

Sophia Anna Szokolay  
*violin*

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

with  
Yandi Chen, piano

Sunday, February 26, 2023  
8:00 p.m.  
Brown Hall

PROGRAM

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**Kati Agócs**  
(b. 1975)

***Versprechen (Promise) for Solo Violin*** (2004)

**Leoš Janáček**  
(1854–1928)

**Violin Sonata** (1921)  
Con moto  
Ballada  
Allegretto  
Adagio

**Sándor Szokolay**  
(1931–2013)

**Sonata for Solo Violin No. 1** (1956)  
Allegro con brio  
Adagio  
Allegro molto vivace

**Johannes Brahms**  
(1833–1897)

**Violin Sonata No. 2 in A Major, op. 100** (1886)  
Allegro amabile  
Andante tranquillo  
Allegretto grazioso

### **Agócs** *Versprechen (Promise)*

Canadian-Hungarian composer Kati Agócs has served on faculty at the New England Conservatory since 2008. Agócs's 2004 work for solo violin, *Versprechen* (Promise), is based on a Lutheran chorale, "Ist Gott mein Schild und Helfersmann" (God is my Shield and Helper). In the composer's own words, the work "casts the soloist as the hero in a musical peregrination. Its eight-minute trajectory traces spiritual yearning, supplication, and redemption, with the chorale melody always present, although at times "refracted" — as if heard through an auditory prism." The work begins with an inquisitive phrase that explores the instrument's full resonance and register. The second section is dance-like and passionate, slowly building to climactic quadruple-stop chords. The final section offers an answer to the piece's search for meaning in the form of a J. S. Bach chorale harmonization.

### **Janáček** *Violin Sonata*

Leoš Janáček was born in Moravia, in modern-day Czechia, in 1854. He worked as a choirmaster, teacher, and ethnomusicologist, researching speech patterns and voice inflections of his native language and incorporating these elements into his music. Janáček completed his Violin Sonata in 1921. Its raw intensity, tragedy, and tender qualities allude to the recent horrors of the First World War. While the piece's folk motifs reflect Janáček culture and language, the Sonata's emotional content is universal.

### **Szokolay** *Sonata for Solo Violin No. 1*

Sándor Szokolay was born in 1931 in Kunágota, a small village in southeastern Hungary. He studied and later taught composition at the Budapest Franz Liszt Academy, worked as a music editor at the Hungarian Radio, and lectured on music through the Hungarian national broadcast television. He composed nearly 500 works, including seven operas, five ballets, oratorios, symphonies, concertos, orchestral works, chamber music, and over two hundred choral works. His most famous opera, *The Blood Wedding*, was awarded the Hungarian Kossuth Prize.

Szokolay's early success came from winning international competitions, including the 1955 Wieniawski International Composer's Competition in Warsaw (for his Violin Concerto) and the 1957 VIT Composition Prize in Moscow — for this Solo Violin Sonata. In the composer's words, "the three-movement Violin Sonata is based on a traditional form of fast-slow-fast. The chordal world of the first movement draws from baroque instrumental writing and Bartókian dissonance: seconds, sevenths, and augmented fourth intervals. The reflective second movement develops a quasi-12-tone motif in arc form. The third movement is a virtuosic Capriccio-like Rondo."

### **Brahms** *Violin Sonata No. 2 in A major, op. 100*

Brahms composed his A major Violin Sonata in the summer of 1886 while staying at a lakeside retreat in Bernese Oberland, Switzerland. It was a fertile summer: aside from this violin sonata, Brahms also completed his Opus 106, 107, and 108 Lieder, the F

major Cello Sonata, and the C minor Piano Trio.

This second violin sonata is the most intimate and lyrical of the three violin sonatas, featuring a substantial piano part and lush violin melodies that quote substantially from Brahms' own recent lieder. The first movement opens with a joyful theme in the piano marked *Allegro amabile*, cheerful and loving. The second theme is based on the lied *Wie Melodien zieht es mir*, a song where the poet compares melodies to the scent of flowers. The second movement is both soulful and playful with contrasting *Adagio* and *Scherzo* sections. The last movement is a romantic, lush, and lyrical rondo.

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