

6 From Bach

1–7 French Suite no. 5 for Solo Piano, BWV 816 (1722)

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

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|-----------|------|
| Allegro | 2:53 |
| Courante | 1:19 |
| Sarabande | 3:51 |
| Gavotte | 1:14 |
| Bourrée | 1:27 |
| Loure | 2:30 |
| Gigue | 3:40 |

WU HAN, piano

8 Fantaisie in A Major for Violin and Harp, op. 124 (1907)

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835–1921)

KRISTIN LEE, violin; BRIDGET KIBBEY, harp

9–11 Selections from *Préludes*, Book 1 (1909–1910)

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

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|-----------------------------|------|
| La fille aux cheveux de lin | 2:32 |
| Minstrels | 2:06 |
| La cathédrale engloutie | 5:45 |

GILLES VONSATTEL, piano

12–14 Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp (1915)

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

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|--------------------------------------|------|
| Pastorale: Lento, dolce rubato | 6:29 |
| Interlude: Tempo di minuetto | 5:31 |
| Finale: Allegro moderato ma risoluto | 4:37 |

TARA HELEN O'CONNOR, flute; PAUL NEUBAUER, viola;
BRIDGET KIBBEY, harp

15–18 Suite for Flute, Violin, Viola, Cello, and Harp, op. 34

(1928)

MARCEL TOURNIER (1879–1951)

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| Soir | 3:09 |
| Danse | 1:52 |
| Lied | 3:17 |
| Fête | 4:42 |

TARA HELEN O'CONNOR, flute; KRISTIN LEE, violin; PAUL NEUBAUER,
viola; DMITRI ATAPINE, cello; BRIDGET KIBBEY, harp

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Music@Menlo *LIVE*

6 From Bach



BACH *French Suite no. 5*

SAINT-SAËNS *Fantaisie for Violin and Harp*

DEBUSSY *Selections from Préludes*

DEBUSSY *Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp*

TOURNIER *Suite for Flute, Violin, Viola, Cello, and Harp*

6 From Bach

Music@Menlo's eleventh season, *From Bach*, celebrated the timeless work of Johann Sebastian Bach, the composer whose profound legacy has shaped Western music over the two and a half centuries since his death. Each disc of the 2013 edition of Music@Menlo *LIVE* captures the spirit of the season.

Bach is often considered the patriarch of a Germanic tradition. But equally vibrant in Bach's language are the elegance, color, and romance that characterize the music of France more than a century later. Disc VI celebrates the bewitching spirit of Bach's *French Suites* that surfaces in Saint-Saëns's seductive *Fantaisie*, Debussy's ethereal *Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp*, and Tournier's evocative *Opus 34 Suite*.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

French Suite no. 5 for Solo Piano, BWV 816 (1722)

From 1717 to 1723, Bach was Director of Music at the court of Anhalt-Cöthen, north of Leipzig. His employer, Prince Leopold, was an accomplished musician and started the court musical establishment in 1707 with three players. By the time of Bach's appointment, the ensemble had grown to nearly twenty performers equipped with a fine set of instruments. It was for these musicians that Bach wrote many of his outstanding instrumental works, including the *Brandenburg Concerti*, the orchestral suites, the violin concerti, and much of his chamber and keyboard music. The first four of the so-called *French Suites* must have been composed at Cöthen, since they appear in a manuscript collection of six such works dating from 1723, the year Bach left Cöthen

for Leipzig. The last two suites in the 1723 set—now known independently as BWV 818 and BWV 819—had been replaced with the *French Suites* nos. 5 and 6 by 1725, when the collection, much revised, reached its definitive state. The six *French Suites* (BWV 812–817) form a pendant to the earlier *English Suites*, though they are smaller in scale (they eschew the elaborate opening preludes of the *English Suites*), more melodic in character, and lighter in texture. The source of the term “French” in the title is unknown. The heading of the 1725 manuscript was written in French, but so was that for the *English Suites*, and neither one mentioned “French” or “English” in its title. The *French Suites* follow the standard succession of stylized dances that composes the Baroque form, established in German practice with the works of Johann Jakob Froberger around 1650: allemande, courante, sarabande, gigue. The Fifth Suite includes a gavotte, bourrée, and loure.

—Dr. Richard E. Rodda

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835–1921)

Fantaisie in A Major for Violin and Harp, op. 124 (1907)

The fiftieth anniversary of Saint-Saëns’s debut as a virtuoso pianist, in 1896, provided a catalyst for a stream of honors, awards, citations, memberships, honorary degrees, and demands for personal appearances that continued unabated until the day he died. Three times during his later years, Saint-Saëns applied his art of beauty, precision, and formal perfection to music for the harp: the *Fantaisie* for Solo Harp, op. 95, of 1893, the *Fantaisie* for Violin and Harp, op. 124, of 1907, and the *Morceau de Concert* for Harp and Orchestra, op. 154, of 1918. The *Fantaisie* for Violin and Harp was composed early in 1907 at

Bordighera, on the Italian Riviera, where Saint-Saëns had gone to rest up after overseeing the first production in thirty years of his opera *Le timbre d'argent* (*The Silver Bell*) in nearby Monte Carlo. He dedicated the score to the harpist Clara Eissler and her sister Marianne, who enjoyed a modest career as a violinist. Saint-Saëns eschewed the classical forms that he usually favored for his instrumental works in the fantaisie in favor of a sectional construction: an introductory passage of an improvisatory nature, an *Allegro* of a more robust character that reaches an impassioned climax, a scherzo-like episode with a contrasting pastoral interlude, an *Andante* built above a repeating ostinato figure in the harp, and reminiscences of the first two sections as a coda.

