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22/23 SEASON

 UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

presents

ITZHAK PERLMAN, violin
ROHAN DE SILVA, piano

SAT, APR 29, 7:30 pm
Hodgson Concert Hall

Supported by
THE KLEINER FOUNDATION

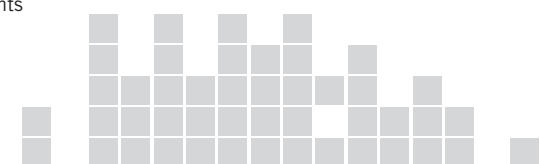
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PROGRAM

Jean-Marie Leclair (1697-1764)

Violin Sonata in D Major, Op. 9 No. 3

- I. Un poco andante
- II. Allegro – Adagio
- III. Sarabande. Largo
- IV. Tambourin. Presto

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 9 in A Major, Op. 47, “Kreutzer”

- I. Adagio sostenuto – Presto
- II. Andante con variazioni
- III. Finale (Presto)

INTERMISSION

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Fantasiestücke, Op. 73

- I. Zart und mit Ausdruck
- II. Lebhaft, leicht
- III. Rasch und mit Feuer

Additional works to be announced from the stage.

Program is subject to change.

PROGRAM NOTES

By Laurie Shulman

Sonata in D major, Opus 9, No. 3

Jean Marie Leclair (1697-1764)

A major figure in the French Baroque violin tradition, Jean-Marie Leclair excelled as a dance master as well as a violinist. The son of a Lyonnais lacemaker who was also an accomplished cellist and dancing master, Leclair studied both violin and dance as a young man. In his mid-twenties, he traveled to Italy to further his career, serving as ballet master and choreographer at the Turin opera from 1722. Within four years, prominent Italian violinist Giovanni Battista Somis convinced Leclair to focus his talent on the violin.

Somis himself had studied with Arcangelo Corelli, and his own music was a key link between the Baroque and Classical styles in Italy. Leclair's study with Somis brought certain Italianisms to his music. He succeeded in merging the melodic lyricism of Italian song with the mannered elegance of the French style.

Leclair made a brilliant recital debut upon returning to France in 1728. He settled in Paris as a performer at the celebrated Concert Spirituel series. In 1734 he was appointed to the Chapel Royal, and later enjoyed patronage in locales as far flung as Amsterdam, London, and Chambéry in southeast France. He was murdered in his home in 1764; the crime was never solved.

More than four dozen of Leclair's sonatas for violin and continuo have survived. The twelve sonatas of Opus 9 were published in Paris in 1743 with

a dedication to Leclair's patron, the Dutch Princess of Orange. An English edition of the first six sonatas appeared in London in 1755, a reflection of how highly they were regarded. These sonatas are also taxing for the violinist, who must execute wide leaps and master left hand tremolo, double trills, passages of double-stopped octaves, and a variety of articulations.

The D major Sonata, Op. 9, No. 3 is the best known of the set. It conforms to the standard four movement *sonata da chiesa* (church sonata) structure of slow-fast-slow-fast, with the opening *Un poco andante* functioning as an introduction to the first allegro. That stated, the third and fourth movements are both dances, which reflects Leclair's extensive background in ballet and connects the sonata to the French dance suite. The closing *Tambourin* is lively and tuneful above a drone bass. Elegant ornamentation in the slow movements, however, makes the greatest impression in Leclair's sonata.

Sonata No. 9 in A for violin & piano, Op. 47 (“Kreutzer”)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Violinists and pianists come to the Beethoven duo sonatas from very different places. To violinists, these ten sonatas are as fundamental to their literature as the Bach unaccompanied sonatas and partitas: essential repertoire of grandeur, technical challenge, and consummate workmanship. Those violinists who play in orchestras as students gain further familiarity with Beethoven's language through performance of his symphonies, overtures, and other orchestral works.

Pianists have another context: Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas, which

are bread and butter to the keyboard literature. The difference is that pianists are very likely to have played a half dozen or more of the Beethoven solo sonatas before collaborating on one of the duo sonatas. That continuum, the perspective of his evolution as a composer for keyboard, informs every pianist's approach to Beethoven's 10 sonatas for violin and piano. They know he was likely writing for himself, and that this is no accompaniment part.

While all ten of the sonatas are important works, the "Kreutzer" Sonata is the *ne plus ultra* of the set, and something of a Mount Everest for violinists and pianists alike. Blazing with drama, it is a virtuoso *tour de force* as well as a splendid example of Beethoven's heroic middle period style. Like several other major works by Beethoven, it takes its nickname from the dedicatee.

