



Motti Fang Bentov

23|24 SEASON



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

presents

GENEVA LEWIS, violin
NATHAN LEWIS, piano

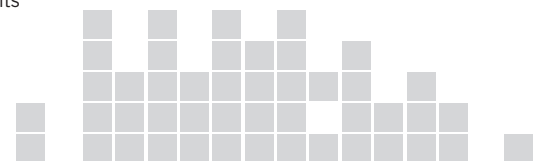
MON, MAR 18, 7:30 pm
Ramsey Concert Hall

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#ugapresents



PROGRAM

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685-1759)

Sonata in A Major, HWV. 361 [7:00]

- I. Andante
- II. Allegro
- III. Adagio
- IV. Allegro

CHERYL FRANCES-HOAD (1980-)

Suite No. 1 for solo violin (2014) [10:00]

- I. Adagietto
- II. Allegro scherzando
- III. Adagio cantabile
- IV. Allegro molto
- V. Allegro grazioso

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 2 in A Major, Op. 100 [18:00]

- I. Allegro amabile
- II. Andante tranquillo
- III. Allegretto grazioso (quasi andante)

INTERMISSION

SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR (1875-1912)

Suite de Pièces, Op. 3 [23:00]

- I. Pastorale: Larghetto
- II. Cavatina: Andante
- III. Barcarolle: Allegretto
- IV. Contemplation: Allegro moderato

EDWARD ELGAR (1857-1934)

Violin Sonata in E Minor, Op. 82 [22:00]

- I. Allegro
- II. Romance: Andante
- III. Allegro non troppo

Program is subject to change.

PROGRAM NOTES

by Laurie Shulman ©2024

Sonata in A Major for violin and continuo, HWV 361

George Frederick Handel (1685-1759)

Solos for a German Flute, a Hoboy or Violin, With a Thorough Bass for the Harpsicord or Bass Violin Compos'd by Mr Handel

Thus read the announcement by the London publisher John Walsh the elder when he issued Handel's sonatas about 1732. Walsh's was not a first edition, even though he had been Handel's foremost publisher in England since 1711. (That honor fell to the Amsterdam publisher Jeanne Roger in about 1722.)

The structure of a Baroque instrumental sonata in the early 18th century was four movements arranged slow-fast-slow-fast. Handel's violin part, as it appears on the printed page, is spare. Although he was himself a secure violinist, in his solo works for the instrument he focused on clarity of line and structure, leaving elaboration and ornamentation to the discretion and taste of the performer. (This approach applies to the harpsichord part as well, which he notated only in figured bass, a kind of musical shorthand for the sonata's harmonic underpinning.) Baroque performers were expected to understand contemporary performance style. Musicians were trained to flesh out the skeleton provided by the composer and embellish melodic lines tastefully. The beauty of the music is that it communicates to us both in its simple, unadorned fashion as well as in a more decorated and mannered style.

The A major Sonata that opens this program begins with a dignified and melodious Larghetto. Its conclusion on an E major chord—the fifth degree of the A major scale—calls for it to move *attacca* [without pause] to the lively Allegro. This second movement is quite brilliant, with concerto-like passage-work for the violin. A brief Adagio in F-sharp minor follows, with written-out ornamentation that intensifies its pathos. It leads directly to a bouncy Allegro in A major that shows Handel in an uncharacteristically lighthearted mood. A full binary structure, it repeats both halves.

Suite No. 1 for solo violin (2014) **Cheryl Frances-Hoad** (1980-)

A native of Essex in southeast England, Cheryl Frances-Hoad studied at the Yehudi Menuhin School in Stoke d'Abernon, Surrey; Gonville & Caius College Cambridge; and King's College London. Though she is only in her mid-forties, Frances-Hoad has already distinguished herself as a star in the UK's music world. Her talent was recognized early: At age 15 she was named the BBC Lloyds Bank Composer of the Year. She has since received three Ivor Novello British Composer Awards, and was BBC Radio 3's Composer of the Week in March 2015.

Her recent works include *Your Servant, Elizabeth*, which was commissioned by the BBC Proms for the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee Prom in July 2022. Last June, Larua van der Heijden premiered Frances-Hoad's Cello Concerto in Glasgow with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. Also in 2023, King's College Cambridge commissioned her to compose a new carol for the 2023 Festival of Nine

Lessons and Carols on Christmas Eve. Frances-Hoad has worked with several opera and dance companies throughout the UK.

