

PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

PREVIEW
NOTES

LEONIDAS KAVAKOS, *violin*

ENRICO PACE, *piano*

Monday, February 4 – 7:30 PM

Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center

PROGRAM

Violin Sonata in A Minor, Op. 23

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born: December 16, 1770, in Bonn, Germany

Died: March 26, 1827, in Vienna Austria

Composed: 1800-1801

Duration: 20 minutes

Beethoven scholar Lewis Lockwood describes the Violin Sonata in A Minor as “the wayward stepchild among Beethoven’s violin sonatas, and perhaps among all his chamber music.” The sonata’s feverish first movement is marked by an extensive middle section. The second movement is marked at a jolly walking pace is fittingly witty and enigmatic. The fiery and virtuosic finale is broken apart by pensive moments of stillness.

Violin Sonata in F Minor, Op. 80

Sergei Prokofiev

Born: April 23, 1891, in Sontsivka, Ukraine

Died: March 5, 1953, in Moscow, Russia

Composed: 1938-46

Duration: 32 minutes

Prokofiev wrote two sonatas for violin and piano. He started working on the Sonata No. 1 in F Minor, Op. 80, in 1938 but set it aside, finishing it nearly a decade later in 1946 after his second sonata was already published. Dedicated to the great violinist David Oistrakh who provided the impetus for its completion and who performed its premiere, it is an incredible virtuoso work, darker and more serious than the second sonata (originally for flute and violin). It was apparently influenced by a Handel sonata that Prokofiev admired, and its substantial four-movement design follows the Baroque plan of slow-fast-slow-fast.

Rhapsody No. 1

Béla Bartók

Born: March 25, 1881 in Nagyszentmiklós, Hungary

Died: September 26, 1945, in New York, NY

Composed: 1928

Duration: 12 minutes

Among Bartók's music most overtly redolent of folk influences are his two Rhapsodies for Violin, into which he incorporated melodies from Romania, Hungary and (in No. 2) Ruthenia, the eastern Czech region bordering Ukraine. Each of these works consists of a pair of movements whose style and character derive from the Hungarian national dance, the *Czardas*, which alternates a slow section (*Lassú*) and a fast one (*Friss*). Bartók settled on the generic title *Rhapsody* for these pieces, a term that Franz Liszt had originally borrowed from literature for his series of works spawned by the *Czardas* to describe their free structure and quick contrasts.

Violin Sonata in A Minor, Op. 25

George Enescu

Born: August 19, 1881, in Iiveni, Romania

Died: May 4, 1955, in Paris, France

Composed: 1926

Duration: 25 minutes

Like Bartók and Kodály in Hungary, and Vaughan Williams in England, Enescu drank deeply at the well of his country's folkloric tradition, drawing from it both inspiration and a rich source of musical ideas. Laid out in three movements, the sonata bears an undercurrent of bittersweet melancholy that acts as an emotional thread reflecting the memorial intent of the music. At the same time, it is an unmistakable celebration of Romania's fertile musical heritage.