

Sophia Anna Szokolay
violin

Recital in partial fulfillment of the
Doctor of Musical Arts degree, 2024
Student of Donald Weilerstein

with
Yandi Chen, piano

Wednesday, November 9, 2022
8:00 p.m.
Williams Hall

PROGRAM

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)

from **Violin Sonata No. 1 in G Minor, BWV 1001**
I. Adagio

Eugène Ysaÿe
(1858–1931)

from **Violin Sonata No. 1 in G Minor, op. 27**
I. Grave
II. Fugato

Johann Sebastian Bach

from **Violin Sonata No. 1 in G Minor, BWV 1001**
III. Sicilienne

Eugène Ysaÿe

from **Violin Sonata No. 1 in G Minor, op. 27**
III. Allegretto poco scherzoso

Jacques Hétu
(1938–2010)

Rondo Varié, op. 25 (1977)

Maurice Ravel
(1875–1937)

Tzigane, op. 1 (1924)

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770–1827)

**Sonata for Piano and Violin No. 9 in A Major,
op. 47 “Kreutzer”**

Adagio sostenuto – Presto

Andante con variazioni

Presto

Yandi Chen, piano

*Thank you to Miriam Fried, Vivian Hornik Weilerstein, and Andrew Schartmann
for guiding Yandi and me through the delights and drama of Beethoven’s music.*

*Thank you to my friends and family for supporting me tonight,
both in person and virtually.*

*And a special thank you to my teacher, Donald Weilerstein,
for his dedication, patience, and passion for teaching and music-making.*

Bach Violin Sonata No. 1 in G Minor, BWV 1001

Johann Sebastian Bach's 6 Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin comprise an important core of the violin literature. Composed during Bach's time in Cöthen as court conductor, these pieces demand virtuosity, precision, and sensitivity to rich harmonies and complex polyphonic textures. While it is not known whether the works were performed much during Bach's time, they have been championed by nearly every major violinist of the 20th and 21st century, and are celebrated for their quality and profundity. Most violinists form a life-long relationship of interpretation and discovery with the Sonatas and Partitas, a testament to their value and quality. My relationship to these works is constantly evolving, and I am constantly listening for sound quality, voicing contrapuntal lines, carrying bass lines, drawing long phrases, and most importantly, discovering my own artistic voice within Bach's music.

Ysaÿe Violin Sonata No. 1 in G Minor, op. 27

Belgian violinist, composer, and conductor Eugène Ysaÿe enjoyed a highly respected and rich musical life. After studying with major violinists of the time Henryk Wieniawski and Henri Vieuxtemps, and graduating from the Royal Conservatory of Liège, he served as concertmaster of the orchestra that would later become the renowned Berlin Philharmonic. In addition to his orchestral engagements and tenured teaching position at the Brussels Conservatory, he concertized widely as soloist and loved playing chamber music, giving the premiere of Claude Debussy's string quartet. A testament to his stature are the numerous musical dedications given to him, including works by Camille Saint-Saëns, Ernest Chausson, and César Franck, the latter of which dedicated his Violin Sonata in A Major to Ysaÿe as a wedding present. As a conductor, he was offered positions with the New York Philharmonic and Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.

The inspiration for Ysaÿe's 6 Sonatas for Solo Violin came after Ysaÿe heard a performance of Bach's Solo Sonatas and Partitas by Hungarian violinist Joseph Szigeti. Within a day of Szigeti's performance, Ysaÿe sketched out his own six sonatas, dedicating each sonata as a portrait of the playing style of six virtuosos of his time: Szigeti, Jacques Thibaud, George Enescu, Fritz Kreisler, Mathieu Crickboom, and Manuel Quiroga, respectively. Like Bach's Sonatas and Partitas, Ysaÿe's Sonatas are highly virtuosic, contrapuntal and expressive. Ysaÿe takes advantage of the instrument's full range and color palette through string techniques like quadruple stops, bariolage (playing across multiple strings quickly), and ponticello (playing close to the bridge, creating an icy sound). Compositionally, Ysaÿe follows Bach's harmonic and structural footsteps with clear bass lines and contrapuntal voices while adding his creative colorations with whole tone scales, dissonances and unexpected harmonic twists.