The English violinist Fenella Humphreys commissioned Frances-Hoad's Suite No. 1 as part of her Bach2theFuture project. Humphreys used Kickstarter to raise funds for commissioning new works for solo violin. She sought out British composers who were inspired by Bach's sonatas and partitas for solo violin. Frances-Hoad was one of the first three chosen. The composer has written:

"My work is inspired by J.S. Bach's Partita No. 3 in E major BWV 1006, but rather than base my work on any specific motives or harmonies, I simply listened and listened to the Bach, identified what really appealed to me, then tried to forget Bach's music and write a work which had similar feelings, melodic shapes and moods, or that employed a similar striking violin technique (for example). For instance, the first movement is based around the open e string, as it was the joyful 'e-ness' of Bach's first movement which really struck me. In other movements I tried to recreate the energy, phrasing and poise of various parts of the Bach, and one movement features a drone all the way through (whereas in the Bach this only appears briefly)."

In an interview with Humphreys, Frances-Hoad added that, while the project was somewhat intimidating, she felt very much at home with Bach's music. "That balances out the terror of going near Bach!" she says. "I tried to replicate lots of Bachian things, like

the illusion of two lines going on simultaneously. Some other things were intuitive responses [such as] the sound of the open E string." Humphreys adds that Frances-Hoad's Suite catches the joy of Bach's music, and clarifies that E is the brightest string on the violin.

At six minutes, the opening Adagietto is by far the longest of the Suite's movements. Its swirling, soaring gestures recall Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending* and allusions to other composers, in addition to its Bach references. The Allegro scherzando slips by in under a minute, and is far more connected to the world of contemporary music. Frances-Hoad's Adagio cantabile is tentative and exploratory, using double stops to imply various harmonies. It is emotionally intense, a ruminative center to the Suite. The fourth movement Allegro molto uses a drone, employing double and triple stops throughout. The Suite concludes with a lighthearted Allegro giocoso replete with Bachian gestures—but more capricious and Prokofievian in its language.

Fenella Humphreys premiered the Suite at the Peter Pears Recital Room, Snape Maltings, Suffolk in September 2014. She has since recorded Frances-Hoad's Suite on a CD devoted to her Bach2TheFuture project.

Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 2 in A Major, Op. 100

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Brahms's habit was to escape Vienna, his adopted home, during the summers in favor of the beautiful alpine countryside. He was particularly fond of secluded villages tucked into the mountains, and returned for

subsequent holidays to those he found most pleasant. The Swiss town of Thun drew him for three consecutive summers, from 1885 through 1887. During the second, he composed a stream of chamber music in a mere six weeks: his Second Cello Sonata in F major (Op. 99), Third Piano Trio in C minor, Op. 101, and the Second Violin Sonata (Op. 100) we hear.

All three works reflect a preoccupation with sonata form and an increased concern with compressing ideas. But how different they are from one another! The A major violin sonata is the most tender and intimate of the three, calling to mind the lyrical side of Brahms's character so expressively evidenced by the early Serenades and string sextets. It shares the spacious introspection of the middle-period Horn Trio, Op. 40. Brahms scholar Edward T. Canby compares the two works:

They "share between them that heavenly relaxation and good feeling, the rich, prolific melody, the ingenious informal structure, that always marked this aspect of the composer's complex personality. These are the 'unbuttoned' pieces, in contrast to those thought of as his 'great' pieces—according to the ideal of Beethoven, Mozart, and Haydn—because he worked so much harder towards taut concentration and rigorous logic."

Brahms composed the lovely Op. 100 with his old friend Joseph Joachim in mind. Upon Joachim's separation and subsequent divorce from his wife, he and Brahms had experienced a serious rift. This Sonata was something of a peace offering, which may have influenced its overall character. In any case, with it Brahms produced one of

the most flawless scores of his mature years, at once varied in texture and unified in spirit. Although his integration of the two instruments is among the most successful in the entire literature, the piano has a slight edge in terms of the weight of its material in the first movement, while the violin maintains hegemony in the radiant finale. That stated, the slow movement—which is not really slow, and compresses slow movement and scherzo into one with its twice-recurring *Vivace* section—is an astonishing marriage of the two instruments: sublime in its relaxed A-section, dizzying in the fleet quasi-scherzo that interrupts. Despite the overall amiable quality of the entire work, Brahms is expert at achieving a dramatic and convincing close to each of the three movements.

Suite de Pièces, Op. 3 **Samuel Coleridge-Taylor** (1875-1912)

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (not to be confused with the similarly named English Romantic poet) was an Afro-British composer whose popularity in the early 20th century briefly eclipsed Edward Elgar's. Born to a Black father from Sierra Leone and a white English mother, Coleridge-Taylor studied violin as a child, also singing in the church choir of Croydon. He enrolled at London's Royal College of Music at age 15 as a violin student, but soon developed a keen interest in composition. The London firm of Novello published several of his anthems in 1891 and 1892. (He was all of 16.) He was soon accepted as a composition student of Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, who was then at the forefront of English composition, and won a fellowship in composition at the College in 1893.

By the late 1890s, Coleridge-Taylor had taken up conducting, and his compositions were being performed regularly. He enjoyed remarkable success with several cantatas based on Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Hiawatha*. In early 20th-century Britain, the first of them, *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* (1898), rivaled Handel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* in popularity.

