



Part of



University of  
Nottingham  
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

# CLARE HAMMOND

Thursday 15 June, 7.30pm  
Djanogly Recital Hall

## PROGRAMME

Études from *Cours complet pour l'enseignement du forte piano*

Nos. 62, 66, 67, 103, 82, 104, 101 and 107

**Hélène de Montgeroult**  
(1764-1836)

*Miroirs*

- i. Noctuelles ('Moths')
- ii. Oiseaux Tristes ('Sad birds')
- iii. Une barque sur l'océan ('A boat on the ocean')
- iv. Alborada del gracioso ('Dawn song of the Jester')
- v. La vallée des cloches ('The valley of bells')

**Maurice Ravel**  
(1875-1937)

Interval

Sonata No. 8 in C minor, Op. 13 'Pathétique'

- i. Grave: Allegro di molto e con brio
- ii. Adagio cantabile
- iii. Rondo: Allegro

**Ludwig van Beethoven**  
(1770-1827)

*24 Negro Melodies*, Op. 59 No. 10

- i. Thata Nabandji
- ii. Deep River
- iii. The Bamboula

**Samuel Coleridge-Taylor**  
(1875-1912)

*Iberia*

- i. Cádiz ('El Puerto') (Book 1)
- ii. Evocación (Book 1)
- iii. Triana (Book 2)

**Isaac Albéniz**  
(1860-1909)

## PROGRAMME NOTES

*Études from Cours complet pour l'enseignement du forte  
piano (1788-1812)*  
Nos. 62, 66, 67, 103, 82, 104, 101 and 107

**Hélène de Montgeroult**  
(1764-1836)

Born into an aristocratic family in Lyons, Montgeroult's musical talent as a pianist, improviser and composer was evident from an early age. She studied with Jan Ladislav Dussek before marrying the Marquis de Montgeroult in 1784. At that time, it was forbidden in France for people of noble descent to give public concerts or publish under their own name, so her activities were restricted to musical salons.

During the French Revolution, Montgeroult was kidnapped by Austrian soldiers in Italy together with her husband, who died in custody. On her return to Paris she was imprisoned and escaped the guillotine by improvising a set of variations on 'La Marseillaise' that reportedly moved the Committee of Public Safety to tears. Accepted by the new regime, in 1795 she was appointed Professor of Piano at the Conservatoire de Musique in Paris, the first woman to be granted such a position.

Montgeroult's legacy for keyboard comprises 9 extant sonatas, 114 études and a host of supplementary pieces (published as the *Cours complet pour l'enseignement du fortepiano*). The études, in particular, are extraordinary. The first were written in 1788 for Johann Baptist Cramer, a pupil of hers, and the entire set was completed in 1812 then published by *Marquerie frères* in 1816. Despite being born some 50 years before the great Romantic composers, the textures and harmonic language that she uses, together with a preoccupation with 'making the piano sing', prefigure the work of Mendelssohn and Schumann. Her biographer, Jérôme Dorival, describes her as the "missing link between Mozart and Chopin".

### *Miroirs*

- i. Noctuelles ('Moths')
- ii. Oiseaux Tristes ('Sad birds')
- iii. Une barque sur l'océan ('A boat on the ocean')
- iv. Alborada del gracioso ('Dawn song of the Jester')
- v. La vallée des cloches ('The valley of bells')

**Maurice Ravel**  
(1875-1937)

Written as a tribute to members of *Les Apaches* ('The Hooligans'), a group of artists of which Ravel was a member, *Miroirs* shows the composer striking out on new paths. Ravel wrote that the piece marked "a considerable change in my harmonic evolution" while its subtlety, nuance and eloquence is, at times, breath-taking.

Each movement is dedicated to a member of the group. 'Noctuelles' illustrates a line from dedicatee poet Léon-Paul Fargue ("the owlet moths fly clumsily out of a barn to drape

themselves round other beams") and perfectly captures the delicacy and quiver of the insects' flight. 'Oiseaux tristes', dedicated to pianist Ricardo Viñes who premiered the set, is, according to Ravel, an evocation of "birds lost in the torpor of a dark forest during the hottest hours of the summer" and may have been inspired by the dawn singing of birds in the woods at Fontainebleau. Ocean waves and dazzling slivers of light are expertly captured in 'Une barque sur l'océan', dedicated to painter Paul Sordes. 'Alborada del gracioso' is an alternately serious and satirical portrait of a Jester performing at the Spanish Court, dedicated to music critic Michel-Dimitri Calvocoressi. Composer and pianist Maurice Delage is the final dedicatee with 'La vallée des cloches', a piece of mystery and rare serenity.

