

Notes on the Program

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart wrote his **Duo No. 2 in B-flat Major for Violin and Viola, K. 424** in 1783 under mischievous circumstances. Mozart wrote two duos for violin and viola (the first is K. 423 in G Major) as a favor to his friend Michael Haydn (the younger brother of the well-known Joseph Haydn). Michael was commissioned by Archbishop Hieronymus von Colloredo to write a set of six duos for violin and viola, but when Michael became ill after composing only four, Mozart chose to write two duos and submit them to the archbishop under Michael Haydn's name, so to spare him from losing his long-standing employment by the archbishop. This sneaky behavior was, in all likelihood, extra satisfying for Mozart, as he had been let go from his own employment by Archbishop Colloredo two years prior in 1781 due to his being absent too frequently. While Mozart did make some choices to blend his B-flat duo with the four that Michael Haydn had composed, Mozart's personal style is undeniably present throughout the work.

For instance, the first movement opens with an Adagio introduction before the sonata-form Allegro begins; this is not at all unusual to Mozart's style, however, none of the other five duos in this set begin with an introduction. In the case of the third and final movement, though, Mozart writes a theme and variations, which Michael Haydn did include as the finale to one of his duos (officially). Ending a work with a theme and variations is somewhat unusual for Mozart, although he did so with his string quartet, K. 421 in D minor, also written in 1783 (the only of his mature string quartets to end with a theme and variations).

Regardless of movement tempi and structures, Mozart's style, and most notably, his masterful skill as an orchestrator, is highly evident throughout this work. With only two string instruments, Mozart is able to creatively evoke or even maintain his typical use of dialogue, harmony, and rhythmic texture. Of course present throughout as well is his sense of wit, lyricism, and playful charm that one would expect from a mature work of Mozart.

Béla Bartók wrote his **Sonata for Solo Violin, Sz. 117** very near the end of his life, in 1944, while ill with leukemia. The sonata was commissioned by (dedicated to, and premiered by) twentieth-century world-class violinist Yehudi Menuhin.

Menuhin worked with Bartók to make edits to the sonata, most notably to today's performance in the fourth movement (Presto). In its unrevised version (which you will hear today), the Presto features the use of quarter and third tones (itches that lie between the typical twelve pitches that are used in Western Classical music before the twentieth century). The edited version omits these microtones, and remained the standard version of the work until Bartók's son, Peter, had the original version published as an urtext edition in 1994.

Bartók's solo violin sonata is written in four movements, featuring a *Tempo di ciaccona* and a fugue as the first two movements. Like the solo violin sonatas of Eugène Ysaÿe, for example, these movements exhibit clear influence of the most revered solo violin sonatas in the Western classical repertoire: those of J.S. Bach.

The third and fourth movements of Bartók's sonata also feature inspiration from the Bach solo sonatas, specifically in their tempi, completing this sonata's congruence with the slow-fast-slow-fast structure that Bach used. The third movement, titled '*Melodia*,' features a barren, monophonic melody, which creates an eerie and otherworldly atmosphere. Unusual in Bartók's music generally is this movement's lack of a

strong rhythmic beat or pulse. This void-of-time quality, combined with the influence of Hungarian and Romanian folk music that is typical of Bartók's music, makes this movement quite alluring.

The fourth and final movement (Presto) can be characterized by two opposing settings: the first of which is again eerie like the *Melodia*, but now very active, perhaps evoking mosquitoes and other insects, and representative of Bartók's night-music style. The second setting is perhaps during waking hours as it is full of vitality, fire, and a great deal of rhythmic character. Here Bartók features consistent use of both hemiolas, and two successive strong beats (short, then long, often referred to colloquially as the "Bartók" rhythm). Among other folk-like rhythms in the movement, both of these are highly characteristic again of Bartók's style, due to his Hungarian and Romanian influence. This finale movement ultimately ends in a sudden burst of energy, creating a playfully quirky ending to an often serious work.

