

## Simone Lamsma brings Saint-Saëns violin concerto to Blossom Music Center

by Mike Telin



Time is running out to catch The Cleveland Orchestra at Blossom Music Center this summer. On Saturday, August 26 at 7:00 pm, guest conductor Fabien Gabel will lead The Orchestra in a program titled “Impressions of France and Spain.” The program will include Ravel’s *Alborada del gracioso* and Suite No. 2 from *Daphnis and Chloé*, and De Falla’s Suite No. 2 from *The Three-Cornered Hat*.

This is the final Classical concert at Blossom in 2023. Bring young people along and take advantage of the Under 18s for free on the

lawn program. Click [here](#) for more information. Tickets are available [online](#).

The concert will feature Saint-Saëns’ *Violin Concerto No. 3*, with Simone Lamsma as soloist. Lamsma made her Cleveland Orchestra debut at Severance Music Center in May of 2014 and her Blossom debut in August of 2015. “I’m so happy to be coming back. The Cleveland Orchestra is so refined — there’s an exquisite nobility in the way that they play,” the Dutch violinist said during a telephone conversation from the Netherlands.

Saint-Saëns’ Third Violin Concerto was written in March of 1880 and dedicated to Pablo de Sarasate, who performed the premiere in October of that year. Lamsma said that of the three violin concertos penned by the composer, the Third is his most popular. “The orchestra sets the atmosphere and it has such a bold opening statement in the violin. Saint-Saëns is from the Romantic era and this concerto exemplifies that with its beautiful singing melodies in the solo part.”

She noted that the work shares many similarities with the Mendelssohn Concerto, pointing out that both have openings that are “full of passion” and second movements that feature “a lilting melody.” And the third movements open with lyrical passages before launching into lively conclusions.

Lamsma said that while she first learned the Saint-Saëns in her teens it’s a piece she still enjoys living with. “I’m always looking for a fresh perspective — which begins by revisiting the score. Your interpretation changes over time. It’s like a journey through life and as we grow the way we approach a piece also changes. But each piece also has its memories.” The violinist looks forward to once again collaborating with her “dear friend” Fabien Gabel. “We worked together many times and it’s always enjoyable, and our approaches to this concerto are similar.”

Following her Cleveland Orchestra debut *Clevelandclassical.com*’s Daniel Hathaway wrote that “Lamsma’s appearance with the orchestra was remarkable on several counts. The Dutch violinist stepped in on short notice to replace her ailing countrywoman, Janine Jansen. She agreed to play the same concerto — a piece not all violinists keep under their fingers. And she played the Britten with consummate skill and complete authority...”

She also recently filled in at the last minute for Baiba Skride at the Bozar in Brussels with the Belgian National Orchestra. How does a soloist prepare for situations like these?

“Replacing someone happens once in a while and it’s always quite exciting to pack the suitcase and go, especially when it happens with a piece that has been in your system for a long time, so it’s part of you. The downside is that you need to keep them in your hands, and that can be a challenge.”

Lamsma began studying the violin at the age of five. At the age of eleven she moved to the UK to study at the Yehudi Menuhin School, and at fourteen, she made her professional debut with the North Netherlands Orchestra. In addition to keeping a full performance calendar, she recently completed her second year as Artist in Residence with the Oregon Symphony and will serve in that capacity with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra beginning with the 23/24 season. What advice does she have for young people who hope to have a career in music?

“The most important thing is to have passion — a passion that is so strong you can’t live without it. You have to dare to follow your own path, one that is right for you. Don’t be afraid to be different, and be honest with yourself, because not everything suits everybody. And today there are so many career options in music.”

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