

Despite Brahms' usual self-deprecation, his **Third Violin Sonata** is brilliant music—not in the sense of being flashy but in the fusion of complex technique and passionate expression that marks his finest music. The violin's soaring, gypsy-like main theme at the opening of the Allegro is so haunting that it is easy to miss the remarkable piano accompaniment: far below, the piano's quiet syncopated octaves move ominously forward, generating much of the music's tension. The piano alone has the second theme, with the violin then picking it up and soaring into its higher register. The development of these two ideas is ingenious. In the piano's lowest register Brahms sets a pedal A and lets it pound a steady quarter-note pulse for nearly 50 unbroken measures—beneath the powerful thematic development, the pedal notes hammer a tonal center (the dominant) insistently into the listener's ear. Its energy finally spent, this movement gradually dissolves on fragments of the violin's opening melody.

The heartfelt Adagio consists of a long-spanned melody (built on short metric units—the marking is 3/8) that develops by repetition; the music rises in intensity until the double-stopped violin soars high above the piano, then falls back to end peacefully. Brahms titled the third movement *Un poco presto e con sentimento*, though the particular sentiment he had in mind remains uncertain. In any case, this shadowy movement is based on echo effects as bits of theme are tossed between the two instruments. The movement comes to a shimmering close: piano arpeggios spill downward, and the music vanishes in two quick strokes. By contrast, the aptly titled *Presto agitato* finale hammers along a pounding 6/8 meter. Brahms marks the violin's thematic entrance *passionato* and that character is amply clear from the music itself. Even the noble second theme, first announced by the piano, does little to dispel the driven quality of this music. The complex development presents the performers with difficulties of ensemble, and the very ending feels cataclysmic. The music slows, then suddenly rips forward to bring this sonata to its powerful close.

Ernestine M. Raclin School of the Arts Indiana University South Bend

Student Recital

Helen Pappas, Violin

Dr. Geoffrey Duce, Piano

8:00 PM Monday, April 28, 2014

Louise E. Addicott and Yatish J. Joshi Performance Hall

Sonata No. 1 in G minor, BWV 1001

**J.S. Bach
(1685-1750)**

- I. Adagio
- II. Fugue: Allegro

Caprice No. 24 in A minor

**Niccolo Paganini
(1782-1840)**

Havanaise, Op. 83

**Camille Saint-Saëns
(1835-1921)**

Intermission

Four Pieces, Op. 7

**Anton Webern
(1883-1945)**

- 1. Sehr langsam
- 2. Rasch
- 3. Sehr langsam
- 4. Bewegt

Violin Sonata No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 108

**Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)**

- I. Allegro
- II. Adagio
- III. Un poco presto e con sentimento
- IV. Presto agitato

*Presented in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree Bachelor of Music,
Violin, Recital Course MUS-I-412*

Program Notes

The **Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin (BWV 1001–1006)** are a set of six works composed by **Johann Sebastian Bach**. The set was completed by 1720. Even after publication, it was largely ignored until the celebrated violinist Joseph Joachim started performing the works. Today, Bach's Sonatas and Partitas are an essential part of the violin repertoire.

Bach began composing these works around 1703, while at Weimar, and the set was completed when he was Kapellmeister in Köthen. While employed as a court musician in Weimar and Köthen, Bach composed predominately secular music. Bach's cello and orchestral suites date from the Köthen period, as well as the famous Brandenburg concertos. It is not known whether the Sonatas and Partitas were performed during his lifetime or, if they were, who the performer was. It is possible that Bach himself gave the first performance.

The sonatas each consist of four movements, in the typical slow-fast-slow-fast pattern of the sonata da chiesa. The first two movements are coupled in a form of prelude and fugue. The first movement, adagio, is a free fantasy with an elaborate treble melody and implied accompaniment in the lower range of the instrument. As a contrast to this homophonic texture, the second movement is a four-voice fugue marked allegro. The fugue subject, only one measure in length, is easy to follow with its initial four repeated eighth notes followed by a pair of sixteenth notes. There are three prominent episodes, with material not related to the subject, consist of sixteenth-note arpeggios in sequences.

The **24 Caprices for Solo Violin, Op. 1**, were composed by **Niccolò Paganini** between 1802 and 1817 and published in 1819. The caprices are in the form of études, with each number studying individual skills, such as double stops, extremely fast switching of positions and strings, etc.. Caprice No. 24 in A minor is the final caprice of the Caprices. The work, in the key of A minor, consists of a theme, 11 variations, and a finale. It is the most well known of the Caprices and requires many different techniques, such as parallel octaves and rapid shifting covering many intervals, extremely fast scales and arpeggios including minor scales in thirds and tenths, left hand pizzicato, high positions, and quick string crossing. It has been transcribed for many different instruments and its theme has served as the basis for compositions by well known composers, such as Brahms, Liszt and Rachmaninoff.

Camille Saint-Saëns composed his beautiful **Havanaise** in 1887 and dedicated it to Spanish violinist Diaz Albertini. This was a time when Latin music of various strains was very much in favor with French composers. It has the lilting, sultry character of the habanera, a tango-like African dance whose popularity spread first to Cuba, then to Spain. The composition consists of a single multi-tempo movement marked: Allegretto lusinghiero-Allegro-Tempo primo-Allegretto-Allegro non troppo-Più Allegro-Allegretto-Lento.

"It is always all over before it starts" was the reaction of **Anton Webern's** father upon hearing the **Four Pieces, Op. 7** for the first time. While brevity has been a hallmark of Webern's style, the Four Pieces are extraordinary in their restraint: The shortest is only nine measures in length, the longest, twenty-four. It is possible even Webern himself felt some uncertainty about the scale of these works. Some early manuscripts bear the designation Op. 7, No. 1, suggesting a possible future expansion of the set. The brevity of the Four Pieces is especially striking in light of the grand proportions that were so much a part of the contemporary musical aesthetic. In 1910, the year in which Webern composed the Four Pieces, Stravinsky completed *The Firebird* and Mahler's *Symphony No. 8* was first performed.

The concentrated aesthetic of the Four Pieces, however, alters the perception of their durations. Dynamics, motivic content, and gestures are all expressed in the most sparse language possible. Musicians who worked with Webern were surprised by the results he was able to achieve by such modest means. The violinist Felix Galimir, who prepared the Four Pieces under Webern's supervision, stated: "I remember at first our shock, a reaction almost prompting us to ridicule the sparsity of notes in each composition. After we worked with him for a little while, though, the proportions were so perfect that all length or shortness vanished. Of course, the minutest details were of greatest importance. How expressive every little miniature phrase became when he sang it."

Johannes Brahms spent the summer of 1886 at Lake Thun in Switzerland. He had just completed his Fourth Symphony, and now—in a house from which he had a view of the lake and a magnificent glacier—he turned to chamber music. That summer he began the *Violin Sonata in D Minor*, but he put the sonata aside while he wrote the *Zigeunerlieder* ("Gypsy Songs") and *Double Concerto for Violin and Cello*, grumbling that writing for stringed instruments should be left to "someone who understands fiddles better than I do." He returned to Lake Thun and completed his final violin sonata in the summer of 1888.