

Programme Notes By Emer Nestor

Yury Revich, violin

Benedict Kloeckner, cello

Programme:**J. S. Bach (1685 – 1750)**

Cello Suite No. 3 in C major, BWV 1009

1. Prélude
2. Allemande
3. Courante
4. Sarabande
5. Bourrée I-II
6. Gigue

Reinhold Glière (1875 – 1962)

A selection from Eight Pieces for Violin and Cello Op. 39
Prélude; 3. Berceuse; 4. Canzonetta; 7. Scherzo; 8. Etude

Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962)

Recitativo and Scherzo, Op. 6

Alessandro Rolla (1875 – 1962)

Duo for Violin and Cello, No. 2 in C major, Bl. 242
II. Andante; III. Rondo. Allegretto

INTERVAL**Niccolò Paganini (1782 – 1840)**

Duet No. 3 in in D major, MS 130
2. Petite Romance (Larghetto); 3. Pollacchina (Andantino con grazia)

Sebastian Adams (b. 1991)

2018.3
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Eugène Ysaÿe (1858 – 1931)

Violin Sonata in D minor, Op. 27 No. 3, "Ballade"

Maurice Ravel (1875 – 1937)

Sonata for Violin and Cello

1. Allegro
2. Très vif
3. Lent
4. Vif, avec entrain

J. S. Bach (1685 – 1750)

Cello Suite No. 3 in C major, BWV 1009

1. Prélude
2. Allemande
3. Courante
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During his tenure as Kapellmeister at the court of Anhalt-Cöthen (1717-1723), Bach penned a set of Six Suites for unaccompanied cello. The world of musicology has yet to find a surviving facsimile of the works in the hand of the composer, however, scholars and performers consider the manuscripts of copyists Johann Peter Kellner (organist and composer) and Bach's second wife, Anna Magdalena, as their most reliable sources. The latter of the pair prepared her copy of the collection between 1727 and 1728 for the Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel chamber musician Georg Heinrich Ludwig Schwanenberger, who had visited Leipzig at the time and taken lessons in thoroughbass from Bach.

Towards the close of the eighteenth century, the suites dissipated into near obscurity until a thirteen-year-old Pablo Casals (1876-1973) discovered a bedraggled edition of the scores in Barcelona (1890). These pieces became the cornerstone upon which the young Catalan built a stellar musical career as one of the finest cellists of the twentieth century. Following a public performance of the first two suites in 1936, Casals returned Bach's Six Suites back to their rightful place within the music canon. No longer relegated to the wasteland of forgotten technical studies, Casals imbued his interpretation of the works with a fresh emotional diction, reflective of Bach's philosophical understanding of the instrument.

The third Suite in C Major, composed around 1720, opens with an unassuming two-octave descending scale with a closing broken triad culminating on an open C arrival. Here, the rich deep bass sonority of the cello is fully illuminated. An overarching sense of excitement is created by a mighty pedal point over which a series of progressively richer and richer figures build tension, pushing harder and harder for resolution. As the Prelude progresses, Bach manipulates scale figures, fragmenting them and rearranging them, yet maintaining interest at

all times. He flawlessly intermingles scales and arpeggios, all the while building harmonic energy through sequential writing. Continuous 16th-note motifs, amid multiple key changes and pedal tones, herald the movement to an invigorating climax of chords, dramatic rests and harmonic victory.

The Allemande is the only movement in the suites that has an upbeat consisting of three semiquavers instead of just one, which is the standard form. The lively dance takes inspiration from the previous Prelude in its use of the descending C major scale shape, albeit in a different rhythmic guise. Bach's remarkable skill of two-part writing, and his use of bariolage (bowing technique—the alternation of notes on adjacent strings, one of which is usually open) creates the illusion of a duet-like texture. As with the preceding two movements, the Courante begins with a descending C major idea over two octaves. The continuous eighth note motion propels the music forward, energised by the driving string crossing segments towards the close of each section. The Sarabande opens with a luxurious and inviting series of chords emphasising the natural warmth and resonance of the cello. Written in four voices, a sense of polyphony is implied within a series of triple and quadruple stops. The first Bourrée, frequently arranged to include accompaniment, is one of the more popular movements of the suite. The energetic c-major character of this tuneful dance is a distinct contrast to the more reserved and troubled second Bourrée in c minor. The concluding Gigue is decorated with melodic and rhythmic ideas that oscillate between the upper and lower registers of the cello.