The French violinist and composer Rodolphe Kreutzer (1766-1831) was a professor at the Paris Conservatory and concertmaster of the Paris Opéra. He met Beethoven in 1798, while in Vienna as part of the French ambassador's entourage. Beethoven liked Kreutzer's playing, and eventually dedicated this A major violin sonata to him. Ironically, Kreutzer did not perform the premiere of the piece, nor does it appear that he ever played it.

Beethoven began sketching the A major sonata in 1802. He completed it in April 1803, apparently in great haste, for a performance with the celebrated English violinist George Bridgetower (c.1780-1860). An apocryphal story claims that Beethoven quarreled with Bridgetower before the Englishman left Vienna, compelling the composer to

change the dedication. Thus Kreutzer earned a certain measure of immortality—underscored by the eponymous Tolstoy novella, *The Kreutzer Sonata*, inspired by Beethoven's piece—for a work he allegedly found unintelligible.

The original title page described this sonata as being in "a very *concertante* style, almost like a concerto." With the "Kreutzer" sonata, Beethoven took the violin sonata out of the private salon and placed it decisively in the concert hall. The writing is brilliant and exceedingly demanding for both players. Pianist and violinist are equal partners in this sonata.

The violin, unaccompanied, declaims the dramatic slow introduction to the first movement with elaborate double and triple stops. No other slow introduction occurs in the Beethoven violin sonatas. Perhaps none other in the entire repertoire switches so abruptly to minor mode after an introduction in major.

An expansive, elegant set of variations constitutes the slow movement. As in the virtuosic opening, the scale and inspiration of Beethoven's writing are symphonic. The finale is a brilliant tarantella, marked *Presto* like the first movement. Designating both outer movements to be played *presto* is another indication of Beethoven's bold, virtuosic approach in this sonata. Curiously, this finale was originally intended for the Sonata Op. 30, No. 1 (also in A major), but was deemed too brilliant. It is a fitting conclusion to the flashy "Kreutzer" sonata.



Fantasiestücke for Violin and Piano, Op. 73

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

The term *Phantasie* occurs regularly in Schumann's compositions, most famously in the solo piano *Phantasie*, Op. 17. Three additional *Phantasiestücke*, or Fantasy Pieces, enrich Schumann's list of works: a set of solo piano pieces, Op. 12, the three pieces on this evening's program, and four *Phantasiestücke* for piano trio, Op. 88. The concept of a fantasy, with all the freedom of thought, form, and emotion that it implies, would have been very attractive to Schumann. He worked most effectively in miniatures that allowed him maximum flexibility of expression. These three pieces, only the last of which even exceeds four minutes, are fine examples.

The work that opens tonight's second half was originally composed for clarinet and piano. Schumann did, however, specify violin or cello *ad lib.*, meaning that he sanctioned the substitution of either instrument for the clarinet. That directive had a practical justification, allowing for a wider dissemination of his music if it were available to three duo combinations. During the years 1848 and 1849, Schumann was exploring the possibilities of such

limited chamber ensembles. How much sonic variety could he achieve with only two instrumental timbres? The clarinet, with its wide range and sultry tone color, must have appealed to him. Similarly, the string instruments, with their warmth, songful potential and wider range, were a natural vehicle for these pieces. The seductive appeal of these miniatures has prompted additional arrangements for bassoon, oboe, oboe d'amore and even saxophone! We hear them in Schumann's initial alternative suggestion, for violin and piano.

The three *Fantasiestücke* are closely linked in several ways. All are essentially tripartite [ABA] forms. The overall key scheme—A minor, A major, and A major—binds them together, as do the contrasting middle sections that gravitate to the related keys of F major and d minor. Schumann uses triplet figuration in the accompaniment figures in all three movements, then makes the triplets the melody for the B-section in the second piece, *Lebhaft, leicht*. These pieces demonstrate a beautiful integration of the two instruments, and each movement seems to grow logically out of its predecessor. The third piece is the most dramatic, with a recurrent "Mannheim rocket" (a rapidly rising musical gesture) that reminds us that Schumann knew a thing or two about virtuoso writing and creating musical excitement. The finale also alludes subtly to material from both prior movements. Yet, as John Daverio has so eloquently observed, "the various reminiscences do not overtly call attention to themselves; Schumann's technique of attenuated recall rather makes for a delicate tracery of fleeting allusions and half-remembered ideas."

