2-20-1999

Concert: Corey Cerovsek, violin & Katja Cerovsek, piano

Corey Cerovsek
Katja Cerovsek

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—William Grant Egbert (1867–1928) Founder, Ithaca Conservatory of Music

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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ITHACA COLLEGE CONCERTS 1998-99

COREY CEROVSEK, violin
KATJA CEROVSEK, piano

Polonaise No. 1 in D Major, op. 4

Henryk Wieniawski
(1835-1880)

Sonata in C minor, op. 30, no. 2

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

*Allegro con brio*
*Adagio cantabile*
*Scherzo: Allegro*
*Finale: Allegro—Presto*

Sonata No. 3 in G minor

Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

*Allegro vivo*
*Intermede—fantasque et leger*
*Finale—très animé*

INTERMISSION

Sonata No. 1 in G Major, op. 78

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

*Vivace ma non troppo*
*Adagio*
*Allegro molto moderato*

Tzigane

Maurice Ravel
(1875-1937)

Saturday, February 20, 1999
Ford Hall Auditorium
8:15 p.m.

DELOS RECORDS

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PROGRAM NOTES

Henryk Wieniawski (1835–1880).

Polonaise No. 1 in D for Violin and Piano, op. 4

The son of the talented pianist Regina Wolff-Wieniawska, Henryk Wieniawski began his violin studies with Jan Hornziel and Stanislaw Serwaczynski (1791–1859), Joachim’s first teacher. At the urging of her brother, the concert pianist Edouard Wolff, Henryk’s mother took him to Paris where he was admitted to the Paris Conservatoire in 1843 and studied violin with Lambert-Joseph Massart (1811–92), Fritz Kreisler’s teacher. When Wieniawski won the first prize in violin in 1846, he became the youngest award winner in the history of the Paris Conservatoire. He continued his studies for two more years before giving his début recital in Paris on 30 January 1848. After touring Russia with his younger brother Józef (1837–1912) as his pianist, Wieniawski reentered the Paris Conservatoire in 1849 to study composition, and received the accessit prize in 1850. Between 1851–53, while the Wieniawski brothers were touring and giving over 200 concerts, Henryk composed and published fourteen compositions, including the Polonaise in D. In 1860, Anton Rubenstein (1829–94) asked him to come to St. Petersburg to teach violin at the newly-founded conservatory. Wieniawski, who stayed in St. Petersburg until 1872, continued to compose. While at the conservatory he wrote his Études-caprices, op. 18, Polonaise brillante, op. 21, and his second violin concerto, op. 22. In 1872 Wieniawski resumed his touring, including a tour of the United States, and in 1875 he succeeded Henry Vieuxtemps (1820–81) as the violin professor at the Brussels Conservatoire. Ill health caused him to resign his teaching post two years later; he died in Moscow in 1880 at the age of 44.

As a violinist he was known for his tone, élan, and technique (in 1864 the renowned musicologist F.-J. Fétis called Wieniawski “the most expert virtuoso violinist of the present era”). Fritz Kreisler (1875–1962) contended that Wieniawski brought the vibrato “to heights never before achieved.” As a composer, Wieniawski built on Paganini’s technical advances. His études, next to Paganini’s, are some of the most musically and technically demanding in the violin repertoire. The Polonaise in D, written for violin and orchestra, is dedicated to Carl Lipinski (1790–1861), the Polish violinist and composer who was a student of Paganini and had performed with Liszt. The work, which commences with a march-like introduction, is written in triple meter and uses the typical polonaise rhythm. This work is a striking example of a work written by a virtuoso-composer for his instrument and his use.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827).

Sonata in c for Piano and Violin, Op. 30 no. 2

The opus 30 sonatas, dedicated to “Kaiser Alexander I” of Russia, were written in 1802 and published in 1803 by Kunst- und Industrie-Comptoir as
Sonatas for Pianoforte with a Violin. It was not until the publication of Beethoven’s last violin sonata, op. 96, that the equality of the instruments was recognized in the title: Sonata for Pianoforte and Violin.

