

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

May 12, 2021 1:00 p.m.

Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall



Julia Danitz, violin
with Han Chen, piano

Violin Sonata No. 4 in E minor, Op. 27 No. 4

“À Fritz Kreisler” (1924)

Allemanda: Lento maestoso

Sarabande: Quasi lento

Finale: Presto ma non troppo

Eugène Ysaÿe
(1858–1931)

Violin Sonata No. 3 in C Major, BWV 1005 (1720)

Adagio

Fuga

Largo

Allegro Assai

J.S. Bach
(1685–1750)

INTERMISSION

Samarasa (2010, revised 2014)

Dai Fujikura
(b. 1977)

Violin Sonata No. 7 in C Minor, Op. 30, No. 2 (1803)

Allegro con brio

Adagio cantabile

Scherzo: Allegro

Finale: Allegro; Presto

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770–1827)

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

Notes on the Program

Eugène Ysaÿe

Violin Sonata No. 4 in E minor, Op. 27 No. 4

Ysaÿe dedicated each of his 6 violin sonatas to a great violinist, of whom the works are inspired by. Sonata No. 4 in E minor is dedicated to Viennese virtuoso Fritz Kreisler, known for his benevolent and sweet manner of playing. Ysaÿe's sonata exudes the noble style of the violinist with a contrapuntal style of writing that gives a nod to the baroque style of J.S. Bach.

The *Allemanda* starts with the unraveling of an ascending and expansive scale that captivates the listener due to the virtuosic nature. Immediately a cascade of downward arpeggios follow, which descend into the crusading melody of the *Allemanda*. Towards the end of the movement Ysaÿe builds up the grand ending by starting with a contemplative two voice contrapuntal texture.

The second movement, *Sarabande*, continues with a pizzicato built around a repeating motif of notes (G, F#, E, A). The *canto* continues on and is woven throughout passages of the movement and also prevalent in the *Presto ma non troppo* finale, which is more of an extroverted ode to the style of Kreisler's compositions. Parallels in the style of writing can be heard between Kreisler's *Preludium and Allegro* to the *Presto* movement.

J.S. Bach

Violin Sonata No. 3 in C Major, BWV 1005 (1720)

Bach wrote his set of 6 Sonatas and Partitas during his time at Köthen. Of the three sonatas, the 3rd and final sonata (BMV 1005) is the only to have a four voice fugue, which the work is centered around. The *Fuga* in the C major sonata is also the only solo string work of Bach's that employs a three voice counterpoint. The subject of the fugue is inspired by a Lutheran Hymn, "Komm Heiliger Gest, Herre Gott" (*Come Holy Ghost, God and Lord*). The four bar subject exudes a calm and optimistic character reminiscent of an oration.

Emerging from the prelude *Adagio* movement, which is mainly subsumed by a meditative and patient ostinato subject, the monumental nature of the *Fuga* is texturally and tonally complex. Bach employs the stretto throughout work, new for this particular fugue, and the overlap of question and answer material poses a technical challenge for a violinist with unrelenting chords and double stops. Bach also makes use of an inverse fugue subject halfway through the work, providing the B section for a fugue in ternary form (ABA).

After the emphatic end of the *Fuga* movement, the sweet *Largo* movement provides a brief respite of introspection. The finale movement, *Allegro Assai* with its quick sixteenth notes is finally a contrasting movement of single voice, but with Bach's classic and clever juxtaposition of pedal tones to draw attention to the quick melody.

Samarasa in the words of Dai Fujikura (b. 1977):

“Samarasa” is a rough translation for “mind at rest” in Sanskrit. I composed this piece for the violinist Hae-Sun Kang who is with Ensemble InterContemporain, commissioned by the Messiaen Festival which takes place in the French Alps.

As I set to work on this piece, my focus fell on the right arm of the performer and the movement and speed of the bow. Whereas contemporary music tends to focus on the pitches (which would be the performer’s “left hand”, and its fingering) - and quite understandably so - I was more fascinated with the right arm, as was the case with my viola piece “flux”. The first part begins with the same note being played alternately on three strings, where the violinist’s bow maintains its normal movement while the “left hand” shifts geographically on violin’s fingerboard. This unconventional method produces an irregular kind of melody. During the compositional process I tried drawing the neck of a violin on a piece of paper and placing my fingers along it. The constant cross-string technique employed in the piece is another “unnatural” characteristic unique to string instruments.

Ludwig van Beethoven

Violin Sonata No. 7 in C minor, Op. 30, No. 2 (1803)

Beethoven’s Sonata No. 7 is likened to the grand scale of the “Kreutzer” Sonata no. 9 in A major, op. 47. The C minor sonata goes beyond the 3 movements structure typical of sonata with the inclusion of a contrasting scherzo movement and a dramatic finale movement. The work is reminiscent of a large scale symphonic work in that regard.

