

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

May 18, 2023 12:00 p.m.

Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall



Julia Danitz, violin
Alexei Tartakovsky, piano

Sonata No. 32 in B-flat Major, K. 454 (1784) Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Largo—Allegro (1756–91)
Andante
Allegretto

Nocturne for Solo Violin (1994) Kaija Saariaho
(b. 1952)

INTERMISSION

Sonata No. 10 in G Major, Op. 96 (1812) Ludwig van Beethoven
Allegro moderato (1770–1827)
Adagio espressivo
Scherzo: Allegro - Trio
Poco allegretto

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

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Sonata No. 32 in B-flat Major, K. 454 for violin and piano (1784)

I. Largo—Allegro

II. Andante

III. Allegretto

Considered one of W.A. Mozart's late works for his violin sonata repertoire, K. 454 was written in 1784, just under a decade from Mozart's early death and during the height of his success in Vienna. Many of Mozart's earlier violin sonatas held the violin in an accompanying, auxiliary role, but K. 454 shows clear independent lines with both instruments in active interplay, and in the most concerto-like style that Mozart has written for the violin sonata genre. For the violinist and pianist to trade themes, was unheard of, as previously the violinist was a mere accompanist to the piano in Mozart's earlier sonata work.

K. 454 was written specifically for Regina Strinasacchi, an Italian virtuoso violinist whom Mozart was friends with, and who played a Stradivarius violin and a Tourte bow. The advent of the Tourte bow was the latest technological innovation of its era (and still is the model that modern players use). The grandeur of the work is made possible by the powerful tone this bow could extract from the violin. The first movement of the work, opens with a triumphant slow introduction marked *Largo*. The serious opening chords *Largo* sets the tone for the sonata— with both players exchanging the grand thematic material, which sets the tone for the rest of the work. Immediately following the introduction is a joyous sonata-form *Allegro*, a typical first movement work of the Classical era. The second movement *Andante* is an introspective aria for the violin and piano, which is perfect for the Tourte bow's ability to sustain *cantabile* (singing) lines. The second movement is followed by the third movement *Allegretto*, a playful rondo with a catchy theme.

Kaija Saariaho (b. 1952)

Nocturne for Solo Violin (1994)

Finnish composer, Kaija Saariaho, most interested in the spectral aesthetics of French composers Tristain Murail and Gerard Grisey, is known for compositions that extract unique and unusual timbres from Western Classical instruments. Her works are often dream-like, subtle, and draw upon a new sonic language for both performer and listener. Nocturne for Solo Violin, is a delicate work, dedicated to memory of Polish composer, Witold Lutoslawski, The majority of the work has a soft dynamic, sometimes almost inaudible, followed by special moments of crescendi to short-lived crashing scratch tones. The work entails the violinist to extract harmonics, and in a way that Saariaho hopes the listener can hear multiple partials and textures from the violin, as the violinist is to draw the bow back and forth from playing on the bridge (*sul ponticello*). The work seems to go back and forth from light to dark, and integrates selected pitches that the work circles around. Rhythmically, the work is rather free and set to a slow pulse in this sheer and short six-minute piece.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Sonata No. 10 in G Major, Op. 96 for violin and piano (1812)

I. Allegro moderato

II. Adagio espressivo

III. Scherzo: Allegro - Trio

IV. Poco allegretto

How to follow op. 47, the fiery “Kreutzer” sonata that Beethoven penned and premiered almost 10 years prior? His last sonata, op. 96, is not necessarily a departure from the *concertante stile* of the “Kreutzer,” as the stillness and serenity of the first movement requires a wholly different skillset of playing for the performers. It is the test of calm and tenderness. The delicate writing from Beethoven in op. 96 is what ushers in his late era preoccupation with the sublime. In 1812, when he wrote op. 96 he also wrote in his diary, “Everything that is called life should be sacrificed to the sublime and be a sanctuary of art.”