The first movement, cast in single-movement sonata form, is the first of Beethoven’s violin sonatas to abolish the repeat of the exposition. The first theme, a motive consisting of a descending tonic triad, is announced by the piano and then restated by the violin. A short transition leads into the Eb march-like second theme, a theme dominated by dotted rhythms. The development commences with the first theme. The second movement, an elegant gavotte in A♭, is in three sections; after a digression to the parallel minor, the opening section recurs with a new accompaniment, and the movement closes with a coda. The third movement, a scherzo in C major, features a 3-voice trio that is notable for the imitative passages between the violin and the piano, and a melody that is a variation of the scherzo theme. According to Anton Schindler (1795–1864), Beethoven was particularly unhappy with this scherzo because “of its incompatibility with the character of the work as a whole . . . and wanted to do away with it.” The finale is a sonata-rondo with a fugal development and a Presto coda that summarizes the rondo themes.

This sonata, the seventh of ten for piano and violin, has been called one of the great masterpieces, because in the first and last movements the “wonderfully strong, sombre energy and passion strike a note hitherto unheard in Beethoven’s music.”

Claude Debussy (1862–1918).

Sonate pour Violon & Piano (1916–17)

The latter half of 1915 was one of Debussy’s most productive periods. He wrote En blanc et noir for two pianos, the 12 études for solo piano, the sonata for cello and piano, the sonata for flute, harp, and viola; and Noël des enfants qui n’ont plus de maison. On 7 December he had cancer surgery, and only one more of his projected six sonatas for “diverse instruments” was completed—the violin sonata in g, which was his last composition. On 5 May 1917, Debussy and Gaston Poulet premiered the violin sonata in Paris. In his final public performance in September 1917 in Saint-Jean-de-Luz, Debussy again played the violin sonata with Poulet. Debussy died on 25 March 1918.

In a 7 May 1917 letter to his friend Robert Godet, a Swiss journalist, Debussy described his violin sonata as being “full of a joyous tumult.” Then one month later (7 June), when Debussy was depressed, he contended that the violin sonata was written “only to get rid of the thing, spurred on as I was by my dear publisher. . . . This sonata will be interesting from a documentary viewpoint and as an example of what may be produced by a sick man in wartime.” Although Debussy’s late chamber works are less frequently performed, this harsh, condemnatory statement is unwarranted. Godet was more objective when he wrote (16 August 1917),
I have had time to read and reread the Violin Sonata but not without outbursts of indignation against the severity of its composer. It may not present a three-dimensional view of the composer’s subtlety and depth, but it nevertheless speaks his true language... in a friendly, youthful manner, simply and addressed to everyone.

The sonata form Allegro vivo is followed by a sectional Intermède that Edward Lockspeiser calls a “Harlequinesque interlude.” The Finale, which opens with a quotation from the opening of the first movement, is the movement Debussy rewrote several times. In his May letter to Godet, Debussy said that the Finale’s theme “is subjected to the most curious deformations and ultimately leaves the impression of an idea turning back on itself, like a snake biting its own tail.” With its formal, motivic, and textural economy, this violin and piano duo clearly reveals Debussy’s continuing affection for the French classical style.

Johannes Brahms (1833–97).

Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano, op. 78

Johannes Brahms spent the summers of 1877–9 in Pörtschach (Austria), and these summers were unusually productive. He wrote his a cappella Motets, op. 74; Four Ballads for piano, op. 75; the twenty-three lieder of opp. 69–72, the Four Capricci and Four Intermezzi of op. 76 for piano, the Two Rhapsodies for piano, op. 79; the Violin Concerto, op. 77; and his Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano, op. 78. Brahms presented Joseph Joachim (1831–1907) with this sonata as Joachim was helping Brahms refine his violin concerto. The sonata was published by Simrock in 1880.

Brahms was extremely self-critical of his chamber music. It is believed that he drafted and destroyed three or four earlier violin sonatas, including the a minor sonata of 1853. What Brahms has given us is a lyrical sonata that exploits the violin’s cantabile characteristics. The sonata opens with a Vivace ma non troppo cast in sonata form. The dotted rhythm that opens the movement, and ultimately permeates the sonata, recurs in the second theme in D. The development section commences with a restatement of the primary theme in the piano over pizzicato chords in the violin in an unusual tonal center—tonic. The Adagio is a ternary form in the third-related key of Eb; the contrasting section is a funeral-march-like in b. The last movement is a five-part rondo in which the rondo theme (refrain) in g quotes the opening vocal and keyboard parts from two of Brahms’s op. 59 songs, “Regenlied” and “Nachklang.” Save for key, the quotes are identical. The second episode of the rondo reuses, in its original key of Eb, the opening measures of the second movement’s Adagio theme. This is the first use of the major mode in the finale. The coda, in G, is a synthesis of interwoven ideas from the rondo and the Adagio. Brahms’s use of the op. 54 lieder does not come...
value-free: as did audiences in Brahms’s time, we know their source and the texts with which he associates them.

