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2024
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MUSIC

Chloe Nelson, violin

Senior Honors Recital

Dr. Matthew Brower, piano

From the studio of Jessica Shuang Wu

Saturday, March 29, 2025, 5:00 p.m

Emerson Concert Hall
Schwartz Center for Performing Arts



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FOR PERFORMING ARTS

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Program

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| Violin Sonata No. 8 in G Major, op. 30, No. 3 | Ludwig van Beethoven |
| I. <i>Allegro assai</i> | (1770–1827) |
| II. <i>Tempo di menuetto, ma molto moderato e grazioso</i> | |
| III. <i>Allegro vivace</i> | |
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| Violin Sonata No. 2 in A Minor, BWV 1003 | Johann Sebastian Bach |
| II. <i>Fuga</i> | (1685–1750) |
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| Sonata for Solo Violin in G Major, op. 27, No. 5 | Eugène Ysaÿe |
| I. <i>L'Aurore (Dawn): Lento assai</i> | (1858–1931) |
| II. <i>Danse rustique: Allegro giocoso molto moderato</i> | |
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Intermission

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|---|--------------|
| Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano | César Franck |
| I. <i>Allegretto ben moderato</i> | (1822–1890) |
| II. <i>Allegro</i> | |
| III. <i>Recitativo–Fantasia: Ben moderato</i> | |
| IV. <i>Allegretto poco mosso</i> | |

Program Notes

Notes on the program by Chloe Nelson

Violin Sonata No. 8 in G Major, op. 30, No. 3

Ludwig van Beethoven's Violin Sonata No. 8 in G major, composed in 1802, was dedicated to Tsar Alexander I of Russia, who began his rule in 1801. Beethoven's eighth violin sonata is an example of a typical Classical sonata. Sonatas from the Classical era, spanning from 1750 to 1830, generally have three movements: the first in sonata form, with an exposition, development, and recapitulation; the second as a slow movement; and the third written in rondo form. Today's performance opens with this work to introduce the sonata as it is most often referenced in instrumental music—in terms of form. Beyond demonstrating sonata form, Beethoven's Violin Sonata No. 8 is truly a violin and piano duo, encouraging the instruments to imitate each other: the violin to reproduce the piano's percussive articulation with compact bow strokes, and the piano to emulate the violin's melodic fluidity.

The first movement, *Allegro assai*, opens the sonata in a robust G major. Together, the piano and violin outline a G major triad in a buoyant 6/8 meter. The opening phrase seems to ask a question by concluding with the dominant key of D major. Then, a restatement of the opening answers by landing resolutely in G major. The present interpretation accentuates this dialogue by using a fast bow speed to firmly assert the dominant, then slowing the bow to ease into the tonic. Beethovenian contrast is pervasive in this sonata, dynamic and articulation changes interspersed throughout. Notably, Beethoven's use of *subito piano* ("suddenly soft") is clear in the transitional phrase before a stormy D minor in the exposition. This dynamic contrast is exaggerated by lightening the pressure of the bow to change the character of the melody from hesitant to playful. Following the exposition, the development transforms the opening motivic material. Unlike the opening, the piano and violin are not in unison; rather, they alternate playing the melody, which gives a sense of uncertainty that is mirrored by the harmonic instability of the development. The original theme returns and ends with a deliberate increase in intensity—that is, until the *subito piano* at the final two notes (played at the tip of the bow), which may be Beethoven's way of expressing humor through music.

Tempo di minuetto, ma molto moderato e grazioso strays from G major and its related keys, instead written in a warm E-flat major. Although the

second movement is a dance, today's interpretation does not lay out a strong rhythmic foundation. Rather, it focuses on emphasizing the lyricism of the long, flowing phrases of the first theme by maintaining steady bow speed and pressure. The second theme recalls the buoyancy of the first movement with a waltz-like accompaniment in the piano. This melody is marked *dolce* (sweet), which is demonstrated through fast vibrato and a warm tone while maintaining a playful character. The last pronouncement of the first theme is a quiet conversation between the piano and the violin, lending an introverted quality to close the movement.

Any leftover reserved feelings from the second movement are interrupted by the energetic *Allegro vivace*. Written in rondo form, the final movement returns to G major with a sense of humor that was hinted towards in the first movement. Beethoven marks *leggiermente* (lightly) each time the main theme returns. This theme is played at the lower half of the bow to use the bow's natural bounce, maintaining that lightness throughout. Syncopation is a recurring feature in the movement that contributes to the light feeling by deemphasizing the downbeat.

Violin Sonata No. 2 in A Minor, BWV 1003

Sonatas during Johann Sebastian Bach's time are vastly different from the Classical-era sonata. Bach was born in Eisenach, Germany, in 1685, during the Baroque era. The term "sonata" originates from the Italian sonare ("to play"), referring to solo musical works written for an instrument (in contrast to cantare—"to sing"—referring to vocal works). In the Baroque context, the sonata follows this definition. Bach's sonatas for solo violin are in the form of the sonata da chiesa, or church sonata. His Violin Sonata No. 2 in A minor consists of four movements: *Grave*, *Fuga*, *Andante*, and *Allegro*. Only the second movement, *Fuga*, is performed in today's recital.

Bach begins the *Fuga* with a rhythmic motive that permeates the entire movement: a two sixteenth-note pickup followed by two eighth notes. The *Fuga*'s subject is two measures long, harmonically progressing through the dominant, tonic, dominant seventh, and tonic. By providing a baseline with this simple chord progression, Bach allows for a larger impact when he writes unexpected chords. Towards the end of the first distinct section of the movement, Bach uses a Neapolitan chord (flat II) that changes the stately mood to one that is more bittersweet. This chord offers a fitting transition into a rhythmically novel passage of constant sixteenth notes.

The Baroque fugue places emphasis on the different layers that develop throughout the piece. The present performance expresses these differences by changing the bowing pattern of the motive described above (up-up-down-up vs. up-down-up-up) to clearly communicate different

characters. The *Fuga* also demands intense dynamic contrast, reminiscent of Beethoven's use of *subito piano* earlier, to effectively advance through the piece. Bach layers complex harmonies with difficult passagework, necessitating some freedom of timing to create dynamic contrasts. This performance takes advantage of the *Fuga* as an unaccompanied work to use time to successfully express the desired character. Bach ends the *Fuga* by increasing the density of notes in each beat, a compositional technique that is mirrored in Ysaÿe's fifth sonata to be performed next.

Sonata for Solo Violin in G Major, op. 27, No. 5

Known for his extreme virtuosity, Eugène Ysaÿe was a Belgian violinist born in Liège in 1858. He composed his *Six Sonatas for Violin Solo*, op. 27, after attending a performance of a solo violin sonata by J.S. Bach by Hungarian violinist Joseph Szigeti. Ysaÿe dedicated his first sonata to Szigeti. The dedicatee of his fifth sonata, performed in today's recital, is his student and quartet member Mathieu Crickboom.

This sonata is written in two movements, following neither the structure of a Classical sonata nor a Baroque sonata di chiesa. The first movement is *L'Aurore (Dawn): Lento assai*. After this title, Ysaÿe includes the directive "Mesure très libre," indicating that the movement should be timed freely. As such, today's performance sets the opening tempo with the speed of the bow rather than feeling a deliberate pulse. *L'Aurore* takes advantage of the possible harmonies that use the violin's open strings. The first sound is a fifth: a two-note chord of the open D and open G strings. The use of open strings prevents any expression through the left hand (such as using vibrato), highlighting the importance of the bow in creating the atmosphere of the sonata. The missing third in this chord creates a sense of ambiguity, which gives the harmony the opportunity to progress in different directions. Ysaÿe chooses to introduce the notes E and B and lands decisively on a G major chord. *L'Aurore* uses the Paganinian left-hand pizzicato throughout the movement, which can be interpreted as nature waking as the sun rises. Rhythmically, the lengths of notes shorten to increase the perceived speed as the movement progresses. The ending of the first movement uses the open G string in each arpeggiated chord. The culmination of sound from the open string, growing volume, and increasing speed result in a fully risen sun.

The second movement, *Danse rustique: Allegro giocoso molto moderato*, begins with the same notes—D and G—as *L'Aurore*. In contrast to Ysaÿe's instructions for the first movement, he now requests "Bien rythmé" ("well-paced"). The dance is mostly written in an unconventional 5/4 meter. Today's performance highlights this lopsided feeling by stressing the beats in each measure unevenly (2 + 3 or 3 + 2 beats). The *Danse rustique* is even more virtuosic than the first movement, incorporating the techniques introduced earlier—left-hand pizzicato, fast arpeggios, and

two, three, and four-note chords—without allowing as much freedom with time. Tension builds with the pervasive open G and dense passagework all the way to the final note.

Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano

César Franck is a French composer, but like Ysaÿe, he was born in Liège, Belgium. The composers' connection does not end here; Franck famously composed his Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano in 1886 as a wedding gift for Eugène Ysaÿe. This sonata's lush harmonies and innovative form establish its place in the Romantic era (circa 1820–1900). Franck reworks the Classical-style sonata that was heard earlier in Beethoven's eighth sonata, opening with a movement in sonata form but diverging from the slow and rondo movements that typically follow.

To begin the *Allegretto ben moderato*, the piano plays an ethereal dominant chord with an added ninth that immediately introduces harmonic uncertainty. When the violin enters, the piano provides a solid harmonic foundation but remains rhythmically stagnant. The tonic chord—A major—does not appear until the eighth bar of the piece. In today's performance, the introduction exhibits a pensive mood before relaxing with the establishment of the tonic. Additionally, the first movement is written in an unusual 9/8 time signature. The compound meter with a waltz-like beat seems to evoke an airiness throughout the movement, which is amplified at the recapitulation; the piano accompaniment plays on each beat, departing from the rhythmic simplicity of the exposition. The violin conveys this airiness by adding a slight separation between the notes of the melody.

