



BRENDAN GARDE & GARY BEECHER

Mozart: Violin Sonata in B-flat, K.454

Brahms: Violin Sonata No.1 in G, Op.78

Chopin: Nocturne in C sharp minor

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Cork Orchestral Society
2021 Online Concert Programme



Brendan Garde

Violin

Gary Beecher

Piano



W. A. Mozart (1756-1791)

Violin Sonata in B flat major, K.454

1 Largo – Allegro

2 Andante

3 Allegretto

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Violin Sonata No.1 in G major, Op.78

1 Vivace ma non troppo

2 Adagio – Più andante – Adagio come I

3 Allegro molto moderato – Più moderato

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

Nocturne No.20 in C sharp minor, Op. posth.

arranged for violin and piano

by Nathan Milstein (1904-1992)

Mozart : *Violin Sonata in B-flat major, K. 454*

i. Largo - Allegro ii. Andante iii. Allegretto

In April 1784 the Italian violinist Regina Strinasacchi paid a visit to Vienna. She was clearly a player of the front rank, and Mozart—spurred on, no doubt, by the fact that the event was to be held in the presence of the Emperor Joseph II—hurriedly took advantage of the occasion to write a new sonata for the concert she was to give in the Kärntnertor Theatre. As Mozart told his father: “We now have the famous Strinasacchi from Mantua here—a very good violinist. She has much taste and feeling in her playing. I am just now writing a sonata which we will play together in the theatre on Thursday at her benefit concert.”

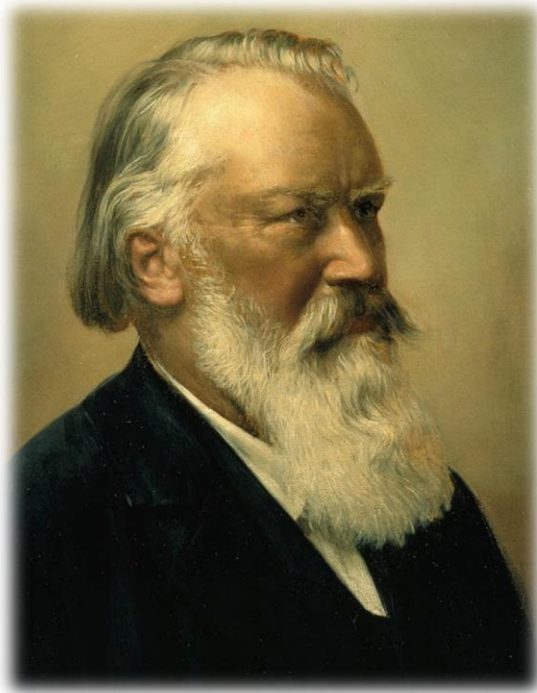
As had happened once before (with the G major sonata, K379), Mozart had so little time to compose the new work, the Sonata in B flat major, K454, that he was able to write out only the violin part before the concert, and had to play the piano part from compositional memory. That Mozart actually carried out this tour de force is confirmed by the appearance of the final manuscript of the work, in which the two parts are written in different inks. Moreover, at several points Mozart had not allowed himself sufficient room to fill in the more intricate passages of the piano part, and they consequently spill over the already ruled bar-lines.

K454 is the first of the three large-scale masterpieces that form the crowning glory of Mozart’s series of sonatas for piano and violin. (Its successors are the E flat major K481 and the A major K526.) It is one of his grandest works of the kind, and the only example from his high maturity to begin with a slow introduction. That introduction lends imposing grandeur to the first movement as a whole, and enables the allegro to be set in motion with a quiet, yet urgent main theme. Despite the fact that the allegro itself contains a wealth of thematic ideas, Mozart chooses to base its central development section on new material, taking as his starting-point the tiny staccato cadence-figure that rounds off the exposition. The staccato idea makes a return in the coda, before a series of brilliant piano arpeggios brings the piece to a close.

Mindful of Regina Strinasacchi’s fondness for slow, cantabile playing, Mozart originally designated the sonata’s middle movement as an adagio, though he subsequently altered the marking to andante. It is among his most profound slow movements, notable above all, perhaps, for the harmonic daring of the closing stage of its development section, where the music moves within the space of a half-dozen bars from B flat minor (the dark key in which the development begins) to a very remote B minor, and then threatens—but neatly sidesteps—an even more elliptical modulation into C minor. Mozart was to carry harmonic experimentation of a similar kind to a further extreme in the slow movement of the E flat sonata, K481.

