



CMA Performing Arts Series 2013-14



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DEPARTMENT OF PERFORMING ARTS, MUSIC, AND FILM

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Gil Shaham, Solo Violin

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Welcome to the Cleveland Museum of Art

Our Masters of the Violin series continues with Gil Shaham, a renowned master of the instrument. To hear him play J. S. Bach's Partitas and Sonatas for solo violin is a real treat given the importance of these pieces in the development of violinists. Special thanks to our series sponsors the Musart Society and Glidden Paint, as well as the Cleveland Israel Arts Connection of the Jewish Federation of Cleveland for their generous support for this performance.

Next week, the compelling young violinist Ray Chen is joined by pianist Julio Elizalde to offer a recital of works by Mozart, Sarasate, and Beethoven. And three films shown in February in conjunction with our violin series pay tribute to Jascha Heifetz, Isaac Stern, and Robert Mann of Juilliard String Quartet. Our violin series ends with two scorching masters Midori and gypsy violinist Roby Lakatos.

In March our Flamenco Festival will generate enough heat to warm up the arctic blast. It features three of the leading performers in Flamenco. On the category of "miss it at your peril" is the Spanish superstar Estrella Morente. Her masterful live shows torch the soul and leave audiences spellbound. Estrella was the singing voice of Penélope Cruz in Pedro Almodóvar's Oscar-nominated film *Volver*.

I invite you to come early to look at works of art, dine at the restaurant or cafe and refresh yourself with great performances from around the world. There's much more to come. . . glance through the Performing Arts Series brochure available in the lobby and see if anything catches your imagination for an evening in the fabulous surroundings of the Cleveland Museum of Art.



Massoud Saidpour
Curator of Performing Arts and Music



Gil Shaham, violin

Thursday, February 6, 2014 • 7:30 p.m.
Gartner Auditorium, The Cleveland Museum of Art

PROGRAM

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Sonata No. 2 in A minor, BWV 1003

Grave

Fuga

Andante

Allegro

Partita No. 2 in D minor, BWV 1004

Allemanda

Corrente

Sarabanda

Giga

Ciaccona

—INTERMISSION—

Sonata No. 3 in C Major, BWV 1005

Adagio

Fuga

Largo

Allegro assai

Mr. Shaham records exclusively for Canary Classics

For legal reasons and physical safety of the artists and for the comfort of the audience, cameras and other recording devices are not permitted in the auditorium during the performance.



NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

***Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin No. 2, in A minor, BWV 1003* – Johann Sebastian Bach**

(Born March 21, 1685, in Eisenach; died July 28, 1750, in Leipzig)

In 1717, Bach was appointed composer and music director to Prince Leopold, the ruler of the tiny German state of Anhalt-Cöthen, a post he held until 1723. At Leopold's court, Bach's musical duties were primarily unrelated to the church. Leopold was an enthusiastic and accomplished musician with a great appetite for instrumental music, who as a Calvinist, only cared about standard hymns and encouraged Bach to focus on secular music. In 1720, three years after arriving at Cöthen, Bach completed a set of six pieces, "Sei soli a violino senza Basso accompagnato," (Six Solo violin works without bass accompaniment) made up of three *Sonatas* and three *Partitas* for unaccompanied violin, which have a wide range and profundity of expression. In these same years, Bach composed the *Brandenburg Concertos*, the first volume of the *Well-Tempered-Clavier*, the six *French Suites*, and also the six *Suites for solo cello*.

As a young man, Bach was a formidable violinist, and the six compositions for unaccompanied violin are clearly the work of a composer with a profound knowledge of the instrument and its potential. As Bach was a supremely practical man, what he wrote on paper only indicated to the violinist where and when to produce certain sounds, but much of the music actually relies on what is implicit or suggested in what is written. It can only become real in the mind of the player and the listener. To understand this music requires musical imagination and memory. Bach's achievement in these works resides less in the use of multiple stops, which add tension, drama and new sonorities, than in his ability to create an illusion of polyphony out of a single, unaccompanied melodic line.



Bach drew on the Italian tradition of the church sonata (*sonata da chiesa*) in four movements for the sonatas, and the three partitas take the form of the *sonata da camera* (chamber sonata) with stylized dances movements in binary (two-part) form. The *sonata da chiesa* follows the typical slow-fast-slow-fast pattern of the time: a slow, introductory movement followed by a fugue, then a contrasting slow, lyrical movement, and a fast finale often featuring rapid passagework. The partitas all include typical Baroque dances: *allemande*, *courante*, *sarabande* and *gigue* (with some omissions) and added *galanteries* to introduce variety in each partita. The second partita concludes with an extraordinarily lengthy *chaconne* in which a single idea motivates thirty-one variations.

