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Zola Berger-Schmitz

April 13, 2019

Program from Senior Honors Viola Recital

by

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2019

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An abstract of  
a thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences  
of Emory University in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements of the degree of  
Bachelor of Arts with Honors

Department of Music

2019

## Abstract

Program from Senior Honors Viola Recital

By Zola Berger-Schmitz

On Saturday April 13<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm, Zola Berger-Schmitz performed an hour of music for her senior honors viola recital. The performance took place in Emerson concert hall at Emory's Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts. The program consisted entirely of viola repertoire from the romantic era, highlighting the evolution of the viola as a virtuoso solo instrument during the nineteenth century in France, Belgium and Germany. The program included the *Capriccio in C Minor* by Henri Vieuxtemps, the Brahms *Sonata for Viola and Piano in Eb Major*, and the *Sonata in A major* by César Franck. Berger-Schmitz played on a viola made by Giovanni Battista Morassi in Cremona, Italy. Her collaborative pianist was Patricia Dinkins-Matthews.

Senior Honors Viola Recital

By

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## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge Mr. Paul Murphy for his exceptional teaching over the past four years and for helping me grow as a violist and a musician. I would also like to thank my pianist Dr. Patricia Dinkins-Matthews for rehearsing with me over the past six months and being such a marvelous chamber music partner. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Paul Bhasin, Dr. Thomas Lancaster, and Dr. Stephen Crist for supporting my musical and academic endeavors over the past several years and providing invaluable guidance throughout the recital preparation process.

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**MUSIC** at

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**ZOLA CARINA BERGER-SCHMITZ, VIOLA**  
SENIOR HONORS RECITAL

**PATRICIA DINKINS-MATTHEWS, PIANO**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2019, 5:30 P.M.**

**EMERSON CONCERT HALL**  
**SCHWARTZ CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS**



## PROGRAM

- Capriccio for Solo Viola in C Minor, op. 55  
"Hommage à Paganini" Henri Vieuxtemps  
(1820–1881)
- Sonata for Viola and Piano No. 2 in E-flat Major, op. 120 Johannes Brahms  
(1833–1897)  
*Allegro amabile*  
*Allegro appassionato*  
*Andante con moto*

### —BRIEF INTERMISSION—

- Sonata for Violin in A Major (played on viola) César Franck  
(1822–1890)  
*Allegro ben moderato*  
*Allegro*  
*Ben moderato: Recitativo-Fantasia*  
*Allegretto poco mosso*

## PROGRAM NOTES

### **Capriccio for Solo Viola in C Minor, op. 55, “Hommage à Paganini”**

Most of the music that Henri Vieuxtemps composed is written for violin and orchestra and his chamber music rarely includes any instruments aside from violin and piano. As one of the most prominent figures in the Franco-Belgian violin school of the 19th century, Vieuxtemps often wrote violin concertos for his students, including prominent pupils like the violinist Eugene Ysäye. Vieuxtemps, a Belgian-born composer and violinist, found success early in his life as a prodigy and a soloist. After spending several years in Russia as a court violinist in St. Petersburg and more than a decade touring Europe as a violin virtuoso, Vieuxtemps settled into a teaching post at the Brussels conservatory in 1871. In addition to being a famed violinist, Vieuxtemps was also a competent violist and often played viola in string quartet performances. In 1873, a stroke left his arm paralyzed and ended his career as a concert violinist. As a result, he found solace in composition. During this period in his career, Vieuxtemps composed three works for viola: *Capriccio for Solo Viola in C Minor*, *Elegy*, and *Viola Sonata in B-flat Major*.

*Capriccio for Solo Viola*, published in 1881, was one of the first pieces that treated the viola as a true virtuoso instrument by including technical demands on par with Paganini's works for violin. As a young man, Vieuxtemps had attended a concert played by the violinist Niccolò Paganini, and he was blown away by his artistry and musical wizardry. Written as an homage to Paganini, the *Capriccio* is reminiscent of the structure of the Paganini caprices, short works that feature demanding technical passagework and challenging bow technique. Similar to the Paganini caprices, the *Capriccio for Solo Viola* features a prominent virtuoso-like cadenza that is interspersed with more lyrical sections. The haunting melody at the beginning of the piece is ornamented by light, arpeggiated figures that grow increasingly complex as the piece progresses. The *Capriccio's* climax comes with the introduction of a rapid double stop progression and a flurry of thirty-second notes that quickly accelerate before resolving with a chromatic descending scale. A few lightly plucked pizzicato chords give the piece a final flourish.

### **Sonata for Viola and Piano No. 2 in E-flat Major, op. 120**

Towards the end of his career, Johannes Brahms diversified his compositional output and began composing chamber music for strings and clarinet. When Brahms was nearing his retirement in the 1890s, he heard the clarinetist Richard Mühfeld perform during a trip to the Meinungen Court Orchestra and fell in love with Mühfeld's sound. A stroke of newfound inspiration hit him shortly thereafter, and Brahms returned from his compositional hiatus to compose several pieces for clarinet including the *Clarinet Trio*, op. 114; the *Clarinet Quintet*, op. 115; and a set of two sonatas for clarinet and piano that he dedicated to Mühfeld. Brahms soon reworked the op. 120 sonatas and simultaneously published transcriptions for viola. Brahms rarely prepared transcriptions for commercial publication, but he felt strongly that the viola's lush tone and musical range would complement the clarinet version. While much of the compositional material is consistent across both versions, Brahms

transposed some sections to lower octaves in the viola version to highlight the viola's deeper registers and also added several double stop passages.

