

**Exploring Various Violin Repertoire from Eastern and Western European Countries**

by

**Sunmi Chang**

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Musical Arts  
(Music: Performance)  
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**Doctoral Committee:**

**Professor Aaron Berofsky, Chair**

**Associate Professor Chad Burrow**

**Lecturer Amy I-Lin Cheng**

**Professor David Halen**

**Professor Andrew Jennings**

**Associate Professor Damani Partridge**

Sunmi Chang

[violinsc@umich.edu](mailto:violinsc@umich.edu)

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## ABSTRACT

The dissertation consisted of three recitals. The first recital featured music by Eastern European composers Erwin Schulhoff, Antonín Leopold Dvořák, Grazyna Bacewicz, and George Enescu. The second recital was to commemorate Ludwig van Beethoven's 250th birthday featuring works only by Ludwig van Beethoven. The third recital featured music by Carl Nielsen, Charles Ives, and Robert Schumann.

### Recital 1: Eastern European Music

Monday, December 9, 2019, 8pm, Stamps Auditorium, Walgreen Drama Center, University of Michigan. Assisted by Yevgeny Yontov, Piano

Program: Erwin Schulhoff *Sonata No. 2 for Violin & Piano*; Antonín Leopold Dvořák *Four Romantic Pieces*; Grazyna Bacewicz *Sonata for Solo Violin*; George Enescu *Sonata No. 3 for Violin & Piano*

### Recital 2: Beethoven 250th Anniversary

Friday, January 24, 2020, 8pm, Yale Woolsey Hall, New Haven, Yale University. Assisted by Peter Oundjian, Conductor; Paul Watkins, Cello; Melvin Chen, Piano; Yale Philharmonia

Program: Ludwig van Beethoven *Concerto for Violin, Cello & Piano, Op. 56*

### Recital 3: Nielsen, Ives and Robert Schumann

Saturday, August 10, 2019, 8pm, Korean United Methodist Church of Minnesota, Saint Paul, Minnesota

Assisted by Stephen Gosling, Piano; Sarah Lewis, Cello; Amy Yang Guenther, Piano

Program: Carl Nielsen *Sonata No. 2, Op. 35 for Violin & Piano*; Charles Ives *Piano Trio*; Robert Schumann *Sonata No. 1, Op. 105 for Violin & Piano*

## **RECITAL 1 PROGRAM**

DMA Dissertation Recital  
Monday, December 9, 2019, 4pm  
Stamps Auditorium, Walgreen Drama Center

Sonata No. 2 for Violin & Piano

Erwin Schulhoff (1894–1942)

Yevgeny Yontov, Piano

Four Romantic Pieces

Antonín Leopold Dvořák (1841–1904)

Yevgeny Yontov, Piano

Sonata for Solo Violin

Grazyna Bacewicz (1909–1969)

### **INTERMISSION**

Sonata No. 3 for Violin & Piano

George Enescu (1881–1955)

Yevgeny Yontov, Piano

## **RECITAL 1 PROGRAM NOTES**

### **Erwin Schulhoff Sonata for Violin & Piano no. 2**

Erwin Schulhoff was one of the most popular Czech composers and jazz pianists of the early 20th Century. His works, in which he integrated jazz elements into traditional forms and genres, caused a considerable sensation at the time. His interest in jazz was sparked during his Dadaist phase when he was also experimenting with absurdist elements. During this period he befriended the Berlin Dadaist George Grosz, who introduced Schulhoff to jazz with his American recordings. It is fascinating to note that he was also very much influenced by communist ideology, which in his later years brought him much trouble. In 1941 he tried to emigrate to the Soviet Union and was approved for citizenship, but he was arrested and imprisoned at the Wülzburg camp before he could leave Czech.

Schulhoff's mother, Louise, played a tremendous role in her son's education. Initially Dvorak was not very interested in guiding Schulhoff, who did not believe in child prodigies. However, Dvorak later changed his mind after evaluating the young boy's talent and encouraged him to begin his studies at the Prague Conservatory. Schulhoff later writes in his diaries that although Dvorak didn't accept him as a student, he did direct him to the right path. Some of his other mentors included Debussy, Max Reger and Fritz Steinbach.