The first movement begins with a mysterious melodic subject that forebodes the dramatic action to come. The opening is quickly contrasted with a brighter and brisk march-like section that is passed between the piano and the violin. The exposition is not repeated in the first movement, going against the precedent set in Beethoven’s prior violin sonatas. All the while, savage chords erupt throughout the movement and remain until the menacing end. The Adagio cantabile is a movement of spiritual nature, though with two noticeable outbursts. Nevertheless Beethoven provides an indulgent movement that seems to freeze time.

The playful scherzo movement follows, with a lighthearted and exuberant style in a 3/4 meter. In the finale, the ominous mood and grit of the first movement returns with the natural momentum of a fast finale movement.

About the Artists

Violinist **Julia Danitz** is currently in her third year of pursuing a Doctorate of Musical Arts at CUNY Graduate Center, and is a graduate of The Juilliard School with a Masters of Music. Prior to her doctoral studies, she completed a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science at Columbia University, where she was enrolled in the rigorous dual degree Columbia-Juilliard exchange program, majoring in Political Science. Her violin tutelage includes noteworthy professors such as Daniel Phillips, Yoko Takebe Gilbert, Masao Kawasaki, and Li Lin.

As an enthusiastic educator Julia maintains a private violin studio and serves as Faculty Mentor at the Harmony Program, which provides musical instruction to underserved areas of NYC.

She leads a multifaceted performing career which has led her to diverse concert venues such as Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall, to on the screen and behind the scenes on The Late Show with Stephen Colbert. Julia collaborates with Late Show bandleader Jon Batiste on various projects.

She has performed at many prestigious summer music festivals including the Tanglewood Music Center, Spoleto Festival USA, Aspen Music Festival and School, Lake George Music Festival and Bowdoin International Music Festival. At Tanglewood she had the privilege to collaborate with the iconic Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble at the Koussevitzky Music Shed.

In 2019 Julia was invited to be on the artist roster of the Center of Musical Excellence, which provides solo and small ensemble opportunities for gifted young musicians.

Hailed by the New York Times as a pianist with “a graceful touch... rhythmic precision... hypnotic charm” and “sure, subtle touch,” **Han Chen** is a distinctive artist whose credentials at a young age already include important prizes in competitions of traditional music as well as increasing respect in the avant-garde.

Mr. Chen’s debut CD with Naxos Records, which consists of Liszt operatic transcriptions, was released in January 2016 as the first prize winner of the 6th China International Piano Competition. American Record Guide and Gramophone stated Mr. Chen’s performance as “with sensitivity and thoughtfulness,” and “impressively commanding and authoritative” respectively.

An enthusiastic advocate for modern music, Mr. Chen actively performs both 20th-century classics and works by emerging composers. He has worked with renown composers such as Thomas Adès, Unsuk Chin, Helmut Lachenmann, Lei Liang and Nina Young, given world premieres of works by Chin, Molly Joyce and Reinaldo Moya. He is a member of the New York-based group Ensemble Échappé.

Mr. Chen has performed with orchestras around the world, such as the Fort Worth Symphony, National Taiwan Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Xiamen Philharmonic and Macao Orchestra, collaborating with conductors such as Vladimir Ashkenazy, Karina Canellakis and Nicholas McGegan.

Native of Taiwan, Mr. Chen graduated from The Juilliard School and the New England Conservatory, studying with Prof. Yoheved Kaplinsky and Prof. Wha Kyung Byun. He is now a doctoral candidate at the CUNY Graduate Center with Prof. Kaplinsky and Prof. Ursula Oppens.

Spring 2021 Online Events

March

- 8 Ari Livne, piano
- 12 Han Chen, piano

April

- 7 Kirsten Jermé, cello
- 16 Audrey Chen, cello
- 23 Carrie Frey, viola
- 26 Federico Diaz, guitar
- 28 Antonio Valentin, piano
- 30 Austin Lewellen, double bass

May

- 3 Thapelo Masita, cello
- 5 Clare Monfredo, cello
- 12 Julia Danitz, violin
- 14 GC Composers
- 17 Isabel Fairbanks, cello
- 19 Jeremy Kienbaum, viola
- 21 Fifi Zhang, piano

All events begin at 1:00pm and will be live-streamed free of charge at this link:

<https://gc-cuny.zoom.us/j/95813229159>

For detailed concert information, please visit our website at: <http://gcmusic.commonsgc.cuny.edu>