



Maxim Vengerov Roustem Saïtkoulov

Maxim Vengerov / *Violin*
Roustem Saïtkoulov / *Piano*

Sunday Afternoon, January 28, 2018 at 4:00
Hill Auditorium
Ann Arbor

45th Performance of the 139th Annual Season
139th Annual Choral Union Series

This afternoon's recital is supported by the Oscar Feldman Endowment Fund and Mainstreet Ventures.

Media partnership provided by WGTE 91.3 FM and WRCJ 90.9 FM.

The Steinway piano used in this afternoon's recital is made possible by William and Mary Palmer.

Special thanks to Tom Thompson of Tom Thompson Flowers, Ann Arbor, for his generous contribution of floral art for this afternoon's recital.

Mr. Vengerov appears by arrangement with FAS Arts Management.

In consideration of the artists and the audience, please refrain from the use of electronic devices during the performance.

The photography, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance is prohibited.

PROGRAM

Johannes Brahms

F-A-E Sonata (excerpt)

Scherzo

Brahms

Sonata No. 3 in d minor, Op. 108

Allegro

Adagio

Un poco presto e con sentimento

Presto agitato

Intermission

Maurice Ravel

Violin Sonata No. 2 in G Major

Allegretto

Blues: Moderato

Perpetuum mobile: Allegretto

Heinrich Ernst

Theme and Variations on “The Last Rose of Summer”

Niccolò Paganini

Cantabile for Violin and Piano in D Major, Op. 17

Paganini, Arr. Fritz Kreisler

Variations on “I Palpiti,” Op. 13

F-A-E SONATA (EXCERPT) (1853)

Johannes Brahms

Born May 7, 1833 in Hamburg, Germany

Died April 3, 1897 in Vienna

UMS premiere: Violinist Franco Gulli and pianist Enrica Cavallo; November 1969 in Rackham Auditorium.

Snapshots of History...In 1853:

- Levi Strauss & Co is founded in the US
- The world's first public aquarium opens at the London Zoo
- An outbreak of yellow fever kills 7,790 in New Orleans

On September 30, 1853, a shy young man rang the doorbell at Robert and Clara Schumann's house in Düsseldorf. The Schumann's eldest child, the 12-year-old Marie, opened the door and told the visitor that her parents were not home. The next morning, the young man returned, and the rest is history. Before long, Brahms was part of the Schumann household. After many hours spent talking and making music, Schumann was convinced that a new musical genius had arrived, and he made a public announcement in his article "Neue Bahnen" (New Paths), published in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (New Music Journal), the periodical he had founded almost 20 years earlier.

Soon after the article came out, Schumann invited Brahms and another composer friend, Albert Dietrich (1829–1908), to join forces with him in the writing of a violin sonata for Joseph Joachim (1831–1907) who, at 22, had already been celebrated as a virtuoso for a whole decade. In fact, Joachim, a friend of both Brahms and Schumann, was the one who sent Brahms to Düsseldorf in the first place.

In this composite sonata, Dietrich wrote the first movement; Schumann the second and fourth; the third-movement scherzo fell to Brahms. All four movements featured the motif F-A-E, the first letters of a phrase that Joachim adopted as his personal motto: *Frei aber einsam* (free but lonely). The manuscript was handed to Joachim at the end of October. As Jan Swafford tells the story in his 1997 biography of Brahms:

Among invited guests for the occasion were Gisela von Arnim, from whom Joachim had recently become free but lonely, and her celebrated mother, Bettina — writer, friend of Beethoven and Goethe...Dressed in peasant costume, Gisela began the evening by presenting the sonata to Joachim, hidden in a basket of flowers. For him that must have been a wrenching moment. But he went through the ceremony, expressing delight when he found the piece amid the flowers. He was asked to play it through with Clara...

The "Scherzo" Brahms contributed to this joint project fully justifies Schumann's enthusiasm for his

young friend. The music is full of fire and shows several hallmarks of what would become Brahms's mature style: the interplay between 6/8 and 3/4 time and a number of novel harmonic turns announce a new voice that cannot be mistaken for any other. After a dramatic and passionate main section, the central trio — in a new key and new meter — strikes a very different tone: tender and dreamlike, it seems to come from a different world. According to classical conventions, the fiery scherzo is repeated, but as a final surprise, Brahms appended a coda in C Major, based on the trio melody but of a completely different character: what was gentle and lyrical before has become majestic and grandiose.

