



CÉSAR FRANCK (1822-1890)

Violin Sonata in A major

FRANCIS POULENC (1899-1963)

Violin Sonata, FP119

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835-1921)

Violin Sonata no 1 in D minor, Op. 75

The Carlock-Combet Duo

Guillaume Combet *violin* · Sandra Carlock *piano*

Franck Violin Sonata in A major

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|---|----------------------------|------|
| 1 | 1. Allegretto ben moderato | 6:11 |
| 2 | 2. Allegro | 9:09 |
| 3 | 3. Recitativo-Fantasia | 7:21 |
| 4 | 4. Allegretto poco mosso | 7:18 |

Poulenc Violin Sonata, FP 119

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|---|----------------------|------|
| 5 | 1. Allegro con fuoco | 7:12 |
| 6 | 2. Intermezzo | 6:58 |
| 7 | 3. Presto tragico | 5:41 |

**Saint-Saëns Violin Sonata No. 1,
Op. 75**

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|----|------------------------|------|
| 8 | 1. Allegro agitato | 8:01 |
| 9 | 2. Adagio | 6:54 |
| 10 | 3. Allegretto moderato | 4:14 |
| 11 | 4. Allegro molto | 6:19 |

Total duration 75:42

Recorded at Turner Sims, Southampton on 23-25 July 2016

Recording Producer: Siva Oke Recording Engineer: Paul Arden-Taylor

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Violin Sonatas

by *Franck*

Poulenc

Saint-Saëns

The Carlock-Combet Duo

Guillaume Combet *violin*
Sandra Carlock *piano*

Violin Sonatas by Franck, Poulenc and Saint-Saëns

Whilst the longevity of Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921) saw him, soon after performing in Paris the complete Beethoven piano sonatas from memory at the age of 11, mourn Chopin's death in the same city in 1849, become the first great composer to write music for the cinema in 1904, and in his final years declaring himself to be an enemy of Les Six, his activities in other fields throughout his adult life made him a powerful figure in world music.

Saint-Saëns was a composer, pianist, organist, conductor, poet, critic and teacher. In the last discipline he was highly selective in his choice of pupils, among the most gifted of whom was Gabriel Fauré, ten years his junior. Fauré became more than a pupil to the older man, and they remained close friends for life. Saint-Saëns' eminence gave him an entrée to every echelon in Parisian society, including the family of the famous mezzo-soprano and composer Pauline Viardot (Saint-Saëns was to dedicate *Samson et Delilah* to her), then living in her residence on the Boulevard Saint-Germain.

It was through Saint-Saëns that Fauré met Viardot, composing for her several songs, but it was to Viardot's daughter Marianne that Fauré became more attracted. After a courtship, the couple were engaged, and as if to cement his relationship with the family, in 1875-76 Fauré composed his Violin Sonata in A major, dedicating it to her violinist brother Paul.

But the engagement did not last: Marianne broke it off after three months, and the first performance of the Sonata was given in January 1877 by the 21-year-old Marie Tayau – by all accounts, a superbly gifted young violinist – with Fauré at the piano. The recital was part of a series at the Salle Pleyel under the auspices of the Société Nationale de Musique, which Saint-Saëns had founded. In his role as critic, Saint-Saëns wrote: “In the Sonata you find new forms, excellent modulations, unusual tone colours, and unexpected rhythms. A magic floats above everything, encompassing the whole work..... With this work, M. Fauré takes his place among the masters.”

Fauré's Sonata broadly adheres to the classical four-movement shape, but Saint-Saëns himself was more adventurous in his structuralisations. When, ten years after Fauré's Sonata appeared, the older master produced his own first Violin Sonata, Opus 75, he also created a work in four movements. Yet in joining the first and second movements, and the third and fourth, Saint-Saëns effectively produced a Sonata in two 'parts' – a structural innovation he was to follow a year later in his Third Symphony.

As we might therefore expect, Saint-Saëns' First Violin Sonata is a spacious conception. It is dedicated to the famous violinist Martin Marsick (whose Stradivarius was later owned by David Oistrakh), and is a far more 'public' work than Fauré's more intimate score. It is a brilliantly effective Sonata, beginning in a mood of sustained drama which is splendidly contrasted with a second subject of haunting nobility and style. The attentive listener will have no trouble following the dramatic give-and-take of this movement –

the significance of the second subject reinforced as it forms the elision to the *Adagio* – a movement as original in its sustained beauty of form and sensuous emotional expression as the fiery first.

A pause is necessary; the mood now lightens for the witty Scherzo, here shot through with delicacy and the lightest of touches before a chorale on the piano leads to the *Allegro molto* finale, full of joie-de-vivre and brilliant virtuosity as the music races headlong to its jubilant conclusion.

