radio-France-Montpellier, Strasbourg, Musica, Besançon, La Roque d'Anthéron, Monte-Carlo "Printemps des Arts", Nantes "Folles Journées", West Cork, Campos do Jordao (Brazil), Stuttgart, Midem, Kuhmo, Korsholm and Prades.

An avid chamber music player, Marc Coppey has explored and performed the cello repertoire with such renowned artists as Maria-Joao Pires, Stephen Kovacevich, Nicholas Angelich, Aleksandar Madzar, Michel Beroff, Peter Laul, François-Frédéric Guy, Mikhail Rudy, Augustin Dumay, Victoria Mullova, Liana Gourdjia, Tedi Papavrami, Ilya Gringolts, Laurent Korcia, David Grimal, Gérard Caussé, Janos Starker, Marie-Pierre Langlamet, Michel Portal, Paul Meyer, Emmanuel Pahud and the Prazak, Talich or Ebene Quartets. From 1995 to 2000 he was a member of the Ysaÿe Quartet, performing at the most prestigious international concert venues.

Marc Coppey's choice of repertoire is eclectic and innovative. He frequently plays the complete Bach Suites and other well-known and loved concert repertoire, and also brings to the public's attention works that are rarely heard. Performing and promoting contemporary music is very important to Marc Coppey and composers such as Christian Durieux, Fedele, Fénelon, Jarrell, Krawczyk, Lenot, Monnet, Pauset, Pécou, Reverdy and Tanguy have all dedicated works to him. He gave the world premieres of Lenot's Concerto, Monnet Concerto, Tanguy's 1st Concerto and the French premiere of Elliott Carter, Mantovani and Tüür cello Concertos.

Marc Coppey's many recordings have received critical acclaim worldwide. They include works by Beethoven, Debussy, Emmanuel Fauré, Grieg and Strauss, produced by the labels Auvidis, Decca, Harmonia Mundi and K617. His latest release of the complete Bach Suites (awarded Télérama's ffff) and a CD dedicated to Dohnányi (featured in the "10 de Répertoire"), were both recorded for the Aeon/Harmonia Mundi label. Together with the Prazak Quartet, Marc Coppey recorded the Schubert Quintet for the Praga label. In 2006 two more CD's were released: one of the great Russian cello sonatas, accompanied by pianist Peter Laul (on the Aeon label), and the other, a performance of Martin Matalon's concerto (on Accord/ Universal). Marc Coppey's 2008 recording of the Dutilleux Cello Concerto and the Caplet Concertos with the Liège Orchestra under Pascal Rophé's direction received a Diapason d'Or, a "Choc" from the Magazine Le Monde de la Musique and BBC Magazine *****. More recently, he released a CD of the Brahms Sonatas, followed in the fall of 2010 by a Schubert recording (Arpeggione sonata).

François Le Roux, baritone

François Le Roux began his vocal studies with François Loup at the age of 19, and later he studied under Vera Rosza and Elisabeth Grümmer at the Opéra Studio, Paris. He is a winner of international competitions in Barcelona ("Maria Canals"), and Rio de Janeiro. He was a member of the Lyon Opera Company from 1980 to 1985 since when he has been a guest with all the major European opera houses and festivals. He has appeared at the Glyndebourne Festival (as Ramiro in Ravel's *L'Heure Espagnole*), in Hamburg and Oslo (as Marcello in Puccini's *La Bohème*), in Frankfurt (as Orestes in Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*), at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London (among other parts as Lescaut in Massenet's *Manon*, as Papageno in Mozart's *Magic Flute* conducted by Colin Davis, as Figaro in Rossini's *Barbiere di Siviglia*). In 1988, he made his debut as Valentin in Gounod's *Faust* at the Paris Opera. In 1987, the role of Don Giovanni played at the Paris Opera-Comique enjoyed a real triumph and brought him the French critics' award "Prix de la Révélation de l'année". As Don Giovanni Le Roux has also appeared in Zürich (under Nikolaus Harnoncourt) in England, Scotland and in Spain. For the first time in 1985 he was cast in the role of Pelleas in Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and at once was appointed by critics "the greatest Pelleas of his generation". He has played this role over a hundred times on the most renowned operatic stages throughout the world and has recorded it for Deutsche Grammophon under Claudio Abbado ; since 1998, he has switched to the part of Golaud in the same opera, to great acclaim, in Paris, in Bordeaux, and at the famous Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires (Argentina) ; it was him who was Golaud, for the centenary of the world premiere of the opera (30 april 2002), at the Paris Opera- Comique, and recently, for the Russian staged premiere ever of the opera.

His wide repertoire covers all Mozart baritone parts, a range of parts from the Italian repertoire (Figaro, Dandini, Malatesta, Marcello), and also baroque opera (title roles of Monteverdi's *Orfeo* at the Vienna festival, and *Ulisse*, *Campra's Tancredi* -title role-, and *Rameau's Pollux* in *Castor et Pollux* at the Aix en Provence Festival), as well as contemporary opera (Henze's *Der Prinz von Homburg* -title role- in Munich conducted by Wolfgang Sawallisch, and World premieres of Birtwistle's *Gawain* -title role- at Covent Garden, Von Bose's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* -title role- at the Schwetzingen Festival, Georges Boeuf's *Verlaine Paul* -title role- in Nancy and Marseille, David Lang's *Modern Painters* -part of John Ruskin- at the Santa Fé Opera).

