Verizon Hall
Wednesday, March 4
8 PM

Master Musicians, Recital Series

Hilary Hahn, violin
Valentina Lisita, piano

Ysaÿe
Sonata for solo violin in E Minor, Op. 27, No. 4
Allemanda: Lento maestoso
Sarabande: Quasi lento
Finale: Presto ma non troppo

Ives
Sonata for violin and piano, No. 4, "Children's Day at the Camp Meeting"
Allegro
Largo
Allegro

Brahms (arr. Joseph Joachim)
Hungarian Dances
No. 10 in E major: Presto
No. 11 in D minor: Poco andante
No. 12 in D minor: Presto
No. 19 in A minor: Allegretto
No. 5 in G minor: Allegro
No. 20 in A minor: Poco allegretto
No. 21 in E minor: Vivace

Ives
Sonata for violin and piano, No. 2
Autumn
In the Barn
The Revival

—Intermission—

Ysaÿe
Sonata for solo violin in E Major, Op. 27, No. 6
Allegro giusto non troppo vivo

Ysaÿe
Rêve d'enfant, Op. 14

Ives
Sonata for violin and piano, No. 1
Andante—Allegro
Largo cantabile
Allegro

Bartók (arr. Zoltan Székely)
Romanian Folk Dances, BB 68
Joc cu bâtă: Allegro moderato [Dance with sticks]
Brâul: Allegro [Sash dance]
Pe loc: Andante [In one spot, or stamping dance]
Buciumeana: Moderato [Horn dance]
Poargă românească: Allegro [Romanian polka]
Mărunțel: L'istesso tempo [Quick dance]

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Eugène Ysaÿe
(b. Liège, 1858; d. Brussels, 1931)
Sonatas for Solo Violin
Rève d'enfant, Op. 14

Belgian virtuoso Eugène Ysaÿe is often credited with launching the entire era of modern violin playing. Known for his sweeping, convincing phrasing, elastic rubato, expressive slides, and unusual bow grip, Ysaÿe steadily rose to international prominence. The "younger generation" of violin virtuosos—Kreisler, Elman, Flesch, Thibaud, Enescu, Milstein—all looked up to Ysaÿe, agreeing that he was "the master of us all."

In 1924, after trembling hands had already curtailed his own playing, Ysaÿe heard a performance of one of Bach's solo sonatas played by Joseph Szigeti, which inspired him to compose his own set of six unaccompanied violin sonatas. He dedicated each to a different rising young violin virtuoso: No. 1 to Joseph Szigeti, No. 2 to Jacques Thibaud, No. 3 to George Enescu, No. 4 to Fritz Kreisler, No. 5 to Mathieu Crickboom, and No. 6 to Manuel Quiroga.

Sonata No. 4 in E minor takes the Baroque suite or partita as its point of departure, with an Allemanda and a Sarabande for its first two movements but closing off with a Finale instead of adding more of the typical dance movements. In its suite characteristics and also in the configuration of its implied and real polyphony, this Sonata perhaps comes closest of the six to a Bach sound, though the style proclaims Ysaÿe's more modern language. The Baroque orientation also pays homage to the piece's dedicatee Kreisler, who was known for "resurrecting" Baroque works on his recitals. At the time Ysaÿe wrote his Sonatas, Kreisler had not yet confessed to being the actual author of his "Baroquish" pieces.

The Allemanda begins with an improvisatory-sounding introduction that ushers in the chordal main theme with its stately dotted rhythms. A plaintive section whose polyphony is only implied brings a return to the main theme's regal outlook. Another tranquil section, this time in two-part counterpoint, leads to the final return of the main theme.

The Sarabande also consists of a number of sections, the first in three voices all played pizzicato, followed by a bowed section, again in three voices, in which chromatic lines play an important role. In the concluding section the melody emerges from a texture of fast string crossings.

The energetic Finale begins and ends with whirlwind perpetual motion. The middle section again features majestic material in dotted rhythms. The Sonata concludes with some spectacular acrobatics. No wonder this Sonata became the obligatory piece for the violin competition established in Ysaÿe's honor by Queen Elisabeth of Belgium

Sonata No. 6 in E major unfolds in a single extended movement, full of virtuosic display intended for violinist Manuel Quiroga. Having studied at both the Madrid and Paris conservatories, Quiroga made numerous concert tours throughout Europe, the United States, and South America, during which Ysaÿe presented him on his Brussels concert series. Ysaÿe was one of many composers who dedicated works to Quiroga; though he never performed the Sixth Sonata in public, it remains a testament to his abilities.