SONATA NO. 3 IN D MINOR, OP. 108 (1888)

Brahms

UMS premiere: Violinist Maud Powell with pianist Waldemar Liachowsky; November 1911 in University Hall.

Snapshot of History...In 1888:

- The Washington Monument opens to the public in Washington, DC
- Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh cuts off the lower part of his own ear during a bout of mental illness
- The Detroit Wolverines, a National League baseball team founded in 1881, disbands after taking their lone pennant in 1887

The last of Brahms's three sonatas for violin and piano and the only one to contain four movements rather than three, the d-minor Sonata was written between 1886 and 1888. It was published in 1889 with a dedication to the composer's friend, Hans von Bülow, the great pianist and conductor.

The first and last movements of this sonata are highly dramatic and impassioned, framing an "Adagio" of intense emotionality and a lively and sparkling scherzo-type movement (Brahms did not call it a scherzo). Brahms had no sooner finished this sonata than he sent it off to two of his closest friends, the composer Heinrich von Herzogenberg and his pianist wife Elisabet. After playing through the sonata with violinist Amanda Röntgen — (and, indeed, committing the whole piece to memory in just a few days), Elisabet von Herzogenberg wrote three long letters to Brahms in which she described her reactions to the new work almost measure by measure. Instead of attempting a new commentary, it will be best to look at it with the eyes of the first person to open the score, who happened

to be a musician of rare sensitivity and intelligence. Her comments can inspire us to hear this now-familiar masterpiece as if it were the first time:

My dear Friend,

This 30th of October will long be green in my memory. I cannot tell you how I felt when the dear, fat roll of music was brought in this morning. We were still at breakfast, and my heart beat fast as I cautiously extracted the kernel from its shell. Heinrich wanted to tear the manuscript from me; but I held it tight, and ran straight up to Amanda's room, where — more or less mal coiffées [with disheveled hair], but full of joyous expectancy — we sat down to play it at once.

We got into the spirit of it immediately, feeling your spell upon us. Our eyes flew from bar to bar, our zeal and delight grew from page to page, our fingers tackled every difficulty with such success that I hardly knew myself. We grasped each successive beauty, feeling quite at home in spite of the startling sense of novelty which a first movement invariably produces.

At the opening of the development we quite caught our breath. How new it is, with that exquisite pedal-note absorbing everything! How our surprise and delight grew and grew as the 'A' showed no sign of giving way, but held its own through all the glorious tissue woven above it! How my left thumb reveled in the pressure it had to exert!...How happy, how happy this piece makes me!...

It is still too new to write quite fully, but I must dwell on one or two points; the delicious tranquillo of the coda [in the first movement], and the shorter pedal-note at the end, emphasizing the structure of the sonata form and welding the two pedal-notes, 'A' and 'D,' into a golden ring...How it vibrates with emotion, how it grows in intensity and the ritenuto, reaching its climax where the pedal-note ends and the violin becomes chromatic! When we reached that point we exchanged comprehensive looks, we three, and our looks would have told you much that you would like to hear...What delights me so in this sonata is its wonderful unity. The four movements are so unmistakably members of one family. One purpose dominates them, one color scheme embraces them all; yet their vitality finds expression in such various ways.

VIOLIN SONATA NO. 2 IN G MAJOR (1927)

Maurice Ravel

Born March 7, 1875 in Ciboure, Basses-Pyrénées, France

Died December 28, 1937 in Paris

UMS premiere: Violinist Zino Francescatti and pianist Artur Balsam;
March 1955 in Hill Auditorium.

Snapshots of History...In 1927:

- The Harlem Globetrotters play their first-ever road game in Illinois
- The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences is founded
- Charles Lindbergh makes the first solo, non-stop, transatlantic airplane flight

It is not universally known that Ravel wrote not one but two violin sonatas. An early sonata in one movement, from Ravel's student days, was discovered and published for the first time in 1975, the centenary of the composer's birth. Therefore, the familiar sonata may now be referred to as No. 2.

