



22|23 SEASON

 UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

presents

## WEST-EASTERN DIVAN ENSEMBLE

**MICHAEL BARENBOIM**, violin and leader

**MOHAMED HIBER**, violin

**DAVID STRONGIN**, violin

**SAMIR OBAIDO**, violin

**MIRIAM MANASHEROV**, viola

**SINDY MOHAMED**, viola

**ASTRIG SIRANOSSIAN**, violoncello

**ASSIF BINNESS**, violoncello

TUES, FEB 28 , 7:30 pm

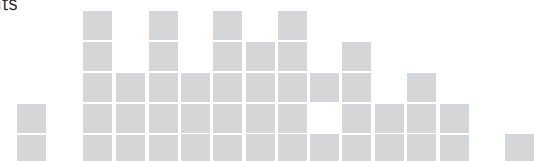
Hodgson Concert Hall

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## PROGRAM

**Maurice Ravel** (1875-1937)

Sonata for Violin and Cello [20:00]

- I. Allegro
- II. Très vif
- III. Lent
- IV. Vif, avec entrain

**Antonín Dvořák** (1841-1904)

Terzetto in C major for two violins and viola, Op. 74 [20:00]

- I. Introduzione. Allegro ma non troppo
- II. Larghetto
- III. *Scherzo*. Vivace — *Trio*. Poco meno mosso
- IV. Tema con variazioni. Poco Adagio — Molto

**Paul Hindemith** (1895-1963)

*Trauermusik* [8:00]

- I. Langsam
- II. Ruhig bewegt
- III. Lebhaft
- IV. Choral “Für deinen Thron tret ich hiermit” — Sehr langsam

## INTERMISSION

**George Enescu** (1881-1955)

Octet in C major for Strings, Op. 7 [35:00]

- I. Très modéré -
- II. Même temps (pause) -
- III. Très fougueux - moins vite - 1er mouvement - moins vite -  
Lentement - Plus animé -
- IV. Mouvement de valse bien rythmée

Program is subject to change.

## PROGRAM NOTES

By Laurie Shulman

### Sonata for Violin and Violoncello Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

In 1928, at the behest of the Aeolian player piano company, Maurice Ravel dictated an autobiographical sketch to his friend and colleague Alexis Lévy Roland-Manuel. The document contains one revealing paragraph about the Duo Sonata.

The Sonata for Violin and Cello dates from 1920, when I settled in Montfort l'Amaury. I believe that this Sonata marks a turning point in the evolution of my career. In it, thinness of texture is pushed to the extreme. Harmonic charm is renounced, coupled with an increasingly conspicuous reaction in favor of melody.

Ravel did indeed begin the piece in 1920, but he labored on it for the better part of two years before it was complete, encountering considerable frustration along the way. The project originated as part of a tribute to Claude Debussy, who had died in March 1918. Ravel was one of a group of prominent composers and musicians approached by the musicologist and critic Henry Prunières, editor of the *Revue musicale*, to contribute a work to a special commemorative issue, *Tombeau de Claude Debussy*. Ravel's contribution, composed in summer 1920, was a single movement Duo for violin and cello. Others involved in the project were a who's who of music at the time, including Béla Bartók, Paul Dukas, Manuel de Falla, Eugene Goossens, Gian Francesco Malipiero, Albert Roussel, Erik Satie, Florent Schmitt and Igor Stravinsky.

Ravel heard his movement performed, along with his contemporaries' new works, in January 1921, at a concert presented by the Société Musicale Indépendante. Impressed with Zoltán Kodály's Duo for Violin and Cello, Op. 7 (1914), Ravel had already determined to expand his own piece to a full-scale, multi-movement sonata. The process caused him considerable difficulty. “This devil of a Duo is giving me agony!” he wrote to Roland-Manuel on 22 September 1921. By February 1922, he had finally completed it; however, still dissatisfied with the Scherzo, he rewrote that movement entirely. The violinist Hélène Jourdan-Morhange, who played the première of this work with cellist Maurice Maréchal on 6 April, 1922, recalled rehearsing the Scherzo:

. . .the rhythms and sonority of the *spiccati* [bouncing the bow lightly and rapidly on the string] must be uniform enough to pass easily from the violin to the cello. The cellist Maréchal and I went over it again and again till we were giddy. Ravel would not allow the tiniest discrepancy between the sounds of the two instruments, dissimilar though they are. So there were arguments. . . .

