HACHIDORI DUO

Jennifer Dalmas, violin. Evgeni Raychev, cello

Program Notes by Jackson Harmeyer

Welcome to the Fourth Annual Sugarmill Music Festival! We begin our weekend of music with the Hachidori Duo, a wife-and-husband team based in Nacogdoches, Texas, and consisting of violinist Jennifer Dalmas and cellist Evgeni Raychev. They share with us a program, which with one exception, exclusively features music written by composers active in France in the years between World War I and World War II. That exception is **Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)**, the German composer whose music defines the late Baroque era. Yet, Bach is no stranger to these ranks: indeed, his music weighed heavily on the minds of many composers during the interwar years. As composers were reevaluating the nineteenth-century lineage of Romanticism, that creative force so tied to Richard Wagner and his imitators at the turn of the twentieth century, many saw a need to break with this tradition which had led their civilization directly into the horrors of World War I. They instead looked to earlier, seemingly more objective times finding solace there, whether through the music of Bach, an esteemed French contemporary of his such as Jean-Philippe Rameau or François Couperin, or the anonymous edifices of medieval modality and Renaissance polyphony. The neo-Classicism of Igor Stravinsky's middle period was a motivator for many younger French composers; certainly, this composer's intent to reinterpret past music sparked the interest of Bohuslav Martinů, the Czech composer, when he relocated to Paris in October 1923. Maurice Ravel, who was by then an older more established figure, made the discovery on his own and without the same cynicism that Stravinsky brought to his equation. Meanwhile, Arthur Honegger, though he too found inspiration in eighteenth-century music, was reluctant to cut all ties with the immediate past and also learned from the languages of Wagner, Richard Strauss, and Max Reger.

That Bach, then, would be included in such a program is no mere oversight: the works we hear this evening seek communion with the music of his era, if not always with Bach himself. Furthermore, the arrangements the Hachidori Duo performs were made by Joachim Stutschewsky, a cellist and pedagogue active, like the other composers, in the early twentieth century. They include two duets from Bach's *Clavier-Übung III* transcribed by Stutschewsky for violin and cello and published in 1947. The title, *Clavier-Übung*, translates to "keyboard exercises," and it accompanies four publications Bach made in the ten years from 1731 to 1741. It was a title that his predecessor in Leipzig, Johann Kuhnau, had also used, and it suggests the title, *Essercizi*, which his Italian contemporary, Domenico Scarlatti, had applied to a set of keyboard sonatas within these same years. The third installment of *Clavier-Übung* consists of organ music, including four duets which have since been assigned the catalog numbers, BWV 802-805. These are referred to as duets for their strict two-part counterpoint, resembling that of Bach's inventions which, likewise, often served a pedagogical purpose. Owing to their two lines, the duets have been played on two melody instruments—like violin and cello—as often as on the organ. The duets we hear this evening are the second and third in this set, paced at *Allegro* and *Moderato* and cast in F major and G major, respectively. While the F-major duet is in simple duple meter and prominently features a reoccurring triadic motive, the G-major duet is in compound quadruple meter and possesses the character of a rustic dance.

Arthur Honegger (1892-1955)

Sonatine, H. 80 for violin and cello

Arthur Honegger was a composer of Swiss parentage who spent much of his life in France where he was considered one of his generation's foremost composers. Following studies at the Paris Conservatoire, Honegger and several former classmates were dubbed *Les Six* in a newspaper article published by Henri Collet in 1920. Although Honegger shared with these colleagues a renewed interest in formal and harmonic clarity apart from the perceived excesses of impressionism, he never sympathized with the mocking wit and satire evidenced by Francis Poulenc and Darius Milhaud, especially in their initial works. This difference in aesthetics is evident at least as early as *Le roi David*, Honegger's breakthrough piece which was premiered in 1921. Honegger once commented, "My great

model is J.S. Bach… I make no attempt, as do certain anti-impressionist musicians, to return to harmonic simplicity… Bach uses the elements of tonal harmony as I should like to use the harmonic, modern, and polytonal equivalents." Honegger's appreciation for the music of his predecessors and, in particular, that of Bach endowed his nevertheless forward-looking compositions with a foundation sometimes lacking in the works of his colleagues. He was regarded as one of his era's great contrapuntists and was also revered for his choral-orchestral works and symphonic scores. Later in life, he strengthened his ties with Switzerland, composing multiple works for Paul Sacher, the leading Swiss conductor of his era and a fervent supporter of new music. These include his Second and Fourth Symphonies, the latter subtitled *Deliciæ Basiliensis* after the Swiss city where Sacher gave its premiere.

