

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA PERFORMING ARTS

*Presents*

JOSHUA BELL, VIOLIN  
SAM HAYWOOD, PIANO

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2012, 7:30 P.M.

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JOSHUA BELL, VIOLIN  
SAM HAYWOOD, PIANO

PROGRAM

VIOLIN SONATA IN F MAJOR (1838)

FELIX MENDELSSOHN

*Allegro vivace*

*Adagio*

*Assai vivace*

VIOLIN SONATA NO.3 IN D MINOR, OP. 10

JOHANNES BRAHMS

*Allegro*

*Adagio*

*Un poco presto e con sentimento*

*Presto agitato*

INTERMISSION

SONATA FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO IN G MAJOR

MAURICE RAVEL

*Allegretto*

*Perpetuum mobile: Allegro*

VIOLIN SONATA IN D MINOR, OP. 27, No. 3, "BALLADE"

EUGÈNE YSAÏE

THREE PRELUDES

GEORGE GERSHWIN

*I. Allegro Ben Ritmato E deciso*

*II. Andante Con Moto E Poco Rubato*

*III. Allegro Ben Ritmato E Deciso*

ADDITIONAL WORKS TO BE ANNOUNCED FROM THE STAGE

\*PROGRAM IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE\*

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Mr. Bell will personally autograph programs and recordings in the lobby  
following the performance.

# PROGRAM NOTES

## VIOLIN SONATA IN F MAJOR (1838)

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847)

Today we know him mainly as a composer, but according to musicologist Karl-Heinz Köhler, German-born Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy was one of the most gifted individuals of the 19th century. He was a virtuoso pianist, a violinist, a conductor, a landscape artist and a poet, not to mention one of the most precocious musicians in history. By age 12, he was writing substantive works, including two piano concertos, a violin concerto, sacred works and *singspiele*, a distant German cousin of the Italian opera. Originally of Jewish descent, born Mendelssohn, his family converted to Christianity and added the decidedly un-Jewish “Bartholdy” to their name, surely with an eye towards full acceptance in European society. (Much to her father’s chagrin, the young Felix never dropped the original name.)

In spite of growing up with financial advantages, and trying hard to fit in socially, Mendelssohn still needed a day gig. He was a fine conductor and took the helm of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, which he turned into one of the finest in Europe.

It was during his tenure there that he composed his Violin Sonata in F major, one of three works he wrote with the same title. The first he wrote at age 11. The second, his Op. 4, was written when he was 16 and is still performed regularly. The work on this program was written 13 years later in 1838 and never published in his lifetime. Surprisingly, Mendelssohn didn’t think it was worthy and the Sonata didn’t make into circulation until more than 100 years later when it was rediscovered and championed by violinist Yehudi Menuhin.

The opening of the first movement, marked *Allegro vivace*, is bold yet dignified. Listen to the long-long-short-long rhythm that will be deftly developed and bandied about throughout this movement. The second theme, by contrast, is wistful, even melancholy. Also note the lack of a solo violin cadenza in the first movement. The *Adagio* is as memorable as any movement in the violin repertory. Mendelssohn, a violinist himself, shows his skill writing soaring melodies for the instrument. The Final (*Assai vivace*) is an impressive showpiece for both the violinist and pianist.

## VIOLIN SONATA NO.3 IN D MINOR, OP. 108

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

German composer Johannes Brahms was not exactly a child prodigy, but he did exhibit musical talent at an early age. He is known to have played piano in chamber recitals as young as age 10, gave his first solo piano recital at age 15 and received favorable notices in the press for a recital the very next year. As a teen, he was already contributing to his family’s income by teaching music, working as an accompanist in the local Hamburg theaters and even playing gigs in neighborhood *Schänken* — a type of small, family-owned restaurant/pub that was common in Hamburg.

Brahms began composing in his mid-teens and displayed great promise. At age 20, he showed several of his works to Robert and Clara Schumann at their home in Düsseldorf, a meeting that was a turning point in his career. The Schumanns were impressed. Robert Schumann was already a well-established composer and music critic writing for the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*; he wrote of the young Brahms: “A man of young blood has arrived who as a child was watched over by the graces and the heroes. His name is Johannes Brahms ... he has all the external signs which declare: here is one of the chosen!”

Though this introduction to the music world put Brahms’ career on the fast track, it also may have hindered him in some regards. A few scholars suggest, in fact, that he struggled to live up to Schumann’s abundant praise. Brahms certainly wasn’t without his insecurities: he struggled for more than 20 years to complete his first symphony at age 43 (he eventually finished four), and

he had a penchant for destroying works he considered undeserving. After a lengthy dry spell in which he was unable to compose anything he liked, Brahms wrote to Clara Schumann that he had forgotten “at all how one composes, how one creates.” In spite of that hiccup, he still went on to become one of the most celebrated composers of the late 19th century.

