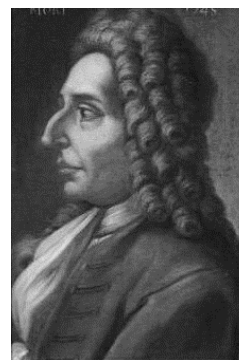


ABOUT THE MUSIC**Albert Combrink takes us *Inside the Concert* with notes on the programme****Introduction**

From virtuoso violin transcriptions to brand new compositions from our own era, this programme spans 300 years of music for an instrument, which itself is not yet 200 years old. The range and flexibility of the saxophone is enormous, and we will be treated to music from Baroque to Brazilian, from colourful France to modern England.

Tomaso Vitali (1663-1745)**Chaconne in G minor (arr. for soprano saxophone and piano)**

The son of a famous violinist Giovanni Vitali, young Tomaso showed early interest and musical talent. His precocious talent landed him a job in the Este Family orchestra in Modena, at age 12. He eventually became the leader of the orchestra and was on the payroll for 67 years. In that time, he became an important violinist, teacher, and composer of four volumes of chamber music mostly for his own use as performer and teacher.

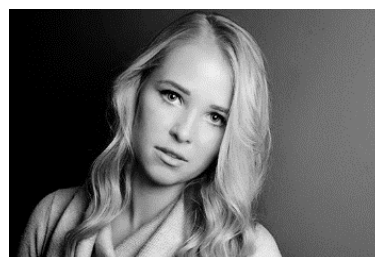


He is most famous for the *Chaconne in G minor*, and it is therefore ironic that we are not absolutely sure if Vitali actually wrote it himself! It is very different to Vitali's other works: dramatic modulations to foreign keys, rather daring virtuosic writing and certain complex bowing seem different to Vitali's other works. The autograph is lost and all we have are copies signed by the head-copyist of the Dresden Hofkapelle, indicating "Tomaso's part". It was found in 1867 by composer Ferdinand David, who published it along with quotations from the Mendelssohn "Violin Concerto". In addition, the work has been arranged by various composers, from Heifetz to Respighi, and in various forms: Violin and String Ensemble, Wind Quintet, and as in today's performance, Saxophone and Piano.

A Chaconne is a work that allows for melodic improvisation over a repeated bass line. This repeated bass line (also known as Ground Bass or Basso Ostinato [literally: Obstinate Bass]). The notes G, F, E-Flat, D repeat over and over while Vitali's virtuosic embellishments become more and more virtuosic. For a work of the baroque, the Chaconne packs a dramatic punch that verges on the theatrical, even the ethereal, revealing why it has sustained its popularity and mysterious appeal for audiences for almost 400 years.

Dani Howard (1993)**Dancing Shadows for Alto Saxophone and piano**

Dani Howard, currently Resident Artist with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, studied at the Royal College of Music in London, and is quickly gaining international recognition. She was a finalist in the 2014 and 2015 editions of the International Antonín Dvořák Composition Competition, held in Prague. In both years, she won the Junior 3rd Special Prize for the best free composition in the junior category. Her works have been released on NonClassical, Listenpony and TYXart record labels,



She has already had over 40 orchestral commissions with regular performances of her works across Europe. Her Trombone Concerto won the *Royal Philharmonic Society Award*. Her work for Saxophone includes chamber music, a Concerto for Saxophone, and the present *Dancing Shadows*. A new commission (2023) for alto saxophone and piano, *Dancing Shadows* evokes a sense of motion and intrigue. A dynamic interplay of contrast between light and darkness, the work explores how shadows come to life through a perceived sense of dance.

Darius Milhaud (1892-1974)

Scaramouche Op.165 for Alto Saxophone and Piano



French composer, conductor and teacher Darius Milhaud was a member of “Les Six”, a group of 1 Swiss and 5 French composers. Their music is often seen as a neoclassic reaction against both the musical style of Richard Wagner and the Impressionist music of Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel. One of the most prolific composers of musical history, Milhaud had his own modernist language, drawing on Jazz and Brazilian music, and explored polytonality (writing pieces in more than one key at the SAME time.)

Milhaud’s quirky style as composer and teacher attracted a range of students: Iannis Xanakis, Burt Bacharach, Dave Brubeck, Steve Reich, Philip Glass and Karlheinz Stockhausen, to name a few. He spent three years in Brazil, as a teenager, working as personal assistant to the famous poet Paul Claudel. A love for poetry and Brazilian music influenced his music for his entire career.