The final rondo is based on a gavotte-like theme with a repeated-note upbeat. The tempo is allegretto, rather than allegro, but Mozart nevertheless provides the sonata with a brilliant conclusion through the simple expedient of writing nothing quicker than quaver triplets until the final moments, where the pianist is suddenly confronted with a virtuoso flourish of semiquavers.





Brahms : *Violin Sonata No. 1 in G major, Op.78*

- i. Vivace ma non troppo
- ii. Adagio – Più andante – Adagio come I
- iii. Allegro molto moderato – Più moderato

It was one of his songs to a poem by his friend Klaus Groth that provided Brahms with the germ of his Violin Sonata in G major, Op 78—so much so that the work is sometimes known as the ‘Regenlied’ sonata. It is a piece that seems as nostalgic as Groth’s poem: ‘Walle, Regen, walle nieder, / Wecke mir die Träume wieder, / Die ich in der Kindheit träumte’ (‘Flow, rain, flow down and reawaken in me the dreams I dreamed in my childhood’). The sonata’s atmosphere was described by the prominent music critic Eduard Hanslick as being one of ‘resigned reconciliation’. The piece was written alongside the famous violin concerto Brahms composed for Joseph Joachim during his working summer holidays by the Wörthersee in Carinthia

in 1878–79, and although it bears no dedication it must have been written with Joachim in mind, too.

The opening movement’s main subject, unfolding quietly against sustained chords on the piano, arises out of the repeated-note rhythm that sets the song in motion. The subject has a smooth and flowing pendant in constant quaver motion which suggests that Brahms may have had at the back of his mind the mellifluous sound of Beethoven’s last violin sonata, Op 96, in the same key of G major.

The second subject is more forceful and animated, while a third idea beginning in the nature of a chorale becomes increasingly nervous as it proceeds. As he so often does, Brahms begins the development section with a return to the first subject in the home key, as though a varied repeat were about to commence, with the melody now given out by the piano to the background of pizzicato violin chords. But the flowing quavers soon lead the music in a new direction, and an elaborate development, almost entirely based around the main subject, gets under way. The recapitulation ends quietly and calmly, as though the music were about to die away into the distance; but a coda beginning in a mysterious pianissimo gradually gains in intensity, allowing the piece to come to a forceful conclusion.

The slow movement’s almost hymn-like theme is given out, sonorously harmonized, by the piano alone. With the entrance of the violin the music delves into darker realms that are explored at greater length in the middle section, which, despite its more flowing tempo, has the aspect of a funeral march whose repeated-note rhythm harks back to the beginning of the first movement. The reprise of the opening section is elaborately varied, with the melody now given out in double-stops by the violin, and the piano providing an intricate accompaniment. A coda echoes the middle section’s repeated-note rhythm while at the same time maintaining the music’s slow tempo.

In the finale, Brahms quotes the melancholy ‘Regenlied’ extensively, recalling not only the song’s melody but also its accompaniment in imitation of the patter of raindrops. At the centre of the piece stands an episode that harks back to the theme of the slow movement, thereby drawing the sonata’s threads still closer together. The same theme returns towards the end, enabling the music to dissolve from minor to major, and to die away peacefully. What may surprise us, however, is that Brahms should have chosen to write his finale in the minor in the first place. However, he had done the same in the case of his third symphony, while the B major piano trio, Op 8, goes so far as to come to a violent end with the music still firmly entrenched in the minor. The notion of providing a major-mode work with a finale setting off in the minor is one that Brahms may have learned from Haydn, two of whose late string quartets from Op 76 (one being the famous ‘Emperor’ Quartet) have a finale that follows the same procedure.



Chopin : Nocturne No. 20 in C sharp minor, Op. posth

Lento con gran espressione

The Nocturne No. 20 in C sharp minor, Op. posth., is a solo piano piece composed by Frédéric Chopin in 1830 and published in 1870. Chopin dedicated this work to his older sister Ludwika Chopin, with the statement: "To my sister Ludwika as an exercise before beginning the study of my second Concerto". First published 21 years after the composer's death, the piece is usually referred to as Lento con gran espressione, from its tempo marking. It is sometimes also called "Reminiscence".

