Junior Recital Programme Notes

Works for Flute and Piano

1. Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921)

Romance in D-flat Major, Op. 37 (1871)

Camille Saint-Saëns was a French composer, pianist, and organist, widely recognised for his elegant melodies, refined musical structures, and contributions to French Romantic music. His compositions often combine classical clarity with Romantic expressiveness.

Originally composed in 1871 for flute and orchestra, the Romance, Op. 37 is a lyrical and expressive work that highlights the flute's singing qualities. The piece opens with a gentle, flowing melody, creating a peaceful and intimate atmosphere. As the music develops, the melodic phrases become increasingly expressive, supported by rich harmonies and subtle changes in dynamics. The work gradually returns to its opening tranquillity, concluding with a delicate sense of calm. Through its graceful phrasing and warm musical character, the Romance demonstrates Saint-Saëns' ability to convey deep emotion through simplicity and elegance.

2. Carl Reinecke (1824–1910)

Ballade in D Minor, Op. 288 (1911)

Carl Reinecke was a German composer, pianist, and conductor whose musical style was strongly influenced by the Romantic traditions of composers such as Mendelssohn and Schumann. He was also an important figure in nineteenth-century musical education, serving as a professor and conductor at the Leipzig Conservatory and Gewandhaus Orchestra.

The Ballade, Op. 288, is one of Reinecke's final compositions and represents his mature Romantic style. Written for flute and piano, the work unfolds in a narrative-like structure, contrasting dramatic intensity with moments of lyrical tenderness. The opening introduces a dark and expressive musical character, followed by passages of flowing melodies and increasingly energetic rhythms. Throughout the piece, the flute and piano engage in a close musical dialogue, creating contrasts in mood, texture, and dynamics. The work showcases both the expressive depth and technical versatility of the flute, bringing the listener through a musical journey filled with tension, warmth, and dramatic resolution.

3. Henri Dutilleux (1916–2013)

Sonatine for Flute and Piano (1943)

Henri Dutilleux was a French composer known for his distinctive harmonic language, colourful orchestration, and refined approach to musical structure. His music combines elements of French musical traditions with innovative twentieth-century techniques, creating a unique and expressive sound world.

Composed in 1943 as a commissioned examination piece for the Paris Conservatoire, the Sonatine for Flute and Piano is one of Dutilleux's most frequently performed early works. The composition consists of three connected sections, moving from a mysterious and lyrical opening to a more animated central passage and a brilliant finale. The opening features delicate melodic lines and colourful harmonies, while the middle section introduces playful rhythms and lively interactions between the flute and piano. A demanding flute cadenza leads into the energetic final section, highlighting the performer's technical agility and musical expression. Combining lyrical beauty with rhythmic complexity and virtuosic writing, the Sonatine demonstrates Dutilleux's sophisticated musical language and remains an important work in the modern flute repertoire.