



Joshua Bell Sam Haywood

Joshua Bell / *Violin*
Sam Haywood / *Piano*

Saturday Evening, February 10, 2018 at 8:00
Hill Auditorium
Ann Arbor

63rd Performance of the 139th Annual Season
139th Annual Choral Union Series

This evening's recital is supported by the Karl V. Hauser and Ilene H. Forsyth Choral Union Endowment Fund, the Medical Community Endowment Fund, James and Nancy Stanley, Sesi Lincoln, Drs. Max and Sheila Wicha, and by the Zelenock Family.

Media partnership provided by WDET 101.9 FM, WGTE 91.3 FM, and WRCJ 90.9 FM.

The Steinway piano used in this evening's recital is made possible by William and Mary Palmer.

Special thanks to Danielle Belen for her participation in events surrounding this evening's recital.

Special thanks to Tom Thompson of Tom Thompson Flowers, Ann Arbor, for his generous contribution of floral art for this evening's recital.

Mr. Bell records exclusively for Sony Classical — a MASTERWORKS Label.

Mr. Bell appears by arrangement with Park Avenue Artists and Primo Artists.

In consideration of the artists and the audience, please refrain from the use of electronic devices during the performance.

The photography, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance is prohibited.

PROGRAM

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Violin Sonata No. 32 in B-flat Major, K. 454

Largo — Allegro

Andante

Allegretto

Richard Strauss

Violin Sonata in E-flat Major, Op. 18

Allegro ma non troppo

Improvisation: Andante cantabile

Finale: Andante — Allegro

Intermission

Franz Schubert

Fantasie for Violin and Piano in C Major, D. 934

Additional works to be announced by the artists from the stage.

VIOLIN SONATA NO. 32 IN B-FLAT MAJOR, K. 454 (1784)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Born January 27, 1756 in Salzburg, Austria

Died December 5, 1791 in Vienna

UMS premiere: Isaac Stern with pianist Alexander Zakin; February 1971 in Hill Auditorium.

Snapshots of History...In 1784:

- John Wesley ordains ministers for the Methodist Church in the US
- Benjamin Franklin invents bifocal spectacles
- The Ottoman Empire agrees to Russia's annexation of the Crimea

The present sonata is in a class all by itself among Mozart's violin sonatas. It owes its life to the Viennese debut of a remarkable touring virtuoso who, moreover (and very unusually for those days), was a woman. Her name was Regina Strinasacchi; she was 22 or 23 at the time of her concert with Mozart. She had studied at the famous Ospedale della Pietà in Venice where, many decades earlier, Vivaldi served as music director. By all accounts, she was an exceptionally flamboyant player, trained as an opera singer as well as a violinist.

Mozart had been asked to compose a new sonata for Strinasacchi's Viennese concert, which took place on April 29, 1784. Having left the composition to the last minute as he often did, Mozart once again had no time to notate the piano part. The story goes that, after giving Strinasacchi her music, he had an empty sheet on the piano, as he played a part that only existed in his head. When he later wrote it down, he used ink of a different color and had a hard time squeezing in all the 16th-notes underneath the notes of the violin.

According to Mozart's widow, even Emperor Joseph II found out about the ruse, as he was looking through his opera glasses and noticed that Mozart had no music in front of him.

The unique nature of this sonata is apparent from its very theatrical opening. It is the only Mozart sonata to open with a slow introduction. Though short, this introduction is both grandiose and intense. The ensuing "Allegro" is serene and playful, again not without some operatic gestures (this time alluding to comic opera). The magical slow movement contains some enharmonic modulations that are among the boldest Mozart ever wrote, while the concluding *rondo* presents a cornucopia of sparkling melodic ideas.

VIOLIN SONATA IN E-FLAT MAJOR, OP. 18 (1887)

Richard Strauss

Born June 11, 1864 in Munich, Germany

Died September 8, 1949 in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany

UMS premiere: Jascha Heifetz with pianist Emanuel Bay; February 1953 in Hill Auditorium.

Snapshots of History...In 1887:

- Construction of the iron structure of the Eiffel Tower begins in Paris
- The US Senate allows the Navy to lease Pearl Harbor as a naval base
- Chester Greenwood patents earmuffs

Strauss's only violin sonata dates from the period in the composer's life when he was moving away from the Brahmsian universe of "absolute" music into the New German world of programmatic composition. The 23-year-old composer was about to abandon the classical chamber genres to which he had made several remarkable contributions in previous years, and set his sights on symphonic poems à la Liszt, and on opera, where he would become the heir of Wagner. The *Violin Sonata* is a transitional work, written in a conventional form but informed by an entirely new musical aesthetic.