The still extant copy of the works, in Bach's hand, is dated 1720, (he never published it; they were first published in 1802 by Nikolaus Simrock) but that may not entirely reflect when the works were written. Bach scholar Christoph Wolff suggests that Bach began composing these violin works in Weimar (where Bach was from 1708-1717) and that he was most probably influenced by the violinist Johann Paul von Westhoff, who published a collection of solo violin partitas in 1696, the first of its kind, which may have been Bach's model. Bach's manuscript is the handwritten equivalent of what we would call a practical performing edition; it is detailed enough to include instructions to turn the pages quickly where necessary.

Later generations deeply admired the six works, but profoundly misunderstood them, too. The 18th and early 19th centuries looked at Bach's unaccompanied string music mainly as pedagogical materials for developing technique. Then, in 1852, when Robert Schumann heard the violinist Ferdinand David play the *Chaconne* from Bach's *Partita No. 2* with Felix Mendelssohn improvising an accompaniment at the piano, he was motivated to write piano accompaniments for all of Bach's sonatas and partitas to supplement the original solo texture. Although



for us in the 21st century, it may be difficult to understand why these two composers believed an accompaniment might be necessary or even desirable, it is because the violin is a linear instrument, and its strings' multiple-stopping can only suggest the actual full harmonic structure. With the multiple stops, Bach was able to provide a harmonic context, but to Schumann and Mendelssohn the music seemed to need a fuller harmony, which they tried to provide that for listeners. Actually, in writing for violin without accompaniment, Bach was challenged to include the frequently used accompanying basso continuo in the violin part, thus treating the violin as a polyphonic instrument that could produce the sense of a multi-voice texture and suggest multiple, independent voices.

As time passed, the pieces have frequently been models for solo violin pieces written by other composers including Eugène Ysaÿe and Béla Bartók. Today, Bach's *Sonatas and Partitas* continue to be an essential part of the violin repertoire, and are frequently performed and recorded.

The *Second Sonata*, in A minor, opens with a Grave movement that is an introductory free fantasy. A huge fugue movement on a tiny, two-measure subject that almost never disappears during the entire length of the movement comes second. In 1737, the scholar Johann Mattheson asked in his book, *The Essence of the Science of Melody*, "Who would believe that these few notes could be so fruitful?" The third movement, Andante, is one of Bach's lovely slow melodies, here supplied with a persistent, repeated-note figure, that is all the accompaniment it needs. Many listeners will recognize the theme as one of Bach's most well known lyric melodies. To close, there is a brilliant and lively Allegro with unusual echo effects.

Partita No. 2 in D minor, BWV 1004 – Johann Sebastian Bach

Partita No. 2 in D minor has become the most famous in the series of Sonatas and Partitas because it concludes with the *Chaconne*, a kind of gigantic supplement, longer in duration than the other four movements combined and generally



considered one of the pinnacles of the violin literature. Before this extraordinary ending come the four basic movements of the partita, all in binary form.

Partita No. 2 has no prelude. Its four dances were almost obligatory in Bach's suites. Bach titled them in a way that acknowledges French national style: an *Allemande*, (from the French word for German) one of the most popular instrumental dance forms of Baroque music, definitely a standard element in partitas; a *Sarabande*, originally from Spain; a *Courante*, originally a French dance; and a *Gigue* or jig, a dance whose origins are British. The dances of Bach's partitas all had their origins in noble ballrooms or at festivals of ordinary folk, but by this time, they had become highly stylized pieces that only distantly reflected their sources.

The Allemande, in quadruple meter, introduces some underlying harmonic chord structures that reappear in subsequent movements, helping to unify the whole partita. The word Allemande comes from the French word for German. The dance originated in the 16th century and had a moderate tempo, derived from dances popular then in Germany; it subsequently became one of the most common instrumental dance forms in the Baroque era and took its place as a standard element of the suite. In the allemande the dancers formed a line of couples, extending paired hands forward, and parading back and forth the length of the ballroom, walking three steps, then balancing on one foot.

The Courante is in triple meter; its title comes from the French: "running." A dance for couples, it was fashionable in the late 16th century in aristocratic European ballrooms, although it reputedly originated as an Italian folk dance with running steps. As a court dance, it was performed with small, back-and-forth, springing steps, later evolving into stately glides.



