

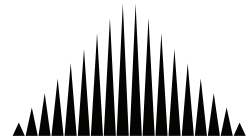
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JOSHUA BELL, VIOLIN | SAM HAYWOOD, PIANO
Thursday, April 15, 2010, at 7:30pm
Foellinger Great Hall | Classical Mix Series

THE ACT OF GIVING

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PROGRAM

Joshua Bell, violin
Sam Haywood, piano

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

Sonata for Piano and Violin in B-flat Major, K. 454
Largo—Allegro
Andante
Allegretto

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Sonata No. 7 in C Minor for Violin and Piano, Op. 30, No. 2
Allegro con brio
Adagio cantabile
Scherzo: Allegro
Finale: Allegro

20-minute intermission

Maurice Ravel
(1875-1937)

Sonata for Violin and Piano
Allegretto
Blues (Moderato)
Perpetuum mobile (Allegro)

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
(1840-1893)

Souvenir d'un lieu cher, Op. 42 (Three Pieces for Violin with Piano)
Méditation

Pablo de Sarasate
(1844-1908)

Introduction and Tarentella, Op. 43

This program is subject to change.

Joshua Bell will autograph programs and recordings in the Lobby following the performance.

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PROGRAM NOTES

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Born January 27, 1756, in Salzburg, Austria
Died December 5, 1791, in Vienna, Austria
Sonata for Piano and Violin in B-flat Major, K. 454

On the recent death of the American novelist Saul Bellow, *The New York Times* reported that Bellow once told a reporter that “for many years, Mozart was a kind of idol to me—this rapturous singing that’s always on the edge of sadness and melancholy and disappointment and heartbreak, but always ready for an outburst of the most delicious music.” Bellow could easily have been speaking of the *Sonata for Piano and Violin in B-flat Major, K. 454*, for it is this sense of dark and light that pervades the work from its opening definitive statement to its final merriment. We have here something more than merely contrasting movements. Rather, contrast persists within each of the three movements. In more purely musical terms, one could view this as chords and melody, but that hardly says it all. We could look at it architecturally as a perfect mix of the vertical and the horizontal. Neither view, however, fully catches the sonata’s operatic quality as only Mozart can effect. It is this sense of the operatic that surely drove Saul Bellow’s comment.

The work is also an adventure in the development of the sonata for piano and violin. Even its very title suggests a balance of instruments not heard in earlier works. The piano is fully removed from the role of accompaniment and is thrust gloriously into equal standing with the violin. Sometimes the scales are even tipped when the piano takes on the operatic vocal lines and embellishments, and the violin provides only the solid rhythmic line. Nevertheless, competition is not the point of this beautifully integrated work, equality is.

Mozart himself played the piano part in the debut of the sonata on April 21, 1784, with the Italian violinist Regina Strinasacchi, praised for both her beauty and her playing. Mozart was notorious for not completing piano parts in time for these first performances but rather playing them from memory, something which had to have disconcerted the violinist. Wolfgang Hildesheimer, in his wonderful book on Mozart, comments, “But we are safe in assuming (this sonata is proof of it) that such feats did not impede his creative power, but, on the contrary, gave it wings.” Hildesheimer describes the period from which this sonata sprang as “a kind of hectic contentment, if not euphoria.” The work itself elicits these same feelings.

Ludwig van Beethoven
Born December 16, 1770, in Bonn
Died March 26, 1827, in Vienna
Sonata No. 7 in C Minor for Violin and Piano, Op. 30, No. 2

There is little hint of earlier times in Beethoven’s *Sonata No. 7 for Violin and Piano*. This is pure Beethoven at his most ingenious and virtuosic for both instruments that are cast here in a light more equal than in any duo sonatas heretofore. Even the Sonata’s C minor key points to its importance in Beethoven’s canon since he used it for some of his most important works, such as *Symphony No. 5*, *Piano Concerto No. 3*, the “*Pathétique*” *Sonata*, and *String Quartet, Op. 18, No. 4*. The work is also an exquisite example of Beethoven’s brilliant use of the motto, or repeated thematic imprint. Repetition, in *Sonata No. 7*, becomes a powerful tool and not a simple duplication of notes.

