

# The Ph.D./D.M.A. Programs in Music

February 27, 2017 7:30 p.m.

*Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall*



Jin Suk Yu, violin  
with Eric Sedgwick, piano  
and Soohyun Kwon, violin

Sonata in A major, op. 30 no. 1 (1801-2)

*Allegro*

*Adagio molto espressivo*

*Allegretto con Variazioni*

Ludwig van Beethoven

(1770-1827)

Sonata no. 4 in E minor, op. 27 (1923)

*Allemande: Lento maestoso*

*Sarabande: Quasi lento*

*Finale: Presto ma non troppo*

Eugène Ysaÿe

(1858-1931)

## INTERMISSION

*Subito* (1992)

Witold Lutoslawski

(1913-1994)

*Poème*, op. 25 (1896)

Ernest Chausson

(1855-1899)

Five Pieces for 2 Violins and Piano (1955)

*Prelude*

*Gavotte*

*Elegy*

*Waltz*

*Polka*

Dmitri Shostakovich

(1906-1975)

arr. Lev Atovmyan

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the D.M.A. degree.

Please switch off your cell phones and refrain from taking flash pictures.

## Notes on the Program

**Beethoven** composed the **Op. 30 Sonatas for Violin and Piano** between 1801 and 1802, during some of the most turbulent and tragic periods in his life. He had recently moved to Heiligenstadt in a desperate attempt to improve his hearing, and penned the now-famous Heiligenstadt Testament where he admits and despairs over his imminent deafness. This incredibly raw document gives us rare insight into Beethoven's emotional and physical suffering, but also serves as a kind of explanation for his foray into a new, creative language.

The first movement, marked *Allegro*, begins with a gentle chorale-like theme in which the melody and accompaniment is interweaved. The violin and piano continue to pass the melodic lines between them and while Beethoven quickly moves away from the tonic, there is still a sense of expansiveness and calm rhetoric, which is already a departure from the tumultuous nature with which Beethoven's works are best associated with. The recapitulation arrives almost unnoticed. After some slight variations on the original themes presented, a quiet coda with a natural pedal finishes out the movement.

The *Adagio molto espressivo* takes full advantage of Beethoven's lyricism with a heartfelt melody invoking an aria. Again, he finds beauty and shape in the accompaniment figures, along with the continuous lilting rhythm in the piano. The middle section in B-flat major displays brief moments of virtuosity and anguish before dissolving into the main theme once again.

The finale Beethoven originally intended for this sonata became the published finale for the "Kreutzer" sonata. Instead, he composed an elegant and gentle variation movement that perhaps fits better with the rest of the work. The movement includes an original theme with six variations, with an emphasis on arpeggiated figures.

**Eugène Ysaÿe** (1858-1931) was a Belgian violinist, composer, and conductor. He began lessons with his father at a young age and supported his family through dire financial difficulties during his childhood by playing in two orchestras. Though he was asked to leave the Royal Conservatory of Liège for lack of improvement, legend has it that a passing Henri Vieuxtemps heard a 12-year old Ysaÿe practicing in a cellar and invited him back to the conservatory to continue his studies. Following his graduation from the conservatory, Ysaÿe continued on to a hugely successful performance career as well as a professorship at the Brussels Conservatoire. Unfortunately, he was plagued by a growing number of physical ailments and eventually turned his focus to composition.

Ysaÿe's sonatas for unaccompanied violin were written in July of 1923 after he was inspired by a performance of Joseph Szigeti's. His desire to compose solo violin works that encompassed the musical range and technical prowess of the instrument resulted in six sonatas, with each one dedicated to a virtuoso violinist of his day, including Szigeti and Georges Enescu.

**Sonata no. 4** is dedicated to Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962), an Austrian-born violinist and composer, easily regarded as one of the great master violinists of all time. Ysaÿe seems to convey Kreisler's sonorous tone and bravado throughout this three-movement work. The first movement, *Allemande*, begins with dramatic flourishes then launches into the full-bodied main theme reminiscent of the sonatas and chorales of J.S. Bach. The opening pizzicatos of the *Sarabande* gently lay the expansive foundation for the movement before exploring the two distinct but complementary melodic lines. The *Finale* returns to the fiery nature of the *Allemande* with virtuosic passages, but still with a sense of expansiveness through open harmonies.