Hétu Rondo Varié, op. 25 (1977)

Canadian composer Jacques Hétu was a longtime faculty member at the Laval Conservatory, Montréal University, and Université du Québec à Montréal. After

winning the 1961 Prix d'Europe, he studied in Paris with Henri Dutilleux and Olivier Messiaen. In 1989, he was elected a member of the Royal Society of Canada, and in 2001 he was awarded Officer of the Order of Canada, Canada's highest honour for individuals who make outstanding achievements in their field. Other awards include receiving SOCAN's Jan V. Matejcek prize seven times and a Juno Award for the 2004 recording of his Concertos. The large majority of Hétu's works were commissions by Canadian artists and ensembles, including the Toronto and Montreal Symphony Orchestras. In 1967, Glenn Gould recorded his Variations for Piano, and in 1992, the New York Philharmonic premiered his Trumpet Concerto.

Hétu said about his music that it incorporated "neo-classical forms and neo-romantic effects in a musical language using 20th-century techniques." His Rondo Varié for solo violin uses 12-tone serialism in a conventionally expressive and idiomatic style.

Ravel *Tzigane*, op. 1 (1924)

Maurice Ravel's *Tzigane* is one of the most popular show pieces in the violin repertoire. Ravel was inspired to write this piece after hearing an informal performance by Hungarian violinist Jelly d'Aranyi, who improvised in the Hungarian Roma style. While musical borrowing from other cultures was common practice among western European composers, *Tzigane* does not escape elements of the composer's French style: moments of impressionism surface occasionally. Ravel must have also had an older virtuosic style in mind, as the technical passage work is reminiscent of concert pieces by Pablo de Sarasate and Niccolò Paganini.

The piece unfolds in two sections: an extended improvisatory cadenza and a rhapsodic quasi-theme and variations in the Hungarian Roma style. Each variation features an extended technique, including harmonics, which are achieved by using half pressure in the left hand on the strings; pizzicato, plucking the strings with both hands; and spiccato, where the bow is thrown and bounces off the string. At ten minutes in length, Ravel demands agility, flair, and sensitivity throughout the piece.

Beethoven *Sonata for Piano and Violin No. 9 in A Major*, op. 47 "Kreutzer"

Circumstances surrounding the premiere of Beethoven's penultimate sonata for piano and violin are rather unique. Violinist George Bridgetower was engaged to give the premiere with Beethoven at the piano in a concert organized by Ignaz Schuppanzigh, a friend of Beethoven's who also premiered many of his string quartets. The concert took place bright and early at 8:00am to a sizeable audience; among the attendees were Prince Karl Lichnowsky, Prince Josef Johann Schwarzenberg, and Prince Josef Marx Lobkowitz, important figures and patrons of Vienna's musical life. Beethoven woke his student Ferdinand Ries at 4:30am the same morning to copy out the violin part for Bridgetower. While the second movement was not ready for the concert, resulting in Bridgetower reading over Beethoven's shoulder from the piano score, the audience loved the movement so much that Beethoven and Bridgetower performed it twice.

While Bridgetower was the original dedicatee of the sonata, a slight disagreement caused Beethoven to withdraw Bridgetower's name from the work. During a rehearsal, Bridgetower improvised a flourish that caused Beethoven to exclaim "Noch einmal, mein lieber Bursch!" (Once more, my dear fellow!). Beethoven rededicated the work to Rodolphe Kreutzer, who unfortunately refused to perform the sonata because its premiere had already happened and he thought the work was "outrageously unintelligible." Two months after publication, the Leipzig Music Newspaper wrote "This sonata requires for its performance two artists who are in very mighty command of their instruments, and who understand how to use them with meaning and with feeling."

In his sketchbook, Beethoven added a secondary title of Sonata for the piano and one obligatory violin in a very concertante style, like a concerto. This title is fitting, considering the virtuosic nature of the work. The opening introduction section begins with a cadenza-like phrase in the violin, to which the piano responds with a harmonic twist. The two instruments converse back and forth, finally joining forces as a duo. Both players carry equal weight in carrying the movement's energy and drama. The writing is not concerto-like, but virtuosic and full of dialogue between the instruments.

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