

La Côte Flute Festival, Switzerland 2-5 October 2014

The first La Côte flute festival took place at the beginning of October on the northern shores of Lake Geneva. Centred around the town of Gland, between Geneva and Lausanne, the festival used a range of venues around the region. The weekend had a total of 42 events, over four days and across three villages, with a main festival hub at the Théâtre de Grand-Champ in Gland. Like all good flute festivals, the trade was very much in evidence, with a wide array of flute makers, sheet music and accessories on offer. The festival was expertly organised by Carole Reuge, who worked tirelessly for two years to plan the programme, find sponsors and promote the event. Her vision, and attention to detail, made the festival a big success. The festival was supported by a number of sponsors - no less than 46 are listed on the website - who undoubtedly formed an important part in allowing Carole's vision to become reality.

The programme was varied, with a focus on European artists and a number of Swiss nationals. All areas of music were covered, from Baroque to contemporary, with jazz also very firmly in evidence, and masterclasses with a number of the guest artists took place each morning. Concerts ranged from solo performers to full orchestra, and included an extremely enjoyable performance of music for two flutes and organ, featuring Carole Reuge. Overall, the programming was intended to attract the local audience as well as specialist flute players, so many of the main concerts were designed with a generalist audience in mind. This meant that there were perhaps fewer new works than typically found at an event intended solely for flute players, but the full auditoria at the evening concerts proved that Carole Reuge had a good understanding of the needs of the local concert goers.

The festival had many highlights. The opening 'spectacle' featured *Le Concert Impromptu*, a wind quintet directed by flute player Yves Charpentier. This was a true spectacle in all senses, and came in the form of a staged musical re-enactment of a football match between Germany and Brazil. This was an imaginative piece of music theatre, with polished performances of arrangements of Bach, Villalobos and others, played while the quintet impressively ran around the stage. The fitness and physical strength of these players was astonishing, and this was a truly memorable performance.

For those with an interest in baroque repertoire, there were excellent masterclasses and performances by both Barthold Kuijken, and Jan der Winne. Kuijken's class was fascinating,

with his points carefully demonstrated and given a broader context through extracts from other repertoire as well as the piece under discussion. Later in the day he appeared with the Ensemble Baroque du Léman, directing them in works by the sons of Bach. His performance of JC Bach's D major flute concerto was one of the highlights of the festival for me, and was extremely well received by a full house of festival-goers and locals.



Le concert impromptu © Carla Rees

Maxence Larrieu's 80th birthday concert was another important highlight. Here, Larrieu performed with harpist Benoît Wery, including the world premiere of Wery's *Sonatine*, written as a gift to Larrieu. It was a great privilege to hear Larrieu perform some of the classics of the French repertoire including the Fauré *Fantaisie*, Ravel's *Habanera* and Debussy's *Syrinx*. He was on fine form, and the rapport with Wery gave some particularly entertaining moments. This was an inspiring concert from a legend, and Larrieu's musical sensitivity and impressive technique was admired by all.

The festival also featured a conference about Jean-Pierre Rampal, masterclasses with many of the festival's leading artists, including Matthias Ziegler, Nicola Mazzanti, Gudrun Bourel, Sarah Rumer, Dieter Nanz and jazz classes with Jeroen Pek and Matthieu Schneider. Although I couldn't attend all of the events, I heard enjoyable concerts by Eva Amsler, Nicola Mazzanti, Michel Lavignole, Kazunori Seo, Elena Cecconi and

a particularly notable performance of contemporary repertoire by Riccardo Ghiani. Liz Walker and Richard Shaw performed music by Dorus, Boehm and Chopin, featuring Liz's vintage Louis Lot flute. The performance by the excellent flute sextet Pentagones was another highlight, with polished performances of convincing arrangements of works by Saint-Saëns, Piazzolla and others.

Above all, for me the biggest highlight was the final concert was a concerto gala, featuring the Geneva Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Philippe Bernold. This was a fabulous collection of concerto performances, with a programme ranging from CPE Bach (expertly played by Sarah Rumer) to the premiere of a new concerto by Sophie Dufautrelle, performed by Matthias Ziegler. I was particularly taken by José-Daniel Castellon's performance of the Jolivet concerto, which was full of energy from start to finish and a truly charismatic, and technically flawless, performance. Michel Bellavance played Mozart beautifully, with well-shaped phrases and a captivating tone. Ziegler dazzled with his contrabass flute, and treated us to one of his own compositions in a spellbinding encore dedicated to Carole Reuge. This concert was a phenomenal celebration of the festival, bringing together local audiences and flute players in the full to bursting auditorium. It was, without doubt, one of the most memorable concerts I have been to for a long time.

CARLA REES



Eva Kingma © Carla Rees



Masterclass with Matthieu Schneider © Carla Rees

I was extremely privileged to attend La Côte Flute Festival in Gland and the surrounding area (near Geneva) from the 2nd to 5th October with Martina Rogers, a BFS colleague from Bristol. This was the first ever Swiss Flute Festival and was directed by Carole Reuge and her committee. Carole and a couple of colleagues had a table in the Trade Hall at the Warwick Convention in order to help publicise their event. La Côte Flute Festival was set up in partnership with the Dutch Flute Association and consequently the programme featured several Dutch artists, such as Jeroen Park (jazz flute player), Jan Karman (composer), Gudrun Bourel (piccolo) and Eva Kingma (flute maker).

The Trade Hall was well supported by familiar faces like Abell, Mancke and Kingma Flutes as well as more local companies, such as Vents du Midi from Geneva.

The BFS table in the foyer was laid out with 40 September editions of PAN and competition and membership leaflets, and by the end of Saturday evening's concert, there was only one magazine left. There must, therefore, be quite a lot of Swiss Flute Festival delegates who have now heard about the work of the BFS for the first time. Perhaps we may have recruited some new overseas members – time will tell!

La Côte Flute Festival was extremely well organised by Carole Reuge and her team and supported admirably by the community. The mini bus drivers who efficiently ferried delegates between the hotel and various venues were all local volunteers, and although attendance on the Friday was poor, the festival overall was highly successful with 2000 concert seats occupied and 1000 visitors.

CAROLE JENNER-TIMMS