

Sax meets piano

Ruth Jacobs, alto saxophone

Jim Cline, piano, voice

Friday 2nd June 2017 – 12.00pm – CERN main auditorium

webcast/recording: <https://indico.cern.ch/event/639677/>

1st Arabesque (1888)

Claude Debussy (1862–1918), Arr.: James Rae

Rhapsodie (1901-1911)

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

Commissioned by Mrs Elise Boyle Hall, one of the world's first concert saxophonists, who, on recommendation of her surgeon husband, took to playing a woodwind instrument to improve her health. Claude Debussy himself did not like the saxophone much, calling it a "strange reed-animal" and found the idea of a woman playing it "ridiculous". The Rhapsodie, more of a musical painting than a formal piece, exposes Moorish rhythms and melodies while maintaining the fantasizing and vague impressionistic style for which Debussy is renowned.

Sonata

Jeanine Rueff (1922–1999)

Ruth Jacobs (alto saxophone)

1. Allegro

Jeanine Rueff, born in Paris, studied at the Conservatoire de Paris and composed extensively for Saxophone. Her agile, yet lyrical style of composing is reflected in the first movement of the saxophone sonata, almost dissolving the bar metres by use of complex rhythmic patterns.

Schliesse mir die Augen Beiden

Alban Berg (1885-1935)

Jim Cline (voice, piano)

1st setting (1900)

2nd setting (1925)

Viennese composer Alban Berg is best known for his violin concerto and two operas *Wozzek* and *Lulu*. These two settings of Theodor Storm's poem, sung in the original German, were composed 25 years apart, the second after Berg had adopted the 12-tone system of his mentor Arnold Schönberg. The English translation by Eric Smith:

Close, o close my eyes at parting with those hands I've loved so much,
that my anguish and my suffering may find peace in thy sweet touch.
As my pain flows like the sea, wave by wave to rest at evening,
when at last it ceases beating, all my heart is filled by thee.

Alto Horn Sonata (1943)

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)

1. **Ruhig bewegt**
2. **Lebhaft**
3. **Sehr langsam**
4. **Lebhaft**

Hindemith began his career in Germany, but moved to Switzerland to gain distance from the Nazis. He subsequently moved to the U.S. for 13 years, before returning to Zurich. This sonata, composed during his time in the U.S., was written for alto horn, a brass band instrument, but it is more commonly performed on the saxophone. Before the last movement, the performers are instructed to read a poem written by the composer and entitled “The Posthorn (dialog).” The posthorn (familiar symbol of the German postal system) was used to signal the arrival of a post rider or mail coach in the days of horse-powered mail delivery.

Jim Cline is a professor of physics at McGill University, Montréal, visiting the CERN Theory Division. He specializes in particle physics theories beyond the standard model and astroparticle physics. He studied piano during university and has been active as a singer in choirs including the Montréal Symphony Chorus and the CERN Choir. He has composed works for piano, choir, and other instruments.

Ruth Jacobs is a Ph.D. student in experimental particle physics at the University of Bonn in Germany, working on a search for new heavy resonances in ATLAS. She learned to play the alto saxophone during secondary school and her first years of university, mostly focusing on Jazz (however “secretly” also enjoying classical compositions for saxophone). After a few years’ break she took up playing the saxophone again during her time at CERN.

We thank the CERN choir for use of their piano, and the Jazz Club for making this meeting possible.