The Sarabande, in a slow triple meter, with characteristic emphasis on the second beat, was especially popular in the 16th and 17th centuries, initially in the Spanish colonies, before making the journey across the Atlantic to Spain, where it was controversial since it was thought rather indecent. Cervantes once said of it that it was “invented in Hell.” In the early 17th century, it spread to Italy and reached France, where it became a slow, serious processional dance in 3/2 metre. As a musical form, it is a stylized version of the dance, and characteristically appears as the third movement in a suite.

The Gigue (from the French for “jig”) is in 12/8 and features wide melodic leaping intervals. It was a popular Baroque dance that originated in the British Isles and became widespread in aristocratic circles of Europe. As a musical form, the gigue was often used in the stylized dance suites, where it usually came last. Mostly written in fugal style, the gigue retains the characteristic triple groups of notes.

The *Chaconne*, too, was once a dance. It probably originated in Mexico and was brought back to Europe in the 16th century by Spanish voyagers to the New World. Something like it is described in early literature as a wild and lascivious dance, but by the time North European composers began to borrow its musical form, its motion was slow and dignified. One of the most disciplined and demanding forms in music, the chaconne has a ground bass in triple meter over which a melodic line is repeated and varied. The chaconne in Bach’s hands becomes incredibly complex for the violin to play, because it must simultaneously not only suggest the ground bass but project the melodic variations that form above it.

Bach presumably wrote the *Chaconne*, the only one he composed, in honor of the death of his wife, indicating that it represents the whole circle of life. It is a spiritually and emotionally powerful masterpiece. Brahms was so impressed with it that he wrote to his dear friend, Robert Schumann’s wife, Clara: “On one stave, for a small



instrument, the man writes a whole world of the deepest thoughts and most powerful feelings. If I imagined that I could have created, even conceived the piece, I am quite certain that the excess of excitement and earth-shattering experience would have driven me out of my mind.” This very special movement has taken on an independent existence outside its original context; over time, it has been transcribed for many instruments.

In the lengthy *Chaconne*, filled with extensive polyphony and implied counterpoint, a single idea resonates through thirty-one variations. Its structural idea is simple: a set of continuous variations occurs over a persistently repeated harmonic progression, but Bach’s realization of the idea is very complex. The motion from the minor key to major and back to minor makes three large sections. Other kinds of subdivisions result from the occasional recurrence of the opening theme. There are some thirty variations in a subtle and seamless sequence. Bach’s depth of imagination and the creative force, which enabled him to take such a modest subject and build so great a structure from such slight material, is astounding. This work makes huge demands on both the technical skill and the artistic insights of the performer. The basic subject, heard at the start, is a fragment that is made to grow into a piece of musical architecture at once so vast and so concentrated that its expression by a single instrument is one of music’s great experiences. It is further complicated by the fact that many of the dances have a single continuous voice, but this *Chaconne*, like most of the other slower pieces in the set, introduces a remarkable stylistic challenge: Bach introduces multiple ideas and thick textures on an instrument that can produce only two tones at once. The *Chaconne* exists almost like a catalogue of musical figures and moods, all including the same repeating phrase. The whole moves toward a sublime section in a major tonality and eventually returns to the feeling and idiom of the beginning.



Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin No. 3, in C Major, BWV 1005 – Johann Sebastian Bach

The *Sonata in C Major* follows the usual traditional form and opens with an introductory Adagio, an elaborate fugue, based on a tiny rhythmic fragment that Bach develops. It is expanded in the first five measures from one to four voices, as the movement begins to grow into a huge prelude. The Adagio includes extremely florid ornamentation over a relatively simple chordal base; almost every measure contains the same dotted figuration, uniting the structure. Second comes a gigantic fugue based on the hymn “*Veni, Sancte Spiritus*” (“Come, Holy Ghost”), one of the grandest movements in all six unaccompanied violin works. In it, Bach includes an inversion of the subject (where originally a note went up or down, in the inversion it does the opposite). The beauty of this fugue, with its waves of sound, transcends the physical limitations of four strings of the violin.

After this powerful piece comes a slow interlude, an idyllic Largo. The Largo is lyrical, yet because of its continuous pattern of sixteenth notes that are often passed from one voice to another, it has a specifically instrumental texture with a single melodic line emerging from within the voices. The sonata closes with a lively, perpetual-motion movement, Allegro assai, whose phrases seem to make a series of questions and answers. This dance-like finale includes varied bowing patterns and string-crossings.

