



SENIOR RECITAL SERIES | SPRING 2024

Sunday, April 14, 2024, 7 PM

Taplin Auditorium, Fine Hall

Soonyoung Kwon '24

Violin

Senior Recital

Featuring:

Kasey Shao '25

Sarah Yuan '27

William Robles '25

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

For more information about the Department of Music and other upcoming events, and to sign-up for our mailing list, please visit music.princeton.edu.

PROGRAM

**HEINRICH
IGNAZ
FRANZ BIBER**

Rosary Sonata No. 1, 'The Annunciation'

Kasey Shao, Piano
Duration: 6 minutes

**GABRIEL
FAURÉ**

Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano No. 1, Op. 13

I. Allegro Molto
II. Andante
III. Scherzo
IV. Final

Sarah Yuan, Piano
Duration: 25 minutes

**JOHANNES
BRAHMS**

Piano Trio No. 1 in B Major, Op. 8

I. Allegro con brio
II. Scherzo: Allegro Molto
III. Adagio
IV. Finale: Allegro

Kasey Shao, Piano
William Robles, Cello
Duration: 35 minutes

PROGRAM NOTES

By Soonyoung Kwon

Rosary Sonata No. 1, 'The Annunciation' - Standing alongside the greats of the Baroque era, **Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber** (baptized 1644 - 1704) is considered to be one of the most technically impressive violinists of his time, employing musical techniques far beyond his fellow composers. From the creative usage of *scordatura* to the abundance of virtuosic passages in his works, Biber was truly a prodigy in both musical performance and composition, making his lack of popularity relative to other composers quite unfortunate. With that being said, there are a quite a few of his pieces enjoyed by many performers currently; his most popular one by far being the Rosary Sonatas. This is a collection of 15 short sonatas, each with a very distinct musical character. Biber was specifically inspired by the '15 Mysteries of the Rosary', which are special Christian meditations describing the most important moments in the life of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary.

'The Annunciation' is the first 'Mystery', recounting the moment when the Angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she had been chosen to be the mother of Jesus Christ. This significant and majestic event is musically portrayed in 3 parts. The first section ('Praeludium') clearly establishes the key of A minor before quickly moving into large, sweeping 32nd note runs. As such, the general mood feels stormy, yet there are still small breaks of melodic relief in between the technical passages (supposedly representing moments of dialogue between Gabriel and Mary). Biber then moves into the second section ('Aria Allegro'), which consists of a simple theme followed by a few variations. In my opinion, this part is very 'fugal' in nature, with each variation being different rhythmically, but still maintaining the core melody. This is especially prevalent in the Adagio, where Biber employs multiple voices for harmonical support, producing an overall regal-sounding subsection. Lastly, the piece ends with the 'Finale', returning to the tempestuous passage work heard in the 'Praeludium'. The accompaniment holds chords across multiple bars, a stark contrast from the 'Aria Allegro', allowing the violin to highlight its technical bravado during this section. Biber then closes the piece in the parallel major, a common hallmark of baroque pieces known as the Picardy Third, giving the ending a hopeful tone.

Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano No. 13 - The era of French Impressionism was arguably one of the most important periods of late classical music. Characterized by exceptionally complex timbre and textures, compositions of the Impressionist movement were rich in color and emotionally evocative, which is why they're so beloved by many. **Gabriel Fauré** (1845 - 1924) served as one of the primary influences for many Impressionist composers, as his pieces bridged the gap between early French Impressionism and late Romanticism. His Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 1 in A major in particular was immensely popular, quickly solidifying itself as a staple within the Sonata repertoire for violin. In fact, the piece's success had surpassed Fauré's own expectations, allowing his career to reach new heights.

Starting with the first movement, Fauré presents the main theme in the right hand piano part immediately, allowing the eighth note runs to evoke a sense of sweeping romanticism beneath the A major melody. This is quickly followed up by the violin with an alternate version of the main motif, which flourishes into a passionate group of phrases supported by the piano's fast arpeggios. In the development section, Fauré has the two instruments play along with each other, bouncing around short musical statements whilst constantly changing the modality. Eventually, the piano and violin come together at the recapitulation of the main theme in a very climactic fashion, even more emotional than any of the themes prior to this moment. The movement concludes with one last *do/ce* section, before a final flourish in A major. The second movement marks a huge shift in both character and tone, with an emphasis on sustained triplet patterns and a 'singing' quality. This is a stark contrast from the third movement, which is light and whimsical, as both the violin and piano pass around quick rhythmic patterns. With that being said, Fauré also unexpectedly interrupts the scherzo segments with long lyrical passages that serve as brief respites from the playfulness. The final movement returns to the dramatic nature heard in the first movement, building a melody around a central note (like C# in the case of the opening theme). However, to inject tension, Fauré masterfully incorporates syncopated phrases across both instruments, giving the entire movement a feeling of natural flow. This slowly builds up to the coda, where the violin performs one last dazzling display of *spiccato* before satisfyingly concluding the piece in A major.

Piano Trio No. 1 in B Major, Op. 8 - Johannes Brahms (1833 - 1897) certainly needs no introduction. Considered to be one of the most prodigious composers in music history, he has no shortage of famous pieces, from his virtuosic Violin Concerto in D major to his monumental Third Symphony. But amongst these grand compositions stands an equally exquisite piece despite being lesser known: his B major piano trio. Completed in 1854 when he was only 20 years old, the trio was obviously characteristic of Brahms's early works, with long lyrical passages and a more 'classical' style. But Brahms, being the meticulous composer he is, revisited the trio in 1889 with now decades of experience, hoping to reduce the sheer length of the original version whilst elevating its romantic character. This newly revised edition was nothing short of a masterpiece in my opinion, as it was a perfect mixture of late Brahms and the core aspects of the original version.

