

10-22-2012

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Lawrence University

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## Recommended Citation

Lawrence University, "Composer Claude Debussy's 150th Birthday Celebrated with Day-long "Carnival"" (2012). *Press Releases*. Paper 414.

<http://lux.lawrence.edu/pressreleases/414>

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## Composer Claude Debussy's 150th Birthday Celebrated with Day-long "Carnival"

*Posted on: October 22nd, 2012 by Rick Peterson*

From colonialism to issues of racism, the Lawrence University Conservatory of Music piano department commemorates the 150<sup>th</sup> birthday of French composer Claude Debussy Sunday, Oct. 28 with a day-long, multimedia examination of the social and cultural history of Paris that influenced Debussy's work.

Music, art, theatrical readings, a dance competition, a gamelan demonstration and even a circus act will be featured in the "Debussy Carnival." The celebration begins at 11 a.m. and continues throughout the day in Harper Hall of the Music-Drama Center. All events are free and open to the public.

In conjunction with various presentations ("Humor in Debussy," "Race and the Cakewalk") and demonstrations of early Parisian courtly dances, the Lawrence student piano majors will perform nearly all of Debussy's works for piano, many of which are short (2-3 minutes) pieces.



**Professor Catherine Kautsky**

“This celebration promises to be fascinating on every front,” said Professor of Music and keyboard department chair Catherine Kautsky, who will perform a 1 p.m. faculty recital as part of the day’s activities with conservatory colleagues Joanne Bozeman (soprano), Wen-Lei Gu (violin) and Steven Spears (tenor). “No composer absorbed more from his surroundings than did Claude Debussy. We will be transported to his Paris of 1880-1918, complete with its circus acts, gamelan performances, as well as the political ambiguities arising from new colonies, visiting minstrel shows and a constant simmering resentment against the Germans.

“Debussy’s music is by turns funny and infinitely evocative— my hope is that the slides, readings and dances with which we surround it will well communicate all that imagination!”