



Jonathan Koh, violoncello

Native of Chicago, Illinois, Jonathan began his cello studies at the age of five. His teachers include Hans Jorgen Jensen of Northwestern University and Johann Lee of Seoul National Symphony Orchestra. Jonathan made his debut at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C. at the tender age of fifteen playing the Elgar Cello Concerto. Soon after, he soloed with numerous orchestras, including the Evanston Symphony, Springfield Symphony, San Jose Symphony, Harper Symphony and Korean-American Youth Orchestras. He has been a featured soloist in Tchaikovsky's Rococo Variations,

Kabalevsky Concerto, Lab Concerto, Saint-Saëns Concerto, and Shostakovich Concerto. In 2001, Jonathan was invited to participate in the prestigious Leonard Rose International Competition as well as other international competitions. His achievements include receiving top prizes at the Hellam International Competition, Society of American Musicians, Midwest Young Artists, AACS National String Competition, Donna Reed Foundation, National ARTS Foundation, Yonsei University Young Artists, and others. He also had success at the Julius Stulberg International Competition, Irving Klein International Competition, Johansen International Competition, and the Kingsville International Competition.

He has performed under Lorin Mazel of the New York Philharmonic, Leonard Slatkin of the National Symphony, Apo Hsu of the Springfield Symphony and among others. He also served as the principal cellist of the Texas Music Festival Orchestra. In November 2002, Jonathan performed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, premiering Krzysztof Penderecki's fourth symphony (*Adagio*) as well as playing Richard Strauss' *Also Sprach Zarathustra*.

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2004 Sejong Cultural Festival

Spring Gala Concert

Sejong Piano Trio

Myunghee Chung, piano

Kyung Sun Lee, violin

Jonathan Koh, cello

Saturday, 7:30 p.m.

April 17, 2004 (Saturday)

Recital Hall

The Fine Arts Center

Northeastern Illinois University

Chicago, Illinois, USA



PROGRAM

Sonata No. 5 for Piano and Violin in F major, Op. 24, “Spring”

1. *Allegro*
2. *Adagio molto espressivo*
3. *Scherzo: Allegro molto*
4. *Rondo, Allegro ma non troppo*

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Kol Nidrei for Violoncello and Piano, Op. 47 (1881)

Max Bruch
(1838-1920)

Glisses for Solo Violincello

Isang Yun
(1917-1995)

Andante Spianato and Grande Polonaise in E-flat major, Op. 22

- Andante spianato: Tranquillo*
Polonaise: Allegro molto

Frédéric Chopin
(1810-1849)

— *Intermission (15 minutes)* —

Vocalise, Op. 34, No. 14

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)

Zigeunerweisen (Gypsy’s Air), Op. 20, No. 1

Pablo de Sarasate
(1844-1908)

Trio No. 1 for Violin, Cello and Piano in D minor, Op. 49

1. *Molto allegro ed agitato*
2. *Andante con moto tranquillo*
3. *Scherzo: Leggiero e vivace*
4. *Finale, Allegro assai appassionato*

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809-1847)

Sejong Piano Trio

Myunghee Chung, piano
Kyung Sun Lee, violin
Jonathan Koh, violoncello



Myunghee Chung, piano

Born in Korea, Myunghee Chung was a child prodigy who started piano at seven with late Jung-Ju Oh. Pianist Artur Schnabel visiting Korea in July 1966 hearing her encouraged her to become a concert pianist. Ms. Chung started to gain public recognition when she won the first prize at the prestigious 516 National Competition in Korea in 1973. Since then, she was awarded with many international awards, including the first prizes at the 1976 Chicago Symphony Young Performers’ Competition and at the 1977 William Kapell International Piano Competition. She also received prizes at the 1980 Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition and the 1981 Busoni International Piano Competition, Bolzano, Italy.

She studied at the Juilliard School with Martin Canin, and earned her Bachelor and Masters degrees in music. Dr. Chung continued her study with Gary Graffman and Andre Watts at the Manhattan School of Music and received her Doctor of Musical Arts degree.

Dr. Chung has been performing widely as a soloist and a chamber musician throughout the United States, Mexico, Europe, and the Far East. She performed with such orchestras as Chicago Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Portland Symphony, Concertante di Chicago, and New Philharmonic Orchestra. In addition to her active solo performances, she has been performing as a member of the Seraphin Trio and collaborating with violinist David Kim and Eugenia Alkanova. Dr. Chung is on a faculty of University of Wisconsin, Whitewater in charge of the Keyboard Program. Dr. Chung’s recordings are available from the Fontana Classics.

