



ARTIST
SERIES

JOSHUA BELL

with Sam Haywood, piano

Feb. 9, 2018

CU ★ PRESENTS

Joshua Bell

with Sam Haywood, piano

Program

Violin Sonata No. 32 in B-flat Major, K.454 (22')

I. Largo – Allegro

II. Andante

III. Allegretto

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756–1791)

Violin Sonata in E-flat Major, Op. 18 (30')

I. Allegro, ma non troppo

II. Improvisation: Andante cantabile

III. Finale: Andante - Allegro

Richard Strauss
(1864–1949)

INTERMISSION

Fantasie in C Major, D.934 (25')

I. Andante moderato

II. Allegretto

III. Andantino

IV. Allegro vivace

Franz Schubert
(1797–1828)

Additional works to be announced from the stage

Program is Subject to Change

Joshua Bell records exclusively for Sony Classical – a MASTERWORKS Label
www.joshuabell.com

Mr. Bell appears by arrangement with Park Avenue Artists and Primo Artists.
www.parkavenueartists.com
www.primoartists.com

For more information on Sam Haywood, visit www.samhaywood.com

Program Notes

Notes by Marc Shulgold

JOSHUA BELL

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

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Mozart carried on an intriguing relationship with the violin. As a boy of 6, he amazed a gathering hosted by his father (himself a respected teacher and player of that instrument) by insisting he join in on a chamber piece, playing his tiny fiddle—with no prior training. His focus would remain on the keyboard, but Mozart drew early accolades with his prowess on the violin, particularly from Dad—that is, until he pretty much stopped playing it altogether in his 20s. His most familiar works for the violin include the five concertos (penned in 1775) and the violin-and-violata Sinfonia Concertante, K.364 (1779). These were composed while he was employed in the orchestra at the Salzburg Cathedral. The concertos were likely written for himself or for his colleague Antonio Brunetti. Scholars believe that K.364 was first played as a father-and-son duet by the Mozarts.

It's a mystery why the talented young violinist abandoned the instrument and composing concertos for it. There are some clues: Enduring a strained relationship in the employ of the Cathedral's Archbishop, Hieronymus Colloredo, Mozart may have carried bad memories of the violin as he left for Vienna in 1781, breaking free from a cleric who barely tolerated the young musician (and who was an amateur violinist himself). Or perhaps Mozart simply felt it was time to focus on the keyboard. Yet he continued to write sonatas for violin and piano over a span of 25 years, producing some 40 such works.

Not all of them were for his own playing, as witnessed by the B-flat Sonata, K.454. In a letter to his father Leopold on April 24, 1784, Mozart wrote that this piece was penned for “the famous” Regina Strinasacchi (1764-1823), a virtuosa from Mantua described by Mozart as possessing “a great deal of taste and feeling in her playing.” The composer told of a performance five days hence, attended by Emperor Joseph II, at which Mozart accompanied Strinasacchi, relying only on a few sketches he'd scribbled (the completed work would be published the following July).

Compared to his early sonatas—the first 10 were published when he was 8 years old—K.454 demonstrates more than maturity. It shows a concerted desire to unite the two instruments in an equal partnership. The three movements contain episodes for violin and piano playing in unison or in parallel harmony, along with phrases introduced by one voice and quickly answered by the other. We encounter moments dominated by the keyboard, as well as those sung by the violin. A slow introduction to the opening *Allegro* reveals an intention to make this a serious work rather than a light amusement. That is confirmed by the thoughtful, expansive *Andante*, no doubt inspired by Strinasacchi's “feeling in her playing.” That description was echoed by Leopold, who was impressed by how “she puts her whole heart and soul into the melody she is playing.” A well-mannered *Allegretto* again gives equal time to each player. As always, Mozart can't help injecting touches of unexpected wit here and there.