Scaramouche Op. 165, is a three-movement Suite written in 1937, drawn from incidental music written for stage plays put on by a group of players called “Théâtre Scaramouche”. Originally written for two pianos, at the special request of virtuoso Marguerite Long – one of the favourite star pianists who circled in the orbit of “Les Six” – the Suite became so popular that it has been arranged for various forces, from orchestral, to Marimba, to Clarinet (by no less a musician than Benny Goodman). Milhaud was not convinced that the work was any good, or would be successful, so much so that he tried to prevent it from being published. While sheet music sales were going through a slump, Milhaud’s Suite became an overnight best-seller.

1. Vif (Lively) Polytonality is evident from as early as the opening measures when folk-melodies and nursery-rhymes clash against each other in a deceptively simple-looking C Major. Syncopation also rubs up against a basic tango-rhythm, and for good measure, Milhaud uses polymeter as well, with a three-against-four rhythm to keep things lively.

2. Modéré (Moderately) A neo-classical hint at Bach’s French Overture style, uses elements of Canon (imitation) and Ostinato (repetitive themes or rhythms). It is written in ternary form, (ABA), with the outer A sections in 4/4 and the middle section in a livelier 6/8.

3. Brasileira (In the style of Brazil) The tempo marking is *Mouvement de samba*, inspired by the Brazilian Samba Choro of Ernesto Nazareth, one of his most admired Brazilian heroes. Also written roughly in a ternary form, the theme and variations make up a lively samba, with syncopation passages and anticipations of the downbeat.

During the Nazi censorship of works by Jewish individuals, *Scaramouche* (along with Milhaud's other works) was banned. Undeterred by the censorship, Marcelle Meyer and Marguerite Long, organised a performance of *Scaramouche* on 1 June 1943 at the École Normale de Musique de Paris. To evade the ban on Milhaud's works, the performers were forced to trick the censors. The pianists used anagrams to provide a pseudonym for both Milhaud and the suite; they changed Darius Milhaud to become “Hamid-al-Usurid” while *Scaramouche* was changed to be “*Mous Are-chac*.” The performance managed to successfully take place, avoiding any censorship from the Nazi authorities. Milhaud safely escaped to the USA shortly after.

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Rapsodie - Alto Saxophone and Piano

Debussy’s *Saxophone Rapsodie* is an intriguing work, which, for all its musical merit, remains quite sidelined by mainstream performing organisations. Elise Hall was an ambitious amateur saxophonist and heiress of the Boston Coolidge family fortune, and founder of the Boston Orchestral Club. After the death of her husband in 1898, Elise dedicated herself even more to her saxophone and was quite frustrated when she ran out of repertoire – it had, after all, only been invented in 1846, and composers were not quick to warm to it as a solo instrument. Elise Hall used her frustration, her contacts and her fortune, to commission piece after piece for the saxophone from the world’s most famous composers. On the list was Claude Debussy, desperate for cash. He had not had any earning jobs for a while, as he was wrapping up the composition of his opera “*Pelleás et Mélisande*”. Elise Hall paid him upfront. However, by the time the work was delivered it was 18 years later, after Debussy’s death, and when Elise



was too old and deaf to consider performing the work in public. Creative blocks, depression and eventually cancer, all interfered with Debussy's creative processes. Despite this, he managed to sell the publishing rights to Durand, getting him into further troubles with Hall and their relationship soured. She felt cheated, and would make surprise visits at his home, to check on progress, and Debussy said she "dressed like an umbrella, stalking him like Don Giovanni's Commendatore". By his death, Debussy had completed the solo-part with piano accompaniment and had sketched the orchestration on a piano score, and it was "fleshed out" after his death by Jean Roger-Ducasse.

Early commentary on the work – much of it premature and unfair – appears to have stuck to the piece: that Debussy had lost interest and wasn't inspired enough to complete it. Hall was dismissed as a rich busy-body bloated on her own self-importance and less accomplished than she thought. Ironically, much of the first review in Boston was repeated verbatim by the New York Times critic in 1939, and it has taken the work a longer time than really needed, to make its way into the concert repertoire.