After Brahms had sent the sonata to Clara Schumann, she replied that “Many others could perhaps understand it and speak about it better, but no one could feel it more than I do.” Karl Geiringer has spoken about it, observing that it, “reflects the atmosphere of the beautiful Carinthian holiday resort where it was created. It is a composition full of restrained sweetness and that yearning which... seems to smile through tears.”

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937). Tzigane

Tzigane was written as a showpiece for the Hungarian violinist Jelly d’Aranyi (1895–1966), a grandniece of Joachim, whose playing of traditional gypsy music Ravel admired. D’Aranyi, to whom the work is dedicated, gave the first performance on an all Ravel program on 26 April 1924 in London. To become more conversant with violin technique, Ravel took a “crash course” in violin composition—he had the French violinist Hélène Jourdan-Morhange play him the 24 Paganini Caprices as he was composing. Ravel completed Tzigane just three and one-half days before its première. This quasi-gypsy style showpiece makes the highest demands on the technique of the performer, and it exceeds the difficulties of the virtuoso violin music of the nineteenth century. Ravel attempted to get inside the melancholy of the Puszta nomad, and in imitating the gypsy style it is a pastiche that is brilliant. The work, a pastiche of double-stops, harmonics, fingered pizzicato, and brilliant passages in perpetuum mobile, is well-written for the violin. It commences with a mercurial opening for solo violin that presents the themes that will recur in numerous variations. The anonymous reviewer for The Times of London (28 April 1924) wrote:

It is rhapsodical in the literal meaning of the word, being a series of episodes in the Hungarian manner strung together. . . . Either the work is a parody of the Liszt-Hubay-Brahms-Joachim school of Hungarian violin music . . . , or it is an attempt to get away from the limited sphere of his previous compositions to infuse into his work a little of the warm blood that it needs.

The score is dated April–May 1924, indicating that Ravel made some revisions after the première. Later in the year, Ravel orchestrated Tzigane, and it has become a showpiece for violinists. While the style of Tzigane deviates from that of Ravel’s canon, it is an amazingly effective composition that violinist love to perform.

Mary I. Arlin
THE ARTISTS

COREY CEROVSEK, violin

With over a dozen years of performing on the world’s classical music stages, violinist Corey Cerovsek has matured into a musician known for his dramatic performances, clear sound, and stylistic flexibility. At age 26, Corey has appeared with conductors such as Mehta, Dutoit, Litton, Levi, Pinnock, Comissiona, Worby, Tilson Thomas, Andrew Davis, Jarvi, Comet, Lopez-Cobos, DePreist and Alsop, to name a few. He has performed in the United States with the orchestras of Philadelphia, San Francisco, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Indianapolis, Buffalo, Baltimore, Colorado, Detroit, Milwaukee, Atlanta, Phoenix, San Diego, Denver, Kansas City, Utah, and the New World Symphony, and internationally, with the Israel Philharmonic, Iceland Symphony, Prague Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra (Ireland), Hong Kong Philharmonic, Residentie Orkest of the Hague, Montreal Symphony Orchestra, Winnipeg Symphony, Vancouver Symphony, Bournemouth Symphony, Vienna Chamber Orchestra, Toronto Symphony, Bilbao Symphony, the Montpellier Symphony, and the National Arts Centre Orchestra of Ottawa, among others. In recital, Corey has performed throughout the United States and Canada. He performs regularly at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D. C. and at the Isabella Gardner Museum in Boston. Other recital credits include Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts’ Walter Reade Theatre and the Frick Collection in New York, SUNY Purchase, the Place des Arts in Montreal, the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra "Debut Series," and the Spoleto Festivals in Charleston and in Italy. He has toured Australia, Japan, China, and the Netherlands.