Program notes © Susan Halpern, 2014.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Gil Shaham

Avery Fisher Prize-winner Gil Shaham is one of the foremost violinists of our time, whose combination of flawless technique with inimitable warmth and generosity of spirit has solidified his legacy as an American master. Named



Musical America's “Instrumentalist of the Year,” he is sought after throughout the world for concerto appearances with leading orchestras and conductors, and regularly gives recitals and ensemble appearances on the great concert stages and at the most prestigious festivals.

The new season sees Shaham return to one of his signature works, reprising his “brilliant, almost ecstatic performance” (*Los Angeles Times*) of Korngold’s Violin Concerto with Zubin Mehta and the Vienna Philharmonic at Carnegie Hall, as well as with the Cleveland Orchestra during its annual Miami residency; John Adams and the Houston Symphony; James Conlon conducting the National Symphony; the symphony orchestras of St. Louis and Austin; and France’s Orchestre de Paris. He also takes his long-term exploration of “Violin Concertos of the 1930s”—recognized by *Musical America* as “one of the most imaginative programming concepts in years”—into a fifth season, with performances of Bartók’s Second with the Los Angeles and Atlanta symphonies, Prokofiev’s Second with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony, Barber’s with the Louisiana Philharmonic and Mexico National Symphony, and Berg’s with the Berlin Radio Symphony and the Bavarian Radio Symphony in Munich, Paris, and at Carnegie Hall. With the symphony orchestras of Detroit, Singapore, and London’s BBC, Shaham gives the world, Asian, and European premieres of a new concerto by Bright Sheng. His other upcoming orchestral collaborations include dates with his longtime friend and musical partner John Williams at the Chicago Symphony. In anticipation of his next recording project, the master violinist also returns to Bach’s Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin, taking his singular approach to these beloved works to Baltimore, Cleveland, and Italy’s Florence and Rome.

Shaham kicked off the 2012–13 season with a summer of appearances at Aspen, Tanglewood, Caramoor, the Blossom Music Festival, and the Hollywood Bowl. He went on to play “Violin Concertos of the 1930s” by Barber, Berg, Stravinsky, Britten, Bartók, and Prokofiev with the orchestras of New



York, Chicago, Boston, San Francisco, Baltimore, Kansas City, Montreal, the Orchestre de Paris, and Japan's NHK Symphony. He also returned to repertory favorites with renditions of the Brahms concerto with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, and Cincinnati Symphony; the Beethoven with the symphony orchestras of Boston and St. Louis; and Mozart's "Turkish" with the Seattle, Pittsburgh, and Toronto symphonies. During recital tours in the U.S., Europe, and Japan, the American master gave the world premiere of a solo suite written for him by William Bolcom, and pioneered recent commissions by Avner Dorman and Julian Milone.

Dorman's work also forms the centerpiece of *Nigunim: Hebrew Melodies*, a new album that Shaham recorded with his sister, pianist Orli Shaham, and released on his own Canary Classics label in June 2013. According to the *Buffalo News*, "Shaham's virtuosity on this disc is of such pyrotechnic flamboyance and ferocity and the impassioned beauty so openhearted that it bids fair to be one of the greatest of Shaham's long career and one of the greatest intimate violin recordings anyone is likely to encounter in a while." "The Shahams achieve overwhelming heights of expressiveness," agreed the *Strad* magazine. "This is a lovingly produced and presented recording of some hauntingly beautiful music from the violinist's own label."

Gil Shaham already has more than two dozen concerto and solo CDs to his name, including bestsellers that have appeared on record charts in the U.S. and abroad. These recordings have earned prestigious awards, including multiple Grammys, a Grand Prix du Disque, Diapason d'Or, and *Gramophone* Editor's Choice. His recent recordings are produced on the Canary Classics label, which he founded in 2004. They comprise Haydn Violin Concertos and Mendelssohn's Octet with Sejong Soloists; *Sarasate: Virtuoso Violin Works* with Adele Anthony, Akira Eguchi and Orquesta Sinfónica de Castilla y León; Elgar's Violin Concerto with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and



David Zinman; *The Butterfly Lovers* and Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto with the Singapore Symphony; Tchaikovsky's Piano Trio in A with Yefim Bronfman and cellist Truls Mork; *The Prokofiev Album* and *Mozart in Paris*, both with Orli Shaham; and *The Fauré Album* with Akira Eguchi and cellist Brinton Smith. Upcoming titles include Bach's complete works for solo violin and several installments of the "Violin Concertos of the 1930s" project.