The piece begins with the B major motif in the piano part, a simple, but effective, theme that is eventually passed around to the cello and then the violin. Derivatives of the main theme emerge as the piece progresses, reaching an intense mini-climax before the start of the development section. Here, the musical segments become much more tumultuous, as Brahms inserts complex polyrhythms into the phrases and plays with the modality constantly. However, the storm eventually passes, and Brahms seamlessly transitions back to the main theme with an absolutely majestic *espressivo* segment presenting all three instruments together. But right before Brahms closes the movement, he introduces a brief *Tranquillo* section that features an explosive finale, elevated by the piano's arpeggios. For the second movement, the key is switched to B minor, which allows the middle *Meno Allegro* section in B major to be much more impactful. The *scherzo* segments are relatively straightforward, but nonetheless fun to both play and listen to. Personally, however, I believe the third movement is where Brahms really shines, as the combination of late Brahms lyricism with slow contrapuntal writing allows for a lovely *Adagio* section. Take note of the cello solo and piano chordal phrases especially, as they really highlight the operatic melody. The final movement goes back to B minor, with an overall agitated character blanketing the musical lines. And as the movement progresses, it's evident that this agitation won't go away, as Brahms increases the level of syncopation and chromaticism throughout. The movement concludes in a similar fashion to the first movement, but in B minor instead, leaving a powerful, lasting impression on the audience.

ABOUT

Will Robles ('25) is from Pasadena, CA. Before coming to Princeton, he studied cello with Rick Mooney and Sarah Koo at the Colburn School in downtown Los Angeles. He also participated in the honors chamber music program at Colburn, winning first prize in the Mount Saint Mary's Chamber Music Competition in 2020. Currently, he plays cello in the Princeton University Orchestra and La Vie en Cello (an all-cello ensemble). When he is not practicing cello, he can be found reading philosophy, playing video games, or trying (with difficulty) to play piano. His favorite composers include Schubert, Brahms, and Beethoven.

Kasey Shao ('25), a Gilmore Young Artist, Young Steinway Artist, and Presidential Scholar in the Arts, began piano at the age of 6 and is currently studying with Professors Ran Dank and Margaret Kampmeier. She made her concerto debut when she was 12 with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Yannick Nezet-Seguin as the first place winner of the Albert M. Greenfield Concerto Competition. She has won top prizes in numerous piano competitions and scholarships including the Princeton University Concerto Competition, New York International Piano Competition, Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition, Hilton Head International Piano Competition, Young Concert Artists International Auditions, and was the Gold Medal Winner in the Classical Music Division of National YoungArts Week. She has been recognized as a 4-time Chopin Scholar, Cincinnati MacDowell Artist Grant recipient, and a 2-time Matinee Musicale Nancy F. Walker Memorial Scholarship Winner. Kasey is a junior concentrating in Music with minors in Piano Performance and Engineering Biology.

Sarah Yuan ('27) is a current first-year student at Princeton University. She began piano studies at age seven and is now a student of Dr. Francine Kay at Princeton, having previously studied with Dr. Sharon Mann at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Sarah was an Honorable Mention winner of the 2022 and 2023 National YoungArts competitions and is the inaugural recipient of the 2023 John Cron Career Development Award from the Ross McKee Foundation. Over the past several years, she has performed in masterclasses for artists such as John Perry, Ida Kavafian and Peter Wiley, James Giles, Tamas Ungar, and the Gryphon Trio. Sarah is currently the pianist for the Aveta Trio,

ABOUT

which won the gold medal at the 2021 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition. She was a five-year participant of the Young Chamber Musicians program based in Burlingame, California; at Princeton, she is currently a member of Opus Chamber Music. Sarah has performed for the San Francisco International Piano Festival for four consecutive seasons as well as the Noontime Concert series in San Francisco, and has also attended international summer music programs such as PianoTexas and Bowdoin.

Soonyoung Kwon ('24) is a Princeton University Senior concentrating in Neuroscience as well as pursuing a certificate in Musical Performance for the Violin under the tutelage of Anna Lim. He has competed in and won a handful of different violin competitions throughout his musical career. In 2016, being the winner of the Salute to Youth Competition, Soonyoung was able to perform with the Utah Symphony as a soloist; he had received honorable mentions for 2018 and 2019. He had also won the Youth Guild competition in both 2016 and 2018 as well as gaining honorable mentions for 2019. In 2016, Soonyoung had competed in the Stradivarius violin competition and earned sixth place. He also performed in numerous masterclasses for many world renowned violinists and teachers such as Professor Wei He and Stefan Jackew. In addition to the violin, he had competed in a few smaller piano competitions as well, winning the senior division in the 2018 Gifted Music School Paderewski piano competition. Soonyoung's previous violin teachers include Yuki Macqueen and Elizabeth Wallace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express my utmost gratitude to Anna Lim, as she's been an incredible mentor for me. The amount of progress I've made these last two years has been nothing short of significant, allowing me to achieve an entirely new level of musical appreciation. Without her guidance, I genuinely do not think I would have kept such a passion for violin during my college years. Many thanks also to Geoffrey Burleson, Jo-Ann Sternberg, Alan Feinberg and Michael Pratt for their help in elevating my chamber and orchestral music skills. And, of course, how could I forget my friends and family? Thank you all for your support both in my musical career and everything else! Couldn't have done it without ya'll, truly.