—Dr. Richard E. Rodda

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

Selections from *Préludes*, Book 1 (1909–1910)

Debussy's book of Preludes for Solo Piano comprises twelve short but compelling works, demonstrating in miniature the rich nuance of Debussy's musical imagination and, specifically, his command of harmonic color in writing for the piano. Disc VI offers a set of three of Debussy's preludes, beginning with *The Girl with the Flaxen Hair*, one of the composer's most enchanting creations. The final prelude of book I, *Minstrels*, is a playful send-up of much of the popular music of the early twentieth century; its angular rhythms and piquant harmonies might also be heard as a nod in the direction of Stravinsky, Poulenc, and others of Debussy's contemporaries. The set concludes with one of Debussy's most breathtaking creations, *The Sunken Cathedral*. The title alludes to an ancient Breton myth about a cathedral submerged underwater off the coast of the Island of Ys which emerges on clear mornings, transmitting the sound of bells, organs, and chant across the sea. Debussy uses modal and parallel harmonies to evoke antiquity, while the music's slow-moving rhythm creates a feeling of hushed awe.

—Patrick Castillo

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp (1915)

Debussy's Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp represents one of the composer's last completed works. It was one of a projected set of six sonatas for various instruments, only three of which Debussy saw to fruition before succumbing to the cancer that had afflicted him for several years. In addition to this work, Debussy also completed the Cello Sonata in 1915 and the Violin Sonata in 1917. The sonata's instrumentation is without precedent in the literature, and Debussy's management of the ensemble's range of colors and textures is alchemical. Debussy features each instrument's distinct timbre, as in the opening measures of the first movement *pastorale*: a harp arpeggio ushers in a flute melody, *mélancoliquement*, and then a high, sustained viola line, *doux et pénétrant*. Elsewhere in the episodic first movement, Debussy synthesizes the three instruments with equal aplomb. Shortly following the movement's enigmatic introduction, the tempo quickens and the sonority, though still ethereal and shaded in pastel hues, expands. The viola and harp provide a nuanced accompanimental texture as a backdrop to the flute melody. The character of this music is elusive: though it appears to be joyful, the ensemble's gossamer timbre lends it a wistful air. In the sonata's second movement, cast in the form of a minuet, Debussy marks the melody to be played *piano, dolce, semplice*—soft, sweet, and simple. A faster middle section, in 4/4 time and marked *Poco più animato*—slightly more animated—suggests the Far Eastern influence on French art and culture in the early twentieth century. The sonata concludes with an assertive finale. The Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp received its premiere on April 21, 1917, by flutist Albert Manouvier, violist Sigismond Jarecki, and harpist Pierre Jamet.

—Patrick Castillo

MARCEL TOURNIER (1879–1951)

Suite for Flute, Violin, Viola, Cello, and Harp, op. 34 (1928)

In 1912, acclaimed harpist and composer Marcel Tournier succeeded his teacher Alphonse Hasselmans as Professor of Harp at the Paris Conservatoire, a post he occupied until 1948 while performing widely as a soloist and with the orchestras of the Concerts Lamoureux, Société des Concerts, and Paris Opéra. In 1922, Pierre Jamet (1893–1991), a prizewinning graduate of and later harp professor at the Paris Conservatoire, founded the Quintette Instrumental de Paris with flutist René Le Roy, violinist René Bas, violist Pierre Grout, and cellist Roger Boulmé, and the ensemble quickly gained prominence. Tournier composed his Suite for Flute, Harp, and Strings, op. 34, in 1928 for the Quintette, which premiered the work in Paris on May 21, 1928. The suite opens with an evocation of *Soir* (“Evening”) that begins in an appropriately crepuscular mood but turns more animated for its central passage. Had the satyr in Debussy’s *Prelude to “The Afternoon of a Faun”* been successful in his pursuit of the nymphs who gamboled across his hillock, the musical offspring might well have resembled the second movement *Danse* in its bantering character, luscious sonorities, and prominence accorded to the flute. *Lied* (“Song”) provides a languid interlude. The closing *Fête* (“Festival”) is playful and thoughtful by turns.

—Dr. Richard E. Rodda



Marcel Tournier's Suite for Flute, Violin, Viola, Cello, and Harp, op. 34. L-R: Tara Helen O'Connor, Kristin Lee, Bridget Kibbey, Dmitri Atapine, and Paul Neubauer.

About Music@Menlo

Music@Menlo is an internationally acclaimed three-week summer festival and institute that combines world-class chamber music performances, extensive audience engagement with artists, intensive training for preprofessional musicians, and efforts to enhance and broaden the chamber music community of the San Francisco Bay Area. An immersive and engaging experience centered around a distinctive array of programming, Music@Menlo enriches its core concert programs with numerous opportunities for in-depth learning to intensify audiences' enjoyment and understanding of the music and provide meaningful ways for aficionados and newcomers of all ages to explore classical chamber music.