Widely considered to be one of the most influential composers to have emerged from the second half of the twentieth century, **Witold Lutoslawski** (1913-1994) had to endure repercussions and hardships brought by both World Wars during his formative years and the Stalinist regime, which resulted in a conservatism of musical expression. As his compositional style matured throughout the years, Lutoslawski's music starting in the 1980s echo characteristics of a late modernist style where compositional and structural unity are important elements within a given piece. Such is the case in **Subito** where a recurring refrain section alternates with various episodes. The fast and furious refrains are juxtaposed with episodes that are more melodic and expansive. As the piece progresses, the line between refrain and episode becomes blurry as Lutoslawski combines materials from both sections.

Commissioned by and written for the 1994 International Violin Competition of Indianapolis as the mandatory contemporary piece of the semi-final round, the 5-minute work offers a window into some of his large-scale works for violin, which include *Chain 2* (1985), the *Partita* (1988), and fragments of a violin concerto written in the last year of his life. The competition took place in September of 1994 and as Lutoslawski passed away on February 7, 1994, he unfortunately was not able to be present during the course of what is one of the biggest and most exciting violin competitions, which takes place every four years.

The music is at once approachable and the bravura passages along with the many different character and color changes in the music present the violin effectively as well as the performer's musical creativity. Thus it is no coincidence that this particular piece is programmed and recorded so often by students looking to fulfill various recital and audition requirements.

**Ernest Chausson** (1855-1899) was a French Romantic composer who, while perhaps not being the most prolific, cemented his place as a kind of bridge between César Franck's ultra-romantic voice and Debussy's impressionist writing. His circumstances as a composer were already quite different from the more well-known stories like that of Beethoven or Mozart. Chausson was born into an affluent family and pursued studies in law to please his father. In 1879 after having attended a performance of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, he decided to dedicate his life to composition. He entered the Paris Conservatory and began studying with Jules Massenet and César Franck.

He became heavily involved in the Société Nationale de Musique, an organization founded by Saint-Saëns to support the works of French composers. As secretary, Chausson collaborated with and became close to many important French musicians, including Claude Debussy, Isaac Albéniz, Alfred Cortot, Gabriel Fauré, and Eugène Ysaÿe.

The **Poème**, written in 1896 for violin and orchestra, was commissioned by Ysaÿe who also gave its early performances. The original title for the work was *Le Chant de l'amour triomphant*, based on a short story of the same title written by Ivan Turgenev, a personal favorite of Chausson's. The tale is that of two close friends, a painter and a musician, who are in love with the same woman. After she rejects the musician, he travels to India and the Orient and returns with a newfound skill of performing a strangely enchanting piece called the "Song of Love Triumphant" on a stringed instrument.

A dark introduction by the lower-ranged instruments of the orchestra sets the stage for this curious tale. When the solo violin finally enters with its melancholy theme, the orchestra falls silent then takes over again in muted tones. The unusual harmonies add to the exotic and always passionate nature of this quasi-improvisatory style work. The first theme reappears throughout, but in more frenzied and impassioned settings as perhaps the unrequited love makes the musician more desperate.

**Shostakovich** composed fluently in all genres, including symphonies, chamber works, operas, and film. He was involved with the world of cinema throughout his entire career, with a work as early as Op. 18, which was the music to a silent film called *The New Babylon*, and the final being Op. 137 for the film *King Lear*. While his various stages of compositional development were heavily influenced by the political ideals of the time, he found refuge in film music, in which his personal aesthetics were not as prominent.

The **5 Pieces for Two Violins and Piano** were arranged by Lev Atovmian from various films to which Shostakovich provided a score. No. 1, “Prelude” is from *The Gadfly*; Nos. 2 and 3 (“Gavotte” and “Elegy”) are from *The Human Comedy*; the origin of No. 4, “Waltz” is disputed; and No. 5 is a “Polka” arranged from the symphonic score of *The Limpid Stream*.

“Prelude” takes advantage of the mournful sonority of two violins harmonizing with a gently undulating piano accompaniment. “Gavotte” is a work of pure simplicity and charm, without the composer’s usual sarcastic undertones. Following this joyous movement is the “Elegy” which is strongly reminiscent of a lullaby, with some surprising harmonic progressions that quietly remind one that this was composed for a film. No. 4 is an elegant waltz that precedes the “Polka,” a jovial scherzo-like movement full of twists and turns before triumphantly, and comically, rounding out the set.

