

PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

PREVIEW
NOTES

Pamela Frank, violin

Peter Serkin, piano

Tuesday, March 3 – 7:30 PM

Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center

PROGRAM (Selection of Program Notes)

Violin Sonata in B Minor, BWV 1014

Johann Sebastian Bach

Born: March 31, 1685, in Eisenach, Germany

Died: July 28, 1750, in Leipzig, Germany

Composed: 1720

Duration: 14 minutes

A group of the instrumental sonatas J.S. Bach composed while living and working in Cöthen during the late 1710s and early 1720s -- specifically, the six sonatas for violin and harpsichord, the three for viola da gamba and harpsichord, and two of the four authentic flute sonatas -- are especially and rightfully famous for one thing: in these 11 works, by writing out a full harpsichord part on two staves rather than merely writing a bass line and figured bass, Bach promoted the harpsichord from mere continuo foundation to true equal of the solo instrument. Although not as famous as the six Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin, the above-mentioned sonatas for violin and harpsichord are among Bach's most famous chamber pieces; it is possible, assuming that Bach in fact composed it before the other five, that the first of these sonatas, BWV 1014 in B minor, is in fact history's very first modern duo sonata.

Violin Sonata in A Major, BWV 1015

Johann Sebastian Bach

Composed: 1720

Duration: 14 minutes

Although Bach's Sonata No. 2 in A major for violin and harpsichord, BWV 1015, may seem virtually identical to the first of the set in terms of general structure and movement layout, a closer listen reveals that it is really quite individual in shape, content, and -- most significantly -- character. In the new realm of the duo sonata, it is every bit as warm and ingratiating a piece as its immediate predecessor is stern and, at times, lean.

Violin Sonata in E Major, BWV 1016

Johann Sebastian Bach

Composed: 1720

Duration: 17 minutes

BWV 1016, the Sonata in E major for violin and harpsichord was, like the others, composed sometime during his years as Kapellmeister at the court of Cöthen; it shows how well Bach had absorbed the Italian sonata da chiesa tradition, and even better how well able he was to bend that tradition to his own creative will. The four movements of BWV 1016 follow the same basic pattern in the typical Corelli or Handel sonata da chiesa: slow-fast-slow-fast. The opening Adagio, with its very Italianate style of ornamental melodic writing, is in two, nearly equal sections. A slowly-pulsing bassline supports a shining, rising melody in the violin.

Violin Sonata in G Major, BWV 1019

Johann Sebastian Bach

Composed: 1720

Duration: 17 minutes

The Sonata for Violin and Keyboard in G major, BWV 1019, is the last of six violin sonatas Bach wrote before 1725, most likely while he was Kapellmeister at Cöthen, and revised several years later. The sonatas as a whole are technically accessible to amateurs, while containing musical subtleties to be explored by fine musicians. This sonata differs from the other five in that it is comprised of five movements instead of four. In its final version, an extra Allegro precedes the slow-fast-slow-fast structure of the rest of the sonata. As with other late Baroque sonatas, each movement conveys a particular emotion, or Affekt.