His musical styles could be broadly organized into four large periods. His earliest works exhibit the influence of composers from the preceding generation such as Debussy, Scriabin and Richard Strauss. Then came the Dadaist phase, where he composed a number of pieces with absurdist elements. For instance, *In futurum*, part of his 5 *Pittoresks* for piano (1919), is a silent piece composed entirely of rests that anticipates John Cage's 4'33 piece by over 30 years. His most prolific years were from 1923 to 1931, during which this Sonata was also composed. He integrated modernist vocabulary, neoclassical elements as well as jazz and dance rhythms from a variety of sources and cultures in this period. 1931 was a radical turning point in the style of his creations. Influenced by communist ideology, his later years were almost exclusively dedicated to composing large symphonies according to the principles of socialist realism that were to be understandable primarily to the broad public.

The Sonata No. 2 for Violin & Piano, written in 1927, is one of the four compositions written for violin in his lifetime. He consulted both *Ervína Brokešová* & *Richard Zika*, famous violinists at the time, while working on this. *Richard Zika* premiered this work in Geneva at a festival of the International Society of New Music in 1929. The reviews were mixed; some critics did not find major differences among his compositions and therefore were not impressed by it. Nevertheless, all admired his use of driving rhythms and extraordinary energy throughout all four movements, which are typical of his compositional style and are evident in his other works as well. The influence of French impressionism is also very prominent in this work, with parallel motion of the harmony, rhythm and note groupings.



In the first movement he experiments with different scales introduced by Impressionist composers, particularly pentatonic and octatonic scales. The second movement is an extremely expressive recitative with the violin melody singing over the piano part which is built on homophonic chordal structure. This movement is very similar to the 2nd movement of his first string quartet, where the viola part has an improvisatory recitative over pizzicato accompaniment. Then comes a highly humorous and sarcastic Burlesca movement, which was one of his favorite dance forms. The 5/8 meter alternating between 2 + 3 and 3 + 2, which is typical of Czech folk music, contributes to the lively, energetic and yet very humorous character of this movement. The main theme of the first movement comes back in the last movement in a different meter and acts as a unifying thread of this whole work.

#### **Dvorak 4 Romantic Pieces**

Dvorak was often as content writing small-scale works as he was composing symphonies. Dvorak, being an incredibly kind and humble man, made an offer to Josef Krus, who was an amateur violinist and a chemistry student who lived in the same building as Dvorak at that time, to write a piece so that Dvorak, his amateur violinist friend, and Krus' violin teacher (Jan Pelikán) could play it together. He originally wrote the Terzetto, Op. 74 for two violins and viola, but quickly realized that it was too difficult for an amateur violinist, so he decided to compose something easier.

On January 18th, 1887 he informed the publisher: "I am now writing some small Bagatelles for two violins and viola, and this work gives me just as much pleasure as if I were composing a

great symphony; what do you say to that? They are, of course, intended for amateurs, but didn't Beethoven and Schumann also sometimes write with very simple material? – and how!”

After finishing the four bagatelles entitled Cavatina, Capriccio, Romanza and Elegia within a week, he transcribed it for violin & piano and gave it a new title Four Romantic Pieces, and now without the original title. As multi movement works rarely end with a slow movement, Dvorak originally set about writing a 5th movement. Ultimately, he decided that the slow ending was the perfect way to close this piece, while also making it intensely personal.

### **Grazyna Bacewicz Sonata for Solo Violin**

Grazyna Bacewicz was a Polish composer and violinist and a very capable pianist as well. She was the first woman vice president of the union of Polish composers and was the second female composer to have achieved national and international recognition, with the first being Maria Szymanowska. She began studying composition with Kazimierz Sikorski, who was the teacher of Nadia Boulanger, one of the most renowned woman composers and teachers of the 20th century. Grazyna was also an accomplished writer of short stories, novels and autobiographical anecdotes. She is known to have had an uncommonly vibrant yet modest personality, and she was much admired and loved by her fellow Poles during her lifetime.

