

Bach and Beyond Part 2

Program Notes

J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

Sei Sonatas e Partitas senza Basso

Bach's Sonatas and Partitas occupy a unique place within the solo violin repertoire: one of the first sets of works of the genre, they remain to this day some of the most technically and musically challenging that violinists will ever perform, for both young artists and seasoned soloists.

One wonders where Bach's inspiration came from and how he must have felt after having completed such a brilliant output. These pieces are monumental achievements. They are masterpieces of composition, of course, but beside Bach's brilliant innovations, they have a remarkable impact on each player and listener. At first hearing, the listener could be completely taken by the timelessness, the apparent contemporaneous feel, of each of these works, and in practicing them, one loses oneself in the passing of time. From a compositional perspective, the mastery of counterpoint and thematic writing has not lost its mystery; the perfection of the compositional techniques employed has superseded the passage of time. From all perspectives, these works are considered to be a pinnacle of compositional achievement. This is music that presents each listener and performer with an intense experience that cannot be replicated; requiring complete abandonment to the music and the workings of a mind so transcendent.

Midori Goto

Sonata No.1 in G minor BWV 1001

The prelude of the first sonata in G minor, like its successor in A minor, is highly ornamental with three- and four-note chords turning into sweeping runs and an abundance of arpeggio figures. The following fugue will no doubt seem familiar to anyone acquainted with Bach's organ music. This fugue was later reworked for organ as part of the Prelude and Fugue in D minor, BWV 539 as well as for lute in the Fugue, BWV 1000. The third movement is a *siciliana*, a slow dance in compound meter and often with an emphasis on dotted rhythms. Finally, the last movement takes on a *presto* tempo. It is in a binary form and maintains a consistent sixteenth-note rhythm in 3/8 time with the only exceptions being the cadences that conclude each section of the movement.

Joseph DuBose

I would like to present three outstanding composers with whom I have collaborated on previous projects such as world premieres of violin concertos written for me or collaborative past performances. I am honored to premiere their pieces in this program. The styles are varied. Creative imagination comes from J.S. Bach or its complexity might simply be a contrast to a purity of Bach works performed during this recital.

R. Groslot *Surrounded Melody for solo violin* (2017)

Three short pieces for violin solo, which I wrote in 2017.

As the title suggests, the middle section, a charming, melancholic melody, is surrounded by two virtuoso and rather obsessive sections. The middle part also has an A-B-A structure. The B section is a short contrasting pizzicato line. In the A part, the violin alternately sings and accompanies itself.

Robert Groslot

The sound universe of Belgian composer **Robert Groslot** fuses Anglo-Saxon, Germanic and Latin elements into a new and highly malleable language, building upon the achievements of the great composers of the Western heritage. Form virtuosity, sound refinement, wittiness, ‘rediscovered’ tonality and rhythmical adventure are the keystones of the music of Robert Groslot. He often draws inspiration from other art forms, especially poetry and painting. His work catalogue consists of two symphonies, many other orchestral works, 24 concertos, two chamber operas, three multimedia works, a cantata and many solo works and chamber music.

Z. Krauze *Not Too Far, Not Too Deep for solo violin* (2023)

The piece is based on the beginning of Partita No.2 by Johann Sebastian Bach. First I intended to build up something bigger, larger and more expressive. But I failed. Bach is always perfect. Maybe we, the composers should not touch his music? The courageous project created by Joanna opens this question and probably will give some answers.

The title of the piece tells, that I was not able to go further, nor deeper.

Zygmunt Krauze

Zygmunt Krauze (1938), Polish composer, pianist. Creator of unistic music, precursor of spatial-musical works, co-creator of the first happenings in Poland. Author of eight operas, instrumental concerts, chamber music. Doctor honoris causa of music universities, officer of the French Legion of Honor.

S. Korde *Evening Rag and Nocturne for solo violin (2023)*

This composition came to me in a dream as I was composing a solo piece for violin based on the North Indian *Rāg Bageshree*, which is usually played in the late evening. What I recalled of the dream was, that fragments of the melancholic *Bageshree* (which is similar to the Dorian mode but with several unique features), merged in and out of two Chopin Nocturnes almost seamlessly. In composing this piece for Joanna Kurkowicz, I have tried to capture the mood and sound of the dream sequence.

Shirish Korde

Shirish Korde's compositions include works for solo instruments, chamber ensembles, orchestra as well as several large-scale music-theater projects. Among his more frequently performed works are the violin concerto *Svara Yantra* which was commissioned and recorded by Joanna Kurkowicz, *Lalit* for cello and tabla, commissioned by Jan Müller-Szeraws, and his solo flute piece *The Tenderness of Cranes* which has been recorded by several prominent flutists. His music is influenced by Asian musical and theatrical forms. Current projects include his chamber opera *Rasa (2023)*, which will receive its premiere in April 2023 during the inaugural season of the Prior Performing Arts Center at Holycross College where he has taught for many years. Other works-in-progress include a new work for solo violin for Joanna Kurkowicz and a work for the Cassatt String Quartet.

J. S. Bach Partita No. 3 in E major, BWV 1006

The E major Partita opens with one of the most famous movements of the entire set, a sizzling Preludio: bravura torrents of practically unceasing sixteenth notes. Baroque preludes were improvisatory in spirit, if not always in actuality. This Preludio does convey a sense of bursting forth directly from the imagination, although (this being Bach) it is in fact a tightly and logically regulated piece. It is a tribute to Bach's profound appreciation of the violin that so ample a movement could be effectively crafted for an unaccompanied melody instrument; in fact, the composer would end up expanding it into an orchestral piece with obbligato organ in his Cantatas Nos. 29 and 120a. Five dance movements follow, beginning with the Loure, a slow and majestic French court dance sometimes referred to as the "Spanish gigue." (Johann Mattheson, a music theorist of Bach's time, opined that "loures, slow and dotted, exhibit a proud and arrogant nature, on account of which they are beloved by the Spanish.") Another famous movement follows: a "Gavotte en Rondeau" in which the foursquare, rustic gavotte theme alternates with contrasting episodes. A pair of contrasting Menuets come next; period performance practice called for the first to be repeated after the second, shed of its repeats at that point. The Bourrée smiles broadly, and the concluding Gigue provides an irresistible romp to the end.

Steven Ziegler