

SAM BOUTRIS

SOPHIKO SIMSIVE

P H A S E S



CAHUZAC

DEBUSSY

NIELSEN

SCHUMANN

VERDI/BASSI

WEBER

MUSICA
SOLIS



SAM BOUTRIS

PHASES

Sam Boutris *Clarinet*

Sophiko Simsive *Piano*

Louis Cahuzac 1880-1960

1 Cantilène 4'50

Robert Schumann 1810-1856

Three Romances, Op. 94

2 Nicht schnell 3'31

3 Einfach, innig 3'58

4 Nicht schnell 4'30

Luigi Bassi 1833-1871

5 Fantasy on Themes from Verdi's "Rigoletto" 12'22

Claude Debussy 1862-1918

6 Suite Bergamasque, L. 75: III. Clair de Lune (*Arranged by Sam Boutris*) 4'36

Carl Nielsen 1865-1931

7 Fantasy Piece for Clarinet and Piano in G minor 4'04

Carl Maria von Weber 1786-1826

8 Andante e Rondo Ungarese, Op. 35 9'16

Total Time [47'07]

Program Notes

This album pays homage to composers—but not necessarily to the same compositions—whose gravitational pull drew clarinetist Sam Boutris into distinct phases of his musical development. Most clarinetists make their first acquaintance with **Carl Nielsen's** music through his rather manic Clarinet Concerto, written near the end of his life as a musical embodiment of a clarinetist who seemed to flip between opposing personalities. While it was surely the Concerto that catalyzed Boutris' Nielsen phase, listeners will find no trace of its clarinet acrobatics and warring tonalities in the Nielsen work included here. Instead, the present Fantasiestykke (**Fantasy Piece**) takes up the language of Italianate aria with a surprisingly Classical bent. Written in 1881, the work falls quite early in Nielsen's catalogue—earlier, even, than his official debut as a composer with his Suite for String Orchestra, Op. 1—but shockingly late for its reserved harmonic idiom. The title is perhaps a reference to the 1864 Fantasy Pieces, also for clarinet and piano, of Niels Gade, Nielsen's predecessor as the preeminent Danish composer. Gade's Fantasy Pieces can themselves be traced to his close friend Robert Schumann, who coined the term as a musical genre in 1837 with his Fantasiestücke (Fantasy Pieces), Op. 12 for piano, and again in 1849 with another Fantasiestücke, Op. 73 for clarinet and piano. Like Schumann, Nielsen would later recycle the Fantasy Pieces moniker, the next time for a pair of works for oboe and piano.

Schumann also coupled the oboe and piano for a set of short character pieces, but for that work he opted for the title Drei Romanzen (**Three Romances**). When his publisher suggested that the second and third movements could be published for alternate instruments (violin and clarinet, respectively) to broaden the work's commercial appeal, Schumann adamantly refused: "If I had originally written the work for violin or clarinet, it would have become a completely different piece." Curiously, Schumann himself had suggested that his earlier Fantasy Pieces, Op. 73 for clarinet could also be performed on violin or cello, making his resistance to instrument substitutions for the Romances puzzling. In any case, Schumann's publisher disregarded his wishes, as Boutris has in this album by recording them on clarinet. One can hardly blame Boutris and the many other instrumentalists who have been lured by the Romances' understated, circular beauty. Each movement follows an A-B-A "song form" and, indeed, deals in a 19th-century art song idiom shared with Schumann's ample output of lieder. The clarinet line, the presumed "voice," however, incorporates opposing reactions to this vocal conceit, balancing its lyrical, cantabile melody on the one hand with the decidedly un-vocal demands on the breath of endlessly eliding phrases and impossibly wide melodic leaps.

Originally written for viola and orchestra before being retooled by the composer for bassoon and ultimately recorded here on clarinet, **Carl Maria von Weber's Andante and Hungarian Rondo** fits well

within the themes of vocalism and transcription on this album. Ironically, the work's early-Romantic operatic style finds more resonances in Nielsen's retrospective Fantasy Piece, written 72 years later, than in Schumann, Weber's contemporary and compatriot. Furthermore, the piece's circuitous path to the clarinet mirrors its genesis, which can be traced to that instrument. Indeed, it was the success of Weber's clarinet Concertino in 1811 that prompted concerto requests from the principal players of the Munich Court Orchestra, which Weber had conducted at the Concertino's premiere. After two more clarinet concertos, Weber finally produced a Bassoon Concerto, Op. 75 in 1811 for Georg Friedrich Brandt, and following its success, later transcribed the Andante and Hungarian Rondo for bassoon at his request.