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

ITZHAK PERLMAN

Undeniably the reigning virtuoso of the violin, Itzhak Perlman enjoys superstar status rarely afforded a classical musician. Beloved for his charm and humanity as well as his talent, he is treasured by audiences throughout the world who respond not only to his remarkable artistry, but also to his irrepressible joy for making music.

Having performed with every major orchestra and at concert halls around the globe, Perlman was granted a Presidential Medal of Freedom—the nation’s highest civilian honor—by President Obama in 2015, a Kennedy Center Honor in 2003, a National Medal of Arts by President Clinton in 2000, and a Medal of Liberty by President Reagan in 1986. Mr. Perlman has been honored with 16 Grammy Awards, four Emmy Awards, a Kennedy Center Honor, a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, and a Genesis Prize.

In the 2022/23 season, Perlman conducts the LA Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl and the Houston Symphony in Mozart’s *Requiem*, and is joined by an illustrious group of collaborators—Emanuel Ax, Jean-Yves Thibaudet and the Juilliard String Quartet—in a special *Itzhak Perlman and Friends* program appearing in only three locations: Toronto’s Roy Thomson Hall, UMS Ann Arbor and Carnegie Hall. He continues touring *An Evening with Itzhak Perlman*, which captures highlights of his career through narrative and multimedia elements intertwined with performance, to Boston, Philadelphia, Long Island, Akron, Austin, and Naples (Florida). He plays season-opening concerts for the Colorado Symphony, Vancouver Symphony and Florida Orchestra, and recitals across the United States with longtime collaborator Rohan De Silva.

Perlman currently serves as Artistic Partner of the Houston Symphony in a partnership that commenced in the 2020/21 season and culminates at the end of 2023/24. He performs nine programs across three seasons that feature him in versatile appearances as conductor, soloist, recitalist and presenter.

Perlman has an exclusive series of classes with Masterclass.com, the premier online education company that enables access to the world’s most brilliant minds, including Gordon Ramsay, Wolfgang Puck, Martin Scorsese, Ron Howard, Helen Mirren, Jodie Foster and Serena Williams, as the company’s first classical-music presenter.

Perlman’s recordings can be found on the Deutsche Grammophon, Decca, Warner/EMI Classics, Sony Classical and Telarc labels.

For more information on Itzhak Perlman, visit www.itzhakperlman.com

ROHAN DE SILVA

Rohan De Silva has partnered with violin virtuoso Itzhak Perlman in worldwide recitals, and with every notable violinist on the concert stage today. De Silva has performed at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, Library of Congress, Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Wigmore Hall in London, Suntory Hall in Tokyo, and at the White House at the invitation of President Barack Obama in 2012 for Shimon Peres; and at a State Dinner in 2007 hosted by President George W. Bush for Queen Elizabeth. A native of Sri Lanka, De Silva was invited in 2015 by the Prime Minister of his country to perform for U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry on his historic visit to Sri Lanka.

In the 2022/23 season, De Silva plays recitals with Itzhak Perlman across North America in Davis, San Francisco, Modesto, Palm Desert, Mesa, San Antonio, Houston, Knoxville, through the state of Florida, and in New York. He will also perform with Perlman on a new program entitled “An Evening with Itzhak Perlman,” which captures highlights of Perlman’s career through narrative and multimedia elements, intertwined with performance. The tour includes dates with the Long Center, Florida State University, Artis-Naples, the Celebrity Series in Boston, Tuesday Musical, Philadelphia Orchestra, Tilles Center for the Performing Arts, NJPAC, and Philharmonic Society of Orange County. De Silva teaches at the Juilliard School and at the Heifetz International Music Institute in Staunton, Virginia.

De Silva began his piano studies with his mother, Primrose De Silva, and with Mary Billimoria. He spent six years at the Royal Academy of Music in London, and received many awards including the Grover Bennett Scholarship, the Christian Carpenter Prize, the Martin Music Scholarship, the Harold Craxton Award, and the Chappell Gold Medal for best overall performance. De Silva was the first recipient of a special scholarship in the arts from the President’s Fund of Sri Lanka. This enabled him to enter the Juilliard School, studying with Martin Canin, Felix Galimir, and violin pedagogue Dorothy DeLay. He was awarded Best Accompanist at the Ninth International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, and received the Samuel Sanders Collaborative Artist Award presented to him by Itzhak Perlman at Carnegie Hall.

De Silva has recorded for Deutsche Grammophon, CBS/SONY Classical, Collins Classics in London, RCA Victor and Chandos.

