

## Paavali Jumppanen / a filmed recital for the Phillips Collection

### Program

*Claude Debussy:*

**The Snow is Dancing** (from Children's Corner)

**Le Vent dans la plaine**

**Des pas sur la neige**

*Béla Bartók: Out of Doors* – Part 1

With Drums and Pipes

Barcarolla

Musettes

*Outi Tarkiainen: Without a Trace* (world premiere)

*Franz Schubert: Wanderer Fantasy*

*Miriam Hyde: The Forest Stream*

### Thoughts on the Program by Paavali Jumppanen

This program explores the idea of human inner experiences being projected onto nature through music. The outdoors, represented in a variety of ways in these compositions, functions as a canvas reflecting the psychological experiences of imagined protagonists of these compositions.

The first piece, *The Snow is Dancing*, is a movement from the Children's Corner (1908), a cycle by Claude Debussy which evokes adult recollections from childhood. The whimsical description of falling snow frames poignant expressions of childhood fears. The swirling *Le vent dans la plaine* (The Wind in the Plain) introduces wind as a force of nature, particularly significant in this program. Wind exemplifies things in motion and also symbolizes disruption of order. Wind draws apart, it rends and unleashes. Dying away, it can leave empty surfaces, almost like another kind of canvas. The sparse texture of *Des pas sur la neige* (Footsteps in the Snow) depicts the calm following a winter storm with footsteps giving evidence a solitary and unknown person.

*Out of Doors* (1926) is Béla Bartók's reworking of the idea of "pastoral" music embraced by numerous composers who preceded him. The titles suggest the pleasures of the bucolic, while at the same time a listener is presented with denials. For example, the second movement, Barcarolle, opens with a brief allusion to the lulling beauties of a traditional boat-on-the-water piece, but the music soon lapses into a kind of absentminded vertigo and a psychological dead-end. Bartók's

naturalistic textures include imitations of militant percussion instrument in the first movement, and historic bagpipes in the third. Overall expression speaks to isolation, suspiciousness, and outright threat. Presented here is Part 1 of the cycle, containing the first three movements of the five-movement work.

The Finnish composer Outi Tarkiainen found inspiration for her recent work *Without a Trace* (2021) in the painting “Immortal Prints” (1978) by Richard Pousette-Dart (held in the Phillips Collection). In addition the composition fuses into the piano texture a rendition of the poem “The Herd Scatters” by the Sámi poet Nils-Aslak Valkeapää. (The Sami are an indigenous people, traditionally reindeer herders, living in Lapland in northern Scandinavia.) A link between the two inspirational works may be that the abstract painting by Pousette-Dart resembles frozen birch branches seen during winter in the Cap of the North, the area which gave Valkeapää’s art its creative energy. The poem captures a moment when a herd of reindeer scatters and the protagonist is transformed into wind, a change that triggers a remembrance of the ancient past, a time “when the sun lived with us.” As often in Valkeapää’s poetry, this gesture toward an idealized past also hints of a yearning toward the liberation of the after-life. This composition, premiered here, was commissioned by The Phillips Collection.

Schubert’s *Wanderer Fantasy* (1822) is a work composed, in a way, from the inside out. The central moment is the opening of the slow movement with a theme quoting Schubert’s own song “Wanderer.” In the song, the melody sets the words “Die Sonne dünkt mich hier so kalt” (Here the sun seems so cold). In the Fantasy, the melody is used as a kind of a motto that is transformed and continuously adapted to the changing moods of the piece. Life’s events – threats, hopes, anguishes, triumphs – are reflected in the course of the journey. The very idea of wandering, of journeying through hardship into freedom, is expressed through the immense instrumental challenge woven into the pianistic fabric of the piece.

*The Forest Stream* by the Australian composer Miriam Hyde is included here as an endnote to this program. The piece was inspired by a landscape painting of George Washington Lambert. The painting depicts a creek along which cattle gather to drink. The composer said she imagined the stream beyond the painting moving toward a waterfall and this composition being “a cadenza of the water”.