

UNIVERSITY OF  
CENTRAL MISSOURI.

SCHOOL OF

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

AN ALL-STEINWAY SCHOOL

UCM Music Presents

**Graduate Violin Recital**

Hart Recital Hall

Monday, April 25, 2022

7:00 P.M.

**Steve Wasko, violin**

Angie Roustio, piano

*In consideration of the performers, other audience members, and the live recording of this concert, please silence all devices before the performance. Parents are expected to be responsible for their children's behavior.*

Sarabande, P. 15a

Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)

Sonata in E Minor, K. 304

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

*Allegro*

*Tempo di menuetto*

Baal Shem: Three Pictures of Chassidic Life

Ernest Bloch (1880-1959)

*Intermission*

Praeludium and Allegro, in the Style of Pugnani

Fritz Kriesler (1875-1962)

Bethena, A Concert Waltz

Scott Joplin (c. 1867-1917)  
trans. Itzhak Perlman (b.1945)

*O Magnum Mysterium*

Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943)  
arranged by the composer

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Romanian Folk Dances, BB. 68

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*Jocul cu Bata*  
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*Apres un reve, Op. 7, No. 1*

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*Estrellita (My Little Star), Mexican Serenade*

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**PROGRAM NOTES**  
*excerpted from Mr. Wasko's supporting paper*

**Respighi—Sarabande, P. 15**

Ottorino Respighi (1879 – 1936) was one of the more interesting and least understood musicians of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. He studied at the Liceo Musi-cale in his native Bologna, and also with Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908) in Russia and Max Bruch (1838 – 1920) in Berlin. Respighi taught composition at the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia in Rome from 1913 until the end of his life.

Listeners who only know Respighi and his music through the Roman Trilogy (*Fountains of Rome, Pines of Rome, Feste Romane*), *Ancient Airs and Dances*, and *The Birds* are in for a very different experience with his early violin music. Composed between 1897 and 1905, it is much more intimate than his larger works, both in sound and scale.

A sarabande is a slow dance movement in 3/2 or 6/4 meter, with the rhythm emphasizing the second beat, that originated among the Spanish colonists in Central America. Respighi composed his *Sarabande* in 1897, but it was not published until 2016; the manuscript was found among his papers after his death. In this juvenile work, Respighi repeats the opening melody at the end of the second section to create a rounded binary form.

**Mozart—Sonata in E minor, K. 304**

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 – 1791) was one of history's most celebrated and exploited child prodigies. Deeply conflicted, he both craved his father's acceptance and love, and burned with a desire to make his own path. Mozart's attempts to satisfy both impulses ripped the family apart.

After a childhood marked by extensive travel, adulation from royalty and universal acclaim, the 22-year-old Mozart toured Europe in 1777-78 with his mother. This became one of music history's most famous disasters: Mozart's mother died in Paris, and he was spurned by employers and women alike. At its end, Mozart had little to show for his efforts but a broken spirit, a broken heart, and a pile of debt he accumulated for his father.

Not all was lost, however. Among the music Mozart composed during the tour are his "Paris" Symphony (No. 31 in D, K. 297), Piano Sonata in A, K. 310, and the "Palatine" Sonatas (K. 296, 301-305, and 306), written in Mannheim and Paris in 1777 and 1778.

K. 304 is in two movements—the first is in sonata-allegro form; the second is a minuet and trio. Mozart's only instrumental work in E minor, it involves the violin far more than his earlier sonatas, but still does not have the complicated passage work and upper position work featured prominently in later sonatas.

**Bloch—Nigun from 'Baal Shem' Suite**

Ernest Bloch's (1880 – 1959) internal struggle with his Jewish heritage, and his wish to not be defined by it, characterizes the paradox that marked his career and life. Despite his concerted efforts over many years, neither Bloch nor his music was able to completely forget where they came from; neither completely escaped the association with Judaism.

Bloch was born in Geneva and lived throughout Europe before settling in the United States in his 30s. He began studying violin at age nine and started studying composition soon after. Bloch studied with Émile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865 – 1950), Eugène Ysaÿe (1858 – 1931), Ivan Knorr (1853 – 1916) and Ludwig Thuille (1861 – 1907). After a career composing and teaching throughout Europe and America, he retired to Agate Beach, Oregon.