The four movement work does not invoke the turbulence that we associate Beethoven with, though there are always the dynamics and accents that bring the player and listener to the edge before the material turns in different directions— his trademark. The onset of the first movement has a pastoral feeling, fragile, beginning with a trill motif that can be likened to a bird-call. The development of the first movement tests the soft end of the dynamic spectrum for both instruments, the atmosphere becomes distant and eerie before a dramatic burst of triplets breaks the tension. The opening theme returns in E-flat major and Beethoven explores a mix of neighboring keys before the movement is swept up with a crescendo and a scale of the tonic key.

The second movement, *Adagio espressivo*, begins E-flat major, and starts with a hymn from the piano, immediately creating a warm and intimate backdrop for the movement. The violin and piano each have their indulgent melismatic moments, and independent ornamental freedom as they pass the material back and forth to each other. Each instrument also accompanies the other one when the other has the spotlight. The movement ends quietly and on a suspension that turns into an angular Scherzo movement in G minor. The movement is quick and short in length (typically played for no more than two minutes) and features a short trio with pleasant ascending and descending scale figures in the movement before Beethoven chooses to bring the scherzo back and shift it to G major.

The finale movement is a theme and seven variations, with a jaunty, folk-like melody initiated by the piano. The final movement was composed for the violin pedagogue Pierre Rode, who premiered the work. Beethoven wrote to the Archduke Rudolph who was to play the piano part on op. 96, “I did not make great haste in the last movement for the sake of mere punctuality, the more because, in writing it, I had to consider the playing of Rode. In our finales we like rushing and resounding passages, but this does not please Rode and — this hinders me somewhat.” The final movement is in an “unbuttoned” manner— *aufgeknöpft* was the term Beethoven liked to use— and contains aria-like moments reminiscent of the second movement *Adagio espressivo*. When these moments occur, the piano is granted cadenzas that suspend time. There are both boisterous moments as well as elegant in the *Poco allegretto*, and as this is Beethoven’s final movement of his final violin sonata, with seven variations we receive a wide spectrum of his sentiments.

About the Artists

Violinist **Julia Danitz** is currently a Doctorate of Musical Arts candidate 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.

She has performed at many prestigious summer music festivals like the Fontainebleau School, where she won 2nd place at the 2022 Ravel Prix competition, and others such as 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 of collaborating with Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble.

In 2021, Julia performed Mozart's 3rd concerto in G major, K. 216 with the Vienna International Orchestra. She was also a finalist in the 2022 Cadenza Contest online music competition. In addition to holding a private violin studio, Julia is the co-founder of a musicians collective, Sonora Collective, which performs chamber music in unique concert spaces in NYC. They perform and commission living composers and program underrepresented repertoire in the classical music canon as well.

Laureate of the 2021 International Beethoven Competition in Bonn, Germany, Russian-American pianist **Alexei Tartakovsky** has been called a "fantastic musician and pianist" by Martha Argerich and "one of the finest young pianists in recent years...truly exceptional...superb playing...a thoughtful and serious musician" by the New York Concert Review. His tonal palette, superb technique, and profound musicianship have enthralled audiences worldwide and established him as one of the brightest talents of his generation.

A highlight of his career was his outstanding performance at the 2015 Chopin International Competition in Warsaw, where he was a semifinalist. In 2016, Tartakovsky was awarded the French Prize at the Cleveland International Piano Competition. In 2021, he received both the 2nd Prize and the Deutsche Telekom StreamOn Beethoven Award at the International Telekom Beethoven Competition in Bonn, Germany.

Among the musicians he has studied with are Matti Raekallio, Nina Lechuk, Boris Slutsky, Boris Berman, and Horacio Gutierrez. Tartakovsky completed his undergraduate studies at Juilliard and Queens College (CUNY), received his Master of Music degree from the Peabody Conservatory, and an Artist Diploma from the Yale School of Music. He is currently a doctoral candidate as a student of Richard Goode at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York, where he was awarded the coveted Graduate Center Fellowship.