Reena Esmail first wrote *When the Violin* in 2018 for SATB choir and obligato cello. In 2020, she adapted her original work for solo violin in order for violinist Vijay Gupta (this version's dedicatee) to premier it virtually at Americans for the Arts '2020 Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy. This version of *When the Violin* for solo violin is of course distilled compared to the original, and is whimsically improvisatory and poignant in nature, fitting to the solitude of, and as a hopeful antidote to, the COVID era of 2020 that motivated its creation.

According to her website, "Indian-American composer Reena Esmail works between the worlds of Indian and Western classical music..." and this work is no exception. One can hear the increasing use of florid ornamentation as the piece evolves in its waves of intensity, as well as the use of a meditative drone while a conversational melody takes place. *When the Violin* is written after the following poem of the same name by Persian poet Hafiz:

When
The violin
Can forgive the past

It starts singing.

When the violin can stop worrying
About the future

You will become
Such a drunk laughing nuisance

That God
Will then lean down
And start combing you into
Her
Hair.

When the violin can forgive
Every wound caused by
Others

The heart starts
Singing.

— Hafiz, *The Gift* (tr. Daniel Ladinsky)

Franz Schubert's Rondo in B minor, D. 895, often referred to as *Rondo (Rondeau) Brillant*, was composed in October of 1826, and was the first work for violin and piano that Schubert had written in almost ten years (it follows his *Grand Duo* Sonata of 1817). Also chronologically relevant is that the Rondo is one of Schubert's last compositions before the death of Beethoven (whom Schubert revered greatly) in March of 1827. This event arguably inspired the final evolution to Schubert's compositional style for the last eighteen months of his own life. One can certainly hear the results of this in his subsequent and final work for violin and piano, the Fantasy, D. 934 (December, 1827).

The *Rondo Brillant* is structured, unsurprisingly, in a masterfully ornate rondo form with introduction containing three primary themes, each beginning in their own key (with the primary theme or reprise in B). To guide the listener through his complex structure, Schubert brings what becomes a boisterous primary theme in B Major to a sudden halt in each repetition; the brief transitions that follow consistently end with an ascending scale which carries the music into its secondary and tertiary themes. When returning to the reprise (which begins in B minor), Schubert is able to be less predictable, since the darkness of this minor key brings a newly ominous and unexpected moment upon the listener.

While the rondo's title states its key as B minor, it is only this moment of the reprise and much of the Andante introduction that are in B minor. The Rondo travels through a great variety of keys (as do most of Schubert's mature works) via its secondary and tertiary themes, however it ultimately centers itself around B Major as its true and final home. This transformation from B minor to B Major (taking a bird's-eye view) gives an optimistic narrative to the work, and bolsters its raucous, charming, and sweet nature.

Niccolò Paganini is known for performing and composing the most virtuosic music for the violin, but was also a capable composer of many great melodies, which can be heard among his Caprices for Solo Violin, Op. 1 and his violin concertos, for example. The **Cantabile, Op. 17** is certainly among these great melodies, and allows the listener of Paganini's music to experience not only the pyrotechnic virtuosity that one has come to expect from him, but instead, the virtuosity of tone and nuance that the violin is capable of.

The Cantabile was written for violin and either piano or guitar, and is one of well over fifty compositions that Paganini wrote for violin and guitar. It is a beautifully sonorous, warm, and reflective work.

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I would like to thank my two wonderful collaborators this evening, Nicholas and Jinhee, for joining me in this recital, and for their amazing musicianship; it is always a joy to play with you both.

Thank you to the audience for attending this evening to traverse through this program with me, to my friends and peers who came to support me, and to my family for always encouraging me, especially as I begin my doctorate. Lastly, thank you to my dear teacher, Ms. Cho, for changing my life, and for consistently reassuring me that staying true to myself is always the right thing to do.

About the Artists

Praised by *The Boston Musical Intelligencer* for his “sonorous, sweet tone and masterful phrasing,” Armenian-American violinist **Samuel Andonian** hails originally from Massachusetts, and is a graduate of The Juilliard School and the New England Conservatory, where he studied with Catherine Cho and Donald Weilerstein.

