



JAMES EHNES

Violin

ORION WEISS

Piano

UMS Digital Presentation
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PROGRAM

Franz Schubert

Sonatina in g minor for Violin and Piano, D. 408

Allegro giusto

Andante

Menuetto

Allegro moderato

Camille Saint-Saëns

Violin Sonata No. 1 in d minor, Op. 75

Allegro agitate — Adagio

Allegretto moderato — Allegro molto

SONATINA IN G MINOR FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO, D. 408 (1816)

Franz Schubert

*Born January 31, 1797 in Himmelpfortgrund, near Vienna (now part of the city)
Died November 19, 1828 in Vienna*

UMS premiere: Willy Burmester and Jeanette Durno; February 1899 in an unidentified hall.

This work and its two companions were first printed about a decade after Schubert's death, under the title "Sonatina" given by the publisher, Tobias Haslinger. Schubert himself, however, had called these works "Sonatas" in his manuscript. It is important to cross out the two extra letters because, while these three beautiful works are relatively modest in scope, they are certainly not pedagogical in intent, as the diminutive form could lead us to believe. The very fact that two of the three sonatas are in four movements instead of the usual three indicates that these are more than mere miniatures.

In April 1816, when this music was written, the 19-year-old Schubert was still living with his family in the suburbs, helping out his father, a schoolteacher, in the classroom. The sonatas were probably written for the frequent chamber music sessions in the Schubert household. (By the summer, the young composer had moved to the city, where he shared an apartment with his friend Franz von Schober.) The works show that Schubert, who already had such masterpieces as *Gretchen at the Spinning-Wheel* and *Erkönig* under his belt, had not only made Mozart's chamber music style vital to his

composition process, but his own, unmistakable

personal voice shines through at many points as well.

The first movement was inspired by some of Mozart's dramatic movements in g minor. In Schubert's hands, these gestures sound determined and resolute but not necessarily tragic. Also, Schubert significantly alters the usual harmonic trajectory, resulting in some surprising key changes along the way. The slow second movement is similarly Mozartean in its overall shape but, once again, there are some rather unorthodox harmonic progressions in the middle section. The minuet is more conventional, but its central portion—the *Trio*—is pure Schubert in the delicate and refined sound it brings to the folk *Ländler*. Finally, at the conclusion of a gentle and unpretentious "Allegro moderato," the sonata that sounded so grandiose at the beginning ends with a hearty smile.

VIOLIN SONATA NO. 1 IN D MINOR, OP. 75 (1885)

Camille Saint-Saëns

Born October 9, 1835 in Paris

Died December 16, 1921 in Algiers, Algeria (then known as French or Colonial Algeria)

UMS premiere: Anne-Sophie Mutter and Lambert Orkis; March 2013 in Hill Auditorium.

Camille Saint-Saëns was an institution in 19th-century France. A virtuoso pianist and organist as well as a composer of exceptional productivity, he dominated virtually every aspect of the country's musical life, and through his many concert tours abroad, he also became a major international celebrity.

He was an avid opera composer, but of his dozen or so stage works, only *Samson and Delilah* has remained in the repertoire. His instrumental works, however, have continued to enchant generation after generation of concertgoers. And during a compositional career spanning more than 60 years, Saint-Saëns had a chance to write chamber music for almost every instrument available. The present work, the first of Saint-Saëns's two sonatas for violin and piano, was written in 1885, the same year as the famous "Organ" Symphony. The structure of the two works is similar: both are divided into two large sections, each of which is subdivided into two halves.

The opening movement is based on two main themes: a stormy first idea and a second melody of innocent simplicity. The latter made literary history as it almost certainly became the model for "the little phrase by

Vinteuil" which plays an important role in Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*. Both themes are extensively developed in the course of the movement, which also includes a short fugal passage. The "Allegro agitato" melts without a break into the lyrical "Adagio," a soulful dialog between the two instruments accompanied by sensuous harmonies.

