

# Programme Notes

Bela Bartok (1881 – 1945)

The Sonata for Solo Violin Sz. 117, BB 124, is a sonata for unaccompanied violin composed by Béla Bartók. It was premiered by Yehudi Menuhin, to whom it was dedicated, in New York on 26 November 1944.

The Melodia begins with a lyrical melody, stated alone and in all different registers of the instrument. It continues in sixths, octaves, and tenths, accompanied by trills and tremolos. The Presto alternates between a very quiet, fast, bumblebee-like passage played with a mute, and a cheerful melody. Bartók originally wrote the rapid passages in quarter-tones, but many violinists choose to perform a version, suggested by Menuhin, that only uses the standard 12 notes of Western classical music. Three contrasting themes appear throughout this movement, all of which re-appear in the final coda.

The Solo Sonata presents violinists with many difficulties and uses the full gamut of violin techniques: several notes played simultaneously (multiple stops), artificial harmonics, left-hand pizzicato executed simultaneously with a melody played with the bow, and wide leaps between pitches.

Franz Schubert (1797 – 1828)

The Violin Sonata No. 4 (also known as the Duo or Grand Duo) in A major, Op. posth. 162, D 574, for violin and piano by Franz Schubert was composed in 1817. This sonata, composed one year after his first three violin sonatas, was a much more individual work, showing neither the influence of Mozart, as in these previous works, nor of Rossini, as in the contemporaneous 6th Symphony.

The Sonata has four movements:

"Allegro moderato" (A major), sonata form

"Scherzo: presto" (E major), with C major trio

"Andantino" (C major), loose ternary form

"Allegro vivace" (A major), sonata form

Igor Stravinsky (1882 – 1971)

Le Baiser de la fée (The Fairy's Kiss) is a neoclassical ballet in one act and four scenes composed by Igor Stravinsky in 1928 and revised in 1950 for

George Balanchine and the New York City Ballet. Based on Hans Christian Andersen's short story *Isjomfruen* (English: *The Ice-Maiden*), the work is an homage to Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, for the 35th anniversary of the composer's death. Stravinsky elaborated several melodies from early piano pieces and songs by Tchaikovsky in his score. A commission by Ida Rubinstein from 1927, the ballet was choreographed by Bronislava Nijinska and premiered in Paris on 27 November 1928.

*Divertimento* from *Le Baiser de la fée* is a concert suite for orchestra based on music from the ballet. Stravinsky arranged it in collaboration with Samuel Dushkin in 1934 and revised it in 1949. It has four movements:

I. Sinfonia

II. Danses suisses

III. Scherzo (Au moulin)

IV. Pas de deux (Adagio - Variation - Coda)

In 1932 Samuel Dushkin and the composer produced a version for violin and piano, using the same title. Another episode from the ballet was arranged for violin and piano by Dushkin with the title *Ballad*. However, the latter only received the composer's assent in 1947 after the French violinist Jeanne Gautier put forward an arrangement.