

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

For the convenience of concertgoers, the Garden Café remains open for light refreshments until 6:00 pm on Sundays.

Music Department
National Gallery of Art
Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC

www.nga.gov

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COVER: Mary Cassatt, *Lady in Black in a Loge, Facing Right*, 1879–1880, softground etching, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection



The Seventy-second Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
3,003rd Concert

Emmanuel Ceysson, harpist

Presented in honor of *Degas/Cassatt* and in partnership with the Cultural Service of the Embassy of France, through a grant from SAFRAN

June 1, 2014
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Gabriel Pierné (1863–1937)

Impromptu-Caprice

Albert Zabel (1834–1910)

Fantaisie sur les motifs de l'opéra Faust de Charles Gounod

Alphonse Hasselmans (1845–1912)

La Source (The Fountain)

Henriette Renié (1875–1956)

Légende, d'après Les Elfes de Leconte de Lisle

(Legend, after *The Elves* by Leconte de Lisle)

INTERMISSION

André Caplet (1878–1925)

Deux divertissements (Two Divertimentos)

A la française (In French Style)

A l'espagnole (In Spanish Style)

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

Préludes

La fille aux cheveux de lin (The Girl with Flaxen Hair)

Bruyères (Heaths)

Marcel Tournier (1879–1951)

Vers la source dans le bois (Toward the Fountain in the Woods)

Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)

Une châtelaine en sa tour, op. 110 (A Lady of the Castle in Her Tower)

Emmanuel Ceysson (b. 1984)

Paraphrase sur Carmen de Georges Bizet

The Musician

Described by French reviewers as the “enfant terrible” of the harp, Emmanuel Ceysson sweeps away all the clichés associated with his instrument. His infectious enthusiasm and boundless energy place the instrument and its music in a world where poetry vies with temperament. His performing career, which began in 2005, has already taken him to Carnegie Hall, Paris' Salle Gaveau, Vienna's Konzerthaus, London's Wigmore Hall, and the Berlin Philharmonie, where his recitals, concerto appearances, and chamber music performances have won high praise from the press. In 2006 he joined the Orchestra of the Opéra National de Paris as principal harpist—in that capacity, he regularly earns praise for his solo passages from the Paris opera critics.

Among the awards and prizes Ceysson has garnered are the gold medal and a special performance prize at the 2004 USA International Harp Competition in Bloomington, Indiana; first prize and six special prizes at the 2006 New York Young Concert Artist Auditions; and first prize at the prestigious ARD Competition in Munich in September 2009, making him the first harpist to obtain awards at three major international events in such a short span of time. In 2010 he was nominated in the category “Solo Instrumental Discovery” at Les Victoires de la Musique Classique, an annual French classical music award event; and in 2011 he received a Prix d'Encouragement from the Académie des Beaux-Arts de l'Institut de France (Fondation Simone Del Duca) in recognition of the successes of his early career.

Recording for the Naïve label since 2012, Ceysson is currently preparing a solo album based on famous opera themes. A visiting professor at the Royal Academy of Music in London from 2005 to 2009, he has taught at the International Summer Academy in Nice since 2010 and gives regular master classes in France and in the course of his international tours.

Program Notes

The first half of tonight's concert features works that were popular and frequently played during the time Mary Cassatt first visited Paris (in 1855, when she was eleven years old). These romantic works are either fantasies on well-known opera melodies or works in other genres that were famous at the time. By the time Cassatt returned to Paris in the early 1870s, the aspects of symbolism that were later characterized as impressionism were influencing both painters and composers. The second half of the concert presents symbolism in music through three of its major emissaries—Debussy, Fauré, and Caplet—as well as harpist and composer Marcel Tournier, who was the chief French proponent of music for the harp in that era.

Gabriel Pierné was one of the many French composers who flourished in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth, but his name today appears rarely in concert programs outside his native country, despite the attractiveness of much of his music. A pupil of César Franck (1822–1890) and Jules Massenet (1842–1912), Pierné was something of a child prodigy. An organist and conductor, his most notable early performance was the 1910 world premiere of Igor Stravinsky's ballet *The Firebird* at the Ballets Russes in Paris. His *Impromptu-Caprice* is an early piece that was also published for piano.

Born in Berlin, Albert Zabel was already at age eleven touring internationally as a harpist with a band led by Austrian composer and bandmaster Joseph Gungl (1809–1889). Through a scholarship obtained for him by Giacomo Meyerbeer (who was revered in the 1850s as the rising star among Parisian opera composers), Zabel studied at the Berlin Institut für Kirchenmusik, where his harp teacher was Louis Grimm (1820–1882). At fourteen, he was appointed solo harpist to the Berlin Opera, and in 1855 he emigrated to Saint Petersburg to become solo harpist with the Imperial Ballet, remaining there for the rest of his life.