The Sonata's acrobatic introduction is full of expectant rising figures. The first and third of the piece's three main sections traverse a number of moods and myriad double and triple stops, bookending a no less dazzling middle section that pays homage to Quiroga's Spanish heritage by suggesting a sultry habanera.

Ysaÿe composed ***Rêve d'enfant*** (Child's dream) in 1894 on the occasion of the birth of the fourth of his five children, Antoine, to whom he dedicated this lovely flowing lullaby. A soothing accompaniment figure underlies a touching violin melody that rises sweetly into the stratosphere before coming back "to earth." Ysaÿe's own interpretation, replete with expressive slides and rubato, can be heard on a recording he made in 1915.

Charles Ives
(b. Danbury, Connecticut, 1874; d. New York, 1954)
Violin Sonatas

In the four Violin Sonatas, as in much of his music, Ives drew on scraps of hymns, popular songs, band tunes, patriotic songs, and ballads of 19th-century America, familiar from growing up in Connecticut. These he combined with his own original blend of traditional and nontraditional harmonies, "wrong-note" dissonances, clusters, and very free counterpoint. The sonatas are groupings of many individual violin and piano movements that Ives worked on from about 1906 to 1919. Definite similarities exist among the Violin Sonatas. All are conceived in a three-movement form and all end with a large-scale coda based on a hymn tune, played by the violin in altered form.

Ives assembled the material of the **Fourth Sonata** between 1911 and 1915, and had it

privately lithographed in its original four-movement form. The work was republished in 1942, revised, and without the fourth movement, which he frugally commandeered for the finale of his Second Sonata. The Fourth Sonata, Ives said, was "an attempt to write a sonata which Moss White, then about 12 years old, could play. The first movement kept to this idea fairly well, but the second got away from it, and the third got in between. Moss White couldn't play the last two and neither could his teacher." The 1942 publication provided Ives's vivid commentary, worth quoting extensively here for the flavor they impart:

> This sonata . . . called "Children's Day at the Camp Meeting" . . . is shorter than the other violin sonatas, and a few of its parts and suggested themes were used in organ and other earlier pieces. The subject matter is a kind of reflection, remembrance, expression, etc., of the children's services at the outdoor summer camp meetings held around Danbury and in many of the farm towns in Connecticut, in the [18]70s, 80s, and 90s. . . .
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> The first movement . . . was suggested by an actual happening at one of these services. The children, especially the boys, liked to get up and join in the marching kind of hymns. And as these meetings were "outdoor," the "march" sometimes became a real one. One day Lowell Mason's "Work for the Night Is Coming" got the boys going and keeping on between services. . . . In this movement . . . the postlude organ practice [Ives was an accomplished organist]. . . and the boys' fast march got to going together, even joining in each others' sounds, and the loudest singers and also those with the best voices, as is often the case, would sing most of the wrongs notes. . . .
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> The second movement is quieter and more serious except when Deacon Stonemason Bell and Farmer John would get up and get the boys excited. But most of the movement moves around a rather quiet but old favorite hymn of the children ["Jesus Loves Me"], while mostly in the accompaniment is heard something trying to reflect the outdoor sounds of nature on those summer days—the west wind in the pines and oaks, the running brook. . . . But as usual even in the quiet services, some of the deacon-enthusiasts would get up and sing, roar, pray, and shout. . . .
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> The third movement is more in the nature of the first. As the boys get marching again some of the old men would join in and march as fast (sometimes) as the boys and sing what they felt, regardless—and—thanks to Robert Lowry—"Gather at the River."

Though Ives left no comments about his **Second Sonata,** he gave descriptive titles to the three movements: Autumn, In the Barn, and The Revival. He composed the first movement c. 1908–13 as the finale for what is commonly called the "Pre-First" Violin Sonata. Based on the tune "Autumn," which appears in the violin in the final section, the movement was revised and made part of the Second Sonata around 1914, and revised again when he overhauled the whole piece c. 1920–21. The Adagio maestoso introduces motives that Ives elaborates and combines until he presents the final accumulated setting of the hymn toward the conclusion. Ives frequently employed such "cumulative" forms, an apt term coined by Ives scholar Peter Burkholder. Though Ives interpolates faster paced sections, the main character of the movement is stately and slow.