During his 1998-99 season, Corey Cerovsek can be heard throughout the United States, as well as in Europe. Mr. Cerovsek performed this fall with the Grand Rapids Symphony, Greensboro Symphony and the Corning/Elmira Musical Arts. He continues with recitals at Tennessee's Lee University, Nebraska's Tuesday Musical Club, and Georgia's Spivey Hall at Clayton State College and University, followed by performances with the Syracuse Symphony, a recital at Viterbo College, and chamber concerts at Musical Master Work Series. He finished the fall season with performances in Israel with the Haifa Symphony. During 1999, Mr. Cerovsek performs with the Florida West Coast Symphony, the Berlin Symphony, the Wheeling Symphony, the New World Symphony and I Musici Montreal. In recital, he can be heard at Ithaca College, Birmingham Music Club,
Milwaukee's Artist Series at the Pabst and in Oklahoma's Kirkpatrick Auditorium. He finishes the season in performances with the Eugene Symphony, California's Ventura Festival, North West Indiana Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, and in Australia with the Sydney and Melbourne Symphonies.

On the television front, Mr. Cerovsek has been featured twice on NBC's Tonight Show with Johnny Carson and Jay Leno, on the David Frost Show in England and on the PBS special Musical Encounters, and in the spring of 1997 on CBS Sunday Morning. His first recording, made with pianist Katja Cerovsek for the Delos label, was released in 1998, and features works by Henryk Wieniawski.

Born in 1972 in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, Corey Cerovsek began his violin studies at the age of five. At age nine he won the grand prize over 3,000 other musicians in the Canadian Music Competition. He graduated at age 12 from the University of Toronto's Royal Conservatory of Music with a gold medal for the highest marks in strings. That same year he was accepted by Josef Gingold as a student and enrolled at Indiana University, where he received bachelor degrees in mathematics and music at age 15, masters in both at 16, and completed his doctoral course work in mathematics and music at age 18.

Corey Cerovsek plays the "ex Wieniawski" violin, made by Giuseppi Guarneri del Gesu of Cremona in 1742.

KATJA CEROVSEK, piano

Katja Cerovsek, born in Vienna, Austria and raised in Vancouver, began her piano studies at the age of six. She started taking Royal Conservatory of Music exams at seven, graduating at thirteen with a diploma in piano performance (A.R.C.T.) and the gold medal for the highest mark in Canada. Six times she was a national finalist and first-place winner in the Canadian Music Competition. She is a three-time recipient of a Canada Council Arts Grant.

Ms. Cerovsek has given recitals alone and with her brother Corey, in Canada, the United States, Europe, Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. These have included performances at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and the Frick Collection in New York, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Supreme Court and Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C., the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, and the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra's "Debut Series".
International highlights include recitals at Wigmore Hall (London), Cemat Resit Ray Concert Hall (Istanbul), Suntory Hall (Tokyo), the National Theater in Taiwan, and the Spoleto Festival Dei Due Mondi in Italy. In addition to numerous broadcasts on CBC and National Public Radio, including St. Paul Sunday Morning and Performance Today, she has appeared twice with Corey on NBC's Tonight Show.

She has been a frequent concerto soloist since her debut with the Calgary Philharmonic at age ten, appearing with such ensembles as the New World Symphony, Victoria Symphony, Quebec Symphony, Carmel Symphony, and Hamilton Philharmonic; she made her United States orchestral debut with the Indianapolis Symphony in 1985.

Ms. Cerovsek has been active in the performance of contemporary Canadian music; as a tribute, Canadian composer Jean Coulthard wrote for her a work for piano and chamber orchestra entitled Ballade of the West. Ms. Cerovsek performs Coulthard's Piano Sonata on a record released by RCI in 1987.

Ms. Cerovsek has made the United States her home since beginning her studies at Indiana University in Bloomington in 1984. There she received her Bachelor of Music degree with Highest Distinction in 1988, studying with Gyorgy Sebok and serving as studio accompanist for cellist Janos Starker. Continuing her studies with Menahem Pressler of the Beaux Arts Trio, she completed her Master of Music degree with Highest Distinction in 1989. Indiana University awarded her its coveted Performer's Certificate and an appointment as Associate Instructor of Piano. Under the guidance of Leonard Hokanson she completed the academic requirements for the Doctor of Music. Ms. Cerovsek currently lives in San Diego, California where she does freelance work and maintains an active recital and teaching schedule.