All this is clearly illustrated by the opening piano statement, which is then taken up by the violin and repeated by both instruments throughout the wonderful movement. The ominous opening unexpectedly lightens to fulfill the Allegro con brio tempo marking. At the same time, the movement never loses its intensity as we are constantly shifted back and forth between darkness and light.

The second movement, Adagio cantabile, is filled with interesting detail and is as thoroughly developed in its lyricism as the first movement was in its power. The piano again introduces the opening theme but is soon joined by the violin, which takes up the lovely song. Interestingly, the piano offers a staccato accompaniment to the lyricism of the violin and, at several points, sounds elaborate scales while the violin sings. Two powerful moments surprise us before the movement comes to its gentle conclusion.

Beethoven has his fun in the third movement, Scherzo, but not at the expense of power, virtuosic challenges, and, as ever, the employment of a motto. Here the piano and violin are in particularly close partnership and equally share the brilliant moment.

The final Allegro is brighter than the opening one but still not lacking in its dark moments. Because of their tempo markings, one might be tempted to look for similarities in the first and last movements, but they are very different. Things are more straightforward in this movement but no less interesting. An alternating bass line offered by the piano adds much strength, and a new six-note motto makes its imprint. There is a Beethovenian rush to a powerful conclusion with a quick toss of the head in the last two chords.

Beethoven composed nine of his 10 sonatas for violin and piano (or piano and violin, as they are variously listed) between 1797 and 1803, with the three sonatas of Op. 30, Nos. 6, 7, and 8 coming in 1802. They were composed for Czar Alexander I of Russia who, *Thayer's Life of Beethoven* reports, ordered that a diamond ring be sent to Beethoven. There is no record of that gift in the imperial archives, but Melvin Berger, in his *Guide to Sonatas*, suggests that Beethoven was finally paid in 1815 when the czar was attending the Congress of Vienna.

Maurice Ravel
Born March 7, 1875, in Ciboure, France
Died December 28, 1937, in Paris, France
Sonata for Violin and Piano

Ravel's *Sonata for Violin and Piano* is an undisputed masterpiece of 20th-century music. It reflects, in every way, Ravel's statement that "Great music, I have always felt, must come from the heart. Any music created by technique and brains alone is not worth the paper it is written on." Ravel's many other statements calling for technical perfection as the goal of music conflict with this notion, but it seems as if Ravel enjoyed contradiction. We must recall that he said of himself, "I am artificial by nature."

Nothing, however, seems artificial about the sonata. Written between 1923 and 1927, it reveals both Ravel's honoring of Classical form and his own singular spirit of adventure with equality reigning between violin and piano. Ravel once wrote that the sonata is a composition for "two incompatible instruments, which not only do not sink their differences, but accentuate the incompatibility to an even greater degree." Once again, Ravel seems

to contradict himself, since his *Sonata for Violin and Piano* seems to be an ultimate achievement in compatibility if only by the method of giving each instrument its full voice.

The first movement reflects Ravel's Classical spirit yet does not neglect his Romantic side or his adventuresome one. At one point in the first movement, the piano repeats 34 parallel open fifths as a spare but shocking accompaniment for a more lyrical violin melody.

The second movement, "Blues," serves as a scherzo in true Classical spirit despite its obvious bow to American jazz. When on tour in the United States, Ravel once commented that, "To my mind, the 'blues' is one of your greatest musical assets, truly American despite earlier contributory influences from Africa and Spain." Ravel achieves a blues effect by assigning a saxophone-like wail to the violin that is achieved through slides from one note to the next, while the piano imitates the strumming of a guitar.

The third movement is literally a high-speed perpetual motion exercise for violin, while the piano offers an accompaniment, virtuosic in its own right, that keeps things under control.

For the premiere of the sonata, Ravel was the pianist with violinist and composer George Enesco.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Born May 7, 1840 in Votkinsk, Russia
Died November 6, 1893, in St. Petersburg, Russia
Souvenir d'un lieu cher, Op. 42

Contradiction pervades Tchaikovsky's life and work. His homosexuality he called both a "natural tendency" and a "vice." His nine-week marriage was loveless, but his attachment to his patroness

Nadezhda von Meck was profound. That relationship, although they agreed never to meet, resulted in her financial support of him between 1876 and 1890 and a collection of 500 passionate love letters. Even his death—suicide or cholera—remains in question, although there is much to support suicide since that fate was assigned to him, according to 1970 scholarship, by a so-called "court of honor" when he was caught *en flagrante* with the nephew of a high-ranking Russian official.

