

SENIOR RECITAL SERIES | SPRING 2024

Sunday, April 28, 2024, 8 PM

Taplin Auditorium, Fine Hall

Nina Shih

Violin

Nina's Senior Recital



Featuring:

Nina Shih 24'

Kairy Koshoeva

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

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH Violin Sonata No. 1 in G minor
I. Adagio
I. Fuga (Allegro)
III. Siciliana
IV. Presto
Duration: 17 minutes

NICCOLÒ PAGANINI Caprice No. 9 in E major, 'The Hunt'
Duration: 3 minutes

INTERMISSION 10 minutes

JOHANNES BRAHMS Violin Sonata No. 3 in D minor
Kairy Koshoeva, piano
I. Allegro
II. Adagio
III. Un poco presto e con sentimento
IV. Presto agitato
Duration: 20 minutes

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PROGRAM NOTES

By Nina Shih

Johann Sebastian Bach – Violin Sonata No. 1 in G minor

J. S. Bach's Sonata No. 1 in G minor was the first of his six Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin, which he wrote during the late 1710s and early 1720s. Like the rest of the sonatas in this set, Sonata No. 1 contains four movements: a slow movement, followed by a fugue, another slow movement, and a quick, exciting finale. The first movement, the *adagio*, presents a grand, soliloquy-like opening. The second movement, the *fuga*, is the most technically difficult of these movements, as well as the most compositionally complex. During the early 1700s, the fugue was a very special type of composition which showcased the full capabilities of imitative counterpoint. The typical fugue begins with a short main theme in one voice, and then carries this theme into another voice while maintaining a contrapuntal harmony in the first voice. This form is punctuated by various "episodes" of non-polyphonic music, but within the polyphonic sections of the fugue, it is generally true that the main theme is always audible in one of the voices. The third movement is a graceful *siciliana* which is characterized by its lilting dotted rhythms. And the last movement is an exciting *presto* meant to showcase speed and virtuosity.

There has been some speculation by historians that Bach wrote the Sonatas and Partitas in response to the death of his first wife. While this has not been verified, it is important to consider that Bach, while not the most tragic of the classical composers, was hardly immune to grief. His Sonata No. 1 attests to this, evoking mixed emotions of despair, loneliness, and acceptance throughout the span of its four movements.

Niccolò Paganini – Caprice No. 9 in E major, ‘The Hunt’

‘The Hunt’ is one of Niccolò Paganini’s infamous 24 Caprices for Solo Violin, written from 1802-1817. A caprice is a piece of music which is normally free in form and lively in character. Caprices are often fast and virtuosic, which is certainly true of Paganini’s 24 Caprices, although not all of his caprices are equally difficult: No. 5, No. 1, and No. 24 are typically classified as among the hardest, while No. 16 and No. 9 are considered slightly easier. The 9th Caprice is meant to evoke the sounds and atmosphere of a 19th-century hunting expedition. The beginning melody, played on the A and E strings, imitates a flute, while the subsequent melody, played on the G and D strings, is meant to imitate a horn (likely a hunting horn). As with all of Paganini’s caprices, this piece also serves a didactic purpose – it is intended to strengthen certain violinistic techniques such as double stops and ricochet bowings.

Johannes Brahms – Violin Sonata No. 3 in D minor

Brahms published his third and last violin sonata in 1888, approximately a decade before his death. In contrast with his first two sonatas, this piece is comprised of four movements rather than three: a melancholy *allegro*, a lyrical *adagio*, a temperamental *un poco presto e con sentimento* which showcases the piano and serves as a fragmentary intermezzo, and finally, a *presto agitato* which concludes the sonata with fiery virtuosity. Brahms was highly critical of his violin sonatas, and apparently destroyed as many as four full sonatas before publishing his first successful sonata in 1879, his second violin sonata in 1886, and his third sonata in 1888. Brahms’s tendency to destroy his works and delay his publications was not confined to his violin sonatas – by the time he finished his first symphony in 1876, he was 43 years old. In comparison, Beethoven wrote his first symphony at age 29, Schubert at age 15, Schumann at age 22, and Mozart at around age 8 or 9.

Brahms’s high standards were likely the result of the immense pressure which came from being labeled the “heir of Beethoven” by his friend and mentor, Robert Schumann. As Brahms allegedly said of Beethoven, “You have no idea of how it feels — always to hear the tramp of such a giant behind you.” Brahms was especially intimidated by Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony in D minor, a work which noticeably inspired his First Symphony and which possibly motivated his hesitancy to write in this key. It is relevant, then, that Brahms’s last violin sonata was written in D minor. Perhaps, during the final decade of his life, Brahms felt that he had finally emerged from Beethoven’s shadow.

ABOUT

Nina Shih 24': Nina is a history major and violin minor who is interested in going to law school. She loves listening to classical music, learning about composition and history, painting, and drinking tea while reading a good book. In high school, Nina was a part of the Peabody Pre-Conservatory Violin Program, a group of 8 violinists that performed at venues such as the Kennedy Center and for artists such as Midori and the Janoska Ensemble. While she assumed that this would be the highlight of her musical life, she has found music at Princeton to be similarly enjoyable and enriching. She is extremely grateful to have studied with the inspirational Anna Lim, to have attended the Royal College of Music in London, and to have been a member of the Princeton University Orchestra during her four years as an undergraduate.

Kairy Koshoeva: Kairy Koshoeva holds a Doctorate in Musical Arts from the University of Missouri, Kansas City. In addition to Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the Gnessin Academy of Music in Moscow, and an Artist's Diploma from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Dr. Koshoeva has garnered awards from around the globe including top prizes at the International Piano Competition in Vicenza, Italy and the N. Rubinstein Competition in Paris; the Gold Medal at the 2004 Rachmaninoff Awards in Moscow; and first prize at the Chautauqua Music Festival concerto competition in New York. She has studied with great musicians as Bella Zubok, Faina Kharmatz, Michael Burstin, Vera Nosina Monique Duphiland Robert Weirich; and had the privilege of being coached by renowned pianist Lazar Berman in Weimar Master Classes. Dr. Koshoeva has played internationally, in Israel, France, Germany, Russia, Turkey, Switzerland, as well as in the United States. She has performed as a soloist with many prominent orchestras including the Kansas City Symphony and the Chautauqua Music Festival, as well as the National Symphony of Kyrgyzstan and orchestras in Houston and Jefferson City. She has also performed with the Moscow chamber orchestra "Cantus Firmus."

Dr. Koshoeva has been the recipient of major awards for performance in collaboration with the Owen/Cox Dance Group. In 2013 she was awarded the prestigious title of Honored Artist of Kyrgyzstan. In 2019 The Royal Academy of Music honored her as a Teacher of Distinction in Carnegie Hall, Most recently she won First Prize at the 2020 "Musica Classica" International Competition in Moscow, Russia.