In addition to numerous operatic recordings for EMI, Erato, and BMG-RCA, Le Roux has released several records of the French song repertoire for EMI, REM (e.g. complete songs of Duparc and Fauré), HYPERION (Saint-Saëns songs, Séverac Songs & Louis Durey Songs with Graham Johnson), and DECCA-Universal, which were enthusiastically received, gaining him the name of Gérard Souzay's successor.

His first Book "Le Chant intime", published by Fayard, about the interpretation of French Song, has been awarded the 2004 René Dumesnil Award by the French National Académie des Beaux Arts. It is now available in Japanese (translators: Setsuko Miyama & Kenji Yamada, publisher: Shunjusha Publishing Company).

Aurélien Pontier, piano

Born in 1981 in Paris in a family of musicians, Aurélien Pontier displayed at an early age an exceptional talent for the piano. At the age of 9, he performed on the stage of the Opéra de Paris and, the following year, at the Adirondacks Music Festival (New York). His participation in the "Nuits symphoniques" of the Orchestre national de Lyon earned him the notice of the orchestra's eminent conductor, Emmanuel Krivine. Aurélien Pontier was subsequently engaged in 1993 and 1994 as soloist with the Orchestre national de Lyon, performing the Two-Piano Concerto of Mozart and Chopin's First Piano Concerto, under the direction of Sylvain Cambreling and Peter Csaba, respectively. During the same period, after winning a First Prize at the Conservatoire de Boulogne-Billancourt, he was admitted, at the age of 13, to the Conservatoire national supérieur de Musique in Paris, where he entered the class of renowned pianist Jean-François Heisser.

In 1998, Aurélien Pontier won First Prize in Piano and, the same year, was awarded an unanimous First Prize in the International Contest for Young Pianists Vladimir Krainev in Kharkov (Ukraine). Since then, he has performed regularly in numerous festivals, both in France and abroad: Radio-France "Présence 94", and the festivals of Montpellier, Chioggia (Italy), Lake Placid (USA), Kiev, and the Festival International de Colmar. Currently, he is in the process of enlarging his repertoire under the mentorship of Konstantin Bogino, and benefits from the advice of prestigious masters: Vladimir Krainev, Murray Perahia, and Rena Cherechevskaia.

Aurélien Pontier was recently heard live on France-Musique in the program "Scène ouverte", dedicated to young winners of international competitions, in the program "L'Atelier du musicien", hosted by Jean-Pierre Derrien. In recent seasons he has performed at the Auditorium du Louvre, at the Arsenal de Metz, and at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow. Aurélien Pontier also maintains an intense activity as a chamber music pianist, partnering artists such as Marc Coppey, Diego Tosi, Liana Gourdja, Bertrand Chamayou, Pierre-Henri Xuereb, the Johannes Quartet, Sébastien Van Kuijk, and Alexandra Grot.

In 2005 Aurélien Pontier won Third Prize in the International Competition in Chioggia, Italy; his performance of the Second Concerto of Chopin received particular notice. Aurélien Pontier is a laureate of the "Arts Academy" Foundation in Rome; this title will result in a collaboration with the Symphonic Orchestra of Rome and the release of his first CD.

Remerciements

Soyons reconnaissants envers les merveilleux musiciens qui ont, avec enthousiasme, participé de manière bénévole : Sylvia Kahan – piano et Cécile de Montebello - soprano,
Marc Coppey - violoncelle, François Le Roux - baryton et Aurélien Pontier - piano.

Sylvia Kahan et Daniel Popesco ont été l'âme de ce concert inaugural, tant par leurs conseils que par leurs recommandations pour le choix et le déroulement du programme musical.

Gérard Fauvin a restauré les quatre pianos à Pétignac, dans le délai imparti : son travail remarquable, sur les plans mécanique et esthétique, sera certainement apprécié par les auditeurs.

Koray Ozgen et Robin Saikia ont oeuvré à la conception et à la réalisation des invitations et de la brochure.

Citons enfin nos amis mélomanes qui ont contribué avec générosité :

M. et Mme Hervé Audinet, M. et Mme Denis Cassat, M. Gérard Catherine, Mrs Marilyn Cooper,
Mr and Mrs Eugene Curley, Mme Ariadne de Gouville, Mr and Mrs Percy Kemp, M. et Mme Antoine de Pracomtal,
M. et Mme Jean-François de Ramecourt, M. Arnaud de Saint Roman, M. Amaro Sanchez de Moya,
Mme Anne Steverlyncck, Mme Caroline Villecroze.

We are grateful to the wonderful musicians who so very kindly agreed to take part in this concert:

Sylvia Kahan – pianist; Cécile de Montebello - soprano;

Marc Coppey - cellist; François Le Roux - baritone; Aurélien Pontier - pianist.

Sylvia Kahan and Daniel Popesco have been at the heart of this inauguration concert. They have been tirelessly generous with their time and advice - and have played an important role in choosing the music for this program.

Gérard Fauvin has restored the four pianos in his workshop in Pétignac, on time and to a flawless standard. His remarkable work, both on the mechanism and the aesthetic of the instruments, will be warmly appreciated by the audience.

Koray Ozgen and Robin Saikia designed and prepared the invitations and the program booklet.

We thank our friends who have sponsored this event with such generosity:

M. et Mme Hervé Audinet, M. et Mme Denis Cassat, M. Gérard Catherine, Mrs Marilyn Cooper,

Mr and Mrs Eugene Curley, Mme Ariadne de Gouville, Mr and Mrs Percy Kemp, M. et Mme Antoine de Pracomtal,

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