He sought and received the musical favor of Europe but remained deeply rooted in his native Russia. Despite this attachment to his homeland, the famous Mighty Five (Balakirev, Mussorgsky, Borodin, Cui, and Rimsky-Korsakov) eschewed his academic associations as an insult to their interest in Russian folk traditions. Yet in the West, he was viewed as one of the prominent "young Russians." In his chamber music, Tchaikovsky is his least "Russian" or, that is to say, his most "German" in the sense of his indebtedness to Brahms and the great Classical tradition that sprang out of Germany, a notion that in itself is confusing in light of the "Russianness" that we still associate with Tchaikovsky's music. Like other nationalistic composers when they turn to chamber music, Tchaikovsky was, in that genre, his most intimate and universal. Yet, an identifiable Russian spirit remains in his work. As Stravinsky said of him, "Tchaikovsky understood the art of wearing a top hat and at the same time, of wearing a Russian shirt and belt."

The *Méditation* was composed in March 1878 at Nadezhda von Meck's Ukrainian estate and was dedicated to the estate itself. Von Meck herself was elsewhere. Originally intended as the second movement of his violin concerto but replaced by the famous "Canzonetta," it was later published with its

companion pieces, *Scherzo* and *Mélo die*, in 1879, then separately in 1880, and then again in 1896 with all three pieces in an arrangement for violin and orchestra by Alexander Glazunov. A new edition for violin and piano by Leopold Auer was published in 1908.

In a letter to Nadezhda von Meck, Tchaikovsky commented that he considered *Méditation* the best of the three pieces but that “it gave me the most trouble.” The source of his “trouble” was probably the moving spirit of the work that makes special and subtle demands on its players with its melancholy opening and growing impassionment before a return to solemnity.

Pablo de Sarasate
Born March 10, 1844, in Pamplona, Spain
Died September 20, 1908, in Biarritz, France
Introduction and Tarentella, Op. 43

Pablo de Sarasate, honored among violin virtuosos, inspired composers such as Saint-Saëns, Bruch, Bizet, and Dvořák to write for him. Although he was born in Spain, he lived in Paris and is partially responsible for French composers’ admiration of Spanish sounds, a fascination that is reflected even in the later work of Ravel.

Among Sarasate’s many compositions for violin and piano, *Introduction and Tarentella* is one of the most famous and has been recorded by a host of virtuosos who dare to play it. One of the free-wheeling responses to Joshua Bell’s performance of the work on YouTube was simply to say, “You don’t have to understand it. Just feel it.” Well, it’s a bit more complicated than that. Not to understand, first of all, the level of virtuosity that is demanded by the

work is to miss much, and yet to appreciate only its virtuosic demands is also insufficient. What Sarasate has done in this work is to combine virtuosity and lyricism in a way that one cannot be divided from the other. Without question, there are moments of sheer fun in the piece, but the fun should not take away from its impact. It is a consummate expression of a composer who thoroughly understood all the possibilities of the violin. Nor does he neglect a brilliant support by the piano.

Program notes © 2010 by Lucy Miller Murray

Lucy Miller Murray is the founder of Market Square Concerts in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and served as the director of the chamber music series from 1982 to 2009. Her book, Adams to Zemlinsky: A Friendly Guide to Chamber Music, was published by Concert Artists Guild of New York and is available at concertartists.org and amazon.com. www.lucymillermurray.com

JOSHUA BELL, VIOLIN

Joshua Bell has captured the public’s attention like no other classical violinist of his time. His 2009-10 season kicked off with the September worldwide Sony Classical release of *At Home with Friends* featuring Chris Botti, Sting, Josh Groban, Kristin Chenoweth, Regina Spektor, and others.

Named by *Musical America* as the 2010 Instrumentalist of the Year, Bell has many highlights in his 2009-10 season, including performances at the Hollywood Bowl, Verbier, Tuscan Sun, Mostly Mozart, Salzburg, Tanglewood, Menuhin, Gstaad, and Enescu Festivals and a return to the BBC Proms at Royal Albert Hall. Western Hemisphere engagements include appearances with the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center. Bell performs at the Huberman Festival with the Czestochowa Philharmonic and returns to Moscow to perform with the Russian National Orchestra. Bell will be on a European and US recital tour throughout 2010 that includes Carnegie Hall, Disney Hall, and the Wigmore Hall in London; a performance for the World Economic Forum; dates in Paris, Budapest, Madrid, Athens, Zurich, and Istanbul; as well as a tour to Asia with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields.