This evening we hear Honegger's Sonatine for violin and cello, composed in September 1932. Honegger suffered from depression throughout his life, and often this shows in his gravely serious music. The Sonatine, however, is a lighter affair, perhaps inspired by the birth of his daughter the month before its composition. Still, set in three movements and at fifteen minutes in length, the title "sonata" might have been more appropriate than the diminutive "sonatine." The influence of Bach is evident, not only in the two-part invention which interrupts the second movement, but also in the general contrast of contrapuntal textures with more chorale-like sections. The three movements follow the traditional fast-slow-fast scheme. The first movement, marked *Allegro*, begins in rhythmic unison between the violin and cello as they also double at two octaves. After they separate into a more imitative texture, the violin introduces the lyrical first theme. The second theme comes amid a more excited section which includes harmonically-rich quadruple stops in the cello. These textures—one tranquil, the other quite agitated—contrast throughout the movement, before the unison material returns to bring it to a close. The second movement, marked *Andante*, has been likened to a cradle song in its outer sections. This music is tender and contemplative, before it gives way to the invention at its center. The violin launches these contrapuntal exploits and is soon joined in these activities by the cello. The third movement, again marked *Allegro*, is a playful game between the two musicians which they start in call-and-response and then aim to outdo each other in feats of virtuosity. Though Honegger composed the Sonatine for his friends Albert and Anna Neuburger, its premiere was given by Honegger himself on violin and Milhaud on cello.

Bohuslav Martinů (1890-1959)

Duo No. 1, H. 157 for violin and cello

The Czech composer, Bohuslav Martinů, like Arthur Honegger, spent much of his creative career away from his homeland, though in both cases these men retained their national identities through their music. Martinů was born in the Bohemian town of Polička where his father was the bell-ringer for the local church. This meant that Martinů and his family lived in the bell tower until he was twelve and they could afford a house. This childhood experience had a profound effect on the young Martinů: it was likely his first exposure to music, and, throughout his life, he was always trying to recreate this sonic space he knew so well as a boy. The quick progress he made with violin lessons during his boyhood years encouraged the townspeople to collect funds to send him to the Prague Conservatory. These studies were incredibly unfruitful, though he became acquainted with Claude Debussy's seminal opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* and began composing in earnest while in Prague. After achieving professional success as a violinist with the Czech Philharmonic and beginning to gain an audience for his compositions, he received a scholarship to study in Paris with the composer Albert Roussel (whose piece *Elpénor*, Op. 59 we hear Sunday).

Paris became Martinů's home for nearly two decades with its vibrant and diverse music scene of the 1920s and 1930s having a major influence on his compositional aesthetic. Through Roussel, he acquired a solid training in orchestration, learning the nuances of timbre as well as the importance of line. He also encountered the music of Stravinsky, *Les Six*, and jazz. This last influence inspired quite a few unique works in the late 1920s and early 1930s, including the chamber ballet *La revue de cuisine* which incorporates the Charleston as well as a tango. The music of past centuries also began to fascinate him: even before leaving Czechoslovakia, Martinů had come under the spell of English Renaissance madrigals and, in the 1930s, he sought to extend the group dynamics of the Baroque *concerto grosso* into his compositional aesthetic. When he began composing symphonies in the 1940s at the behest of Serge Koussevitzky, the symphonic output of Ludwig van Beethoven was his ideal. Rather than exactly copy any of these diverse influences, Martinů synthesized these and others into a wholly original style which would continue to develop and expand throughout his creative career.

Martinů composed his Duo for violin and cello in 1927, four years after settling in Paris. It was written over the span of a mere few days to be played by his friends and colleagues,

violinist Stanislav Novàk and cellist Mauritz Frank. With their quartet, Novàk and Frank had given the premiere of Martinů's First String Quartet in Prague and had been asked to repeat its performance in Paris. Novàk and Frank would include the new Duo on this concert of March 17, 1927. The Duo is in two movements, the first a *Preludium* marked *Andante moderato* and the second a *Rondo* with the tempo marking *Allegro con brio*. It is a format familiar from Franz Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies* as well as the final movement of the Duo for violin and cello by another Hungarian composer, Zoltán Kodály, which had been premiered a few years prior in 1924. Borrowed by these composers from Hungarian folk music, this movement plan and the accompanying stylistic traits could represent for Martinů a pan-Eastern European culture suited to the Czech players who would be introducing this music to Parisian audiences. Rather than exaggerate exotic-sounding traits, however, as Liszt might be accused, Martinů applies these traits as a substructure upon which he can establish a thoroughly cosmopolitan piece. In the *Preludium*, Martinů builds intensity through an imitative texture, initiated by the cello. Later, the cello supplies a folkish drone above which the violin can soar freely. The *Rondo* has all the exuberance and competition of a virtuoso showpiece for two players.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Sonata for violin and cello

The music of French composer Maurice Ravel is often blindly categorized as impressionism. Associated with this aesthetic label are such traits as extended harmonies, renewed modality, non-Western scales, parallel motion, lush orchestrations, and a heightened interest in timbre. Certainly this categorization is justified in the cases of *Daphnis et Chloé* and a handful of other early works by Ravel—those compositions which, in some sense, resemble the mannerisms of his predecessor Claude Debussy even if they were spawned from a much different compositional outlook. By the outbreak of World War I, however, the traits associated with this aesthetic label had become sublimated into something far more eclectic and multifaceted. Whereas the suite *Le tombeau de Couperin* applies Baroque dances, Ravel's Piano Concerto in G looks to the vibrancy of American jazz in its outer movements and the lyricism of Mozart and Saint-Saëns in its tender middle movement. Likewise, *Tzigane*, a rhapsody for violin and orchestra, is inspired by Gypsy music, and the ballet, *La valse*, by Vienna. The wonder of Ravel's artistry is that, despite their varied influences, each work nevertheless remains in itself a unified whole and, similarly, every composition is representative of a unified body of works.

