

PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

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PREVIEW
NOTES

Miriam Fried, *Violin*

Jonathan Biss, *piano*

Wednesday, March 24 – 6:00 PM

American Philosophical Society

PROGRAM

Violin Sonata in C Major, K. 303

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Born: January 27, 1756, Salzburg, Austria

Died: December 5, 1791, Vienna, Austria

Composed: 1778

Duration: 10 minutes

During the course of the long trip undertaken to Mannheim and Paris in 1777-1778, Mozart composed seven sonatas for piano and violin (K. 296 and K. 301-306). The C Major is the third of the group and the last to have been composed entirely in Mannheim. It was written during the spring of 1778, a period during which Mozart persistently delayed his departure for Paris, having fallen in love with the young singer Aloysia Weber. These Mannheim sonatas were the first Mozart had composed for keyboard and piano since his childhood. Among the Mannheim sonatas, this one is unusual in beginning with an adagio whose broad melody is given out by the violin before being handed over to the piano for an even more rhapsodic continuation.

Violin Sonata

Leoš Janáček

Born: July 3, 1854, Hukvaldy, Czechia

Died: August 12, 1928, Ostrava, Czechia

Composed: 1914-1915

Duration: 18 minutes

Janáček began writing his only mature violin sonata in 1914. He worked on it during the Great War and gave it the final touches for its premiere only in 1922. It is a short and concentrated work, in the typical late style of the composer, based on short motives, swift changes of tempo, and intense emotional expression. The work has four movements. The first, *Con moto*, is passionate and lyrical. It opens with an intense ascending phrase of the solo violin, followed by a tense lyrical melody accompanied by piano tremolos. The second movement, *Ballade, con moto*, is a warm melody

based on a simple motive of folk flavor, supported by the piano's broken chords. The third movement, *Allegretto*, is a very peculiar two-minute scherzo. The finale, *Adagio*, opens and closes in desolation.

Violin Sonata

Claude Debussy

Born: August 22, 1862, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France

Died: March 25, 1918, Paris, France

Composed: 1918

Duration: 20 minutes

Debussy's Sonata for violin and piano, third in a projected series of six chamber sonatas, was the last work the composer completed before his death in 1918. Progress on the sonata caused Debussy a great deal of frustration; in the end, he felt that it never really came together the way he had originally intended. Nevertheless, the work remains a powerful, forward-looking effort that manages to fuse elements of mainstream concert tradition with a wholehearted affinity for gypsy violin playing. This sonata provides a glimpse of what purely abstract musical wonders the composer might have wrought had he not succumbed to cancer at the age of 55.

Violin Sonata in A Major, K. 526

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Composed: 1787

Duration: 24 minutes

The Violin Sonata in A Major, K. 526 is one of the most dazzling of all Mozart's works of the kind, with outer movements in exceptionally quick tempi, and everywhere a feeling that the composer is reveling in the effortless mastery of his linear counterpoint. The contrapuntal textures throughout may suggest Mozart's study of Bach, but the language remains thoroughly his. The piano and violin are truly equal partners in this sonata, and in light of the brilliance of its piano part, there is reason to suspect that Mozart had himself in mind when writing the work.