Although born in Liège, in Belgium, César Franck (1822-1890) lived most of his life in Paris, becoming widely admired as a composer, organist and teacher. His output may not have been large, but was of such consistently original quality as to have earned him a dedicated following. His significant contribution to chamber music is headed by three fully mature masterpieces – a Piano Quintet, the Violin Sonata and the later String Quartet in D minor.

It was Saint-Saëns who, with the string quartet led by Martin Marsick, played the piano in the premiere of César Franck's Quintet, virtually sight-reading the part (and allegedly leaving the platform after the performance in ill-temper). Be that as it may, Saint-Saëns always acknowledged the Belgian's great gifts, which would have been reinforced in 1886, the year of Franck's only Sonata for violin and piano.

It was written as a wedding present for the great fellow-Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe, being presented to him on the morning of the wedding

itself, September 26th. After rehearsing the work then and there with the pianist Léontine Bordes-Pène (herself the dedicatee of Franck's *Prélude, aria et final*, and of D'Indy's Symphony on a French Mountain Air), the Sonata was premiered before the assembled guests. Following the official public premiere at the Musée Moderne de Peinture in Brussels by Ysaÿe and Bordes-Pène in December, 1886, Ysaÿe often performed the Sonata for the remainder of his career. The work falls into four movements – in pulse, slow-fast, slow-fast – and is unified by what came to be known as Franck's 'cyclic' technique of recapitulating themes in various guises from movement to movement, an extension of Liszt's thematic innovations.

The Sonata begins, *Allegretto ben moderato*, with a few introductory bars from the piano before the violin plays a gentle theme in 9/8, one which we learn lies at the very heart of the work, a theme that, once heard, is difficult to forget – more so as Franck muses with this idea, the violin as an individual contemplation supported by the piano in subtle dialogue.

A sturdy scherzo, *Allegro*, changes the mood of the quasi-improvisatory opening movement to one of concentrated fire, remarkable for a new developmental approach to the material, but the more intimate mood of contemplative improvisation returns in the third movement – marked *Ben moderato: Recitativo-Fantasia* – a subtle and inspired prelude to the flowing nature of the finale, *Allegretto poco mosso*, the working beginning with wonderfully effective canonic writing between the instruments, and leading inexorably to the majestic final pages.

The brilliant French composer and pianist Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) was something of a teenaged prodigy: he inherited his musical gifts from his mother, an accomplished pianist, who died when he was 16. His father was to die just two years later, following which he came under the influence of the important Spanish-born pianist Ricardo Viñes (a great champion of Debussy and Ravel), who encouraged Poulenc's composing gifts, even though, at the time, the young man was a conscript in the French Army. So pronounced were these gifts, however, that one of his earliest piano works, *Trois mouvements perpétuels*, appeared when he was 20, and in the same year (1919), Poulenc composed a Sonata for piano duet and his first sonata for violin and piano – which latter work he withdrew almost at once.

But by the following year, he had made sufficient mark as a composer and pianist to be included in the group of young (mainly) French composers, famously dubbed 'Les Six' by the critic Henri Collet in 1920. The 85-year-old Saint-Saëns, who was to die in Algiers eighteen months later, almost at once denounced the music of Les Six, without naming any of them specifically, though the by-now almost totally deaf Gabriel Fauré, who himself was to die in 1924, could not join with his lifelong friend's condemnation of Les Six.

In 1924, Poulenc composed another Sonata for violin and piano, but was equally dissatisfied with that work, and again withdrew the score. It was not until 1943, during the German occupation of France, that he eventually produced a Violin Sonata with which he was satisfied – although he did subject it to revision six years later.

There are tragic elements behind Poulenc's Violin Sonata: the great Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca, an exact contemporary of the composer, fought and was killed in the Spanish Civil War in 1936; the Sonata, written under the hated Fascists in World War II, is dedicated to the memory of the poet, who had been murdered by Fascists seven years earlier.

The Sonata's deeply emotional mood is therefore more than understandable; the passion and fire in the first movement, *Allegro con fuoco*, and finale, *Presto tragico* are self-evident, separated as they are by an elegiac Intermezzo, headed by a quotation from Lorca – 'the guitar makes dreams weep' – the pizzicato writing of which clearly alluding to the instrument that embodies the soul of Spain.

The first performance of Poulenc's Violin Sonata took place in Paris on June 21st, 1943, with Poulenc himself partnering the wonderful young French violinist Ginette Neveu, then just 23 years old and already being spoken of in the highest terms. But Neveu herself was to be killed in an air crash in 1949, along with her brother Jean-Paul, who was her preferred piano accompanist. Her death prompted Poulenc to revise the Sonata, the memorial character of the work unchanged.