Like Schulhoff, leading up to the 1950s when she began developing more of her own compositional voice, Bacewicz's early works from 1932 to 1944 could be seen as a preparation for her next, and more mature, period. The works from the early period are very neo-classical, more tonal, and completely different, from her works from the 1950s. In the works from the early period one can clearly hear the influence of Szymanowski, who was a major influence in

her life. In the 1950s, her music became more personal, casting off any remaining Parisian chic, and therefore moved very far from the conventional notion of neo-classicism.

This Solo sonata, written in 1958 and premiered by the composer herself, was composed during her more mature period. Toward the end of 1957, she joined David Oistrakh and Louis Persinger in judging the 3rd Wieniawski International Violin Competition, and in the following year, she journeyed to Moscow to serve as a judge at the first Tchaikovsky Competition. Perhaps it was this flood of hearing many different violinists at these competitions that sparked the creation of this sonata, and hence, experimenting with the endless tonal, textural and rhythmic possibilities that the violin could create.

### **Enescu Sonata for Violin & Piano, no. 3, op. 25**

Enescu was a phenomenal violinist, a teacher, a very distinguished pianist, and a composer. Of all these, composing meant the most to him. Nadia Boulanger, who knew Enescu well, writes, “Deep down, only composing mattered to him. I think no one met Enescu without revering him: he was a great person, totally disinterested. Enescu was a person of such great stature, such great significance. For all of us he remained an emblem of generosity, of profound musical knowledge in his innermost soul.”

His official musical education began in Vienna, at the Conservatory where Beethoven and Brahms became Enescu’s idols. Brahms visited Vienna Conservatory often between 1888-1892 to supervise the student orchestra, during which time Enescu was fortunate enough to form a relationship with him. Another major influence, on Enescu during this period was Wagner. He

was introduced to Wagner's by his violin teacher, Joseph Hellmesberger Jr. Wagner's influence on Enescu is very evident in the early works of his, in his use of elaborate form, large proportions and intense sonority. In 1895, he moved to Paris to study composition with Massenet, and later on with Faure. Saint Saens was Enescu's mentor in regards to violin playing in Paris. He was able to graduate from the Paris Conservatory, being awarded the first prize at the final examination and playing the Saint-Saens Violin concerto. Enescu expressed his gratitude to Saint-Saens by dedicating to him his first orchestral suite.

One of the reasons that Enescu's music has failed to gain the recognition it deserves, was the Moldavian state's inability, or unwillingness, to distribute his scores and recordings, as compared with the successful Polish and Czech promotion of Szymanowski or Martinu, for instance. Even as late as the 1980s, the only available scores of music by Enescu at the biggest music shop in Bucharest were two Romanian rhapsodies and Enescu's cadenza to Brahms violin concerto.

The Enescu Sonata No. 3 for violin & piano is one of the most popular and critically respected works by him. It was written in 1926, when Enescu was occupied with the late stages of work of his opera Oedipe, and it was premiered in 1927 by Enescu & Nicolae Caravia. The score was published in 1933 and was dedicated to Franz Kneisel in honor of Kneisel's death; Kneisel being a renowned American violinist and teacher, of Romanian birth.

The title, In Romanian folk style, is very meaningful, as Enescu never quotes any of the pre-existing Romanian folk tunes, but creates something that is solely Enescu, while still possessing

the authenticity of super folklore. Essentially, in this sonata, the violin becomes a Gypsy fiddle and the piano imitates a cimbalom - an instrument commonly found in Eastern European countries - with the careful use of the pedal, repeated notes and glissandos. It is fascinating to note that Enescu's first violin teacher was a gypsy fiddler. The use of quarter tones, chromatic modes, specific bowing actions and ornaments were all written out as employed by Gypsy musicians.