“Mr. Bell doesn’t stand in anyone’s shadow,” said *The New York Times*. Bell came to national attention at age 14 in his orchestral debut with Riccardo Muti and the Philadelphia Orchestra. A Carnegie Hall debut, the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant, and a recording contract further confirmed his artistry.

Bell has recorded more than 35 CDs since his first recording at age 18, resulting in a richly varied catalogue of recordings. He received a Mercury

Prize and a Grammy Award for *Maw: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*. He received the Gramophone Award for his recording of the Barber and Walton violin concertos and Bloch’s *Baal Shem*. And he received the Echo Klassik Award for his Sibelius/Goldmark concerto recording. He has collaborated with numerous artists and on film scores including the Oscar-winning soundtrack for *The Red Violin*. Recordings within the past year include *Vivaldi: The Four Seasons* and the film soundtrack to *Defiance*.

Bell and his two sisters grew up on a farm in Bloomington, Indiana. As a child, he indulged in many passions outside of music, becoming an avid computer game player and a competitive athlete. He placed fourth in a national tennis tournament at age 10 and still keeps his racquet close by. Bell received his first violin at age four after his parents, both psychologists by profession, noticed him plucking tunes with rubber bands he had stretched around the handles of his dresser drawers. By 12, he was serious about the instrument, thanks in large part to the inspiration of the renowned violinist and pedagogue Josef Gingold, who had become his beloved teacher and mentor.

In 1989, Bell received an Artist Diploma in Violin Performance from Indiana University. His alma mater also honored him with a Distinguished Alumni Service Award only two years after his graduation. He has been named an Indiana Living Legend and received the Indiana Governor’s Arts Award. In 2005, he was inducted into the Hollywood Bowl Hall of Fame, and he is the recipient of the Avery Fisher Prize. Bell currently serves on the Artist Committee of the Kennedy Center Honors.

Bell plays the 1713 Gibson ex Huberman Stradivarius.

www.joshuabell.com

Sam Haywood has performed to high critical acclaim all over the world as a concerto soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician. He has recorded extensively for CD, radio, and television, most recently with Steven Isserlis for a BBC documentary about Mendelssohn. Throughout the spring, he is touring Europe and the United States with Joshua Bell.

Sam began playing the piano at the age of six, inspired by the magic of candlelit evenings listening to crackly Beethoven records with his grandmother in the English Lake District. His early teachers David Bonser and David Hartigan continued to inspire him, and by the age of 13 he had won second prize in the BBC Young Musician of the Year competition. The Royal Philharmonic Society then awarded him the prestigious Isserlis Award, after which he studied in Vienna with Paul Badura-Skoda and spent many a happy evening at the Vienna State Opera. His next major influence was the Italian Schnabel pupil Maria Curcio, with whom he studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

He has given several recitals on Chopin's own Pleyel piano of 1848, on which he will be making a special recording to celebrate Chopin's anniversary year in 2010. He is also keen to include lesser-known works in his recital programs. Rosetti (Rosetti Festival, Germany), Elgar (the composer's own piano version of *Enigma Variations* at Wigmore Hall and the Schleswig-Holstein Festival), Mozart's younger son Franz Xaver (British embassy, Vienna), and John McLeod (piano sonata commissioned and premiered by Sam Haywood at the Scottish Sound Festival) have recently been featured in his programs. He has also edited a new edition of piano works by Julius Isserlis and Carl Fruehling's *Clarinet Trio*.

Sam has composed several small-scale works for solo piano and various duos, including *Song of the Penguins*, published by Emerson Editions. The director of the film *March of the Penguins*, which inspired the piece, wrote that "the general ambience is one of sadness, yet so much hope and optimism manage to break through. The *Song of the Penguins* takes us on a journey of its own." He is also regularly involved in educational projects and has co-written a children's opera. To celebrate the Chopin anniversary, he recently made a transcription of the "Romance" from Chopin's *First Piano Concerto*.

Outside his musical world, he loves to walk in his native Lake District and is a keen amateur magician.