Though his father returned to Sierra Leone when Coleridge-Taylor was a child and played little role in the boy's life, Samuel identified strongly with his African heritage, and regarded the dignity of the Black man as part of his artistic mission. Journeys to America in 1904, 1906, and 1910 strengthened this aspect of his music. Many of his later works incorporated Black themes.

Coleridge-Taylor's early works date primarily from his years at the Royal College of Music, before and during his study with Stanford. Like most British composers of his generation, Stanford had gone to Germany for his advanced study, and his music shows the influence of the Brahmsian school. Most of his students followed suit, but Coleridge-Taylor felt a stronger affinity with the music of Antonín Dvořák. He was particularly drawn to the works the Czech master composed during his time in America, which made use of Black spirituals and other American melodies.

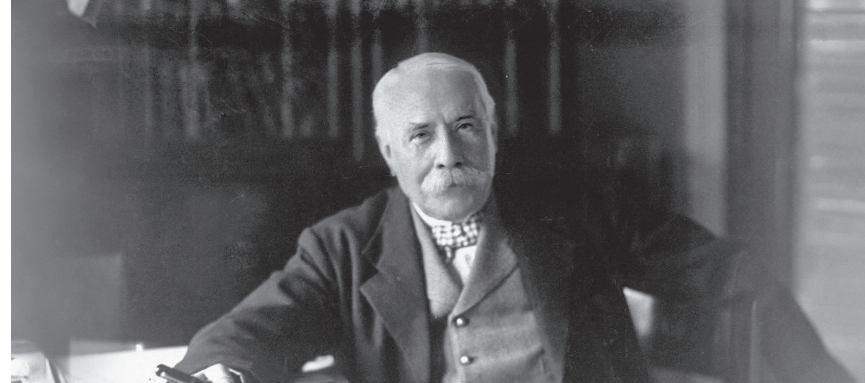
The *Suite de pièces*, Op. 3 dates from 1892, when Coleridge-Taylor was 17; it was published the following year. For a student work, it is remarkably assured. Essentially these are late Romantic salon miniatures; none exceeds three minutes, and none features high drama. The opening *Pastorale*, in lilting 6/8 meter, allots the songful melody to violin, but the piano part is fully

integrated. *Cavatina* takes its title from opera and art song; Coleridge-Taylor focuses on long lines and beauty of sound from the violin. His *Barcarolle* is French in flavor, with some harmonies reminiscent of Gabriel Fauré. *Contemplation* is the only movement in minor mode, and incorporates a bit more drama than the others, but it is all well-mannered and understated. *Contemplation* also features a more participatory role for the keyboard. This is music intended for entertainment rather than depth.

Violin Sonata in E Minor, Op. 82 **Sir Edward Elgar** (1857-1934)

In the waning months of the Great War, as Armistice looked increasingly likely, Edward and Alice Elgar leased a cottage called Brinkwells, situated in Sussex between the tiny villages of Fittleworth and Wisborough Green. The oak-beamed, thatch-roofed cottage was situated on a hill. A studio across the property had a splendid view of wooded countryside, the Arun River, and the South Downs hills toward the coast. On a nearby plateau, a gaggle of gnarled trees was visible. They had been struck by lightning, denuding the branches and, of course, killing the trees. At dusk and after nightfall, their bizarre silhouette against the night sky resembled eerie, deformed figures. Local legend held that, centuries before, an order of Spanish monks had been engaged in "impious rites" — presumably some blasphemy unacceptable to Catholic liturgy — and were struck dead; the trees were said to be their earthly remains.

Enchanted with Brinkwells and its surroundings, Elgar found himself brimful of new musical ideas. During the summer months he embarked on



a series of three works that were to be his most substantial efforts in the realm of chamber music. The first to be completed was the violin sonata that concludes this program. The day he completed the sonata, 15 September 1918, he began composing the Piano Quintet. The String Quartet followed in 1919. The three works were published, respectively, as his Opp. 82, 83, and 84.

The sonata clocks in at nearly half an hour. Its opening movement is constructed around three principal ideas, starting with a dramatic, muscular first theme with wide leaps. The second theme is in complete contrast: wistful and a touch nostalgic. Elgar's third idea is perhaps the most interesting: violin arpeggios over half-note chords in the piano in a striking conversation. Elgar deconstructs these three ideas, putting them through their paces in a manner that is almost Beethovenian, by inverting them, combining them in imitation, and fragmenting them into smaller motives.