The sonata begins with a movement marked *allegro amabile* that has a warm, expressive color and is punctuated by several *dolce* passages in the viola that have a serene and floating quality. Rather than composing a slow second movement marked *adagio*, Brahms introduces a *passionate scherzo* that is interrupted by octave chord interludes on the piano that echo the principal theme voiced by the viola. The trio section of the *scherzo* is far more tranquil and provides a nice contrast to the intensity of the opening melody. The last movement is a set of six variations that vary both in terms of complexity and rhythm, with strong syncopated motives that weave between the viola and the piano. In the fifth variation, a turbulent modulation to the key of E minor abruptly sets the stage for the final variation, which spins through a series of triplet figures before accelerating to a triumphant conclusion. The sonata reflects a certain sense of musical maturity and simplicity that contrasts with the denser texture of many of Brahms's earlier works. Through this ingenious ability to construct an intricate development section from relatively simple melodic material, Brahms demonstrates his complete mastery of the Romantic sonata genre.

### **Sonata for Violin in A Major (performed on viola)**

Paris in the late 1860s and early 1870s was home to a growing literary and artistic movement that was slowly shedding the confines of Romanticism and embracing a new Impressionist aesthetic. During this period, French composers including Camille Saint-Saëns and Gabriel Fauré began pushing the boundaries of tonality and exploring musical palettes that experimented with imaginative new colors and textures. One of the central musical institutions of the French Impressionist era was the Société Nationale de Musique, an organization founded by Camille Saint-Saëns and Romain Bussine. The Société Nationale de Musique pioneered the works of promising French composers and organized debut recitals for talented French musicians in an effort to cultivate a unified French musical tradition and to eschew the influence of German Romanticism. The first concert featured a trio composed by one of the founding members of the society, César Franck, a respected French organist who also taught at the Paris Conservatoire. While Franck was not nearly as prolific as many of his better-known colleagues in the Société, he redefined the French symphonic tradition, and wrote a violin sonata that has become one of the most widely performed pieces in the violin repertoire.

The Sonata for Violin in A Major, originally written for violin and piano, is so well loved that it has also been transcribed for other instruments including viola and flute. Franck composed the piece in 1886 as a wedding gift for his friend, violinist Eugene Ysäye. Ysäye gave a last-minute performance at his own wedding, but the official debut of the piece took place at the Musée Moderne de Peinture in Brussels. One of Franck's students and devotees, Vincent D'Indy, wrote a gripping account of the performance that suggests much of the premiere took place in the dark due to museum restrictions prohibiting artificial light.

The sonata is characterized by several reoccurring motives that are presented in different tempi and different musical keys. The first movement, *allegretto ben moderato*, is fluid and unstructured with frequent modulations between the keys of A major and F-sharp minor, lending it an ethereal quality. It is not until the stormy second movement that Franck adheres to the constructs of sonata form, with a theme, a development section, and a full-fledged recapitulation. The third movement is composed in an improvisatory style with several unaccompanied solo passages that are free and expressive. Franck concludes the piece with a flowing melody in the fourth movement that returns in a rondo-style form and an exuberant conclusion that catapults the listener to a dramatic ending in the tonic key of A major.

## PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES

**Zola Berger-Schmitz** grew up playing violin at the Colburn School of Performing Arts in Los Angeles under the tutelage of Rumi Shimisaki. In high school, she began studying both violin and viola with Lorenz Gamma and she served as assistant principal of the Colburn Chamber Orchestra. Highlights of her high school career include being featured on KUSC classical music radio station and performing at venues including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's Bing theater and the Musical Instruments Museum in Phoenix, Arizona. She has also won music scholarships from the Los Angeles Philharmonic and attended summer festivals such as the Borromeo Festival in Altdorf, Switzerland, where she studied with professors from the Royal Academy in London and the Cleveland Institute of Music. Her sophomore year, Berger-Schmitz was a winner of the American Fine Arts Festival, which culminated in an invitation to perform at Carnegie Hall.

At Emory, Berger-Schmitz is a music performance and political science double major. She currently studies viola with Paul Murphy of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. In addition to her music activities, she is the president of the Emory Climate Organization and the cofounder of the Universities for a Greener Georgia Conference. She would like to thank her parents for nurturing her musical ambitions, Patricia Dinkins-Matthews for her marvelous piano playing, and her wonderful teacher Paul Murphy for helping her prepare this recital.

**Patricia Dinkins-Matthews** joined Emory in 1998, where she is a lecturer in piano, vocal coaching, piano skills, and collaborative piano. Dinkins-Matthews is an active solo and chamber music recitalist and has performed both in the United States and in Europe, including recitals in England, France, Austria, Belgium, and Germany. Among others, Dinkins-Matthews has been the pianist for the Florida Arts Trio and the American Chamber Winds, and she has appeared as soloist with the Colorado Symphony, the University of Tennessee Orchestra, and the Florida Symphony Orchestra. Dinkins-Matthews is the pianist for the Aevia Trio and is the associate pianist for the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Chorus.



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