Sonata No. 8 in C minor, Op. 13 'Pathétique'  
i. Grave: Allegro di molto e con brio  
ii. Adagio cantabile  
iii. Rondo: Allegro

**Ludwig van Beethoven**  
**(1770-1827)**

The Sonata in C minor, Op. 13 was written when Beethoven was only 27 years old and has remained, to this day, one of his most well-loved compositions for piano. Popularly known as the 'Pathétique', it is notable for its intensity of emotion and dramatic rhetoric.

The recurrence of the slow introduction, the 'Grave', at two points in the first movement was a new development in Beethoven's style and something that he was to return to in the Sonata Op. 81a in E flat major, 'Les Adieux'. The striking contrast between the portentous gravity of the dotted rhythms at the opening and the electrifying release of energy in the 'Allegro' is particularly compelling.

The second movement, in A flat major, radiates warmth and contentment in its outer sections, interrupted briefly by a more anxious and insistent central passage. Whereas the first movement in particular shows Beethoven pushing at the boundaries of 'classical' style, the final movement, the 'Rondo', follows a more orthodox formal pattern. There are light-hearted and joyous moments but, in general, the overriding mood is turbulent and tempestuous.

*24 Negro Melodies*, Op. 59 No. 10  
i. Thata Nabandji  
ii. Deep River  
iii. The Bamboula

**Samuel Coleridge-Taylor**  
**(1875-1912)**

Coleridge-Taylor grew up in Croydon and studied at the Royal College of Music under Charles Villiers Stanford, alongside Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan Williams. He won significant acclaim early in his career with his cantata, *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*, which Stanford conducted at its premiere in 1898.

Coleridge-Taylor developed a strong interest in African American spirituals after hearing the Fisk Jubilee Singers in concert in the 1890s and began to incorporate these melodies into his own works. In 1900 he participated in the First Pan-African Conference in London where he

met intellectual and activist W. E. B. Du Bois, and poet Paul Laurence Dunbar. The ideology of pan-Africanism, a belief that "African people, both on the continent and in the diaspora, share not merely a common history, but a common destiny", resonated strongly. Coleridge-Taylor became deeply committed to the preservation and promotion of African and African American music, a cause which is expressed powerfully in the *24 Negro Melodies*.

In the preface to this work, Coleridge-Taylor wrote that "what Brahms has done for the Hungarian folk-music, Dvorak for the Bohemian, and Grieg for the Norwegian, I have tried to do for these Negro Melodies". He inserts the original melody of each movement at the head of the page and then embarks on what he described as "nothing more nor less than a series of variations built on said motto. Therefore my share in the matter can be clearly traced, and must not be confounded with any idea of 'improving' the original material any more than Brahms' Variations on the Haydn Theme 'improved' that." Of the 24 melodies, 16 are from the United States (including 'Deep River'), 7 from Africa (including 'Thata Nabandji' from the Ba-Ronga area of South Africa) and 1 ('Bamboula') is West Indian.

### *Iberia*

- i. Cádiz ('El Puerto') (Book 1)
- ii. Evocación (Book 1)
- iii. Triana (Book 2)

**Isaac Albéniz**  
(1860-1909)

Albéniz was born in Spain and taught by the Spanish composer Felipe Pedrell, who encouraged his pupil to aspire to a 'profoundly national and noble art'. Albéniz is well known for his characteristically Spanish style of writing, where the rhythms and melodies of Andalucía in particular come to the fore. He became established as a composer in the 1880s and 90s and in 1894 moved to Paris, where he was deeply influenced by many French composers, including Debussy. His music took on a nostalgic tone, evocative of the people and the landscapes which he had left behind.

Iberia is a series of twelve pieces, written over a period of four years, arranged into four books, and was described by Messiaen as the 'masterpiece of Spanish music'. Manuel de Falla stated that the set comprised 'twelve admirable jewels' and commended Albéniz himself as a 'loyal and disinterested comrade to all of us who are working towards the creation of a new Spanish art'. Albéniz once wrote that in his compositions he took '*españolismo* and technical difficulty to the ultimate extreme' and Iberia is no exception. Lisztian virtuosity is combined with exotic scales, dance rhythms and imitations of a strumming guitar.