“It's too complicated,” I said, in order to keep my end up. “The cello has to sound like a flute and the violin like a drum. It must be great fun writing such difficult stuff but no one's going to play it except virtuosos.”

“Good!” he said, with a smile, “then I shan't be assassinated by amateurs!”

Ravel worked closely with Jourdan-Morhange while composing the sonata, consulting her regularly about fingerings



and bowings, even posing queries as to whether a specific passage was playable on the violin. He was keenly interested in string technique, particularly bold new sonorities that were being explored by Bartók in Hungary.

Listeners who associate Ravel primarily with the monumental crescendo of *Boléro* or the liquescent sonorities of *Daphnis et Chloé* may be surprised by the acerbic style of this Sonata. Ravel's limitation of musical forces to two instruments forces an emphasis on individual lines—the horizontal element of music—rather than the vertical [simultaneously sounded chords]. The clarity of his texture makes it somewhat easier to hear the cyclic elements that recur in each movement and the exchange of material as each player asserts his independence. The scherzo is a minefield of technical difficulties, taxing the players with atavistic rhythms and multiple special effects that often verge on the percussive. Its rhythm zigzags between 3/8 and 2/8; its tonal coloring shifts from major to minor triads with an occasional jarring bitonal passage.

A cello solo opens the slow movement, presently ceding its contemplative theme to the violin. An agitated middle section to this ternary movement, placed high in both instruments' registers, provides contrast. Ravel dispels any sense of relaxation he may have established with a vibrant and nervous finale. Echoes of musical material from the first movement combine with new, folk-like themes that strengthen this work's kinship to Kodály's Duo and Bartók's early string quartets. An intensely rhythmic cello figure at its beginning establishes drive and tension that Ravel sustains and

increases throughout the movement. In its experimental techniques, adventuresome approach to melody and harmony, and economy of structure, the Sonata is a remarkable work.

### **Terzetto in C major for two violins and viola, Op. 74**

**Antonín Dvořák** (1841-1904)

John Clapham has written that whenever Dvořák started on a new composition, he invariably did so to fulfill a personal need. The background to the Terzetto supports his statement. Scored for two violins and viola, this work dates from early 1887, but its history is linked to that of the second series of Slavonic Dances, Op. 72. The composer completed the new Slavonic Dances in their original version for one piano, four hands, in July 1886. His publisher Simrock pressed him for the orchestration, rightfully sensing that there would be an immediate market for another set of the popular dances. Dvořák detested orchestrating, and in any case had a strained relationship with Simrock. He procrastinated the task, citing as his excuse a trip to England in October and November, during which he conducted the premiere and several additional performances of his oratorio *St. Ludmila*.

Upon his return to Prague, he tackled the laborious chore of orchestrating the Slavonic Dances. After completion of that task in January 1887, he turned with relief to the Terzetto, composing all four movements in a scant two weeks. A highly personal work, the Terzetto was written for pleasure, intended for performance by Dvořák himself (as violist) and two friends. One of the violinists was to be Josef Kruis, a young chemistry student who resided in the same lodging house as the composer; Kruis's teacher, Jan Pelikán,

a member of the National Theatre orchestra, was the other. Ironically, the Terzetto proved to be too difficult for Kruis, prompting Dvořák to compose some easier Bagatelles for the same instruments. Eventually he rewrote them for violin and piano; they were published by Simrock as the Romantic Pieces, Op. 75. But the Terzetto has carved its own unique niche in the chamber repertoire.

Though the Terzetto has four movements, its first two are played without pause, which contributes to the sense of smaller scale one perceives in this composition. Intimacy and sweetness result from the thinner texture. In the last two movements, the viola reaches frequently into its lowest range, at times valiantly trying to cover for the absent cello part. By and large, however, Dvořák succeeded well in meeting the challenges of balance presented by his unusual ensemble. He was particularly successful in the scherzo (a characteristic Bohemian *furiant*), and the fine set of ten variations with which the work ends.