Program Notes

Violin Sonata in E-flat Major, Op. 18

Richard Strauss

If you've seen photos of Strauss in his later years—gruff and unsmiling—this passionate work from his youth may come as a pleasant surprise. Unlike his later compositions, the construction here emerges with unexpected compactness. The themes in the optimistic opening *Allegro ma non troppo* are distinct and memorable, content to follow the sonata-allegro form dating back to Mozart and Beethoven. Similarly, the main theme of the Sonata's middle movement unfolds in accessible fashion, introducing a lovely, hummable song-without-words, while the *Finale* echoes the heroic strains of the first movement, serving as an emphatic statement of unbridled joy.

So, what inspired young Strauss to create music so happy and unforced? A simple answer: love. The opening movements were written in August of 1887, followed in early November by the *Finale*—all composed around the time he had met and fallen in love with a young soprano (and his future wife) named Pauline de Ahna. Knowing this, one might interpret the lovely melody of the *Andante cantabile* as something he might have written for Pauline to sing.

Curiously, this tightly organized central movement—interrupted by an agitated middle section—belies its marking of *Improvisation*. It's tempting to read too much of Strauss' emotional state into the Sonata. There's no storyline here. Consider that it emerged just as he was diving into another heroic work that would become his first orchestral triumph, *Don Juan*. That one did tell a story, and it would lead Strauss into a new world of composition. The Sonata thus became the composer's last major chamber piece, giving way to a flood of huge symphonic poems and, much later, a string of operas. And yet, the violin continued to be a constant companion, dating back to when he began playing it at age 8.

When he was 18, Strauss wrote a Violin Concerto, and in 1896 he would give a prominent role to the instrument in *Also sprach Zarathustra*. Though fame grew from his larger works, the Op. 18 Sonata remained a personal favorite, perhaps because of its association with Pauline's entrance into his life. After all, it was included in a concert celebrating his 85th birthday on June 11, 1949, attended by the composer shortly before his death.

For all its impetuous pleasures, the Sonata should not be classified merely as a youthful exercise. There are powerful, churning pages showing a maturity that fits comfortably with the simultaneous beginnings of Strauss' foray into orchestral writing. Op. 18, then, represents a turning point. While this music seems to look back fondly to his love of the violin, it also offers a glance into what lay ahead: a life devoted to exploring the grand colors of the orchestra. And, lest we forget, the Sonata also represents the start of a life devoted to his beloved Pauline.

Program Notes

Fantasie in C Major, D.934

Franz Schubert

It seems incomprehensible to us that Schubert's gorgeous melodies would have been all but ignored by the legion of music-lovers residing in Vienna during his lifetime. He certainly had his admirers—a coterie of devoted friends and musicians who regularly gathered at his private “Schubertiads” to play and hear the newest songs and chamber works. On the outside, many knew his name, but precious few knew his music. Vienna in the early 1800s was, after all, Beethoven's domain (Schubert died a year after the city's musical hero).

In his brief 31 years, Schubert wrote hundreds of songs, plus symphonies, operas, sacred pieces, solo and duo piano music and chamber works of all different sizes. Only a few gained popularity, or even a public reading. On one rare occasion, he was able to arrange a showcase recital by the renowned young Czech violinist Josef Slavik (Chopin called him “the second Paganini”) and a friend of Schubert's, the pianist Carl Maria von Bocklet. The performance, which took place on Jan. 20, 1828, at the start of the composer's last year, included the premiere of the *Fantasie* in C—and let's just say it failed to impress.

One critic was painfully honest in his appraisal: “The *Fantasie* occupied rather too much of the time a Viennese is prepared to devote to pleasures of the mind. The hall emptied gradually, and the writer confesses that he too is unable to say anything about the conclusion of this piece.” It took years for this work to be recognized as one of Schubert's greatest achievements.