'Cádiz ('El Puerto') is a lively depiction of the fishing village of Santa María on the Bay of Cádiz, while the slow, meditative 'Evocación' superimposes the melodic styles of southern songs and dances (the *fandango* and *malagueña*) with the northern jota. 'Triana', on the other hand, depicts a gypsy quarter in Seville. Its vibrant rhythms, percussive snaps and buoyant energy immediately brings to mind both the flamenco and the toreros' march which is traditionally played at the beginning of a bull-fight.

*Notes by Clare Hammond*



Part of



University of  
Nottingham  
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

## CLARE HAMMOND

Acclaimed as a “pianist of extraordinary gifts” (*Gramophone*) and “immense power” (*The Times*), Clare Hammond is recognised for the virtuosity and authority of her performances.

In 2016, she won the Royal Philharmonic Society's 'Young Artist Award' in recognition of outstanding achievement. Recent highlights include Grieg Piano Concerto with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Moussa and Carwithen with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and BBC Concert Orchestra, Panufnik with the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra, and recitals at the Aldeburgh Festival, Palazzetto Bru Zane in Venice (broadcast on RAI 3), Husum Festival in Germany, and in Denmark and Norway with Henning Kraggerud.

This season she looks forward to performing Grace Williams' Sinfonia Concertante with Jac van Steen and BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Rachmaninoff Paganini Variations with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Lionel Bringuier, works by Piers Hellawell and Samy Moussa with the Ulster Orchestra and Jamie Phillips, and recitals at the Wigmore Hall, London's National Gallery, Lammermuir Festival and Festival Baroque de Pontoise, among others. She brings Ghosts and Whispers, a performance piece for piano and film with composer John Woolrich and animators the Quay Brothers, to Fundación Juan March and to the Barbican, and continues her collaboration with actor and writer Tama Matheson.

Contemporary music is at the core of Clare's work. She has given over 50 world premieres, including those of major works by Arlene Sierra, Robert Saxton and Michael Berkeley, and her discography includes world premiere recordings of over twenty works. In 2019, she gave the world premiere of Kenneth Hesketh's *Uncoiling the River* with Martyn Brabbins and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, and a further performance with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Vasily Petrenko. In 2022, she premiered Graham Fitkin's new piano quartet with Fitkin, Ruth Wall and Kathryn Stott at the Aldeburgh Festival, and opened the Southbank Centre's 22/23 season at the Queen Elizabeth Hall with the work.

Clare has recorded six discs for BIS, most recently releasing an album of Etudes by visionary French composer Hélène de Montgeroult. A disc of 20th- and 21st-century variations was released in 2021, and received extensive critical approval for Clare's “shimmering pianism and lightly-worn virtuosity” (BBC Music Magazine) and “artistry of the highest order” (Musical Opinion), while *Crescendo* (Belgium) hailed her as “one of the most exploratory pianistic personalities of our time”. She previously recorded a disc of Etudes by Unsuk Chin, Nicolai Kapustin, Sergei Lyapunov and Karol Szymanowski which won her an Opus d'Or from Opus HD Magazine and 5 diapasons from Diapason.

Community engagement forms an increasingly important part of Clare's work. Since 2017, she has performed to over 11,830 schoolchildren in partnership with Gloucestershire Music and Wye Valley Music in Schools. She frequently gives children's concerts and masterclasses at festivals in the UK and France, and runs an ongoing series of recitals at prisons.



Part of



University of  
Nottingham  
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

Clare completed a BA at Cambridge University, where she obtained a double first in music, and undertook postgraduate study with Ronan O’Hora at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and with Professor Rhian Samuel at City University London. She completed a doctorate on 20th-century left-hand piano concertos in 2012. In 2014 Clare was paired with French pianist Anne Queffélec on the Philip Langridge Mentoring Scheme run by the RPS.

Clare is grateful for the support of the RVW Trust, Hinrichsen Foundation, John S Cohen Foundation, Arts Council England, Scops Arts Trust, Golsoncott Foundation, Gemma Classical Music Trust, Fidelio Charitable Trust, Help Musicians UK, Stradivari Trust, Ambache Charitable trust, British Korean Society, Chandos Memorial Trust, Vernon Ellis Foundation, Polish Cultural Institute, British Council, and the Britten-Pears Foundation.