The Sonata for violin and cello, composed from 1920 to 1922, represents a turning point in Ravel's idiom when this sublimation is first evidenced. Indeed, Ravel said of the work, "The music is stripped down to the bone. The allure of harmony is rejected and increasingly there is a return of emphasis on melody." In a composition for two soloists and without the harmonic support of a piano or orchestra, melody is an absolute must as is counterpoint between these melodies. Though the lush orchestrations are gone, many impressionistic traits remain such as modality—much of the first movement is in the Dorian mode—and the emphasis on timbre, with Ravel utilizing string techniques like *pizzicato*, ricochet, harmonics, and *glissandi*. Parallel fourths and fifths are also heard in this duo sonata. The initial inspiration for the Sonata was a special issue of *La Revue Musicale* which commemorated Debussy who died in 1918. The music that became the first movement appeared here in December 1920 alongside several works by other composers also written in homage. By September 1921, Ravel had decided to expand the composition to the four-movement structure we know, though not without some difficulty. Only in February 1922 had Ravel completed the Sonata, and its premiere was given in Paris that April by violinist Hélène Jourdan-Morhange and cellist Maurice Maréchal. Ravel was not able to attend the premiere, and apparently the players struggled with the new work. Subsequent performances were more accurate and were received with more enthusiasm.

The movement plan of the Sonata for violin and cello follows a Classical fast-scherzo-slow-fast pattern. The first movement is marked, *Allegro*. The motive introduced right away by the violin suggests two ideas that linger throughout this movement and into the others. Firstly, the circular, repetitive nature of these *ostinati* and others give the movement a consistent texture which seems to be in perpetual motion, much like the familiar opening Prelude of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I*. The second idea is that of modal ambiguity: the motive arpeggiates around the pitches of both the A minor and A major triads, so that while the tonic of A is clear, its modal context is unclear. The cello, playing high in its range, introduces the movement's first theme as the violin repeats its motive for a third time; the violin soon repeats the theme. The violin and cello continue to alternate melodic and arpeggiated, accompaniment materials throughout the course of the movement, rarely slowing in pace. Overall, there is a suggestion of sonata form, and for a time the tonal center shifts to the would-be subdominant key on D.

The second movement, marked *Très vif*, has the same aspects of perpetual motion and modal ambiguity as the first. It begins with both instruments playing *pizzicato*, before the violin launches into nervous figures in *arco*. In the fierce game which develops between the two instruments, there is a percussive intensity and playful sarcasm not heard in the first movement. Just as the competition seems at its most intense, familiar material returns from the preceding movement, and momentarily peace returns too. The lyrical third movement, marked *Lent*, is elegiac in mood and contrapuntal in design. The cello is given an extended solo at its opening, and, when the violin enters, it reiterates the cello's initial melody while the cello gains another, complementary melody. Still tense and controlled, the movement's pace, however, has slowed greatly from that of the second movement. Its form is ternary with material from the opening returning to conclude the movement. The cello again initiates the fourth movement, marked *Vif, avec entrain*, this time with a motive which possesses a bouncier, enlivened feel. There returns some of the competitive spirit of the second movement, though the game seems to be friendlier this time. The main thematic material reoccurs four times with three contrasting episodes, according to a lively rondo form. Toward the center, material from the first movement is heard once more with a slighter echo at the work's conclusion.

About Jackson. Jackson Harmeyer graduated with his Master of Music in Music History and Literature from the University of Louisville in May 2019 upon the completion of his thesis, "Liminal Aesthetics: Perspectives on Harmony and Timbre in the Music of Olivier Messiaen, Tristan Murail, and Kaija Saariaho." He has shared this pioneering research through presentations given at the American Musicological Society South-Central Chapter's annual meetings in Asheville, NC and Sewanee, TN and at the University of Tennessee Contemporary Music Festival in Knoxville, TN. During his studies in Louisville, he was the recipient of the Gerhard Herz Music History Scholarship and was employed at the Dwight D. Anderson Memorial Music Library where he did archival work for the unique Grawemeyer Collection which houses scores, recordings, and documentation for over five thousand entries by the world's leading contemporary composers. Previously, Jackson graduated *summa cum laude* from the Louisiana Scholars' College in Natchitoches, LA. Then, from 2014 to 2016, Jackson served as director of the successful chamber music series, Abendmusik Alexandria. He has remained a concert annotator and organizer, co-directing the annual Sugarmill Music Festival. The scholarly writings he has produced for this festival have even attracted the attention of the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities. Aside from his studies, he is a composer, choral singer, and award-winning nature photographer.

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