The piece is marked Lento con gran espressione and is written in common time. After a soft, sad introduction, the main theme starts at bar 5, with the left hand playing broken chords in legato slurs throughout the section, imparting a haunting and continuous

quality to the music (similar to the Moonlight Sonata). The theme then shifts to a dreamy pianissimo in bar 21, before returning to the original theme in bar 47, and finally ending in C# major. The first two bars of the theme from the middle section (bars 21 and 22), resemble the main theme from the third movement of Chopin's second piano concerto in F minor, which was composed around the same time (1829). The next two bars (bars 23 and 24) resemble the second part of the secondary theme of the first movement from his second piano concerto. The passage in the middle section of the nocturne in 3/4 time starting in bar 33 resembles the scherzando section of the third movement of the second piano concerto starting in bar 145 in which the left and right hand are playing an octave apart. In bars 58-61, there are 4 different tuplets; an 18-tuplet, a 35-tuplet, an 11-tuplet, and a 13-tuplet, all of which run through the E Major scale. The piece ends in pianississimo with a high and low C#.

Programme notes by Julian Haylock

Filmed by **Barra Vernon, Robin Guiton** and **Paraic English**

Audio recorded and mixed by **John Fitzgerald**

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Brendan Garde

Violinist Brendan Garde recently completed a Master's in Music Performance at CIT Cork School of Music and was awarded Best Taught Master's Degree Student 2019. Brendan was also the recipient of the Cork Orchestral Society Emerging Artist Award 2019.



Brendan began learning violin at the age of seven at the Cork School of Music, under Colette O'Brien and later with Adrian Petcu. Joining the Cork Youth Orchestra and Irish Youth Orchestra opened up a world of collaborative playing, and were formative experiences for him which led on to participating in summer chamber music courses, both in Ireland and abroad.

Keen to pursue a degree in music, and specialise in violin performance, Brendan studied at the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) in Manchester, where he gained a BMus degree, under the guidance of Leland Chen. While at the RNCM, Brendan was an ABRSM EU Scholar and was a finalist in both the Norman George Violin Scholarship and the Helen Porthouse Paganini Prize competitions. Opportunities to perform as an active chamber musician at the RNCM were many, and he was awarded the Weil Prize in 2016.

Since his time at the RNCM, he has completed a Master's in Music Performance, studying under Gregory Ellis, at the CIT Cork School of Music, and was awarded Best Taught Master's Degree Student of 2019. Brendan was also the recipient of the Cork Orchestral Society Emerging Artist Award 2019.

As a keen chamber musician, Brendan has performed at many events and festivals, including the Ortús Chamber Music Festival, Salisbury International Arts Festival, Finding a Voice Festival, Kaleidoscope and the West Cork Chamber Music Festival. As a freelance orchestral player, he has played with numerous orchestras, including the RTÉ Concert Orchestra and the Cork Opera House Concert Orchestra.

Teaching violin is also something about which Brendan is very passionate. Over the years, he has developed many practical ideas, acquired through research and experience, which he shares with students in their violin studies.

Gary Beecher



Gary Beecher is a pianist from Cork, Ireland, with a varied career as a collaborative pianist and soloist.

Gary has won several international awards as a collaborative pianist. He was the winner of the 2019 International Nadia & Lili Boulanger Voice-Piano Competition (Paris) with Erika Baikoff (soprano), the winner of the 2019 Rudolf Jansen Pianist Prize at the 53rd International Vocal Competition for Lied Duo ('s-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands), as well as the 2nd Pianist Prize winner at the 2019 Helmut Deutsch International Lied Competition (Vienna). Gary was also a winner of the 2019 Oxford Lieder Young Artist Platform with Ema Nikolovska (mezzo-soprano).

In 2017-18, Gary was awarded the Guildhall Piano Accompaniment Prize, Graham Johnson's Song Guild Paul Hamburger Prize, the Prince Consort Side-by-side Recital at Wigmore Hall and the Guildhall Franz Schubert Lieder Prize.

As a soloist, Gary was the winner of the 'Irish Freemason's Young Musician of the Year' and had his concerto debut performing Schumann's Piano Concerto in A minor with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra and conductor John Wilson in the National Concert Hall. Gary returns regularly to perform as soloist with both the RTÉ National Symphony of Orchestra and RTÉCO and has worked with conductors such as David Brophy, Benjamin Pope and José Sérébrier.

Gary completed his MA at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London where he was subsequently a Fellow and staff accompanist. While in London, Gary was mentored by Julius Drake, Eugene Asti, Iain Burnside, Graham Johnson and Charles Owen among others.

Gary holds a BMUS and MA from the CIT Cork School of Music, where he studied with Susan & Jan Cáp, Michael McHale and Dr. Gabriela Mayer. Gary's former teachers also include Jacques Rouvier (UDK Berlin) and Dr. John O'Connor (RIAM).

Gary is currently undertaking a Doctorate in Music Performance at the Royal Irish Academy of Music where he is studying with Hugh Tinney. Gary holds a teaching position at RIAM and a coach accompanist role at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick.