



Sunday April 16, 2023, 5 PM
Taplin Auditorium, Fine Hall

Yuqi Liang '23

Violin

Senior Recital

Yuqi Liang '23 performs a Senior Recital as the final project for the Certificate in Music Performance.

Featuring:
Katie Forbes '23, piano

I am grateful for the opportunity of studying with my violin teacher, Anna Lim, during my time at Princeton. I have learned a lot from her, and she has made me a better violinist and a better musician through her teaching. I also thank Maestro Pratt for the Certificate program, without which I would not have been able to pursue my passions in music performance alongside academic studies to the extent I have now.

The use of photographic, video, or audio equipment is strictly prohibited. Please turn off or mute electronic devices for the duration of the performance.

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PROGRAM

J.S. BACH

Partita No. 2 in D Minor for Solo Violin, BWV 1004

1. Allemande
2. Corrente
3. Sarabande
4. Gigue
5. Chaconne

E. YSAÏE

Sonata No. 5 in G Major, Op. 27

1. L'Aurore
2. Danse rustique

R. SCHUMANN

Violin Sonata No. 1 in A minor, Op. 105

1. Mit leidenschaftlichem Ausdruck
2. Allegretto
3. Lebhaft

with Katie Forbes '23, piano

PROGRAM NOTES

By Yuqi Liang

Johann Sebastian Bach's **Partita No. 2 in D minor for Solo Violin** belongs to his set of six solo violin sonatas and partitas, which are some of the most challenging and cherished pieces in the violin repertoire. Partita No. 2 begins with the *Allemande*, a solemn and introspective dance of royal character, and is followed by the *Corrente*, from the French word "to run," a lively dance that blends athletic energy with moments of tenderness. The *Sarabande* is slow and contemplative, and the *Gigue* is a high-spirited dance that showcases the virtuosity of the performer.

The final *Chaconne*, lasting almost 15 minutes by itself, is a monumental and deeply moving piece that is often considered one of the greatest pieces of music ever written. It is a set of variations on a repeating harmonic progression (which has been foreshadowed in the *Sarabande*). The piece starts with a simple and mournful melody and then gradually grows in expressive intensity and textual complexity, reaching climaxes of immense power and grandeur.

Ysaÿe's *6 Sonatas for Solo Violin* is often seen as the 20th-century and late-Romantic counterpart to Bach's solo masterpieces for the instrument. **Sonata No. 5 in G Major** is not played as often as the other pieces from the set--especially the brooding *No. 3 in D Minor "Ballade."* The two sonatas actually form a good pair: while No. 3 is a psychological journey filled with dark, violent, and at times melancholic emotions, No. 5 is an ode to nature and the countryside that takes the listeners through scenes of utter serenity, innocence, majesty, intimacy, and ecstasy. The first movement *L'Aurore* is an impressionistic portrayal of a stunning sunrise from the very first beam of light to full-blown daylight. The second movement *Danse rustique* is a friendly country dance that subtly builds on motifs taken from the first, transforms itself through a series of variations, and culminates in an exuberant ending that stretches the limits of excitement and virtuosity.

An influential view in the interpretation of music (and artworks in general) is that music and life should be treated separately, meaning that one should try to understand music "by itself" and not let whatever is going on in the composer's life influence or determine one's interpretation of the work. In the case of Robert Schumann's **Violin Sonata No. 1 in A Minor**, however, it is hard to maintain this purist position. Written at a time of deteriorating mental health, the sonata exhibits Schumann's unique ability to juxtapose episodes of turbulent, passionate, and gloomy emotions with passages filled with tender, playful, and almost naive gestures. The first movement opens with a melody that sets a dark tone for the entire piece and is remarkable in its momentum and continuity. The second movement alters between contrasting scenes and moods, reminiscent of Schumann's character pieces for the piano. The final movement combines intricate counterpoint and extremities of emotion and is at the same time a testament to Schumann's mastery of the expressive power of the two instruments. Careful listeners may also discern subtle motivic connections among the three movements that further demonstrate the unity and cohesiveness of Schumann's musical thinking.

ABOUT

Yuqi Liang is a senior in the Philosophy department and pursuing Certificates in Music Performance and Composition. He started playing the violin at age four-and-a-half and studied at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, China when he was in elementary and middle school. At Princeton, he is an active member of the Princeton University Orchestra and the Princeton Undergraduate Composers Collective, and he studies violin performance with Anna Lim, orchestral conducting with Michael Pratt, and piano with Francine Kay. After Princeton, Yuqi is planning to pursue postgraduate work in philosophy and hopes to draw connections between his two main areas of interest.