Ives's "Pre-First" Sonata also provided material—a deleted scherzo (c. 1908)—for the second movement, In the Barn. He had composed his own fiddle tune, throwing in bits of the dance tunes "Sailor's Hornpipe," "Money Musk," and "The White Cockade." When he later reworked this material he added passages from his *Ragtime Dances* and bits of the "Pre-First" Sonata's first movement. After a few introductory bars, Ives's own fiddle tune enters in the violin "in a fast and rather even quadrille time." A marked contrast arrives when the violin shifts from rapid motion to long notes and octave double stops in a passage based on "The Battle Cry of Freedom." Taken together, this brilliant collage gives a wonderful impression of a boisterous barn dance.

The weight of the Sonata lies in the last movement, The Revival, which begins soulfully with the muted violin in low register. The structure might be described as a complex variation form in which Ives varies the hymn tune "Nettleton" in small segments with a variety of violin and piano textures. Assembled c.1915–17 from material rejected from the Fourth Sonata, The Revival, in contrast with Ives's other cumulative settings, does not use a basic countermelody, concentrating instead on the elements of the theme itself.

The **First Sonata,** which Ives assembled around 1914 or 1917 using some materials from as early as 1906, shows an intriguing unification by key scheme and motives. Ives previews the key of the next movement's opening motive in both the first and second movements, and he emphasizes two main keys across movements. Further, he brings back the first movement's opening at the end of the third movement, and he plays on the melodic similarities between some of his borrowed tunes, such as "Shining Shore" in the first movement and "Watchman" in the third.

Other remarkable features of the First Sonata are its types of cumulative settings—unusual even for Ives—in both first and third movements. The composer bases his first movement primarily on the hymn "Shining Shore," which has a contrasting middle section. He not only lets its main theme accumulate through the movement, but similarly treats a countermelody made from the hymn's contrasting second part. Further, he begins with an introduction that returns at the end, encapsulating the cumulative setting. The third movement is even more ingenious by starting to treat fragments from the tune "Work Song," interrupting this "development" by beginning a different cumulative setting as a middle section (on the tune "Watchman"), and then resuming the initial setting and taking it to its full-blown conclusion—thus creating a unique three-part form.

The intervening slow movement, again indebted to the "Pre-First" Sonata, freely varies "The Old Oaken Bucket" in its outer sections and bits of the Civil War tune "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp" in its livelier middle section. The loud violin passage at the end previews the main theme of the third movement.

Ives jotted down the following colorful description of the First Sonata on his score:

> This sonata is in part a general impression, a kind of reflection and remembrance of the peoples' outdoor gatherings in which men got up and said what they thought, regardless of the consequences—of holiday celebrations and camp meetings in the [18]80s and 90s—suggesting some of the songs, tunes, and hymns, together with some of the sounds of nature joining in from the mountains in some of the old Connecticut farm towns.
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> The first movement may, in a way, suggest something that nature and human nature would sing out to each other—sometimes. The second movement, a mood when "The Old Oaken Bucket" and "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, the Boys are Marching" would come over the hills, trying to relive the sadness of the old Civil War Days. And the third movement, the hymns and the actions at the farmers' camp meeting inciting them to "work for the night is coming."

In 1914 Ives invited accomplished German violinist Franz Milke to try out his First and Second Violin Sonatas, and, as the composer reported, "He didn't even get through the first page. He was all bothered with the rhythms and the notes, and got mad. He said 'This cannot be played.' . . . He couldn't get it even after I'd played it over for him several times." This, after Ives had experienced a number of similar reactions to his music, prompted him to wonder, "Are my ears on wrong?" Though the Violin Sonatas still contain challenges, they have long been recognized by performers and listeners alike as among the most original and important pieces of violin music by an American composer.

Johannes Brahms

(b. Hamburg, 1833; d. Vienna, 1897)
Hungarian Dances
arr. Joseph Joachim

Brahms's love of Hungarian/Gypsy folk music stems from 1849, when as a 16-year-old he met the fiery 20-year-old Hungarian violinist Eduard Reményi. The two played together frequently and in 1853 made a tour of North German towns, always playing the same concert, which closed with a group of dazzling Gypsy pieces. They soon parted company, but Reményi had left Brahms with two lasting contributions: exposure to a wealth of Hungarian music and an introduction to Reményi's fellow Hungarian, violinist Joseph Joachim, who became Brahms's lifelong friend and advisor on violin matters. Though Reményi and Brahms never met again, their spheres collided some 15 years later when Reményi accused him of plagiarism in connection with the Hungarian Dances.

Brahms seems to have written Hungarian Dances on and off from the 1850s on. His interest in Hungarian music was further deepened by his concert tours in Hungary, dating from 1867. That year he offered six Hungarian Dances to a Budapest publisher, who lost out on a fortune by turning them down. Then in 1869 Brahms's first set of ten as piano duets was published by Simrock, whereupon a storm of international proportions broke over who had really composed these tunes. Brahms had explicitly stated to Simrock that these were arrangements, refusing to allow an opus number for this reason. "I offer them as genuine Gypsy children which I did not beget, but merely brought up with bread and milk."