Everything in this work seems to function on a symphonic rather than a chamber-music scale, starting with the very first piano motive whose angular rhythms foreshadow *Don Juan*. Some of the later melodies have a definite operatic sweep to them. Sonata form, with its requisite contrasting themes, development, and recapitulation, nominally still holds sway in the opening "Allegro ma non troppo" (fast, but not too fast). Yet the music's passion overflows the structural

bounds of the form and creates a movement that seems to be defined less by classical considerations than by large cycles of dramatic outbursts and moments of lyrical reflection.

The second movement, "Improvisation," is a beautiful "song without words" that is sometimes performed separately from the rest of the sonata. The highly ornate *cantabile* (singing) movement includes a passionate middle section, followed by the return of the initial theme in an even more richly embellished rendering.

A somber piano introduction opens the third-movement finale, erupting in a brilliant and highly virtuosic "Allegro." The stream of wide-spanned melodies and breakneck figurations is occasionally interrupted by lighter, scherzo-like episodes. As a final surprise, Strauss introduces an extensive coda in a new time signature (a faster 6/8 as opposed to the earlier 3/4). This section is almost a separate movement in its own right, ending the sonata on a climactic point of maximum excitement.

FANTASIE FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO IN C MAJOR, D. 934 (1827)

Franz Schubert

Born January 31, 1797 in Himmelpfortgrund, near Vienna

Died November 19, 1828 in Vienna

UMS premiere: Albert Spalding with pianist André Benoist; January 1931 in Hill Auditorium.

Snapshots of History...In 1827:

- The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad is incorporated, becoming the first in the US to offer commercial transportation of both people and freight
- *Freedom's Journal*, the first African-American owned and published newspaper in the US, is founded in New York by John Russwurm
- Ludwig van Beethoven dies

The violinist Josef Slavik had just made a hugely successful debut in Vienna when Schubert wrote his two works for him: the *Rondo Brilliant in b minor* (D. 895) and the present *Fantasia in C Major*. A few years later, Slavik met Chopin who called him a “second Paganini”; however, the young violinist’s career was soon cut short by his death from typhus at age 27.

The *Fantasia*’s design consists of a slow introduction followed by a classical fast-slow-fast sequence (played without pause), with the song variations in second place. Yet the work is not a sonata in disguise. In a way, both fast sections sound like finales; the *allegro* in sonata form, that all-important ingredient of classical and Romantic instrumental music, is conspicuous by its absence.

After a few measures of suspenseful piano tremolos, the violin’s first entrance in the introduction sounds for a moment like the opening of Schubert’s great two-cello quintet in the same key, written a year later in 1828, the year of the composer’s

death at 31. The sudden dissonance that comes after the opening C Major is the same, creating great tension, though in this case the tension does not erupt dramatically but is, instead, gradually diffused as the languid violin melody segues into a playful fast movement. This section, which alternates between a minor and A Major and visits a number of secondary keys as well, has the unmistakable hallmarks of the “Hungarian” style that Schubert evoked in so many of his works. It is followed by an *andantino*, in which we hear Schubert’s song *Sei mir gegrüsst* (I Greet You) and three increasingly pyrotechnical variations on it.

The song, whose text is by Friedrich Rückert, was written in 1822 and published in 1823. It is an ecstatic confession of love, in which Schubert managed to elevate the poet’s somewhat clichéd lines “*Sei mir gegrüsst, sei mir geküsst*” (I greet you, I kiss you) to truly transcendent heights. The three dazzling variations that follow take nothing away from

the ardor of the poetic feeling; on the contrary, their almost superhuman difficulty is commensurate with the larger-than-life emotions in the song. In both cases, the music reaches for the stars, even if the means employed are entirely different.

One of the work's great surprises is how, after the third variation, an astonishing transition takes us back to the dark drama of the introduction. This section, however, is much shorter now than it was the first time, and is soon relieved by a dashing *allegro vivace* in C Major. It seems that nothing can stand in the way of a brilliant ending, but just before the conclusion, a dramatic modulation brings back the melody of *Sei mir gegrüsst*, in all its original, pure lyricism. All that remains is a short *presto* coda, to return us rather abruptly to the ground after the blissful dream evoked in the song. Most critics have objected to this sudden "alienation effect," but in fact it is not unlike what happens at the end of certain Shakespeare plays where the actors step out of character, removing their masks and taking their bows.