Bloch composed his *Baal Shem* suite in 1923, while he was director of the Cleveland Institute of Music. Subtitled *Three Pictures of Chassidic Life*, the work is dedicated to the memory of his mother, Sophie (1849 – 1921). It was premièred at Temple B'nai Jeshurun in Cleveland on February 6, 1924; Bloch accompanied violinist André de Ribaupierre (1893 – 1955), another student of Ysaÿe who Bloch recruited to teach at CIM.

The Baal Shem Tov (Israel ben Eliezer, c. 1700 – 1760) was an influential Ukrainian rabbi, considered to be the founder of Hassidic Judaism. He taught that God is everywhere in nature, and that the best way to communicate with Him is through simplicity and joyfulness.

In the Jewish tradition, a nigun is an improvisatory chant normally sung without words. Bloch's *Nigun* is in part a meditation on the heavy theme of the first movement and a bridge to the joyful third movement. Filled with emotion and drama, it allows the violinist full reign of the instrument's expressive qualities.

**Kreisler—Praeludium and Allegro, in the Style of Pugnani**

Fritz Kreisler (1875 – 1962) was perhaps the last in the line of violinist-composers dating back to Arcangelo Corelli (1653 – 1713). Literally and figuratively a child of late 19<sup>th</sup> century Vienna, Kreisler was a true Renaissance Man, an old-school gentleman epitomizing the *gemütlich* lifestyle of ear-lier times.

Starting around 1905 Kreisler began programming works by various 18<sup>th</sup> century composers on his recitals, publishing them under the title *Classical Manuscripts*. He stated that he found a number of old manuscripts in monas-teries and convents throughout Europe and arranged them in his own style for the violin.

In 1935, *New York Times* critic Olin Downes (1886 – 1955) cabled Kreisler while researching for a lecture-recital, having found no source material on Pugnani's *Praeludium and Allegro*, which was to open the program. When pressed, Kreisler admitted that *Praeludium and Allegro*, as well as the other *Classical Manuscripts* were in fact his original compositions.

The admission made front pages around the world. London *Times* critic Ernest Newman (1868 – 1959) took exception to Kreisler's explanation—that as a young man, he needed new material for his recitals, and thought it imprudent to overly use his name on concert programs. The maestro, called out for his deception, simply replied, "the name changes, the value remains."

Kreisler composed *Praeludium and Allegro* around 1905. Musically, it is a simple work, with two distinct short movements. That simplicity, however, is deceptive—within it lie numerous technical and musical challenges.

Kreisler ascribed *Praeludium and Allegro* to Italian violinist and compo-ser Gaetano Pugnani (1731 – 1798), whose teacher, Giovanni Battista Somnis (1686 – 1763), was a student of Corelli. Pugnani's most important student was Giovanni Battista Viotti (1755 – 1824), author of a number of concertos that continue to vex violin students to the present day.

**Joplin, trans. Perlman—Bethena, A Concert Waltz**

Scott Joplin's (1867 – 1917) development of ragtime was essential to the evolution of popular music in America. His struggles to move his art from the saloon to the salon, out of the bordellos of Sedalia, Missouri and into the concert halls of St. Louis and New York led to frustration, bankruptcy and obscurity by the time of his death.

The authenticated facts of Joplin's life are surprisingly scant. Born in Texas, he spent time in Missouri in the 1890s and moved to New York, where he died from the effects of tertiary syphilis. The publication of *Maple Leaf Rag* in 1901 brought Joplin financial security and international fame; World War I and the advent of jazz relegated Joplin and ragtime to history's dustbin.

Historians believe Joplin wrote *Bethena* in 1905 to honor the memory of Freddie Alexander (1884 – 1904), who died only ten weeks after marrying Joplin the year before. It is perhaps the first true waltz written in the ragtime idiom. The ragtime syncopations used in 3/4 time give a fascinating hesitant effect to the music.

Itzhak Perlman's (b. 1945) arrangement of *Bethena* dates from 1975. It was done in collaboration with pianist/composer/conductor André Previn (1929 – 2019). Based on the piano manuscript, it offers room for flexibility and a spirit of improvisation in performance.

### Lauridsen—O Magnum Mysterium

Settings of *O Magnum Mysterium* proclaim the essence of Christmas—the appearance of Christ on earth, sent from God in human form, not among the elite in luxury and splendor but in the humblest of settings: a barnyard feeding trough, surrounded by livestock animals and their shepherds.

*O Magnum Mysterium* is a responsorial chant from the Matins (nighttime worship) of Christmas. The Latin text, around since at least the 10<sup>th</sup> century, expresses mystical awe at the mystery of the incarnation of Christ as well as the human tenderness of the Virgin Mary for her newborn child. It is based on biblical references to the Nativity of Christ:

*O magnum mysterium,  
et admirabile sacramentum,  
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum,  
iacentem in praesepe!  
Beata Virgo, cujus viscera  
meruerunt portare  
Dominum lesum Christum  
Alleluia!*

*O great mystery,  
and wonderful sacrament,  
that animals should see the newborn Lord,  
lying in a manger!  
Blessed is the Virgin whose womb  
was worthy to bear  
the Lord, Jesus Christ.  
Alleluia!*

Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943) composed his *O Magnum Mysterium* in 1994 on a commission by the Los Angeles Master Chorale. A 1633 painting by Spanish artist Francisco de Zurbarán (1598 – 1664), *Still Life With Lemons, Oranges, and a Rose*, and its symbolism of the Holy Trinity, challenged him to musically express Zurbarán's idea and say something new with two lines of very familiar text.

At its première, LAMC music director Paul Salumunovich (1927 – 2014) said, "Vittoria's *O Magnum Mysterium* has been the most beautiful and well recognized setting of this text composed to date. I predict that will change after tonight." Indeed, Lauridsen's *O Magnum Mysterium* became one of the best-known and most performed choral works of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Lauridsen arranged *O Magnum Mysterium* for violin and orchestra, with a reduction for piano, in 2015 at the behest of violinist Anne Akiko Meyers (b. 1970). Meyers premiered this arrangement on April 20, 2017 at the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y's Kaufman Concert Hall in New York.

### Bartók, trans. Székely—Romanian Folk Dances, BB. 68

Béla Bartók's (1881 – 1945) musical legacy is vast, wide-ranging, and not without some controversy. Although he earned his living mainly from teaching and playing the piano and was a relentless collector and analyst of folk music, he is recognized today principally as a composer.

A child prodigy, Bartók was originally destined to become a concert pianist. However, a chance encounter with folk music spurred a different interest—along with his friend and colleague Zoltán Kodály (1882 – 1967), he traveled extensively through the countryside to collect and research Magyar folk songs. Later expeditions collected Romanian, Slovak, Bulgarian, and Turkish folk music. Their work led to the founding of comparative musicology, which became the discipline of ethnomusicology.

Bartók wrote his *Romanian Folk Dances* in 1915 as a six-movement suite for piano, arranging it in 1917 for small ensemble. It is based on seven Romanian folk tunes from Transylvania that were originally played on the fiddle or shepherd's flute.

Zoltán Székely's (1903 – 2001) transcription for violin and piano was published in 1926; his adaptations for violin include transposition of some songs from their original keys, repeating some sections, added measures, and use of violinistic techniques such as artificial harmonics, double stops, and sautillé.

### Fauré—Après un rêve, Op. 7, No. 1

Gabriel Fauré's (1845 – 1924) refined, civilized music embodies the aristocratic qualities of the French tradition. Recognized today as one of France's greatest composers, he was better known as an organist for most of his life.

Born in the south of France, Fauré's teachers included Louis Niedermeyer (1802 – 1861) and Camille Saint-Saëns (1835 – 1921). After many years in various organist posts, he became a professor at the Paris Conservatoire in 1896, and several years later was named its director.

In 1871 Fauré helped found the Société Nationale de Musique. Its purpose was to promote contemporary French music. Many of Fauré's works received their premières at Société-sponsored concerts, including *Après un rêve*, first performed by Henriette Fuchs (1836 – 1927) at a Société Nationale concert in January 1879.

Fauré's 1877 engagement to Marianne Viardot (1854 – 1919) ended pre-maturely, sending him into an emotional tailspin. Historians have tried to link this to the composition of *Après un rêve*; however, the song is dedicated to Marguerite Baugnies (1850 – 1930), who ran one of the salons that Fauré frequented.

*Après un rêve (After a dream)* is one of Fauré's best known songs. Composed in 1877 and published the next year, it is based on a poem by Romain Bussine (1830 – 1899), a voice professor at the Conservatoire. It is a soliloquy about a rapturous dream of a passionate encounter to which the dreamer longs to return, even knowing that the dream is a fabrication.

*Dans un sommeil que charmaient ton image  
Je rêvais le bonheur, ardent mirage,  
Tes yeux étaient plus doux, ta voix pure  
et sonore,  
Tu rayonnais comme un ciel éclairé par  
l'aurore;  
Tu m'appelais et je quittais la terre*

*In a slumber enchanted by your image  
I dreamt of happiness, passionate mirage,  
Your eyes were softer, your voice pure  
and resonant,  
You shone like a sky lit up by the dawn;  
You called me and I left the earth*

*Pour m'enfuir avec toi vers la lumière,  
Les cieux pour nous entr'ouvraient leurs  
nues,  
Splendeurs inconnues, lueurs divines  
entrevues,  
Hélas! Hélas! triste réveil des songes  
Je t'appelle, ô nuit, rends moi tes  
mensonges,  
Reviens, reviens radieuse,  
Reviens ô nuit mystérieuse!*

*To run away with you towards the light,  
The skies opened up their clouds for us,  
Unknown splendours, divine flashes  
glimpsed,  
Alas! Alas! sad awakening from dreams  
I call you, O night, give me back your lies,  
Return, return radiant,  
Return, O mysterious night!*

#### **Provost—Intermezzo (Souvenir de Vienne)**

Music has been part of motion pictures from the beginning, but within the musical fraternity there is a fundamental lack of sympathy for film music. Its origins are quite utilitarian—performed live to accompany silent films, it was more a means of covering the sound of projection equipment and avoiding awkward silences than a tool for advancing the movie's plot.

The litany of famous Hollywood composers is lengthy—Steiner, Rózsa, Morricone, Rota, Williams, to name but a very few. But not all movie music was written by established masters or even by professional composers. The story of Heinz Provost (1891 – 1959) and his lone contribution to film music reads like an “Only in America” story—except that it happened in Sweden.

Provost was born Ferdinand Heinrich Proboscht in Vienna. In 1935, he was performing with his orchestra in Örebro, Sweden when he learned about a film music competition then taking place. Provost quickly composed a piece of music, entered it into the competition and returned to Vienna. His work, “Souvenir de Vienne,” won the first prize of 1,000 Swedish *kronor* (about \$3,650) and was selected as the main theme of the upcoming film *Intermezzo*.

The original 1936 production of *Intermezzo* was made in Sweden. Directed by Gustaf Molander (1888 – 1973), it starred Ingrid Bergman (1915 – 1982) in the role of the young accompanist Anita Hoffman. The film's plot centers around a young pianist and the affair she has with a married concert violinist. It ends hopelessly, with both refusing to allow their happiness to come at the expense of others.

When producer David O. Selznick (1902 – 1965) remade the film in 1939, he brought Bergman to America to make her Hollywood début reprising her 1936 role. The film also starred Leslie Howard (1893 – 1943) as violinist Holger Brandt. Selznick kept Provost's work as the film's main theme. Other music for the 1939 film was scored by Lou Forbes (1902 – 1981), Robert Russell Bennett (1894 – 1981) and Max Steiner (1888 – 1971); the score was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Scoring in 1939.

Sadly, this music has fallen out of the repertoire, though in its day it was very well known, with recorded performances by violinists Toscha Seidel (1899 – 1962, who recorded the film soundtrack) and Jascha Heifetz. Arrangements were recorded by such diverse artists as Liberace (1919 – 1987), Benny Goodman (1919 – 1986), Xavier Cugat (1900 – 1990), Glenn Miller (1904 – 1944) and the Boston Pops under Arthur Fiedler (1894 – 1979).

#### **Ponce, trans. Heifetz—Estrellita (My Little Star)**

Manuel María Ponce Cuéllar (1882 – 1948) is widely acknowledged as the father of musical Nationalism in Mexico. Many of his works reveal folk and popular influences from the music of Cuba, Spain, and Mexico. His first musical studies were with his sister Josefina; he eventually studied at the Conservatorio Nacional de Música in Mexico City.

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Ponce travelled to Europe, studying in Italy and Germany before returning to Mexico to teach at the Conservatorio. His first and most accomplished student was Carlos Chávez (1899 – 1978). In his 40s, Ponce returned to Europe to study with Paul Dukas (1865 – 1935). His classmates included Joaquín Rodrigo (1901 – 1999) and Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887 – 1959).