Incidentally, these two works mark the beginning and the end, respectively, of Ravel's chamber music output. They were also played for the first time by the same violinist, George Enescu. In 1897, the great Romanian musician was a 16-year-old musical prodigy and Ravel's fellow student at the Paris Conservatoire; by 1927, he was a celebrated violinist and composer dividing his time between Bucharest and Paris.

Enescu's most famous violin student, Yehudi Menuhin, was present as a boy of 11 when Ravel first showed Enescu his new sonata in 1927. As Menuhin later recalled in his autobiography *Unfinished Journey*, he was having a lesson with his teacher when:

Maurice Ravel suddenly burst into our midst, the ink still drying on a piano-and-violin sonata which he had brought along...Enescu, chivalrous man as he was, craved my indulgence...then, with Ravel at the piano, sight-read the complex work, pausing now and then for elucidation. Ravel would have let matters rest there, but Enescu suggested that they have one more run-through, whereupon he laid the manuscript to one side and played the entire work from memory.

The sonata became universally famous (and, in some quarters, infamous) for its central movement, "Blues." Certainly no one had ever included a blues in a violin sonata before, and Ravel didn't endear himself to the conservative critics by this move. Yet he had been fascinated by jazz for the better part of a decade before this sonata and, unlike the conservative critics, did not think that jazz was incompatible with European classical music. A few years before the sonata, he had composed the opera *L'enfant et les sortilèges* (The Child

and the Enchantments), in which the teapot sings a ragtime and the china cup a foxtrot. In the “Blues” movement of the sonata Ravel gave a perfect rendition of the typical melodic and harmonic turns of the blues, while at the same time remaining French through and through — a true stylistic miracle. But the jazz influence is by no means restricted to this movement.

The sonata opens with an “Allegretto” in which the piano plays a graceful melody (right hand only, without accompaniment). The second motif consists of a single note repeated in a striking rhythmic pattern, which one recent commentator described as “a mischievously percussive little figure from the same ragtime background as Debussy’s *Minstrels*.” The development of these two distinct musical ideas is kept fairly simple throughout. Towards the end of the movement a soaring violin melody is superimposed on the materials heard previously, to help return the music to the idyllic state of the beginning.

On the other side of the “Blues” movement is a finale in perpetual motion that brings back some motifs from earlier movements such as the ragtime-like figure from the “Allegretto” and one of the characteristic licks from the “Blues.” The uninterrupted 16th-notes of the violin start in a restricted melodic range, but they soon expand to include wider and wider *arpeggios* and higher and higher positions on the instrument. The energy constantly increases all the way to the end.

THEME AND VARIATIONS ON “THE LAST ROSE OF SUMMER” (CA. 1864)

Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst

Born June 8, 1812 in Brünn, Austrian Empire (now Brno, Czech Republic)

Died October 8, 1865 in Nice, France

UMS premiere: Ruggiero Ricci; March 1986 in Rackham Auditorium.

Snapshots of History...In 1864:

- Abraham Lincoln is re-elected President of the US
- The Michigan Car Company is founded to manufacture railroad cars for the Union Army
- US Congress passes the Coinage Act of 1864 requiring the words *In God We Trust* be placed on all US coins

Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst, born 32 years after Paganini, may well be regarded as the Italian virtuoso's truest heir in the musical world. His technical abilities certainly matched those of his predecessor, and he pursued an all-too-brief but certainly brilliant performing career all over Europe, just as Paganini had done a few decades earlier.

One of Ernst's crowning achievements was the publication, in 1864, of six unaccompanied etudes for unaccompanied violin. The last of these is a set of variations on the famous Irish ballad “The Last Rose of Summer,” by Sir John Stevenson on words by Thomas Moore. The simple tune is glorified with *arpeggios* (broken chords) played at lightning speed, extremely difficult double and triple stops, and much more. The connections with Paganini are obvious, and Ernst shows himself equal to his great model in every way.