Program notes by Peter Laki.

ARTISTS

With a career spanning more than 30 years as a soloist, chamber musician, recording artist, and conductor, **Joshua Bell** is one of the most celebrated violinists of his era. An exclusive Sony Classical artist, Mr. Bell has recorded more than 40 albums garnering Grammy, Mercury, *Gramophone*, and Echo Klassik awards, and is a recipient of the Avery Fisher Prize. Named the music director of the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields in 2011, he is the only person to hold this post since Sir Neville Marriner formed the orchestra in 1958.

In 2018, Mr. Bell tours with the Academy to the United Kingdom, Germany, the US, and Asia. With pianist Sam Haywood, he performs 10 recitals in Europe and America, and on February 7, 2018, he reunited with collaborator pianist Jeremy Denk for a recital broadcast live from Carnegie Hall. Further season highlights include dates with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Danish National Symphony, and an all-Beethoven play/direct program with the Orchestre National de Lyon.

Recently Sony Classical released *Joshua Bell — The Classical Collection*, a 14-CD set of albums of classical repertoire that displays Mr. Bell's unique breadth, versatility, and breathtaking virtuosity. Slated for June 2018 is Mr. Bell's recording with the Academy of Bruch's *Scottish Fantasy* and *Concerto in g minor*.

Mr. Bell recently engaged in two tech projects: with Embertone, the leading virtual instrument sampling company, the Joshua Bell Virtual Violin was created for producers, artists, engineers, and composers. He also teamed up with Sony for the Joshua Bell VR Experience featuring Mr. Bell performing Brahms's *Hungarian Dance No. 1* in full 360-degree VR. This experience is available for free download for Sony PlayStation 4 VR.

Convinced of the value of music as a diplomatic and educational tool, Mr. Bell participated in President Obama's Committee on the Arts and Humanities' first cultural mission to Cuba. He is also involved in Turnaround Arts, administered by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts which provides arts education to low-performing elementary and middle schools. Mr. Bell has devoted himself to several charitable causes, most notably Education Through Music, which puts instruments in the hands of thousands of children in America's inner cities. Mr. Bell performs on the 1713 Huberman Stradivarius violin.

Sam Haywood has performed to critical acclaim in many of the world's major concert halls. *The Washington Post* hailed his "dazzling, evocative playing" and "lyrical sensitivity" and the *New York Times* his "passionate flair and sparkling clarity." He embraces a wide spectrum of the piano repertoire and is equally at home as a soloist, chamber musician, or working with singers. He has had a regular duo partnership with Joshua Bell since 2010 and often performs with cellist Steven Isserlis.

Mr. Haywood is passionate about period instruments and has made a recording on Chopin's own Pleyel piano. He has recorded two solo albums for Hyperion, one featuring the piano music of Julius Isserlis and the other Charles Villiers Stanford's preludes. He is artistic director of the Solent Music Festival in the UK and the inventor of the memorization aid memorystars®. His other passions include literature, natural history, technology, magic, fountain pens, and table tennis. For more information, please visit www.samhaywood.com.

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L I N C O L N

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UMS ARCHIVES

This evening's recital marks **Joshua Bell**'s eighth appearance under UMS auspices, following his UMS debut in October 1989 with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra conducted by Yoel Levi in Hill Auditorium. Mr. Bell was honored with the UMS Distinguished Artist Award as part of the 2012 Ford Honors Program with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields. **Sam Haywood** makes his second UMS appearance this evening, following his UMS debut with Joshua Bell in February 2014 in a recital in Hill Auditorium.

MAY WE ALSO RECOMMEND...

- 2/14 Emmanuel Pahud
- 3/11 Elias Quartet
- 4/22 Murray Perahia

Tickets available at www.ums.org.

ON THE EDUCATION HORIZON...

- 2/13 Artist Interview: Janai Brugger
(Watkins Lecture Hall, Moore Building, 1100 Baits Drive, 2:30 pm)
- 2/16–17 *The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess: A Symposium*
(Gallery, Hatcher Graduate Library, 913 S. University Avenue)
Please visit smtd.umich.edu/Gershwin for full schedule details and to register.
- 2/19 FRAME: A Salon Series on Visual Art, Performance, and Identity
(202 S. Thayer Street Building, Atrium, 7:00 pm)

Educational events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.

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