Reinhold Glière (1875 – 1962)

A selection from Eight Pieces for Violin and Cello Op. 39
Prélude; 3. Berceuse; 4. Canzonetta; 7. Scherzo; 8. Etude

Kiev-born composer, conductor and pianist Reinhold Glière (Reyngol'd Moritsevich Glier) is considered by many as the founder of Soviet ballet. He taught at the Kiev Conservatory and became director in 1913. Seven years later, he was appointed professor of composition at the Moscow Conservatory, where he remained until his retirement in 1941. From 1938 to 1948 he served as chairman of the organising committee of the USSR Composers' Union (1938–48). Glière held a doctorate in art criticism, several State Prizes (1942, 1946, 1948, 1950) and the

title People's Artist of the USSR (1938), the RSFSR, the Uzbek SSR and the Azerbaijani SSR. Many of his compositions have entered the standard repertory.

Even though Glière lived beyond the middle of the twentieth century, his music owes a great deal to the Russian Romantic tradition. He worked primarily on a grand scale, producing music in large forms, including three symphonies, seven ballets, five operas, and several concertos. His most famous work is the 'Russian Sailors' Dance' from the 1927 ballet, *The Red Poppy*.

Glière's rarely-performed Opus 39 set of eight duos for violin and cello was written in 1909 following his return from Berlin and a period teaching at the Gnesin Institute in Moscow. Dedicated to Boris Kaliushno, the *Huit Morceaux* are an assortment of miniatures ranging from the playful to the tender. The Andante-paced Prelude begins with a repeated-note figure in octaves from the violin, while the cello toys with an ominous fragmented chromatic figure before exchanging ideas with the violin. Both instruments are muted in the Berceuse (cradle song/lullaby), with the cello playing entrancing semiquaver arpeggios beneath the languid melody of the violin. An energetic Canzonetta follows, as the cello line continues its exploration of broken chords, but this time in expansive triplets. The Scherzo is an affectionate caricature of the Beethovenian 'one-in-a-bar' style, making much of repeated notes, chords and strongly accented cross-rhythms. A serene, lyrical trio intervenes briefly, as cello and violin engage in duet before returning to the playful interchange of the opening. Both instruments are tested in the final Etude by way of shimmering figures twirling around brusque pizzicato interjections before all excitement fades away into silence.

Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962)

Recitativo and Scherzo, Op. 6

Friedrich "Fritz" Kreisler, an American of Austrian birth, was one of the most stylish and best-loved violinists to grace the stage since Paganini. The elegance of his bowing, the refinement and charm of his phrasing, the vivacity and confidence of his rhythm, and above all his incomparable sweet and expressive tone were marveled at throughout the concert halls of the world. Kreisler belonged to a lost era of performers that were also composers, like Nicolò

Paganini, Henryk Wieniawski, Pablo de Sarasate and Eugène Ysaÿe. He flirted with controversy for many years by successfully misleading even the most knowledgeable critics by affixing the names of old masters to his compositions. Kreisler had required pieces to fill out his early recitals and adopted various pseudonyms because he considered it "impudent and tactless to repeat my name endlessly on the programmes". Kreisler was both amused and astonished to find his counterfeit compositions accepted at face value by people who should have known better, especially when he "made no endeavour to stick closely to the style of the period to which they were alleged to date".

Influenced by the early demands of the recording industry, Kreisler excelled in the 'miniature' genre. These short works were perfectly suited to fit on one side of a record and were ideal for the many encores called for throughout his performing career. Composed in 1911, *Recitativo and Scherzo* is the only solo violin piece written by Kreisler. It was penned as a musical 'thank-you' note to his friend, the Belgian violin virtuoso Eugène Ysaÿe, as the latter had dedicated his fourth solo violin sonata to Kreisler. The rich introduction of the *Recitativo* enjoys a myriad of lavish Impressionist harmonies—an homage to Ysaÿe. It opens with an intensely dark plaintive theme, of improvisatory nature, before building to a short cadenza-like conclusion. A contrasting lively *Scherzo* follows, full of vigour and nobility, yet tinged with a modicum of melancholy.