The second section opens with a bouncy "Allegretto moderato," a scherzo-type movement whose dance-like theme is tossed back and forth between the violin and the piano like a ball. A trio section with a singing violin melody follows, after which the dance returns. The trio melody is then fashioned into a transition section leading into the perpetual motion of the finale. The music gradually becomes more and more impassioned as virtuoso figures and runs multiply in both parts, to breath-taking effect. "Vinteuil's little phrase" reappears at first as a respite from the whirlwind activity, but it is eventually caught up in that whirlwind and contributes more than a little to the sonata's climactic conclusion.

Program notes by Peter Laki.

ARTISTS

James Ehnes has established himself as one of the most sought-after violinists on the international stage. Gifted with a rare combination of stunning virtuosity, serene lyricism, and an unfaltering musicality, Mr. Ehnes is a favorite guest of many of the world's most respected conductors including Vladimir Ashkenazy, Marin Alsop, Andrew Davis, Stéphane Denève, Mark Elder, Iván Fischer, Edward Gardner, Paavo Järvi, Juanjo Mena, Gianandrea Noseda, David Robertson, and Donald Runnicles. The long list of orchestras he has worked with include the Boston, Chicago, London, NHK, and Vienna symphony orchestras, the Los Angeles, New York, Munich, and Czech philharmonic orchestras, and the Cleveland, Philadelphia, Philharmonia, and the DSO Berlin orchestras.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent closure of concert halls, Mr. Ehnes announced the launch of a new online recital series entitled "Recitals from Home" in June 2020. He recorded the six Bach Sonatas and Partitas and six Sonatas of Ysaÿe from his home with state-of-the-art recording equipment and released six episodes over the period of two months. These recordings have been met with critical acclaim by audiences worldwide. Mr. Ehnes was described by *Le Devoir* as being "at the absolute forefront of the streaming evolution."

Recent orchestral highlights include the MET Orchestra at Carnegie Hall with Gianandrea Noseda, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig with Alexander Shelley, San Francisco Symphony with Marek Janowski, Frankfurt Radio Symphony with Andrés Orozco-Estrada, London Symphony with Daniel Harding, and Munich Philharmonic with Jaap van Zweden. In 2017, Mr. Ehnes

premiered the Aaron-Jay Kernis *Violin Concerto* with the Toronto, Seattle, and Dallas symphony orchestras, and gave further performances of the piece with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Throughout the current season, Mr. Ehnes is Artist-in-Residence with the National Arts Centre of Canada.

Alongside his concerto work, Mr. Ehnes maintains a busy recital schedule. He performs regularly at the Wigmore Hall, Carnegie Hall, Symphony Center Chicago, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Ravinia, Montreux, Chaise-Dieu, the White Nights Festival in St Petersburg, Verbier Festival, Festival de Pâques in Aix, and in 2018 he undertook a recital tour to the Far East, including performances in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Singapore, and Kuala Lumpur.

As part of the Beethoven celebrations, Mr. Ehnes was invited to perform the complete cycle of Beethoven Sonatas at the Wigmore Hall in 2019–20 and throughout the current season will perform the Grieg Sonatas on tour with Orion Weiss. In 2016, Mr. Ehnes undertook a cross-Canada recital tour, performing in each of the country's provinces and territories, to celebrate his 40th birthday.

As a chamber musician, he has collaborated with leading artists such as Leif Ove Andsnes, Renaud Capuçon, Louis Lortie, Nikolai Lugansky, Yo-Yo Ma, Antoine Tamestit, Jan Vogler, Inon Barnatan, and Yuja Wang. In 2010, he formally established the Ehnes Quartet, with whom he has performed in Europe at venues including the Wigmore Hall, Auditorium du Louvre in Paris, and Théâtre du Jeu de Paume in Aix. Mr. Ehnes is the artistic director of the Seattle Chamber Music Society.