### ***Trauermusik***

**Paul Hindemith** (1895-1963)

*Trauermusik* means “music of mourning.” Hindemith intended it as funeral music, and for a very specific occasion. He had traveled from Germany to London on 20 January 1936 to introduce English audiences to his new viola concerto, *Der Schwanendreher*, with himself as soloist under the direction of Sir Adrian Boult. One day following his arrival in the British capital, however, King George V died.

A change of programming was essential, but no appropriate piece existed among Hindemith's

compositions. The composer's letter to Willy Strecker of 23 January, 1936 relates the remarkable ensuing story of *Trauermusik*.

There was great despair at the BBC. Boult and Clark wanted me to take part in the concert at all costs—it was held in the studio, not in the Queen's Hall. We debated for hours, but no suitable piece could be found, so we decided that I should write some funeral music myself. ... A studio was cleared for me, copyists were gradually stoked up, and from 11 to 5 I did some fairly hefty mourning. I turned out a nice piece, in the style of *Mathis der Maler* and *Der Schwanendreher* with a Bach chorale at the end (*Für deinen Thron tret'ich hiermit*—very suitable for kings). It is a tune every child in England knows, though I did not find that out until later.

The piece is in four connected movements for solo viola and strings. Hindemith opens and closes with pensive, expressive hymns. Solo viola figures more prominently in the inner two segments, the first of which is noteworthy for the unusual high viola range it explores. Obviously Hindemith wrote easily and well, for *Trauermusik* was an instant success and has remained among his most frequently performed compositions. Despite its German title, *Trauermusik* was composed in England for an English audience, to mourn an English monarch. Hindemith succeeded in capturing both the dignity and the spirit of bereavement surrounding the historic occasion.

## Octet in C major for Strings, Op. 7 George Enescu (1881-1955)

Romanian-born George Enescu is an elusive composer. The two *Romanian Rhapsodies* are his only works that have become staples of the orchestral repertoire and audience favorites. His other music is little known. Enescu is generally regarded as the finest composer and overall musician Romania has produced. His remarkable career embraced success and international acclaim as a teacher, composer, conductor, and violin virtuoso. In private, he also played both cello and piano creditably.

Enescu was a child prodigy who started on violin at age 4 and began composing one year later. He left Romania in 1888, initially for Vienna, where he studied violin, harmony, chamber music, and piano. Upon his graduation from the Konservatorium der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, in 1893, he remained in Vienna for a year to continue composition study with Robert Fuchs. From 1895 on, he was in Paris, studying at the renowned Paris Conservatoire. His teachers there were among the most prominent French composers of the time: Gabriel Fauré, Jules Massenet, Théodore Dubois, André Gédalge, and Ambroise Thomas. His fellow classmates included Maurice Ravel, Florent Schmitt, Alfredo Casella, Alfred Cortot, and Charles Koechlin. To an impressive academic pedigree, Enescu brought a unique musical language and a formidable string technique that informed nearly all his compositions.

He composed his Octet for Strings in 1900. By any measure, it is a remarkable work: large in scale (nearly 40 minutes of music), dense with post-romantic harmony, and brimful of

counterpoint. It is also the work of a 19-year-old. Apart from the splendid Mendelssohn Octet, Opus 20 (written when Felix was only 16), Enescu's Octet is the only work of its kind to have entered the repertoire.

When a new edition of the Octet was published in 1950, Enescu included a Preface in both French and English.

This Octet, *cyclic* in form, presents the following characteristics: it is divided into four distinct movements in the classic manner, each movement linked to the other to form a *single symphonic* movement, where the periods on an enlarged scale, follow one another according to the rules of construction for the first movement of a symphony. Regarding its performance, it is to be noted that too much emphasis should not be given to certain contrapuntal artifices in order to permit the presentation of essential thematic and melodic elemental values.

His rather formal introduction tells us that thematic material we hear at the beginning will recur later in the Octet; that the eight strings comprise a mini-string orchestra and *not* a double quartet; and that extensive use of contrapuntal devices—canon, fugato, and all manner of other imitation—dominate the texture. Enescu dedicated the Octet to André Gédalge, his counterpoint teacher in Paris. His emphasis on contrapuntal technique was a salute to his professor.

