



Smithsonian Associates

## Great Musical Partnerships

*Dr. Rachel Franklin*

Wednesday, May 08, 2024 - 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. ET

### **MAY 8 – Strange Connections**

One of the most one-sided relationships between composers was that of Richard Wagner and Franz Liszt. We explore how Liszt's generous support of the relentlessly needy Wagner was not repaid, and how Wagner never fully acknowledged other influences such as Mathilde Wesendonck. In Russia the extraordinary businesswoman Countess Nadezhda von Meck felt driven to help gifted musical artists, including Debussy and Tchaikovsky. However, both struggled with her imperious demands while seeking to remaining independent and continuing to receive financial support. Meanwhile, the powerful connections, commissions, and sponsorships of avantgarde American heiress Winnaretta Singer, aka Princesse Edmond de Polignac, aided in the creation of major works by Fauré, Stravinsky, and others.

Finally I'd like to complete our course by visiting the profound decades-long friendship of English composers Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst, and how their long hikes together through the countryside created an entire genre of concert pastoral music, inspired by English Renaissance and folk music.

### Works explored, media used:

#### **Franz Liszt, 1811-1886**

Tannhäuser, S. 442 (Arr. Franz Liszt): Overture

- Yulianna Avdeeva

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W46BKM0mg-g>

### **Richard Wagner, 1813-1883**

Tristan und Isolde, WWV 90, premiered 1865/ Act 3 – Prelude

- Leonard Bernstein, Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1-CYMrmTAo>

Wesendonck Lieder, WWV 91, 1862, "Im Treibhaus"

- Régine Crespin, Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Française  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fh4alsk0JtE>

"Träume"

- Birgit Nilsson, Leo Traubmann  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BPhQGXi5XI0>

### **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, 1840-1893**

Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36, 1878

- Gennady Rozhdestvensky, USSR State TV and Radio Symphony Orchestra  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xldfaf4NGw>

### **Claude Debussy, 1862-1918**

Danse bohémienne, 1880

- Jean-Efflam Bavouzet  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBnt3EkH8y8>

Piano trio in G, 1880

- Trio Gaon  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wvel4Vo7ct4>

### **Gabriel Fauré, 1845-1924**

"C'est l'extase" from Cinq Mélodies de Venise, Op. 58, 1891

- Gérard Souzay, Jacqueline Bonneau  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LgLO7Xa\\_J2k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LgLO7Xa_J2k)

### **Igor Stravinsky, 1882-1971**

Renard - (The Fox, burlesque tale sung and played), 1916. Commissioned, dedicated to Winnaretta Singer-Polignac

- Le Balcon Company, Maxime Pascal

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U977r0nntEk>

### **Gustav Holst, 1874-1935**

St. Paul's Suite, 1912

- Rafał Nicze, Eufonico String Orchestra in Zduńska Wola, Poland. 3rd Polish Nationwide Music Schools' Symphonic Orchestras Competition

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GBjkb9bBTU4>

### **Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872-1958**

Fantasia on a theme of Thomas Tallis, 1910

- Andrew Davis, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Gloucester Cathedral, where in 1910, it was played and conducted for the first time by Vaughan Williams.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihx5LCF1yJY>