Gil Shaham was born in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, in 1971. He moved with his parents to Israel, where he began violin studies with Samuel Bernstein of the Rubin Academy of Music at the age of seven, receiving annual scholarships from the America-Israel Cultural Foundation. In 1981, while studying with Haim Taub in Jerusalem, he made debuts with the Jerusalem Symphony and the Israel Philharmonic. That same year he began his studies with Dorothy DeLay and Jens Ellermann at Aspen. In 1982, after taking first prize in Israel's Claremont Competition, he became a scholarship student at Juilliard, where he worked with DeLay and Hyo Kang. He also studied at Columbia University.

Shaham was awarded an Avery Fisher Career Grant in 1990, and in 2008 he received the coveted Avery Fisher Prize. In 2012, he was named "Instrumentalist of the Year" by *Musical America*, which cited the "special kind of humanism" with which his performances are imbued. Shaham plays the 1699 "Countess Polignac" Stradivarius, and lives in New York City with his wife, violinist Adele Anthony, and their three children.

CREDITS

Mr. Shaham appears by arrangement with:

Opus 3 Artists
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UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

Estrella Morente

Wednesday, March 12, 7:30 p.m.

“Her physical authority is at one with her amazing voice. A tough act to follow” –*The Guardian*.

Spanish superstar Estrella Morente’s work has been showered with praise by critics and audiences worldwide since the release of her debut album in 2001; she has twice been nominated for a Latin Grammy. She was the voice of Penélope Cruz in Pedro Almodóvar’s Oscar-nominated film *Volver*. \$44–\$69*

*Take advantage of our buy one, get one 50% off ticket offer – use code “FLAMENCO” when purchasing tickets online, by phone or in-person.

Sufi Devotional Music: Asif Ali Khan

Wednesday, March 19, 7:30 p.m.

Asif Ali Khan has emerged as the reigning prince of the sublime traditions of the devotional qawwali music. Khan’s music can be meditative and tranceinducing, thrilling and ecstatic. To hear his voice soaring above the call-and-response choruses, rhythmic hand claps, percussion, and harmonium of his accompanying musicians is an inspiring experience. \$29–\$45

Nrityagram Dance Ensemble

Friday, April 11, 7:30 p.m.

“One of the most luminous dance events of the year” –*New York Times*.

Blending Odissi, a classical Indian dance form, with contemporary concepts, the ensemble transports viewers to enchanted worlds of magic and spirituality. Surupa Sen and Bijayini Satpathy appear with their music ensemble in their new fascinating program *Samyoga* (Sanskrit for combination, union, synthesis, conjunction of two or more heavenly bodies). \$33–\$51

Pre-concert Talk At 6:00 in Gartner Auditorium, Indian classical dance expert Rajika Puri delves into the relationships between Indian dance, music, sculpture, mythology, poetry, and painting, all illustrated with slides, storytelling, and excerpts from dances.

CMA Performing Arts Series

Visit www.clevelandart.org/performingarts for more information about performances, including audio/video samples and program notes.

MASTERS OF THE VIOLIN

L. Subramaniam

Friday, October 4, 7:30

O’Connor String Quartet

Wednesday, October 30, 7:30

Jordi Savall and Hespèrion XXI

Friday, November 1, 7:30

Masters of the Fiddle: Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy

Friday, November 15, 7:30

Kayhan Kalhor

Wednesday, November 20, 7:30

Gil Shaham, Solo Violin

Thursday, February 6, 7:30

Ray Chen and Julio Elizalde

Wednesday, February 12, 7:30

Midori

Saturday, April 12, 7:30

Roby Lakatos

Friday, May 2, 7:30

FLAMENCO FESTIVAL

Ballet Flamenco

Eva Yerbabuena

Wednesday, March 5, 7:30

Estrella Morente

Wednesday, March 12, 7:30

Tomatito

Friday, March 14, 7:30

ASIAN PERFORMANCES

PART 1: SUBCONTINENT OF INDIA

L. Subramaniam

Friday, October 4, 7:30

Sufi Devotional Music: Asif Ali Khan

Wednesday, March 19, 7:30

Nrityagram Dance Ensemble

Friday, April 11, 7:30

Mother and Child: Sujatha Srinivasan

Sunday, May 11, 2:00

MOTHER AND CHILD

State Symphony Capella of Russia

IN THE ATRIUM

Wednesday, December 4, 9:00

Mother and Child

Saturday, December 14, 2:00

Mother and Child: Sujatha Srinivasan

Sunday, May 11, 2:00