Alessandro Rolla (1875 – 1962)

Duo for Violin and Cello, No. 2 in C major, Bl. 242

II. Andante; III. Rondo. Allegretto

Over the course of his career, Italian composer, violinist and viola player Alessandro Rolla held a variety of important positions. He was music director at the court of the Duke of Parma during which time he brought the operas of those such as Mozart, Mayr, Paer, Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti and Mercadante to the stage. Rolla also served as first violinist and conductor of the court orchestra of Viceroy Eugenio di Beauharnais from 1805. At the age of 46, he was appointed leader of the prestigious Teatro alla Scala in Milan. From 1808 to 1835 Rolla was a

prominent figure at the newly inaugurated Milan Conservatory where he was employed as first professor of violin and viola. One of his most famous pupils was Nicolò Paganini. After retiring from his teaching position, Rolla began to stage private performances of chamber music in his own home, with particular emphasis on the music of Beethoven.

Rolla's compositions, which number some 500 or more, draw inspiration from both the Italian instrumental tradition (particularly that of Luigi Boccherini) and the Viennese Classical style. This is particularly evident in his three duos for violin and cello, which were written for an 1821 performance at the Milan Scala by the composer himself and a young cellist, Vincenzo Merighi.

Dedicated to the Italian musician Francesco Bignami, the duets all follow the classical fast-slow-fast three-movement structure. Despite the sparse instrumentation, there is never a moment where the harmony or texture is lacking. Rolla manages to create an incredibly rich soundscape that is even orchestral at times without ever sacrificing the surface abundance of flourishes and virtuosity. Appoggiaturas, trills, ornaments and fast bowings abound the expansive melodic landscape. With regard to technical and musical demands, both violin and cello are given equal importance in Rolla's second Duo in C major, which is quite remarkable because for many years (until the later cello concertos of Joseph Haydn), the cello had taken over the role of the viola da gamba as basso continuo instrument.

INTERVAL

Niccolò Paganini (1782 – 1840)

Duet No. 3 in in D major, MS 130

2. Petite Romance (Larghetto); 3. Pollacchina (Andantino con grazia)

Through his development of technique, his extraordinary skills and his charisma, Italian violinist and composer Nicolò Paganini not only contributed to the history of the violin as its most famous virtuoso but also drew the attention of other Romantic composers, notably Franz Liszt, to the significance of virtuosity as an element in art. A composer of a large number of chamber works, Paganini was influential in promoting the performance and appreciation of

music within private social/cultural circles. Originally scored for violin and bassoon, Paganini's three Concertante Duetti were composed around 1800 while the composer was just seventeen years old. Forgotten for centuries, the duets lay dormant until 1990 when they were found in Genoa. The third Duet in D major sees violin and cello in constant dialogue while almost systematically switching parts. Equal attention is allocated to each instrument in exploiting its respective technical and expressive capabilities.

Sebastian Adams (b. 1991)

2018.3

New commission by Music Network

Sebastian Adams (b. 1991) is an Irish composer, viola player and artistic director. He was Composer in Residence with RTÉ lyric fm in 2016/17. Recent commissions include the Irish Chamber Orchestra and both RTÉ orchestras.

Performers of his music include Crash Ensemble, Kirkos, Benyounes Quartet, Fidelio Trio, Sarah Watts, Beatrice Berrut, Carl Ludwig Hübsch, David Adams, Lina Andonovska, and many others. His music has been included at the West Cork Chamber Music Festival, Festival EuropArt (Brussels), Órtús Festival and Hilltown Festival and has been performed in Montreal, Vienna, Cologne, Potsdam, Antwerp and Görlitz.

Sebastian founded and directs Kirkos and co-directs the Fishamble Sinfonia. He also chaired the Irish Composers Collective for two years. As a violist, Sebastian has premiered works by many of Ireland's leading composers and performed as an improviser in Dublin, New York and London. He studied in Dublin (Kevin O'Connell & Jonathan Nangle) and Vienna (Karlheinz Essl).

Sebastian has kindly supplied the following programme note for his piece '2018.3':

2018.3 emerged out of some improvisations on the viola da gamba, and aims to find common ground between the sound of the viol and of the violin family. I wrote the piece straight after two very complex works, full of things that were difficult to

write and are difficult for players to learn. Perhaps in reaction to this, I made this piece into a semi-improvised work with a very open, warm sound world. It seemed natural to leave some elements of the piece open to improvisation, given that the material was worked out that way in the first place. As I worked out the material, I looped short snippets of recorded chords and played over them, trying to find shared resonances and moments of conflict.