Brahms’ Violin Sonata No.3 in D minor, Op. 108, is a dramatic work; its demeanor is at times audacious and spectacular, and at other times somber and heart-wrenching. The violin bursts in at the top of the first movement *Allegro*, almost as if we are joining a work already in progress. What we hear in the opening is the stuff out of which the entire movement is meticulously crafted. The *Adagio* that follows is testament to the violin’s music-making abilities and its almost human ability to sing. The curious third movement (*Un poco presto e con sentimento*, meaning “Upbeat, and with feeling”) is mercurial; Brahms’ good friend Clara Schumann said this movement was “like a beautiful girl toying with her lover.” The last movement begins with the violinist boldly playing double stops (two notes at once), followed by a sweeter second theme. The music that follows is best summed up by Walter Frisch, who wrote in the *Complete Brahms* that “the pent up energies of the preceding movements seem to be fully unleashed.” Indeed.

## SONATA FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO IN G MAJOR

MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)

Composer Maurice Ravel steeped himself in the musical brew of his French homeland: the music of Claude Debussy, Erik Satie, Gabriel Fauré and Hector Berlioz, to name a few. There was common ground: a playfulness, an aversion to rigid formal procedures and a hankering for a richer harmonic and melodic palette than the tonal system that ruled the 19th century.

Debussy and Satie, both contemporaries of Ravel though of the previous generation, were influenced by non-Western music, especially music of Asia. One might say that instead of always moving with a destination in mind (in tonality, that destination is the dominant-tonic cadence), Asia music lingers more on the moment, on various musical colors and sonorities. Satie, Debussy, and Ravel were also taken with popular music of the day, such as American jazz and blues.

Ravel’s childhood made an ineradicable imprint on his musical world, too: he was born in the Basque town of Ciboure, on the border with Spain. His mother, in fact, was Basque. Her musical influence cannot be underestimated, and Ravel has said as much in his writings.

The Sonata — a work that represents all of these musical influences — had its first performance in Paris, May of 1927, with Ravel at the piano and Georges Enescu on violin. It begins with a simple solo piano line, followed by an equally uncomplicated violin response. Note the colorful harmony, complex yet imperturbable and unhurried. The whole movement has the quality of a walk through a Japanese garden. The violin and piano linger at times, seemingly breathing it all in. At one point the violinist plays a long passage using fast, short bow strokes (tremolo), sounding almost like a buzzing bee; we hear various chirpings in both instruments, echoed and banded about; the quiet ending of the movement recalls the opening.

There’s no doubt about the influence of American blues in the second movement, though it is definitely the “blues” as experienced through the eyes and ears of the European sophisticate. We hear the smeary violin notes, the unfussy melodies, a driving rhythm underlying it all, though it is not something we would ever hear in a Mississippi delta roadhouse. The intricate, bitonal harmonies move beyond the palette of the typical blues musician of the day.

The finale is marked *Perpetuum Mobile*, or perpetual motion. This movement starts up like an old car on a cold morning, but is soon moving along at breakneck pace. The violinist plays furiously throughout with the pianist in lockstep, and, just when you thought it couldn’t get more frantic, it does. It is a spirited closing to one of the unique sonatas in the repertoire.

## VIOLIN SONATA IN D MINOR, OP. 27, NO. 3, “BALLADE”

EUGÈNE YSAÏE (1858-1931)

Eugène Ysaÿe was among the most talented and heralded violinists of the last two centuries. His renowned was widespread: from his native Belgium to the music capitols of Europe and the Americas, he became a favorite to audiences and performers alike. He was a violinist's violinist, attracting the interest of violin virtuosos of the day and also inspiring a number of composers – Claude Debussy, Camille Saint-Saëns and César Frank, to mention a few – to write memorable works for him.

Ysaÿe's career was multifaceted. He spent part of his career as professor, later director at the Brussels Conservatory, inspiring a generation of violinists who would go on to greatness. Later in life he became a successful conductor, and though he turned down a gig as music director of the New York Philharmonic in 1898, he accepted a similar post in Cincinnati where he remained until 1922.

Of course, Ysaÿe was also a composer and wrote a number of important works, including his set of six Sonatas for Solo Violin, Op. 27, published in 1924. Ysaÿe was supposedly so inspired by hearing a performance of several Bach solo-works for the violin, that he locked himself in a room and emerged with Op. 27 a day later. They are now among his most celebrated works.

Each of the six solo sonatas of Op. 27 is dedicated to an eminent violinist of the day and meant to replicate and pay homage to that violinist's style. The Violin Sonata in D minor, Op. 27, No. 3, “Ballade” is dedicated to the Romanian violinist and composer George Enescu.

The opening gesture of Sonata No. 3 just about encompasses the entire range of the violin. This chant-like section obsessively spins and turns on the double stops. The middle section is more rhythmic and even more obsessive, spinning out arpeggios and runs like mad. The last section is passionate and unbridled, no doubt paying homage to Enescu's love of Romanian folk music.

### THREE PRELUDES

GEORGE GERSHWIN (1898-1937)

Since his early teens, Brooklyn-born George Gershwin had been enamored by the music he heard wandering in Harlem, a section of uptown New York City that was quickly becoming the center of the jazz universe. Indeed, his first attempt at a more serious composition – a mini-opera called *Blue Monday* – was a story about characters in a Harlem nightclub. Its first presentation was on Broadway, however, with white singers performing in blackface; it was a flop and only received one performance.

