

Joelle's Senior Recital

Beatrice Lin, piano

W.A. Mozart Violin Sonata K305

Gabriel Fauré Violin Sonata No. 1

Maurice Ravel Tzigane

28 April 2022, 3:30pm

YST Concert Hall



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Violin Sonata No. 22 in A major, K. 305

Allegro di molto
Tema con variazioni: Tema - Var. I-VI



Although commonly known for his prodigious childhood and prolific compositional output, behind the glamour, W.A. Mozart was cheeky, human, enjoyed playing billiards, and made fun of other composers in his work titled A Musical Joke K. 522. Mozart was the last of seven children, and only the second to survive childhood after his sister, Nannerl. Having been given the middle name (among many) Amadeus, meaning "loved one", it is safe to say that this lastborn was extremely precious to his family. In the spring of 1778, the 21-year-old Mozart went from Munich to Mannheim and Paris in search of employment, having just left his first employment in Salzburg as court musician. Despite having already grown to adulthood, Mozart's innocence and immaturity left his father uneasy about letting him travel alone, and so his mother went together with him. Be that as it may, Mozart still ended up getting distracted from the original purpose of finding employment, and ended up falling in love with Aloisia Weber of Mannheim and going on a vacation with the Weber family, delaying his travels to Paris — much to his parents' dismay. He did, eventually, make it to Paris with his mother, where he wrote this sonata for violin and piano.

Arguably the most sprightly of Mozart's violin sonatas, the **Allegro di molto** opens with bursts of sparkling festivity, interspersed by gentler and more fluid moments. Throughout the movement, Mozart keeps the audience on their toes with rambunctious interruptions and frequent scene changes, true to the persona of a master storyteller he is known to be in his operas.

The **Andante grazioso** presents a courtly theme, followed by six variations. The **first variation** is taken only by the piano in a fluttering almost like a butterfly, landing periodically on a leaf or a flower. The violin joins in for the **second variation** with an inquisitive spirit, uneven rhythms reminiscent of a toddler on his feet for the first time. The **third variation** carries a comforting melody that flows effortlessly between the two instruments, melting into the **fourth variation**, where the violin sings above the undulating piano accompaniment. The piano is given its chance to shine, too, in an *ad libitum* Adagio phrase, but only to be rudely interrupted by the violin. In the **fifth variation** we are suddenly in the parallel key of A minor, menacing and intense. We come to the sixth and **final variation**, in triple-time dance, both instruments' lines weaving in and out, finally coming together to bring the sonata to a celebratory close.

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) **Violin Sonata No. 1, Op. 13**

Allegro molto
Andante
Scherzo: Allegro vivo
Finale: Allegro quasi presto

In the wake of the French defeat in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, a wave of anti-German and nationalist sentiments arose, and in 1871, a group of French musicians led by Camille Saint-Saëns set up the Société Nationale de Musique for the purpose of promoting new French music by young composers and to resist German dominance in programming habits, as was the norm before the war. The society also favoured chamber works, which were rarely heard in France at the time, being heavily dominated by opera and ballets. Gabriel Fauré, piano student and later, a life-long friend of Saint-Saëns, was one of the founding members of the society. He had always much preferred writing chamber works, and this new direction of the music market in France opened a new door for his personal compositional output, thus far having mostly written art songs. This violin sonata completed in 1876 marks a turning point in his career. It was met with enthusiastic reception at its public premiere with Fauré himself on the piano, the third movement being encored.

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The truth is that before 1870 I would never have dreamt of composing a sonata or a quartet. At that period there was no chance of a composer getting a hearing with works like that. I was given the incentive when Saint-Saëns founded the Société Nationale de Musique in 1871 with the primary aim of putting on works by young composers.

- GABRIEL FAURÉ

Allegro molto begins with the iconic piano solo, rolling straight into the waves after waves that sweep us through the entirety of the movement. The violin joins in, riding these waves until we come to a relatively subdued duet; an intimate conversation flowing between the two instruments. This conversation builds and subsides in intensity, temporarily arriving at an ethereal suspense before melting back into reality and finishing in a vigorous flourish. The conversation turns into an introverted monologue in the **Andante**, permeating a sense of melancholy almost to the point of anguish. A constant throbbing in the piano morphs into an unsettled undulation harking back to the first movement. The **Scherzo** was encored in response to the audience's enthusiastic reception of it at the piece's premiere, light and scampering coupled with a singing trio section. The **Finale: Allegro quasi presto**, sweet and comforting, is occasionally struck by bold flares but quickly dissipates back into its lilting theme, and concludes in a triumphant blaze.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Tzigane

Some three decades after the formation of the *Société Nationale de Musique*, Fauré, now teaching composition at the Paris Conservatoire, acquired a student by the name of Maurice Ravel. This was Ravel's second admission to the Conservatoire, having been expelled before due to his musical and political outlook being too progressive for the conservative faculty of the 1890s to bear. Further biased treatment of Ravel by the Conservatoire caused a national uproar, and the scandal led to Fauré replacing Théodore Dubois as Director, and a radical reorganisation of the conservatoire. In 1924, Ravel met virtuoso violinist Jelly d'Arányi in London at a private concert. D'Arányi was a subject of attraction for many composers, and was dedicatee of pieces by Béla Bartók, Vaughan Williams, and Gustav Holst. Born in Hungary, D'Arányi was said to have "a true gypsy exuberance" in her playing. She later claimed to have received message from the deceased Robert Schumann that she was to give the premiere of his Violin Concerto. It was this peculiar character to whom Ravel dedicated *Tzigane*, *Rapsodie de Concert* (Hungarian Gypsy, Concert Rhapsody). Originally written for violin and luthéal (a piano attachment new to Ravel at the time), it was later reorchestrated to make use of the effects produced by orchestral instruments. Both versions are now frequent violin repertory.

The piece opens with solo violin in a cadenza-like passage, beginning in the instrument's lowest range with sultry slides in an improvisatory spirit, later progressing through an increasingly virtuosic series, of harmonics, runs, and double stops, all with push and pulls in tempo as specifically directed by Ravel. The piano shimmies up from under the violin's line, and sweeps us into a quietly energetic theme. Thereafter, we are brought through playful variations of this theme, employing passages of pizzicato, trills, harmonics and double stops time and time again, interrupted every so often with a slight pulling of the brakes before the music launches into a frenzied close.