CANTABILE FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO IN D MAJOR, OP. 17 (1822–24)

Niccolò Paganini

Born October 27, 1782 in Genoa, Italy

Died May 27, 1840 in Nice, France

UMS premiere: Violinist Elmar Oliveira with pianist Robert McDonald; October 1982 in Rackham Auditorium.

Snapshots of History...In 1824:

- Simón Bolívar is proclaimed dictator of Peru
- None of the four US presidential candidates gain a majority of electoral votes; the election is held by the US House of Representatives
- The Montparnasse Cemetery is established in Paris

178 years after his death, Paganini is still remembered as the greatest technical innovator of violin playing who accomplished things on the instrument that no one would have thought possible. Yet both as a performer and a composer, he was much more than a musical acrobat. He had a great gift for melody and crafted his works with great care for structure.

Paganini's second favorite instrument after the violin was the guitar (he was also a virtuoso guitar player), and most of his violin pieces, if they have an accompaniment at all, use the guitar. The violin-piano combination is the exception rather than the rule in his voluminous output; for that reason alone, *Cantabile, Op. 17* deserves special attention. Not published until 1922, it is a heartfelt instrumental aria with lavish ornamentations, reminding us that Paganini's musical style had a lot in common with the operatic *bel canto* tradition of his time.

VARIATIONS ON “I PALPITI,” OP. 13 (CA. 1819)

Paganini

Arr. Fritz Kreisler

Born February 2, 1875 in Vienna

Died January 29, 1962 in New York, New York

UMS premiere: Violinist Mischa Elman with pianist Walter H. Golde;
December 1915 in Hill Auditorium.

Snapshots of History...In 1819:

- Thomas Jefferson founds the University of Virginia
- The African Slave Trade Patrol is founded to stop the slave trade on the coast of West Africa
- Alabama is admitted as the 22nd US state

I Palpiti is a set of variations on Tancredi's aria "*Di tanti palpiti*" (From all those heartbeats) from Rossini's 1813 opera *Tancredi*, originally written for violin and orchestra and arranged here by the great Austrian violinist Fritz Kreisler. The Rossini aria, a huge hit at the time, inspired many instrumental transcriptions and arrangements. Paganini's variations, of course, pull out all the stops, if we can use a metaphor borrowed from another instrument. Particularly breathtaking is the second variation, all in double harmonics. At the same time, *I Palpiti* (The Heartbeats), as the piece has come to be known, retains a calm elegance where the beauty of Rossini's melody always shines through all the dazzling goings-on.

Program notes by Peter Laki.

ARTISTS

Universally hailed as one of the world's finest musicians, and often referred to as the greatest living string player in the world today, Grammy Award-winner **Maxim Vengerov** also enjoys international acclaim as a conductor and is one of the most in-demand soloists.

Born in 1974, he began his career as a solo violinist at the age of five, won the Wieniawski and Carl Flesch international competitions at ages 10 and 15 respectively, studied with Galina Tourchaninova and Zakhar Bron, made his first recording at the age of 10, and went on to record extensively for high-profile labels including Melodia, Teldec, and EMI, earning Grammy and *Gramophone* "Artist of the Year" awards.

In 2007 he followed in the footsteps of his mentor, the late Mstislav Rostropovich, and turned his attention to conducting and in 2010 was appointed the first chief conductor of the Gstaad Festival Orchestra. June 2014 saw Mr. Vengerov graduate with a Diploma of Excellence from the Moscow Institute of Ippolitov-Ivanov with professor Yuri Simon and he has since enrolled in a further two-year program of opera conducting. He conducted his first performances of *Eugene Onegin* at the Helicon Theatre Moscow in December.

In the 2016–17 season, Mr. Vengerov returned to Australia to open the season of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and conducted the season finale of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, with whom he is artist-in-residence this year. Further guest conducting engagements included the RTE Orchestra Dublin, Munich Philharmonic, and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras.

The current season includes a return to Carnegie Hall with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and a premiere of a new concerto at the Beijing Music Festival written for him by the renowned composer Qigang Chen. He will also tour Europe, China, and the US in recital.