Despite the free flowing and seemingly improvisational spirit of his music, he was known to have labored meticulously on his compositions, and, typically dissatisfied, would continue editing his music, for several years. This sonata is also incredible in that he meticulously notates every single bowing, articulation, dynamic marking, ornament, etc. Yehudi Menuhin believes that this work is "the greatest achievement in musical notation and anyone who obeys implicitly the instructions in Enesco's extraordinary notation will sound like a Gypsy violinist,"

## **RECITAL 2 PROGRAM**

DMA Dissertation Recital  
Friday, January 24, 2020, 8pm  
Yale Woolsey Hall, Yale University, New Haven

Concerto for Violin, Cello & Piano, Op. 56      Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Yale Philharmonia  
Peter Oundjian, Conductor  
Paul Watkins, Cello  
Melvin Chen, Piano  
Sunmi Chang, Violin

## **RECITAL 2 PROGRAM NOTES**

### **Beethoven Concerto for Violin, Cello & Piano, Op. 56**

The Beethoven Triple Concerto, his only concerto to have been written for more than one solo instrument, was regarded as a work that was not often the caliber of the the rest of his other significant compositions. Shortly before he composed this work in 1802, Beethoven had written the famous letter to his brothers called the Heiligenstadt Testament, a letter significant for explaining his realization that he was going deaf. Afterwards, perhaps because of the urgency he felt to complete more works before he became fully deaf, he composed at a furious pace, producing some of his most significant works, such as the Eroica Symphony, Razumovsky String Quartets, Waldstein and Appassionata Sonatas, the opera Fidelio and this Triple Concerto.

The Triple Concerto was composed in 1803 and was published in 1804 by Brietkopf & Härtel. He wrote the piano part for Archduke Rudolph, a long time pupil, friend and patron of Beethoven, and who also was the youngest son of Emperor Leopold II. The official dedication of this work, however, is to Prince Lobkowitz, another dedicated patron of Beethoven and for whom the Eroica Symphony was also dedicated.

I find the most fascinating part of this concerto to be his choice of piano trio as soloists. At this time, the new genre called the Sinfonia Concertante was becoming increasingly popular. It can be said that this popular new genre is a more developed version of the Baroque “Concerto

Grosso.” Perhaps influenced by this popular genre, he wrote to his publisher saying that this Triple Concerto was “really something new” and referred to it as the “Concertante for Violin, Cello & Piano with full orchestra.”

As have mentioned above, this concerto contrasts sharply with the other music he was composing in those years, and was criticized as his lesser work. However, I feel, that instead of the dramatic transformation of the material taking place, this concerto tends more toward lyric elaboration. It is more relaxed and agreeable, rather than striving.

In my opinion, he successfully overcomes several obstacles most gracefully through this concerto. One of the challenges that Beethoven faced with three solo instruments was the issue of balance. Since the register of the cello is much lower than the violin, it is easy to be covered. Therefore, Beethoven always, cleverly, gives the cellist the first chance to play the theme before the other instruments join in. Also, it is very different from other standard concertos in that there is not all that much dialogue between the orchestra and soloists, making it chamber music- like, with the full orchestra gently supporting them. Often, the texture is very well balanced with the trio playing by themselves.

This Triple Concerto offers us an opportunity to look into a different side of Beethoven that is perhaps not so driven with drama, but nonetheless so artfully composed, and as a whole can be characterized as polite and pleasant aristocratic entertainment.



## **RECITAL 3 PROGRAM**

DMA Dissertation Recital (Recording Submission)  
Saturday, August 10, 2019, 8pm  
Korean United Methodist Church of Minnesota, Saint Paul

Sonata No. 2, Op. 35 for Violin & Piano Carl Nielsen (1865–1931)

Amy Yang Guenther, Piano

Piano Trio Charles Ives (1874–1954)

Stephen Gosling, Piano  
Sarah Lewis, Cello

Sonata for No. 1, Op. 105 for Violin & Piano Robert Schumann (1810–1856)

Amy Yang Guenther, Piano

## **RECITAL 3 PROGRAM NOTES**

### **Beethoven Concerto for Violin, Cello & Piano, Op. 56**

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