His formative mentors also include Natasha Brofsky, Kim Kashkashian, Merry Peckham, and Vivian Hornik Weilerstein. Currently, Andonian is a doctoral fellow at the CUNY Graduate Center as a student of Catherine Cho and Mark Steinberg.

Andonian has been a soloist with orchestras such as the Boston Pops Orchestra, the New York Classical Players, the New England Philharmonic, and the Boston Youth Symphony. He has performed on NPR’s *From the Top*, at Juilliard’s Starling-DeLay Symposium, in recital for Music for Food and Music for Peace concert series, and at the Boston Symphony Orchestra’s season-opening gala.

As a chamber musician, Andonian has participated in NEC’s Honors Chamber Music program, has attended The Perlman Music Program’s Chamber Music Workshop, Kneisel Hall and Norfolk Chamber Music Festivals, and has performed with artists such as Kim Kashkashian, Donald Weilerstein, Roger Tapping, and members of the Brentano String Quartet. This summer, he will attend the Marlboro Music Festival.

Andonian has been a concertmaster for the New York Classical Players, the Moritzburg Orchestra (in recording for Sony Classical), the NEC orchestras, and the Boston Youth Symphony for three seasons.

Important to his musical purpose has been Andonian’s work interning and performing with Music for Food, a musician-led initiative founded by violist Kim Kashkashian, which collects donations from its performances for organizations fighting food insecurity in their local community.

A native of Brookline, Massachusetts, **Nicholas Gallitano** is a violist based in New York City. He can be found regularly in the city’s major concert halls, joining the New York Philharmonic at David Geffen Hall and the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra at Carnegie Hall in the 2023-24 season. Performances with the New York Philharmonic have also taken him on tours to Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the Bravo! Vail Music Festival. A seasoned chamber musician, Nicholas has performed as a guest artist at the Smithsonian Chamber Music Society, where he joined the quartet-in-residence, the Axelrod Quartet, for performances of Brahms String Quintet No. 2 in G Major playing the set of Stradivari instruments on which the piece was premiered. He was a festival artist at Arazzo Music Festival and Manchester Summer Chamber Music in the 2023 summer season. In his life as a young artist, he found homes at Kneisel Hall, the Perlman Music Program, Sarasota Music Festival, and the Music Academy, as well as at masterclasses such as IMS Prussia Cove and Internationale Sommerakademie Bad Leonfelden. Nicholas began his studies with Gillian Rogell and Michele Parker in Brookline, MA, and holds degrees from The Juilliard School and Oberlin Conservatory, where his primary teachers were Roger Tapping, Peter Slowik, Molly Carr, and Samuel Rhodes. In addition to his degrees in music, he holds a Bachelor of Arts in East Asian Studies with a minor in History from Oberlin College.

Pianist **Jinhee Park** is a dynamic artist for her versatility and passion for music, having a wide range of experience in both vocal and instrumental repertoire. As a vocal collaborative pianist, Jinhee, in partnership with soprano Meredith Wohlgemuth, has received international recognition by winning the first prize at the Schubert International LiedDuo 2023 in Dortmund and the Concours International Musical de Montréal (Art Song Division) in 2022. She also received the best pianist awards from both competitions.

Since 2018, Jinhee has joined the Chautauqua Institution Voice Conservatory as a vocal coach, working with Marlena Malas. Her dedication to working with young singers is evident in her involvement in various opera productions, including *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*. In 2023, Jinhee conducted Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges*.

As a chamber musician, she was appointed one of the official pianists at the Concours International Musical de Montreal in the Violin edition 2023. Additionally, she holds the position of official pianist at the Hudson Valley String Competition. Jinhee's performances have appeared venues in the United States, Canada, Germany, and Korea, and she actively collaborates with internationally-acclaimed musicians, including Stella Chen and Timothy Chooi.

Currently, Jinhee is a Doctor of Musical Arts candidate at the Juilliard School as a C.V. Starr Doctoral Fellow.

In 2015, Jinhee moved to the United States from South Korea, and she now calls the vibrant heart of New York City home, residing with her accomplished pianist husband, Jun Cho.