The second movement, *Allegro*, opens turbulently in the lower register piano. After the initial statement of the main theme, the violin imitates the piano. The use of imitation between voices is prevalent in Franck's Sonata in A Major, laying the groundwork for the structure of the fourth movement. This imitation creates tension by delaying the progression of the melody; the tension is further magnified by Franck's extensive use of chromaticism in this movement, tumbling to an explosive end.

The *Allegro* immediately transitions to the rhapsodic third movement, *Recitativo-Fantasia*. The structural ambiguity of the third movement arguably contributes most significantly to this sonata's departure from a Classical sonata. The title of this movement suggests a very free feeling, emulating the spoken-word recitativo style used for storytelling in many operatic works. This performance embodies this freedom by taking liberties with timing and imbuing a declarative effect. The effect is accomplished in the violin by varying the bow speed of each note individually, intentionally avoiding the creation of a seamless phrase. The piano and violin seem like separate entities until the second half of the movement, when Franck introduces an expressive melody that later becomes a critical component of the finale.

Franck rounds out the sonata with an optimistic canon in the final movement, *Allegretto poco mosso*. Franck masters the cyclical form with this finale by referencing themes from earlier movements throughout. Much of the motivic material from the third movement returns in the fourth movement. This informed the decision to play these themes more resolutely in the finale by firmly grabbing the string with the bow at the beginning of each note. By reiterating earlier material, Franck seems to extinguish any doubt from the instability of the previous movements. The last tempo marking, *poco animato* (a little animated), propels the sonata to an exuberant close.

Chloe Nelson, violin

Chloe Nelson, 22, from Orange County, California, is a senior studying chemistry and music performance at Emory University. She began her studies in music at the age of five, first learning piano before starting violin at age six. She currently studies violin with Jessica Shuang Wu of the Vega Quartet, and her previous teachers include William Fitzpatrick and Adriana Triggs. Throughout her violin studies, Nelson has performed in masterclasses with notable violinists and pedagogues, including the Juilliard Quartet, Soovin Kim, Michael Barenboim, Daniel Hope, Philip Setzer, Ronald Copes, Nicholas Mann, and Cornelia Heard.

Nelson currently holds the Joel M. Felner MD Concertmaster Chair of the Emory University Symphony Orchestra and performs on the Giovanni Grancino violin (Milan, 1687). She has previously served as Principal Violin II, Assistant Concertmaster, and Assistant Principal Violin II. In 2022–2023, Nelson was awarded the William B. Dickinson Scholarship in recognition of her studies in both music and chemistry. Through the Emory Music in Italy program, she performed chamber music at the 2023 Cremona Music Festival. Before attending Emory, she was the Concertmaster of the Orange County Youth Symphony and participated in the MusiShare Young Artist Program, studying quartet and solo violin performance under the direction of William Fitzpatrick. In 2021, she was named a semifinalist for the Orange County Artist of the Year.

In addition to performing, Nelson is dedicated to promoting the accessibility of classical music. She is the President of Emory's Continuo Music, an organization that provides free music lessons to students at elementary schools and organizes community performances around Atlanta. She also manages the Emory Young People's Concerts, presenting educational symphonic concerts for young audiences.

She extends her gratitude to her Honors committee—Dr. Paul Bhasin, Dr. Jose Soria, and Professor Gary Motley—for their guidance. She is deeply grateful to her teacher, Jessica Shuang Wu, who has shown nothing but support through this project and throughout her college violin studies. She thanks her past teachers, William Fitzpatrick and Adriana Triggs, for their unwavering support, and she is especially grateful for her family and friends for their love and encouragement. She is also thankful to the Emory Friends of Music for making this recital possible with their generous support.

Dr. Matthew Brower, piano

Hailed as “superb” by the Philadelphia Inquirer, Dr. Matthew Brower is a pianist, coach, and educator whose expertise spans a variety of genres, from classical piano, chamber music, opera, and art song to musical theatre and jazz. He is an artist affiliate in piano at Emory University and Agnes Scott College and a member of 6-WIRE, a violin-erhu-piano trio that combines classical chamber music with styles from around the world. Brower has appeared in many prestigious venues throughout the United States and China, including Carnegie Hall, the Kimmel Center, and the Shanghai Oriental Art Center, and he has been featured on WRTI, Philadelphia’s classical radio station. As a vocal coach and choral accompanist, he has held positions at Opera Philadelphia, the Mendelssohn Club Chorus, Westminster Choir College, the Curtis Institute Summerfest Young Artist Voice Program, the Centre for Opera Studies in Italy, the Collaborative Piano Institute, Opera in the Ozarks, the University of Pennsylvania, and The College of New Jersey. Prior to his current academic appointments, Brower served as a visiting assistant professor of piano at Washington College and a faculty member of the University of Delaware’s Master Players Festival. He received his doctoral and master’s degrees in Collaborative Piano from the University of Michigan and his bachelor’s degree in Piano Performance from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

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