In 1880, at Simrock's urging, Brahms composed another 11 Hungarian Dances, again piano duets. In subsequent years arrangements appeared for almost every conceivable instrumental combination. There is a bit of irony in the fact that Joachim, not Reményi, came out with violin and piano arrangements of the 21 Hungarian Dances.

Brahms claimed authorship of three, nos. 11, 14, and 16; all the others in both sets were derived from popular Gypsy melodies, which Brahms took down by ear. A study 100 years after his birth showed that Brahms, unaware, had actually been inspired in most cases by music of popular Hungarian composers from the 1840s and 1860s. Sources aside, the Hungarian Dances all bear Brahms's stamp and are responsible for making his name a household word. They also made him possibly the first composer to make a fortune from published music; Simrock also made a fortune out of the Hungarian Dances in various guises.

The rollicking Hungarian Dance No. 10 takes off at a breakneck speed, punctuated occasionally by an octave leap that only spurs more action. Contrasting episodes provide brief characteristic mood changes. No. 11 consists of a measured dance that slips easily between minor and major. In its center section we get a taste of the exotic mournful kind of melody for which the Gypsies were famous. No. 12 races by almost furtively at first, soon erupting in passionate outbursts. Tender strains sing sweetly in the middle section, interrupted by their own little tempest before the scampering opening music returns. A kind of graceful strut characterizes No. 19's outer sections, which surround a delightful "music-box" central portion.

No. 5, possibly the most popular in the set, enchants with its impassioned minore main theme that changes into a capricious mood, then slows seductively before speeding up once again. The middle section also contains its share of sudden tempo changes, leading back to a spirited reprise of the famous opening section. The deliciously woeful melody of No. 20 sets up a spirited romp before making its soulful return. Brahms fittingly closed his entire output of Hungarian Dances with the brilliant No. 21, whose varied dance strains scintillate whether loud or soft, light or forceful.

Béla Bartók

(b. Nagyszentmiklós, Hungary (now Sînnicolau Mare, Romania), 1881; d. New York, 1945)
Romanian Folk Dances, BB 68
arr. Zoltán Székeley

Bartók spent what he considered the happiest years of his life in the field collecting folk music from all over Hungary and neighboring countries. He discussed three ways in which folk music could be used in art music: 1) transcribing authentic folk melodies, with little change other than providing accompaniment or introductory or closing phrases, 2) inventing material that imitates folk song, and 3) absorbing the essence of folk melodies in such a way that the folk idiom becomes an integral part of the composer's style. Though Bartók worked in all three methods, the Romanian Folk Dances fall into his first category—he used Romanian fiddle tunes from the Transylvanian districts, adding only accompaniment, in which he occasionally allowed himself greater harmonic freedom than in his earlier folk-song settings. He composed these pieces in 1915 for piano, transcribing them for small orchestra in 1917.

Of his various pieces based on Romanian folk song, the Romanian Folk Dances have been performed most frequently, not only in Bartók's versions but in many other transcriptions, among them Zoltán Székely's very popular version for violin and piano. Székely's arrangement contains six pieces like the piano original; for the small orchestra version Bartók split the final Mărunțel into two dances.

The following descriptions preface the score:

1. Joc cu bâtă—Dance with Sticks—or a game played with a stick. From Mezoszabad, district of Maros-Torda, in Transylvania. Merry and energetic with a gaily syncopated melody.

2. Brâul—Waistband Dance. The word actually means: a cloth belt worn by men or women. From Egres, district of Torontal, now a part of Yugoslavia. Gay and quick in duple measure.

3. Pe loc—Stamping Dance. Translation is: "on the spot." Undoubtedly a dance in which participants do not move from a certain location. From Egres. Rather slow with a steady step and a melody notable for small intervals. Like bagpipe music.

4. Buciumeana—Hornpipe Dance—Dance from Butschum, the district of Torda-Aranyos in Transylvania. Graceful, in three-quarter measure with a haunting melody.

5. Poargă românească—Romanian Polka—Romanian Children's Dance. Poargă is a game played by the country children. From Belenyes district of Bihar on the border between Hungary and Transylvania. Quick and lively with a broken-chord melody marked into groups of three beats, three beats, two beats.

6. Mărunțel—Quick Dance. A fast dance using very small steps and movements. From Belenyes.

—Jane Vial Jaffe