The work draws on Debussy's study of French Plainchant – a large body of chants used in the liturgies of the Western Church. It was originally penned under the title "*Rhapsodie Orientale*" as Debussy had in mind to use more Chinese-inspired material in subsequent movements, which did not materialise. After a short introduction, a solo cadenza introduces the two modal melodies (one is a folksong and the other is a plainchant), recalling moments of *La Mer*. The work falls into two sections, a slower introduction and a faster dance section, revealing perhaps a passing reference to the first set of great Hungarian Rhapsodies by Franz Liszt. Not interested in virtuosity, Debussy explores expressions of lyricism and mystery.

Paule Maurice (1910-1967)

Tableaux de Provence for alto saxophone and piano



Maurice was a student at the Paris Conservatoire, winning prizes in harmony, fugue and also composition. It was here that she also became professor. She mainly composed on family holidays - she was married to another composer Pierre Lantier – and often joined by her good friend Marcelle Muler, known for her special advocacy of the Saxophone as a classical musical instrument.

Originally written for Saxophone and Orchestra, the Suite *Tableaux de Provence pour saxophone et orchestra* was written between 1948 and 1955. A quintessentially pastoral mood pervades the suite. The "Tableaux" is a series of musical pictures from the area known as Provence in the southeast corner of France bordering the Mediterranean.

1. Farandole des Jeunes Filles (Dance of the Young Girls)

A bi-tonal opening leads to an energetic and scampering dance-movement. Full of colourful rhythms, the movement dissolves as quickly as it materialised. . The farandole is a round of a joyous and very rhythmic character, always with the accompaniment emulating that of a tabor drum. It is written in the 4th [Lydian] mode (with the raised 4th) which is particularly joyful.

2. Chanson pour ma Mie (Song for My Love)

As short and gentle as a Satie's *Gymnopédie*, the tender movement makes one curious to explore more of this composer's easy-flowing lyricism. The opening notes outlines the open-strings of a guitar.

3. La Bohémienne (The Bohemian Girl)

Colourful modal harmony with a touch of bitonality tumble over rhythmically insistent accompaniment, to create a sexy and vivacious dance with girls, with colourful swirling skirts and tambourines with flowing ribbons flashing in the air. The melody is said to be a gypsy-tune from pilgrims going to Saintes-Maries-de-la Mer.

4. Des Alyscamps l'âme Soupir (The Sigh of the Soul for the Alyscamps).

Starting slow and tenderly, building to an intense climax, this movement expresses the complaint of the souls soaring over the cemetery of Alyscamps (in Arles) bringing nostalgia, sadness and regrets.

5. Le Cabridan (The giant Bumblebee)

In Provence the cabridan is a sort of large bumblebee - turning, going and coming rapidly - resting at times on the flowers, then continuing its flight and departing. Very fast passage-work in both instruments create a very different, quintessentially French version of the *Flight of the Bumble-Bee*.

Pablo de Sarasate (1844-1908)

Zigeunerweisen, 'Gypsy Airs', Op.20 (arr. for alto saxophone and piano)



Pablo de Sarasate.

One of the great showpieces for the violin, the colourful and virtuosic nature of the work has attracted many arrangers to create playable versions for other instruments. Certain technical effects would – out of physical necessity – not be possible on other instruments. Part of the pleasure lies in trying to spot these moments of re-invention.

Few pieces of music embody at once both the spirit of the 19th century virtuoso of almost supernatural ability, as well as the wild and free spirit of the roaming gypsy of Sarasate's *Zigeunerweisen*. A virtuoso violinist at the height of his powers, Spanish composer Pablo Martín Melitón de Sarasate y Navascués, composed this gypsy-inspired show-piece to display his own incredible technique. *Zigeunerweisen Op. 20*, was originally composed for violin and orchestra in 1878 when the composer was 33 years old, and was premiered

the same year in Leipzig, Germany. The Gypsies which Sarasate paints, are not those of his native Spain, but rather Hungarians which he had encountered on his recent concert tours there. It is based on themes of the Roma people, and in the last section the rhythms of the *Csárdás*. The origin of the *Csárdás* can be traced back to the 18th century Hungarian *verbunkos*, used as a recruiting dance by the Hungarian army.

Zigeunerweisen is structured in two sections of contrasting nature. A dramatic orchestral fanfare introduces the soloist, who steps into the spotlight with quasi-improvisational embellished cadenzas, accompanied but rhythmically free. The solo instrument sings a sad lament, decorated with a rich embroidery of trills, grace-notes, harmonics and glissandi. The Violin original includes plucked strings (*pizzicato*) and fast bouncy bowing with a percussive effect (*spiccato*). After a dramatic pause, the fast section launches forth like a tumbler let loose in a circus ring – a brightly-lit dance of the most virtuosic kind, with violin pyrotechnics sparking off the strings.