With its firework displays of virtuosity embellishing beloved arias of the time, the opera fantasy genre seems like the logical extension of Weber's finishing flourishes, a natural byproduct of 19th-century Lisztomania and the soaring popularity of Italian opera. Principal of Milan's La Scala, clarinetist-composer **Luigi Bassi** milked the instrument's pyrotechnic potential in his **Fantasy on Themes from Verdi's "Rigoletto"**. Verdi gladly released his music to Bassi and others for recomposition, himself profiting from the publicity of Bassi's opera fantasy performances, but one of Rigoletto's arias is conspicuously absent from the present work. Verdi allegedly reserved "La donna è mobile," the opera's most famous number, for the fully-staged production only.

Another clarinetist-composer, **Louis Cahuzac** inherited the storied Paris Conservatory tradition of clarinet playing from his teacher Cyrille Rose before forging one of the few solo clarinet careers of the early 20th century (He was, in fact, the first to record Nielsen's daunting Clarinet Concerto no less than 20 years after it was written.). Cahuzac's place on this album is further cemented by the vocal impulse of his **Cantilène**, a French translation of cantilena, the Italian word for "lullaby."

As Schumann might have said, **Claude Debussy's Clair de Lune** certainly is a very different piece in this adaptation for clarinet and piano. The pronounced contrast of the clarinet's timbre has a way of revoicing harmonies toward its chosen chord-tones, refracting the familiar piano chords through a new pane of hearing. Furthermore, the clarinet's syrupy sostenuto threads the implied voice leading of the piano's top line into a true, legato melody, once again feeding this album's vocal urge and making a lunar double entendre out of its title.

Graeme Steele Johnson



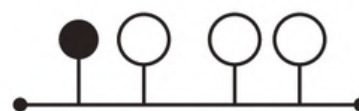
Photo Credit: Eric Tsai

SAM BOUTRIS

Clarinetist Sam Boutris leads a diverse career as concerto soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician. He is the recipient of the 'Musica Solis' Grand Prize Award at the 2019 Chamber Music Northwest International Clarinet Competition. Boutris has since released his debut album *Phases* on the Musica Solis label and collaborated with the Rolston String Quartet, Attacca Quartet, and musicians at Chamber Music Northwest. He has presented recitals on the Crypt Sessions series in New York City, The Violin Channel, and the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concerts in Chicago, and performed live on WQXR (NYC), WFMT(Chicago), and WSMR (Sarasota).

Boutris has appeared as soloist with the New Jersey Festival Orchestra, Chamber Music Northwest, Vermont Mozart Festival Orchestra, and the Yale Undergraduate Chamber Orchestra. He has also served as principal/guest clarinet with the Louisville Orchestra, The Knights, the Pacific Symphony, the New Haven Symphony Orchestra and the Princeton Symphony Orchestra. Committed to education and mentorship, Boutris maintains a full private studio, and his students have received several prizes at the International Clarinet Association's student competitions and have gone on to attend many prestigious institutions. Boutris is a resident artist of Soundbox Ventures' Suncoast Composer Fellowship Program, performing and advocating for clarinet chamber music in contemporary classical repertoire.

Boutris holds an undergraduate degree from the Curtis Institute of Music, a graduate degree from the Yale School of Music, and an Artist Diploma from The Juilliard School.



SOPHIKO SIMSIVE

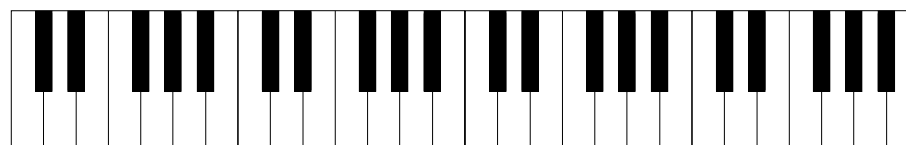
Sophiko Simsive, hailed as an “exceptional musician of rare talent who promises to become one of the leading pianists of her generation” by pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet, began her studies at the age of three and since then she has been invited as a recitalist at prestigious venues such as Berliner Philharmonie and Concertgebouw. Simsive has performed with the Residentie Orkest, Yale Philharmonia, Noord Nederlands Orkest, Jeugdorkest Nederland, and MSM Philharmonia, and has worked with conductors such as Lev Markiz, Peter Oundjian, Jan Willem de Vriend, and Jurjen Hempel. Simsive is the newest pianist of the prestigious Claremont Trio.



Photo Credit: Phil Channing

She has performed with chamber groups including the Calidore String Quartet and has collaborated with prominent musicians such as Kian Soltani and Gilbert Kalish. As soloist and chamber musician, Simsive has been featured at the Yellow Barn Festival, the Music Academy of the West and the Verbier Festival. Simsive currently serves as a senior teaching assistant at the Yale School of Music, co-teaching alongside violinist Wendy Sharp.

Simsive is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the Manhattan School of Music with Solomon Mikowsky. Her past teachers include Boris Berman, Jacques Rouvier, Mila Baslawskaja, and Maka Aladashvili. Simsive is represented by Interartists Amsterdam Management.





S A M B O U T R I S
P H A S E S



Credits

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