The central Andante is a Romance with mystical undertones. The violin punctuates itself with pizzicato chords, also indulging in recitative-like passages. Hesitations and momentary silences ask a lot of questions. The music is unstable harmonically, flirting with several key centers. A middle section switches to B-flat major. Elgar

is said to have written its lovely melody upon learning that his friend Alice Stuart-Wortley had sustained a leg fracture at Tintagel, on Cornwall's Atlantic Coast. (She is one of several women thought to have been Elgar's muse. In correspondence, he referred to her as 'Windflower,' because his wife's name was also Alice.) He wrote to the Windflower that the second movement was "very broad & soothing, like the last movement of the second Symphony." He builds to Brahmsian grandeur at its climax, before a gentle reprise of the opening music.

The E major finale opens tranquilly. Multiple thematic ideas include an allusion to the first movement theme and, later, a recollection of the "Windflower" music. The movement has a reflective quality, and its harmonic language is clearly a throw-back to the post-Romantic vocabulary of the late 19th century. Most interesting are Elgar's textural variety and his close intertwining of the two parts as they exchange material, finishing each other's thoughts. A livelier episode hints at the drama to come, without sacrificing its tenderness. While not precisely gathering momentum, Elgar increases the gravitas by expanding the piano part to quasi-orchestral proportions as the emotional intensity grows. The sonata concludes with decision and grandeur.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

GENEVA LEWIS

New Zealand-born violinist Geneva Lewis has forged a reputation as a musician of consummate artistry whose performances speak from and to the heart and who has been lauded for the “remarkable mastery of her instrument” (Cultural Voice of North Carolina) and hailed as “clearly one to watch” (*Musical America*).

Named a BBC New Generation Artist (2022-24), Geneva is also the recipient of a 2022 Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award and a 2021 Avery Fisher Career Grant. She was grand prize winner of the 2020 Concert Artists Guild Competition, winner of the Kronberg Academy’s Prince of Hesse Prize (2021), Musical America’s New Artist of the Month (June 2021), a Performance Today Young Artist-in-Residence, and a YCAT Concordia Artist.

August 2023 saw Geneva’s BBC Proms debut, with BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Jaime Martin, while the 2023-24 season includes further performances with BBC National Orchestra of Wales and debuts with BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre National de Bordeaux Aquitaine, Kremerata Baltica, where she performs Schnittke’s Concerto Grosso No. 1 alongside Gidon Kremer, as well as the Knoxville Symphony, Santa Rosa Symphony and Orquesta Filarmónica de Jalisco.



Deeply passionate about chamber music, Geneva has had the pleasure of collaborating with prominent musicians such as Jonathan Biss, Glenn Dietrow, Miriam Fried, Kim Kashkashian, Gidon Kremer, Marcy Rosen, Sir András Schiff, and Mitsuko Uchida; she has performed in venues and festivals such as London’s Wigmore Hall, the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Marlboro Music Festival, Kronberg Festival, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Ravinia, and Chamberfest Cleveland.

An advocate of community engagement and music education, Geneva was selected for New England Conservatory’s Community Performances and Partnerships Program’s Ensemble Fellowship, through which her string quartet created interactive educational programs for audiences throughout Boston. The quartet was also chosen for the Virginia Arts Festival residency, during which they performed and presented masterclasses in elementary, middle, and high schools.

Geneva received her Artist Diploma from New England Conservatory as the recipient of the Charlotte F. Rabb Presidential Scholarship, studying with Miriam Fried. Prior to that, she studied with Aimée Kreston at Colburn School of Performing Arts. Past summers have taken her to Marlboro Music Festival, Ravinia Steans Institute, Perlman Music Program’s Chamber Workshop, International Holland Music Sessions, Taos School of Music, and Heifetz International Music Institute. She is currently studying at Kronberg Academy with Professor Mihaela Martin.

Geneva currently performs on a composite violin by Giovanni Battista Guadagnini, c. 1776 generously on loan from a charitable trust.

NATHAN LEWIS

Nathan Lewis was born in Auckland, New Zealand in 1993. Introduced to the violin at the age of 2, his musical aptitude was apparent from an early age. By 7 years old, Nathan had made his American debut, performing Paganini’s 24th Caprice, and had begun to learn the rudiments of piano playing. Pursuing both instruments seriously, his primary formal studies were conducted at the Colburn School of Music and UC Irvine. He excelled at both institutes while exploring new musical fields, exceeding the established music theory curriculum at the Colburn School, and performing as accompanist for numerous recitals at UC Irvine. Utilizing his unique background in musicology, collaboration, and solo performance, Nathan combines a detail-oriented approach with vibrant storytelling in performance.

Teaching from the age of 16, Nathan is passionate about fostering holistic music education in the Orange County community. He currently maintains a private piano studio centered at the Spotlight School of Music, where he also teaches theory, composition, and coaches string and wind players. Additionally, he has worked for the Music Institute of Chicago, Colburn School of Music, Pioneer School of Music, and South Coast Repertory. His students have graduated to study at many elite colleges, including The Juilliard School, Eastman School of Music, and Harvard University.