The work follows the pattern familiar from Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies* (Sarasate met Liszt in Budapest during the 1870s). The *Csárdás* is characterized by a variation in tempo: it starts out slowly (*lassú*) and ends in a very fast tempo (*friss*, literally "fresh"). There are other tempo variations, called *ritka csárdás*, *sűrű csárdás* and *szökös csárdás*. The music is in 2/4 or 4/4 time. The dancers are both male and female, with the women dressed in traditional wide skirts, usually coloured red, which form a distinctive shape when they whirl. It is in one movement but can be divided into four sections, the first three in the key of C minor and the last in A minor, based on the tempi.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Recognised for his “virtuosity and engaging musicianship” (Gramophone Magazine), **Jonathan Radford** is regarded as one of the leading classical saxophonists of his generation. Passionate about showcasing the saxophone’s versatility across the classical and contemporary repertoire, Jonathan delights his audiences with his characteristically energetic and expressive performances.

In demand internationally as a concerto soloist, recitalist and chamber musician, Jonathan has performed in some of the world’s most prestigious concert halls and festivals. Recent highlights include performances at the Grieg Hall (Bergen), Philharmonie de Paris, Seoul Arts Center (South Korea), Bridgewater Hall (Manchester), Southbank Centre - Purcell Room, Queen Elizabeth Hall and Wigmore Hall (London). Highlights this season include concerto debuts with Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra and National Symphony Orchestra.

Jonathan features as ‘One to Watch’ in Gramophone Magazine and as a ‘Rising Star’ in BBC Music Magazine. He is an international prize-winner, with notable awards including Commonwealth Musician of the Year and Gold Medallist in the Royal Over-Seas League Competition (UK, 2018), SaxOpen International Competition (France, 2015) and Concorde Internazionale de Musica Marco (Italy, 2013). He was a Young Concert Artist for the Countess of Munster Musical Trust, Hattori Foundation, Making Music, Park Lane Group, Tunnell Trust and the Worshipful Company of Musicians.

Jonathan’s debut album recorded with pianist Ashley Fripp, ‘The Saxophone Craze – Homage to Rudy Wiedoeft’ (2022) was released on Champs Hill Records to critical acclaim, receiving a 5* review from BBC Music Magazine. As a guest on broadcasting networks, Jonathan has featured on BBC Radio 3, France Musique and Scala Radio.

Alongside championing existing repertoire for his instrument by composers such as Debussy, Glazunov, Milhaud, Caplet, Schulhoff and Villa-Lobos, Jonathan is devoted to the development of new music for the saxophone. He has commissioned and premiered works by Cheryl Frances-Hoad, Dani Howard, Betsy Jolas, Christian Lauba, Luis Naón and Raymond Yiu.

A dedicated pedagogue, Jonathan regularly gives classes at the Royal College of Music. He has given masterclasses at the Royal Academy of Music, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Trinity Laban Conservatoire, Chetham’s School of Music and Melbourne Conservatorium. Jonathan is passionate about bringing music to a wider community, regularly collaborating with Wigmore Hall’s learning programme.

Jonathan studied at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris (CNSMDP) with Claude Delangle, then in London at the Royal College of Music as the 2018 Mills Williams Junior Fellow, studying with Kyle Horch. He is currently pursuing doctoral studies as an RCM Studentship Holder, researching the influential American saxophonist Rudy Wiedoeft.

Jonathan is a Vandoren Paris and Henri Selmer Paris saxophone artist.

Cezarre Strydom began piano lessons at the College of the Arts in Namibia. After lessons with Nettie Immelman in Bloemfontein, he furthered his musical studies in the U.S.A. at the Interlochen Arts Academy and the University of Michigan. Here he attended masterclasses by pianists such as Ashkenazi, Berezovski, Perraiha and Hamelin. His career has included performances across the U.S., Mexico, Germany, Russia and Belgium. Upon returning to South Africa, Cezarre worked as the staff accompanist at the University of the Free State.

His piano students have been prize winners and finalists of competitions such as the National Youth Music Competition, Hugo Lambrechts Concerto Competition, Musicon, Hubert van der Spuy, and Atterbury Piano competitions. He is currently Head of Music at Paul Roos Gymnasium in Stellenbosch.