## About the Artists

Violinist **Jin Suk Yu** joined the New York Philharmonic in January 2015. Previously, he was a second-year fellow at the New World Symphony, in which he served as concertmaster under the direction of Michael Tilson Thomas and appeared as a soloist, having won the concerto competition. Mr. Yu has also performed in the Chicago, Pittsburgh, and Atlanta symphony orchestras. From 2011 to 2013, while studying at The Juilliard School, he led both the Juilliard Orchestra and the Verbier Festival Orchestra as concertmaster and in various principal positions. He has participated in the Artosphere Festival Orchestra, Sarasota Music Festival, Aspen Music Festival, and the Encore School for Strings. An active chamber musician, Jin Suk Yu most recently performed Beethoven’s *Archduke Trio* with pianist Yefim Bronfman at the New World Center. Born in Seoul, South Korea, Mr. Yu started playing the violin at the age of five and attended the Interlochen Arts Academy, where he was concertmaster and winner of the concerto competition as well as a valedictorian. He went on to pursue his studies at The Juilliard School, studying with Naoko Tanaka and Joseph Lin, from which he received both his bachelor and master degrees. He took additional classes and lessons with Sheryl Staples and Yoko Takebe while at Juilliard. Currently, Mr. Yu is pursuing his Doctoral of Musical Arts degree at the CUNY Graduate Center studying with Mark Steinberg.

Violinist **Soohyun Kwon** became a member of the New York Philharmonic in September 2001. Prior to joining the Philharmonic, Ms. Kwon performed as a soloist with many orchestras, including the Vienna Symphony Chamber Orchestra at the Bregenz Summer Music Festival, Prague

Symphony Chamber Orchestra at Smetana Hall, Vienna Mozart Orchestra at the Goldensaal Musikverein, Tchaikovsky Society, Shanghai Symphony, Korea Chamber Ensemble, and Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra. Ms. Kwon made her New York debut at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall and gave other recitals at Juilliard's Paul and Morse Halls, the Concertgebouw and Beurs van Berlage, in Amsterdam, and at the Seoul Arts Center. A founding member of the Alma Piano Trio, she performed with the ensemble at Alice Tully Hall, Salisbury State University, Maryland, and at the Goethe Institute in New York. With her string quartet, Quartet 94, Ms. Kwon toured California, where she performed at the University of Southern California and at the inauguration of the Korean-American Museum in Los Angeles. Ms. Kwon was born in Seoul, Korea, and began studying the violin at the age of six. She won several top prizes, studying with Nam Yun Kim and Min Kim. While an academic scholarship student at Seoul National University, Ms. Kwon transferred to The Juilliard School and received her Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees as a student of Glenn Dicterow. Ms. Kwon's interests include Korean and Chinese history and contemporary art.

**Eric Sedgwick** is a pianist and vocal coach, whose clients have appeared on-and off-Broadway and in major opera houses around the world. As an accompanist he has performed in concert with some of music's biggest talents, including Leona Mitchell and Marni Nixon, Broadway leading ladies Sarah Rice and Carole Demas, Thomas Stacy of the New York Philharmonic, and jazz vocalist Theo Bleckmann. He is currently on the coaching staff at the Manhattan School of Music, where he is the music director for the Junior Opera Theater directed by Catherine Malfitano. On the west coast he frequently coaches and music directs productions for the cutting-edge OperaWorks training program in Los Angeles. Opera and musical theater credits include performances of *La Voix Humaine*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Xerxes*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *The Wild Party*, and *Side by Side* by Sondheim.

Mr. Sedgwick is the official pianist for the Art Song Preservation Society, a group whose regular masterclass series has included Dalton Baldwin, Thomas Grubb, Margaret Lattimore and Carol Kimball. He also performs regularly with Opera Singers Initiatives, an organization dedicated to nurturing careers in the field of classical voice, as well as SongFusion, committed to innovative approaches to art song performance. For the past five seasons he has been the pianist for the Stonewall Chorale in New York and for the Broadway Concerts Direct concert series in Wurtsboro, NY. He was a winner of the Boston Steinway piano competition, and has premiered works by composers Seymour Barab, J. Mark Stambaugh, Joelle Wallach, and Louis Hardin.

A native of Worcester, Massachusetts, he holds degrees from the Manhattan School of Music and Brown University. He operates a private coaching studio in New York.