Mr. Ehnes has an extensive discography

and has won many awards for his recordings, including a Grammy Award (2019) for his live recording of the Aaron Jay Kernis *Violin Concerto* with the Seattle Symphony and Ludovic Morlot, and a Gramophone Award for his live recording of the Elgar Concerto with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Andrew Davis. His recording of the Korngold, Barber, and Walton violin concertos won a Grammy Award for “Best Instrumental Soloist Performance” and a JUNO award for “Best Classical Album of the Year.” Recent releases include sonatas by Beethoven, Debussy, Elgar, and Respighi, and concertos by Walton, Britten, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, and Strauss, as well as the Beethoven Violin Concerto with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Andrew Manze, which was released in October 2017 on Onyx Classics.

Mr. Ehnes began violin studies at the age of five, became a protégé of the noted Canadian violinist Francis Chaplin at age nine, and made his orchestra debut with L’Orchestre symphonique de Montréal at age 13. He continued his studies with Sally Thomas at the Meadowmount School of Music and The Juilliard School, winning the Peter Mennin Prize for Outstanding Achievement and Leadership in Music upon his graduation in 1997. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and in 2010 was appointed a Member of the Order of Canada. He was awarded the 2017 Royal Philharmonic Society Award in the Instrumentalist category.

Mr. Ehnes plays the “Marsick” Stradivarius of 1715.

One of the most sought-after soloists in his generation of young American musicians, the pianist **Orion Weiss** has performed with the major American orchestras, including the Chicago Symphony, Boston Symphony, Los Angeles

Philharmonic, and New York Philharmonic. His deeply felt and exceptionally crafted performances go far beyond his technical mastery and have won him worldwide acclaim.

Named the Classical Recording Foundation’s “Young Artist of the Year” in September 2010, in the summer of 2011 Mr. Weiss made his debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood as a last-minute replacement for Leon Fleisher. In recent seasons, he has also performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, National Arts Centre Orchestra, and Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and in duo summer concerts with the New York Philharmonic at both Lincoln Center and the Bravo! Vail Valley Festival. In 2005, he toured Israel with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Itzhak Perlman.

Also known for his affinity and enthusiasm for chamber music, Mr. Weiss performs regularly with the violinists Augustin Hadelich, William Hagen, Benjamin Beilman, James Ehnes, and Arnaud Sussman; the pianist Shai Wosner; and the cellist Julie Albers; and the Ariel, Parker, and Pacifica Quartets. As a recitalist and chamber musician, he has appeared across the US at venues and festivals including Lincoln Center, the Ravinia Festival, Sheldon Concert Hall, the Seattle Chamber Music Festival, La Jolla Music Society SummerFest, Chamber Music Northwest, the Bard Music Festival, the Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival, the Kennedy Center, and Spivey Hall. He won the 2005 William Petschek Recital Award at Juilliard and made his New York recital debut at Alice Tully Hall that April. Also, in 2005, he made his European debut in a recital at the Musée

du Louvre in Paris. He was a member of the Chamber Music Society Two program of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center from 2002–2004, which included his appearance in the opening concert of the Society's 2002–2003 season at Alice Tully Hall performing Ravel's *La Valse* with Shai Wosner.

Mr. Weiss's impressive list of awards includes the Gilmore Young Artist Award, an Avery Fisher Career Grant, the Gina Bachauer Scholarship at The Juilliard School, and the Mieczyslaw Munz Scholarship. A native of Lyndhurst, OH, Mr. Weiss attended the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he studied with Paul Schenly, Daniel Shapiro, Sergei Babayan, Kathryn Brown, and Edith Reed. In February of 1999, Mr. Weiss made his Cleveland Orchestra debut performing Liszt's *Piano Concerto No. 1*. In March 1999, with less than 24 hours' notice, he stepped in to replace André Watts for a performance of Shostakovich's *Piano Concerto No. 2* with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. He was immediately invited to return to the Orchestra for a performance of the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto in October 1999. In 2004, he graduated from The Juilliard School, where he studied with Emanuel Ax.

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UMS welcomes both James Ehnes and Orion Weiss as they make their UMS debuts on this digital presentation.