The Octet opens with a unison statement of the first theme over a pedal point in one of the celli. Though we are told the piece is in C major, Enescu's expansive theme—the initial statement is a full minute long—is

ambiguous, implying both C major and C minor. Almost immediately the texture shifts to dense counterpoint, with extensive imitation between and among players. A motor rhythm in the cello furnishes a near-constant harmonic anchor. One of the violas declaims the second theme, now in D major, and ending on a B major chord. This fluidity of key centers reflects the late romantic era's expanding view of traditional tonality. Cello maintains the motoric bass.

The second movement, *Très fougueux* [Very fiery, impetuous] is a canonic, aggressive, and angry fugato. It functions as both development section for ideas introduced in the first movement, and as a scherzo in the Octet's larger framework. The third movement, *Lentement* [Slowly] is a quasi-nocturne. Enescu opens with muted, gentle chords and a lyrical melody in one of the violins. Though writing nominally in E major,

Enescu treats the key center modally, with some startling harmonic shifts. A slow, steady pace in triple meter keeps the movement understated. Only gradually do the inner lines become more independent, but the pulse remains constant. Triplets and pizzicato provide textural variety. The dynamic level rarely rises above *mf*, and only at the end to the players remove their mutes, leading to a more dramatic, recitative-like conclusion that moves *attacca* [without pause] to the finale.

Marked *Mouvement de valse bien rythmée* [Waltz tempo, very rhythmic], the finale opens with dramatic syncopations that become muscular and fierce, almost arguing with the waltz theme. Counterpoint is omnipresent, sustaining the complex texture that dominates the Octet. A lengthy pedal point underscores the build to the decisive final measures.

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## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

### MICHAEL BARENBOIM AND WEST-EASTERN DIVAN ENSEMBLE

Michael Barenboim's 2011 performance of Schoenberg's Violin Concerto with Pierre Boulez in the Cologne Philharmonie was the beginning of a remarkable career. Following this celebrated debut, he has since performed the Schoenberg concerto with the Vienna Philharmonic under Daniel Barenboim, the Chicago Symphony under Asher Fisch, the Israel Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta, and the Berlin Philharmonic under Vasily Petrenko. Michael regularly gives solo recitals in the world's most prestigious concert halls, such as Wigmore Hall in London, the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, the Sydney Opera House, and Teatro di San Carlo in Naples. He presented a program with works by Pierre Boulez in Carnegie Hall, the Berlin Philharmonie, the Opéra National de Paris, the Barbican Centre in London, the Dortmund Konzerthaus, and the Salzburg Festival.

Michael has premiered numerous new works by composers such as Jörg Widmann, Kareem Rouston, and many others. He is a professor for violin and chamber music

at the Barenboim-Said Akademie in Berlin, and has since 2020 been the academy's dean. In addition, he has founded the West-Eastern Divan Ensemble, a group derived from the world-renowned orchestra and spreading its message of dialogue and understanding in a more intimate setting. He has taken this ensemble on tours in the United States and Europe since its creation in 2020.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Michael has performed with numerous orchestras. The 2022/2023 season has him touring South Korea with the Württemberg Chamber Orchestra Heilbronn, as well as performances all across Europe. Soloist and chamber music partners include Anne-Sophie Mutter, Pinchas Zukerman and Daniel Hope.

Michael Barenboim's first solo album featured compositions by Bach and Bartók as well as Boulez's *Anthèmes* 1 & 2. In 2018 there followed a CD with works by Tartini, Berio, Paganini, and Sciarrino. For Deutsche Grammophon, Michael has recorded the Mozart piano quartets and trios as well as the complete Beethoven piano trios—together with Kian Soltani and Daniel Barenboim.



# Why I Give...

*Meet Jennifer Holcomb. She and her husband, Gregory, supported the Emerson String Quartet's farewell tour performance in January. Their journey at the Performing Arts Center began when they were invited to a performance. They started buying single tickets, eventually became subscribers, and are now advisory board members.*

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Today's performing arts are at the heart of our culture and civilization. They deepen our life experience and our awareness of the universal human condition by engaging our senses, our intellect, and our humanity.

And, what is probably most important, the performing arts unify us in common experiences of emotion, wonder, and joy.



Photo by Mark Mobley  
Art by Lamar Dodd