

WIGMORE HALL

Wednesday 21 December 2022
7.30pm


Martin Fröst clarinet
Roland Pöntinen piano
Sébastien Dubé double bass

Claude Debussy (1862-1918) Première rhapsodie (1909-10)
Ernest Chausson (1855-1899) Andante and Allegro (1881)
Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) Sonata for clarinet and piano (1962)
 I. Allegro tristamente
 II. Romanza
 III. Allegro con fuoco

Interval

Night Passages - A musical mosaic

Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757) Sonata in D minor Kk32 *arranged by Sébastien Dubé & Martin Fröst*
Chick Corea (b.1941) Children's Song No. 15 (1978) *arranged by Sébastien Dubé, Roland Pöntinen & Martin Fröst*
Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764) Air pour les Sauvages from *Les Indes galantes* (1735-6) *arranged by Sébastien Dubé, Roland Pöntinen & Martin Fröst*
Henry Purcell (1659-1695) Music for a while from *Incidental music for Oedipus, King of Thebes* Z583 (1692) *arranged by Sébastien Dubé & Martin Fröst*
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) Sinfonia No.15 in B minor BWV801 (c.1720 rev.1723) *arranged by Sébastien Dubé, Roland Pöntinen & Martin Fröst*
Henry Purcell Hornpipe in E minor Z685 *arranged by Sébastien Dubé & Martin Fröst*
Chick Corea Armando's Rumba (1976) *arranged by Sébastien Dubé & Martin Fröst*
George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) Menuet in G minor (1733) *arranged by Roland Pöntinen & Martin Fröst*
Traditional Polska från Dorotea *arranged by Sébastien Dubé & Martin Fröst*
Göran Fröst (b.1974) Klezmer Dance No. 2 (2011) *arranged by Sébastien Dubé, Roland Pöntinen & Martin Fröst*

CLASSIC  Wigmore Hall £5 tickets for Under 35s supported by Media Partner Classic FM



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Abridged *Night Passages* album liner notes by Martin Fröst

I have a memory from the time before I was born...

There, in the beginning, was silence and night. In that silence there were sounds. Always the same tunes by Purcell and Scarlatti, sung by my mother. This first memory, and other musical memories throughout my life, inspired me to create this album. I recorded *Night Passages* right after my worst episode so far of Ménière's disease; it made me rethink a lot of things. The episode ended with a severe attack while I was driving my car. After the car finally stopped, I felt, in my dizziness, it was night again.

Slowly light, shapes, language emerged from this formless chaos. Memories, dreams from my childhood where I saw God in a pile of leaves. My first meeting with Miles Davis. When I played for Paul Sacher and Hortense Anda as they danced their last dance in Zurich. When my father cracked someone's ribs dancing to Swedish polskas at our summerhouse. Or when, as a teenager, I listened to the music of Bach night after night.

A while after my car incident I met up with my friends Sébastien Dubé and Roland Pöntinen who looked at the repertoire through fresh eyes and rearranged the music.

Enjoy the fusion.

FIRST PASSAGE: SCARLATTI

Always the same scene, accompanied by Scarlatti which my mother used to play and sing before I was born... I imagine two children in the womb. One says, 'Do you believe in life after birth?' The other says, 'No, I don't. There's just this life, and everything else is made up.' The first one says, 'So you don't believe in a mother either?' 'No,' the other laughs, 'that's just a dream. Life is what we have here...'

'But,' says the first after a moment, 'when I think about it, sometimes, when it is really quiet, I can hear her sing...'

SECOND PASSAGE: IMAGINATION

I dream I am a child who sees God in a pile of leaves which dance and shine around God. Until my nanny whispers to me, 'This is a weasel.' Then everything dies. The leaves stop dancing; the weasel runs away.

Waking, I am disturbed by the dream, even a little provoked. I go to the beach, bury my feet in the sand, and a storm that has passed is now on the other side of the lake; rain falls like a white curtain over there, but the sun also finds its way down. It casts its light into the water, then onto a weasel that stops in front of me. It looks at me with a calm gaze. I wave my arm, but it is not intimidated. Then the inexplicable happens: it takes a step towards me and whispers... 'Imagination – is – for – everyone.'

THIRD PASSAGE: RAMEAU

Arriving at Frau Anda's castle-like house, the drive won't let me out of the taxi. I'm 26 years old, in jeans and a t-shirt; he doesn't think I should visit one of Switzerland's richest women. Luckily, the chef recognises me, and I'm let in. I'm there to play a memorial concert for her husband, legendary pianist Géza Anda. I go to his rehearsal studio - there's a book on the piano with the phone numbers for Furtwängler, Callas, other greats, all dead. Later in the evening I play the concert -

Bach, Rameau and Handel. Then there is the dinner reception.

At the table I have Frau Anda on my left, and the 92-year-old Paul Sacher on my right, a man who commissioned and funded music by Stravinsky, Bartók, Strauss. He speaks about the composers he met, how they affected his life. I get more and more excited by the conversation and stand to give an impromptu speech.

In my confusion, I wipe my mouth on my new tie. The jewelled ladies raise their eyebrows. I take a step back, right into a serving trolley, lose my balance and manage to stabilise myself with my dessert-smear hand on a painting by Gauguin. Everything gets a bit awkward. The ladies look at me, increasingly unsettled. The only one who does not mind the spectacle is Mr Sacher, who asks me to sit down and continues his conversation with me; a sticky tie and a stain of cream on a Gauguin painting are the least of the problems in his passionate discussion with me about music and its future.

There was dancing after dinner, and I saw Mrs Anda and Mr Sacher hovering like angels across the floor while I played Rameau.

FOURTH PASSAGE: DOROTEA POLSKA

'I think he cracked two of my ribs!' the girl managed, trying to catch her breath, emerging onto the terrace of our farm in north Sweden.

Of course my father hadn't intended to break her bones – or those of any other dancing partner, for that matter. But if one were to try to describe him, at least on the dance floor for Swedish polskas, the closest thing would be a frenziedly happy, utterly uninhibited Duracell bunny. He'd plough his way across the floor, putting so much energy into it that the lamps would be hanging askew after two or three numbers. Completely caught up in the moment and high on a mix of wine and adrenaline, he'd swing his partner about recklessly; in the process, the odd rib might get cracked – but he certainly went all in.

My mother, on the other hand, was sinuous as a cat. Lightly gliding across the floor, she'd be at once accessible and distant as she danced to any kind of music – and with anyone. She was probably the only one who could really follow my father in top gear. You may imagine, when they danced together, they made a pretty odd couple – but the result was liberating, full of drama and excitement. And in the midst of this drama, my brothers and I would hide and observe...

Parties of this kind were quite regular occurrences in our family life, always culminating in what truly kept the family together: music.

FIFTH PASSAGE: BENNY GOODMAN

The first time I played Carnegie Hall, there was an exhibition in the building about Benny Goodman's life and musicianship. His clarinet was on display and hadn't been played for many years. I was allowed to try it and was surprised that it was in extremely good shape. Later that day they asked if I wanted to play it during the performance.

I played that night on Benny's clarinet. After the Copland Clarinet Concerto I performed *Goodbye* by Gordon Jenkins – Benny's last song at the end of his shows. Having listened to him playing it since childhood I have performed it as an encore ever since.