Undisturbed, Gershwin's next try at a classical/jazz merging of styles was the so-called “Experiment in Modern Music” (as it was billed for its 1924 premiere): *Rhapsody in Blue*. He followed this with his Concerto in F, which some writers called “The Jazz Piano Concerto.” These last two works were popularly successful, though critics were still guarded with their praise.

The *Three Preludes* were also originally piano works, too. Actually, there were originally five preludes when first performed on the Roosevelt Hotel recital series in late 1926, then again in a Boston recital in 1927. Three of the preludes were published later that year. Famed violinist Jascha Heifetz transcribed the *Three Preludes* for violin and piano and regularly used them as encore pieces.

The signature Gershwin style is evident from the opening piano riff and immediate answer by the violin. This Prelude is a mad dash to the finish line, over before you know it. The second Prelude evokes the mournful qualities – and the frequent flatted 3rds, 5ths and 7ths – of the blues. The Finale is another up-tempo romp, racing along like a New York cabbie, always seeming on the verge of disaster yet somehow never out of control.

— Program notes written by Dave Kopplin.

## BIOGRAPHIES

JOSHUA BELL has enchanted audiences worldwide with his breathtaking virtuosity and tone of rare beauty, earning him the title “classical music superstar.” An Avery Fisher Prize recipient and Musical America’s 2010 Instrumentalist of the Year, Bell is The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields’ newly named music director. Bell came to national attention at age 14 in his debut with Riccardo Muti and the Philadelphia Orchestra. Today he is equally at home as a soloist, chamber musician, orchestra leader and composer who performs his own cadenzas to several of the major concerto repertoire.

Bell’s 2011 festival appearances include Ravinia, Tanglewood, Verbier and Mostly Mozart. He performs with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Montreal, Dallas, Colorado, Atlanta, San Francisco and National Symphony orchestras. A Carnegie Hall recital, appearances with the New York Philharmonic and European tours conclude 2011. 2012 includes a U.S. recital tour and a tour with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields in the U.S. Bell tours Europe with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Vladimir Jurowski and in recital with Jeremy Denk.

An exclusive Sony Classical artist, *French Impressions*, his new album of French sonatas with Jeremy Denk was released in January 2012.

Since his first LP recording at 18, Bell has recorded more than 36 CDs garnering Mercury, Grammy, Gramophone and Echo Klassik Awards. Recent releases include *At Home With Friends*, the *Defiance* soundtrack, *Vivaldi’s The Four Seasons* and *The Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto* with the Berlin Philharmonic. He has recorded critically acclaimed performances of Sibelius and Goldmark and the Beethoven and Mendelssohn concertos both featuring his own cadenzas; and the Oscar-winning soundtrack, *The Red Violin*.

Bell received his first violin at 4, and by age 12, was serious about the instrument thanks to violinist and pedagogue Josef Gingold.

Bell performs on the 1713 Gibson ex Huberman Stradivarius.

[www.joshuabell.com](http://www.joshuabell.com)

SAM HAYWOOD is a critically acclaimed British pianist whose performances have thrilled audiences worldwide. A frequent collaborator with Joshua Bell and Steven Isserlis, upcoming dates include recitals in the U.K., Germany, France, Indonesia, Japan, Poland, Austria, Russia, Romania, Switzerland, Greece, U.S. and the Czech Republic.

Haywood’s latest release, *Chopin’s Own Piano*, is the first to have been made on Chopin’s own 1846 Pleyel piano. To celebrate the Chopin anniversary, he performed at Lancaster House with Steven Isserlis in the presence of HRH Princess Alexandra on the same day and at the same venue as Chopin’s own performance for Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in 1848.

Haywood has composed several small-scale works for solo piano and various duos, including the *Song of the Penguins*, published by Emerson Editions which was inspired by the film, *March*



*of the Penguins*. He is also involved in educational projects and has co-written a children's opera.

Haywood began playing the piano at age 4, inspired by evenings listening to crackly LPs of Beethoven Sonatas with his grandmother. Following his success at age 13 in the BBC Young Musician of the Year competition, he received the Isserlis prize from the Royal Philharmonic Society and later studied with Paul Badura-Skoda, and at the Royal Academy of Music with the late Maria Curcio, a pupil of Artur Schnabel.

Haywood is keen to include lesser-known works in his solo recital programmes. Rosetti, Gade, Franz Xaver Mozart, Alkan, Field, Isserlis, McLeod (commission) and Hummel have recently been featured. He has also edited a new edition of piano works by Julius Isserlis and Carl Frühling's Clarinet Trio and a new solo piano transcription of the Romance from Chopin's First Piano Concerto.

Outside his musical world, Haywood enjoys walks in his native England's Lake District and is a keen amateur magician and photographer.



[www.samhaywood.com](http://www.samhaywood.com)