Considering the novel construction of the *Fantasie*, it's understandable that it received a cool reaction at its premiere. This single-movement piece, written in December of 1827, lasts for some 25 minutes and consists of three or four stitched-together segments, depending on how you divide it up. Those linked episodes, plus some recalls of early themes mixed in, must have bothered those engaged in simple “pleasures of the mind.” The piece's opening is strikingly original: an extended piano tremolo that supports a slowly unfolding, elongated violin melody. The tension is lifted by the appearance of a Hungarian-flavored tune in the relative minor, featuring some cat-and-mouse chasing by the two voices. The centerpiece of the *Fantasie* is an ambitious set of four variations, loosely based on a Schubert song from 1822—a setting of Friedrich Rückert's poem, “Sei mir gegrüsst!” Well-liked by the Viennese, it's a touching lament for lost love, each stanza ending wistfully with “I greet you! I kiss you!”

Perhaps the composer wanted to capitalize on the song's popularity with these variations. One can only imagine his disappointment as he watched patrons (and critic) head for the exits before the exciting, brilliantly virtuosic finale. And consider that, as the year unfolded, Schubert was experiencing deep depression and worsening health (he died in November of 1828). But you would never know his desperation by hearing music that shows not a hint of the darkness that surrounded his remaining days.

Biographies

Joshua Bell, violin



Photo: Lisa-Marie Mazzucco

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, 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 other person to hold this post since Sir Neville Marriner formed the orchestra in 1958.

In 2018, Bell tours with the Academy in the United Kingdom, Germany, the United States and Asia. With pianist Sam Haywood, Bell performs 10 recitals in Europe and America, and on Feb. 7, 2018, reunites with collaborator pianist Jeremy Denk for a recital broadcast live from Carnegie Hall. Further season highlights include dates with the Philadelphia

Orchestra and 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 Bell’s unique breadth, versatility and breathtaking virtuosity. Slated for June 2018 is Bell’s recording with the Academy of Bruch’s Scottish Fantasy and G minor Concerto.

Bell recently engaged in two tech projects. With Embertone, the leading virtual instrument sampling company, he created the Joshua Bell Virtual Violin for producers, artists, engineers and composers. Bell also teamed up with Sony for the Joshua Bell VR Experience featuring Bell performing Brahms’ 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, Bell participated in Barack 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. 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.

Bell performs on the 1713 Huberman Stradivarius violin.

Biographies

Sam Haywood, piano



Photo: Panos Damaskinidis

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, as a chamber musician and working with singers. He has had a regular duo partnership with Joshua Bell since 2010 and also often performs with cellist Steven Isserlis.

He 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 (grandfather of Steven Isserlis) and the other featuring Charles Villiers Stanford's preludes. Gramophone said of the Stanford recording, "Sam Haywood ... does this repertoire absolutely proud; possessing a pleasingly rounded tone, sensitivity to dynamic nuance

and flawless technical address, his is a decidedly superior brand of pianism."

In 2013, Sam founded the Solent Music Festival in the U.K. with his wife Sophia Pagoni. The annual Lymington-based festival features highly varied programs by internationally renowned artists with projects in the local community. Artists have included the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Alina Ibragimova, Mark Padmore and the Endellion String Quartet.

Sam was mentored by David Hartigan, Paul Badura-Skoda and Maria Curcio. Following his early success in the BBC Young Musician of the Year competition, the Royal Philharmonic Society awarded him the Julius Isserlis Scholarship. He studied both at the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Vienna and at the Royal Academy of Music in London, which recently made him an associate (ARAM).

Sam enjoys working with young musicians. He wrote the music for a children's opera and is regularly involved in family concerts, workshops and master classes. He also teaches on the online website musicalorbit.com. His "Song of the Penguins" for bassoon and piano is published by Emerson Editions and the première of "The Other Side" for solo piano was given at the Konzerthaus in Vienna.

His patented invention memorystars® can significantly reduce the time needed to memorize a music score, or indeed any printed text.

Other passions include literature, physics, natural history, technology, magic, fountain pens and table tennis.



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