Eugène Ysaÿe (1858 – 1931)

Violin Sonata in D minor, Op. 27 No. 3, "Ballade"

Noted as one of the foremost violinists of this day, the Belgian virtuoso Eugène-Auguste Ysaÿe exercised an important influence on French music of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Referred to by many as 'the king of the violin', Ysaÿe toured the concert halls of the world to critical acclaim and was a fundamental figure in the development of the modern style of violin playing. After hearing Joseph Szigeti (1892-1973) perform Bach's sonata for solo violin in G minor, Ysaÿe was inspired to compose violin works that depicted the evolution of the music of his time.

Written in July 1923 and published in 1924, his six sonatas for solo violin remain a source of constant technical, tonal, and musical challenge to performers. Ysaÿe dedicated each piece to a distinguished contemporary player whose individual style of performance echoes throughout each composition. The single-movement third sonata in D minor is dedicated to the Romanian violinist George Enescu (1881-1955) and subtitled, 'ballade'. Written in two parts, elements of Romanian folk music inhabit the character of this work within the harmonic language and juxtaposition of rhythmic ideas. Rhapsodic in structure, the sonata opens in the manner of a recitative, which is notated without bar lines, in the style of a free fantasia or a cadenza. The lamenting theme, falls away to make way for the technical gymnastics of an energetic triplet Allegro giusto with dotted rhythms. Here, the virtuosic mastery of the performer is truly tested. The pace briefly softens before jagged leaps and a rapid triplet figuration whirl the sonata along to its exciting conclusion.

Maurice Ravel (1875 – 1937)

Sonata for Violin and Cello

1. Allegro
2. Très vif
3. Lent
4. Vif, avec entrain

“I believe that the Sonata marks a turning point in my career. The music is stripped to the bone, harmonic charm is renounced and there is a return...to melody.” Ravel, 1928

Maurice Ravel was one of the most original and sophisticated composers of the twentieth century. His exquisitely refined part-writing and carefully considered instrumental colouring earned him the nickname, ‘the Swiss watchmaker’. When World War I erupted, the 39-year-old immediately signed up to enlist as an Air Force bombardier, but his slight frame (7st 8lb) and small stature (5ft 3) led to numerous rejections. Nonetheless, Ravel was resolute in his ambition to defend his country, and departed to St Jean de Luz, close to Ciboure, to care for wounded soldiers. After passing his driving test, Ravel then joined the motor transport corps of the Thirteenth Artillery Regiment as a truck driver. He christened his vehicle ‘Adélaïde’, after his eponymous ballet (1912). A brief stint servicing trucks in Paris followed, before setting off to the Western Front at Verdun in north-west France (1916). Here, Ravel delivered petrol supplies to the front, and rescued abandoned trucks, in oftentimes-hazardous conditions. Poor health and the death of his mother resulted in Ravel’s early discharge from service in 1917.

As Paris tried to recover from the aftermath of the ravages of war, Henry Prunières (1886-1942), editor of *La Revue musicale*, contacted Ravel in 1920, along with a selection of the leading composers of the day, to write a series of works to commemorate the memory of Claude Debussy who had died two years before. Drawing upon Kodály’s extraordinary Duo for violin and cello (1915), and Debussy’s notion of ‘depouillement’ (‘economy of means’), Ravel wrote the first movement of his sonata for violin and cello. Completed in 1922, and premiered

in Paris, the sonata surprised its audience by both the density of the exchange between the violin and cello, and the remarkable breadth of colours created by only two instruments.

Throughout the first Allegro movement, the violin and cello engage in a perfectly balanced bitonal narrative built upon two distinctly different themes. The first alternates the notes of the A minor and A major triads in a rising and falling shape, while the second is a succession of falling consecutive sevenths with a decidedly Viennese flavour. Ravel brings us back to the oscillating major/minor tonality of the introduction in the second movement, *Très vif*, via a rapid exchange of pizzicatos and bowed triplets in the violin against plucked duplets in the cello. Fragments of melodic ideas and duelling tonalities bustle about in playful scherzo style. A pensive unaccompanied cello melody introduces the third movement, *Lent*, before extending to the violin. The tempo quickens and the music becomes quite angular and dissonant before returning to the opening musical idea, now entirely in the violin over murmuring cello figures. Ravel closes his sonata with an exciting exploration of the duo's sonorous and technical limits, as the violin and cello tumble over each other in virtuosic splendour.