Belgian-born harpist and composer Alphonse Hasselmans first studied the harp with his father, and later with leading harpists in Stuttgart, Brussels, and Paris. The early part of his career was spent in Brussels, where he became harpist at the Theatre de la Monnaie. In 1877 he gave eight successful solo concerts in Paris, which brought him appointments as solo harpist with the orchestras of that city's Conservatoire, Opéra, and Opéra-Comique. Appointed professor of harp at the Conservatoire in 1884, he revised the harp course, published an important article on harp technique, and, as a virtuoso performer, revived interest in his instrument as the twentieth century approached. In addition to *La Source*, his op. 44, he wrote several other solo works and numerous transcriptions.

Revered during her lifetime and since as “la grande dame de la harpe (the great lady of the harp),” Henriette Renié belongs to both the romantic and the impressionist eras in French music history. As the story goes, she saw Adolphe Hasselmans perform in concert when she was five years old, and declared that he would become her harp teacher. Allowed to begin lessons with Hasselmans at the Paris Conservatoire at age eight, she won a second prize in harp performance when she was ten. (The committee had actually voted to give her first prize, but the director of the institution decided the first prize was inappropriate for such a young performer.) Poetic justice prevailed the next year (1886), when she won the conservatory's Premier Prix. After graduating the following year, Renié gave performances throughout France. Encouraged by her harmony teachers to compose, in 1903 she wrote *Légende*, a substantial harp solo inspired by the poem *Les Elfes* by Charles Marie René Leconte de Lisle (1818–1894). Renié was active in promoting the double-action harp of Sébastien Érard (1752–1831), a French instrument maker of German origin. It was an offhand complaint about pedals that Renié made to another famous manufacturer of harps, Gustave Lyon (1857–1936), which inspired the creation of the chromatic harp. Her compositions have been mainstays of the harp repertoire throughout the fifty-plus years since her death.

A trusted collaborator of Claude Debussy, André Caplet won the Prix de Rome in 1901, establishing himself as a composer and later as a conductor of eminence. Debussy entrusted him with completing the orchestration of *Le martyre de Saint-Sébastien* (The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian) and the direction of its first performance. Though Caplet was not specifically a harp composer, his *Deux divertissements* have become mainstays of the harp concert repertoire. A veteran of World War I, Caplet suffered from pleurisy after having been gassed in battle, and died at age forty-seven.

Claude Debussy composed his two books of twenty-four *Préludes* between late 1909 and early 1913. He saw to it that the titles of the preludes were not printed as a header above the first page, but as a footer on the last page, suggesting that the title was inspired by the music and not the other way around. *La fille aux cheveux de lin*, from Book I, is a tender paraphrase of *Scottish Song* by Leconte de Lisle, and *Bruyères* calls to mind an idyllic English landscape.

Another protégé of Hasselmans, Marcel Tournier is among the relatively few important composers who were also virtuoso harpists. Not surprisingly, his output is dominated by music for the harp, although he did compose choral and stage works as well as chamber and piano pieces. While Tournier's music has generally remained outside the standard concert repertoire, his concert study *Au Matin* (In the Morning) appears regularly in concert and on recordings. Evoking water flowing from a fountain, *Vers la source dans la bois* is a miniature he composed in 1922.

A composer who achieved greatness without resorting to flamboyance or pretension, Gabriel Fauré wrote no symphonies or concertos, preferring instead to write for the piano, voice, and small chamber groups. In addition to his famous *Requiem* and numerous short choral works (some of which will be heard here next week, when the National Gallery of Art Vocal Ensemble sings the second concert in honor of *Degas/Cassat*), Fauré wrote many songs of outstanding beauty. He left only two works for harp—the *Nocturne* of 1904, dedicated to Hasselmans, and *Une châtelaine en sa tour*, which he completed in 1918. In typical symbolist fashion, the composer took his inspiration from the

second line of a poem by Paul Verlaine (1844–1896): “Une sainte en son aureole/Une châtelaine en sa tour...” In 1870 Fauré had written a setting for the entire poem, titled *Une sainte en son auréole*, but here the “impressionist” composer needed only a single idea to inspire a delicious musical moment.

In honor of Edgar Degas and Mary Cassatt, two artists for whom the Paris Opera was an important source of inspiration, and following the examples of his harpist/composer predecessors, Emmanuel Ceysson finishes his program with his own transcription of music from the score of one of the most popular of all French operas, Bizet's *Carmen*. Written in 1875, *Carmen* incorporates romantic tragedy and proletarian realism in a way that offended most critics and audience members at the time. Its initial short run in Paris was deemed a flop, and it was not seen again in Paris until 1883. It met with immediate success, however, in Austria and Germany, and its New York premiere in 1878 was also enthusiastically received.

Program notes based on materials provided by Emmanuel Ceysson

Upcoming Concert at the National Gallery of Art

United States Army Chorus and Saint Albans School Chorale

Music by Biebel, Thompson, Wilhousky, and others

June 5, 2014

Thursday, 12:10 pm

West Building, West Garden Court