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Carlock-Combet Duo



The **Carlock-Combet Duo**, formed three years ago, have continued to delight audiences throughout the Philadelphia Metropolitan and Delaware Valley areas with their exciting and insightful performances of the great repertoire for violin and piano. 'A program of French works will highlight the beauty and musicality evident when Guillaume Combet, violin, and Sandra Carlock, piano, join together.' Such was the pre-concert announcement for the Duo's performance this past October, 2016, on the "Music at Abington" series in Abington, Pennsylvania. The local newspaper *Inside Dunwoody*, Newtown Square, Pennsylvania, featured a review of a recent concert by the Duo. "*Carlock and Combet are seasoned performers and dealt with the considerable intricacies of these Sonatas (Franck and Brahms A Major) with grace*

and precision. Combet's soaring tones heightened the more dynamic phrases of the works. The Duo gave us the emotional lift of great music, wonderfully performed."

Sandra and Guillaume wish to acknowledge Siva Oke of SOMM Recordings, producer, and Paul Arden-Taylor, engineer, for their wonderful expertise and superior musicianship ... and no less importantly! ... their good humor throughout the recording of this CD! We are very fortunate to have such a team looking after us!

The Duo also want to thank those who have supported the production of this CD in varied ways, all deeply appreciated. Guillaume would like to thank Sandra Carlock for being such a wonderful pianist and chamber music partner; his wife, Helen Eaton, and their two children, Guilhem and Claudia Combet; Helen's parents William and Gertrude Eaton; and his late violin teacher, Yves Leroux, who inspired him to be a violinist. Sandra thanks Guillaume Combet, her very gifted Duo partner, and wonderful friend; and Lee Snyder, dear long-time friend, colleague, and enthusiastic devotee of her playing over a period of many years.



GUILLAUME COMBET graduated with a Premier Prix (First Prize) in Violin and Chamber Music from the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris where he studied with Gérard Poulet and Sylvie Gazeau, and received his Advanced Certificate in Violin Performance from The Juilliard School where he studied with Joel Smirnoff, Robert Mann and William Lincer.

Guillaume was leader of the Chicago Civic Orchestra under Barenboim and Boulez, soloist and deputy leader of the Chicago String Ensemble, soloist with the Orchestre Symphonique de Tours, and toured internationally with Les Virtuoses de France. He has performed with numerous orchestras in Paris, Chicago and Philadelphia – Orchestra de l'Opéra de Paris Bastille, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Fulcrum Point New Music Project, Network for New Music, Opera Philadelphia, Philly Pops, and Pennsylvania Ballet. As a sought-after chamber musician, he has performed throughout the country including at the Luckman Fine Arts Complex in Los Angeles, the Chicago Cultural Center on the WFMT Dame Myra Hess Concert Series, the University of Chicago, the University of Delaware, Temple University, and the Philadelphia Ethical Society. In addition to chamber music and orchestral playing, Guillaume has also devoted his life to teaching violin and chamber music, and his students have won major scholarships, competitions and awards. He currently teaches at the University of Pennsylvania and Temple University Music Preparatory Division, and has taught at the Merit School of Music in Chicago and the University of Illinois at Chicago.



SANDRA CARLOCK graduated with a B.Mus. and M.Mus. from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and the State University of New York at Stony Brook, with post-graduate study at The Juilliard School. Her principal teachers were Arthur Dann, Martin Canin, and Rosina Lhévinne, at the Aspen Music Festival. She is well known throughout the USA as a recitalist, master teacher, lecturer and dynamic

chamber music player. She has performed frequently in Great Britain and Europe, in recital in London's major concert halls, and as soloist with orchestra.

Sandra's CD *Sandra Carlock In Recital*, music of Liszt, Bach and Chopin, was recorded in live performance at St. John's, Smith Square, London, England. Her CD *Piano Music by Edward MacDowell* was released, to great critical acclaim, by SOMM Recordings of London. She premiered MacDowell's music at Trolldhaugen, in Bergen, Norway, the home of Edvard Grieg, MacDowell's friend and mentor. She has performed and been interviewed on radio stations WRTI in Philadelphia, Classic FM in London and WQXR in New York City. An authority on the piano music of composers Clara Schumann and Edward MacDowell, she has presented lecture recitals on these composers at The Juilliard School, Oxford University, and numerous similar venues. She holds the Arthur Judson Distinguished Faculty Chair in Piano at Settlement Music School in Philadelphia, PA, teaching piano and chamber music by Special Arrangement.

"Sandra's piano playing projects deep feeling, drama and excitement, illumined by imagination and intelligence. Yet her considerable virtuosity remains consistently at the service of communicating a work of art."

This recording is dedicated to Guillaume's parents, Gérard and Claudette Combet.