As one of Mr. Vengerov's greatest passions is the teaching and encouraging of young talent, he has held various teaching positions around the world and is currently ambassador and visiting professor of the International Menuhin Music Academy in Switzerland (IMMA) and the Polonsky Visiting Professor of Violin at the Royal College of Music in London.

In 1997, Mr. Vengerov became the first classical musician to be appointed International Goodwill Ambassador by UNICEF. He plays the ex-Kreutzer Stradivari (1727).

Born in Kazan (Russian Federation), **Roustem Saïtkoulov** enjoys the great Russian school of piano. He entered the Kazan Conservatory at the age of six and later went on to study with Elisso Virsaladze at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow where he received his soloist's diploma. He furthered his studies at the Munich Music High School.

He is the prize winner at numerous international competitions, including the Busoni Competition, Bolzano, Italy; UNISA (University of South Africa) Competition, Pretoria; Concours Géza Andà, Zurich, Switzerland; Marguerite Long Competition, Paris; first prize in the Rome Piano Competition, and grand prize of the Montecarlo World Piano-Masters.



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UMS ARCHIVES

This afternoon's recital marks **Maxim Vengerov's** third appearance under UMS auspices, following his UMS debut in March 1991 with the Israel Philharmonic conducted by Zubin Mehta at Hill Auditorium. He most recently appeared at UMS in February 1999 in a recital at Hill Auditorium with pianist Alexander Markovich. UMS welcomes **Roustem Saïtkoulov** as he makes his UMS debut today.

Mr. Saïtkoulov frequently performs with the world's renowned orchestras, including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra London, Monte Carlo Philharmonic Orchestra, Prague Symphony Orchestra, Sinfonia Varsovia, RAI Symphony Orchestra Torino, Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, Tokyo New City Orchestra, and Beijing Symphony Orchestra.

His concerts and recitals take him all over the world, including appearances in Russia (International House of Music, Moscow and Philharmonia Hall of St. Petersburg), China (NCPA Beijing and Guangzhou Opera House), Japan (Great Hall of the Metropolitan Art Space and Osaka Symphony Hall), Chile (Frutillar), Argentina (Teatro Colón and CCNK), Mexico (Palacio de Bellas Artes), Australia (Sydney Opera House), the US, Canada, South Africa, and throughout many of the most important venues in Europe.

He is invited to the world's leading festivals including Montreux, La Roque d'Anthéron, Yokohama, Bologna, Merano, Brescia-Bergamo, Edinburgh, Piano aux Jacobins (Toulouse, France), Festival de Radio France-Montpellier, Menton, and Printemps des Arts de Montecarlo. His music is subsequently broadcast on France Musique, Radio Classique, DRS 2 (Switzerland), NDR Kultur (Germany), as well as on television programs in France (France 2, France 3, and Mezzo) and on the international European channel 3 SAT.

He has recorded several solo piano albums for EMI Classics and Dinemec Classics. In 2012, Master Chord Records released an album of the two Chopin piano concertos with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Grzegorz Nowak. In 2014, IndéSens issued his recording of Shostakovich's First Piano Concerto.

Mr. Saïtkoulov has become Maxim Vengerov's privileged partner, and their duo is acclaimed by critics all over the world's most prestigious concert halls.

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Roustem Saïtkoulov.*

MAY WE ALSO RECOMMEND...

- | | |
|------|--------------------------------------|
| 2/3 | Estonian National Symphony Orchestra |
| 2/14 | Emmanuel Pahud |
| 4/22 | Murray Perahia |

Tickets available at www.ums.org.

ON THE EDUCATION HORIZON...

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 2/13 | Artist Interview: Janai Brugger
(Watkins Lecture Hall, Moore Building, 1100 Baits Drive, 2:30 pm) |
| 2/16–17 | <i>The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess: A Symposium</i>
(Gallery, Hatcher Graduate Library, 913 S. University Avenue)
<i>Please visit smt.d.umich.edu/Gershwin for full schedule details and
to register.</i> |
| 2/19 | FRAME: A Salon Series on Visual Art, Performance, and Identity
(202 S. Thayer Street Building, Atrium, 7:00 pm) |

Educational events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.