The Mexican *canción* is a short work with a memorable melody and rom-antic lyrics set in a repetitive binary form. The subject matter varies, but most *canciones* speak of love or include poetic references to Mexican landscapes. *Estrellita* was a newly-composed *canción*, not based on pre-existing melodies like others that Ponce composed. Originally written in 1912 as part of the collection *Canciones Mexicanas*, it is scored for voice and piano, with music and lyrics by Ponce himself:

*Estrellita del lejano cielo,  
que miras mi dolor,  
que sabes mi sufrir.  
Baja y dime  
si me quiere un poco,  
porque yo no puedo sin su amor vivir*

*Little star of the distant sky,  
you see my pain,  
you know my anguish.  
Come down and tell me  
if she loves me a little,  
because I cannot live without her love*

*¡Tu eres estrella mi faro de amor!  
Tu sabes que pronto he de morir.  
Baja y dime  
si me quiere un poco,  
porque yo no puedo sin su amor vivir.*

*You are my star, my beacon of love!  
You know that soon I shall die.  
Come down and tell me  
if she loves me a little,  
because I cannot live without her love.*

In 1927, Ponce's song came to the attention of violinist Jascha Heifetz (1901 – 1987) while the young virtuoso was on tour in Mexico. Realizing that he did not have any music by a Mexican composer on his program, he happened to hear a local musician perform *Estrellita* in a café. Heifetz quickly jotted the tune on his napkin, returned to his hotel, and spent the rest of the night arranging the song for violin and piano. The next morning, he presented the transcription to his accompanist, Isidor Achron (1892 – 1948), announcing that they would perform it on that evening's recital. It was the first of more than 150 transcriptions Heifetz made during his 65-year career.

#### **Gershwin, trans. Heifetz—An American in Paris**

Well before the term was coined, George Gershwin (1898 – 1937) was America's first true crossover artist. More than eighty years after his death, Gershwin's music exposes the gaps between European and American musical sensibilities and the ambivalence in our musical culture.

Gershwin began his career at age 15 as a song plugger in New York's Tin Pan Alley. By the time he was 20 he had established himself as a composer of Broadway shows, and by age 30 he was America's most famous and widely accepted composer of concert music as well as a leading songwriter. Gershwin's groundbreaking *Rhapsody in Blue* was one of the first concert works to incorporate elements of jazz.

Gershwin first conceived of an orchestra piece depicting a lonely American traveler in Europe during an overseas trip in 1925; his 1928 return visit enabled him to complete the tone poem. *An American in Paris* was premièred at Carnegie Hall by the New York Symphony under Walter Damrosch (1862 – 1950) in December 1928. Reviews from critics were mixed, but it was an instant hit with the public.

While showing his increasing mastery of orchestration, Gershwin added his own touches to the score. The themes and moods, infused with the spirit of jazz and the blues, are memorable and evocative of its time. Gershwin wrote a part for taxi horns and purchased actual Parisian horns for use in performance.

Jascha Heifetz is considered by many to have been the greatest violinist of all time. His name has come to represent perfection far beyond the violin. He summed up his life in a 1939 *New York Times* interview: "Born in Russia, first lessons at 3, debut in Russia at 7, debut in America in 1917."

Heifetz and Gershwin were close friends. Heifetz was an invited judge at Paul Whiteman's (1890 – 1967) 1924 *Experiment in Modern Music* concert, where *Rhapsody in Blue* premièred, and was in the audience for the première of *An American in Paris*. Prior to her marriage, Heifetz's sister Pauline (1903 – 1976) briefly dated Gershwin.

Heifetz asked Gershwin to compose a violin concerto for him, but Gershwin died before he was able to fulfill the request. Instead, Heifetz transcribed Gershwin's three preludes for piano and several songs from *Porgy and Bess* in the 1940s. These delightful and technically challenging transcriptions are well established in the repertoire.

The very last project Heifetz worked on, but left unfinished, is a transcription and condensation of Gershwin's *An American in Paris*. He worked on it in 1978, after his retirement. In 1990 his long-time assistant Ayke Agus (b. 1949) completed the work from Heifetz's notes, publishing the reconstructed work ten years later. Heifetz condensed the iconic tone poem to its essence, leaving a compact and exciting work that leaves nothing out.