Kyung Sun Lee, violin

Since winning numerous international violin competitions in the early 90s, Ms. Lee has been enjoying ever-increasing popularity as a violinist in great demand.

Ms. Lee has been a guest artist with the Montreal Symphony, the Erie Philharmonic, the Baltimore and the Gainesville Chamber Orchestras, the Jupiter Symphony in New York City, the Munich Radio Orchestra and the Seoul Philharmonic.

Lee received degrees from Seoul National University and the Peabody Conservatory. She also attended the Juilliard School in the professional studies program. Her teachers include Sylvia Rosenberg, Robert Mann, Dorothy DeLay and Hyo Kang. Ms. Lee is an Assistant Professor at the Oberlin Conservatory, Oberlin, Ohio.

Her CD releases include: *Salut d’Amour* with pianist HaeSun Paik on EMI and *Spanish Heart* with German pianist Peter Schindler and guitarist Sung-Ho Chang on Good International. Lee also recorded the sonatas of Bartok, Debussy, and Prokofiev; and *Points Unknown* including show pieces and shorter works. In July of 2002 she recorded with cellist Tilmann Wick in Germany, and taught at the Aria Music Festival in Ontario, Canada.

Ms. Lee plays *Joseph Guarnerius*, circa 1723, a masterpiece from Cremona, Italy.



Program Notes

Felix Mendelssohn: Trio No. 1 in D minor for Violin, Violoncello and Piano, Op. 49

Mendelssohn wrote two trios for piano, violin and cello. The Trio No. 1 in D minor, Op. 49, of 1839 is still the more popular owing to its melodious character, unencumbered by learned, *i.e.*, contrapuntal texture. In fact, it is somewhat looked down upon by learned musicians as “too light?” It would seem, however, that healthy, spontaneous melodic character and brilliant, effective part-writing are not to be disdained, and that scholarly counterpoint and a more ascetic style do not necessarily make a better composition.

The main theme, a broad elegiac melody of a long arch—surpassed only by the long melodies of Brahms, and destined to die out completely after him—carries the movement irresistibly forward, and drives it, together with the second theme in A major, hardly permitting the taking of breath, through the fine development section and the recapitulation to its end. Its scoring is exceedingly brilliant, and it won the enthusiastic acclaim of Schumann.

The *Andante con moto tranquillo* is also rather sad, but contrasts well with the first movement. While the first is in three-time, and rushing on, the *Andante* is in common time and takes a breath after each period. There is a charming wistfulness and resignation in its tone which becomes impassioned in the middle part, to return and die away. The *Scherzo* takes us into the fairy world of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Mendelssohn frequently returned to that world for the musical expression of which he had a special talent, and predilection, but it can be said that this scherzo stands on the top of the list of this species, along with the scherzo of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* and that of the Octet.

The finale has the tempo marking *Allegro assai appassionato*. But the first movement, *Molto allegro ed agitato*, is really more *appassionato*, this movement being based on a dance theme, twice interrupted by a yearning melody. While it is a brilliant movement, the dance theme is perhaps somewhat overstated.

(Prepared by H. H. Chung)

Ludwig van Beethoven: Sonata No. 5 for Piano and Violin in F major, Op. 24, “Spring”

The *Spring* Sonata was composed shortly after the First Symphony. The work undoubtedly owes its nickname to the magical, portentous introduction to the first movement *Allegro*, a theme which inevitably calls to mind the gentle rustling of a balmy spring breeze, characterized as it is by the breathtaking beauty of a garland of flowers. The bridge section leading to the statement of the second theme is quite surprising. It follows a descending line and serves to give added emphasis to the soaring qualities of the second theme. The development, in which these two themes are elaborated with great imagination, is remarkable for its particularly limpid atmosphere. Here, too, one cannot help being struck by the joyous springtime mood.

The second movement *Adagio molto espressivo* is based on a single melody, Mozartian in character, which the piano ornaments with fine filigree work in the recapitulation. The theme is heard once again, this time in a wistful minor, in the middle section.

The third movement *Scherzo: Allegro molto* is a short, lively scherzo. The syncopated “follow-up” by the violin, after the fanfare-like chords in the piano is wittily ingenious: The trio of this scherzo is a magnificent miniature in which the composer achieves miracles with the aid of simple scale figures.

The rondo theme of the last movement *Rondo; Allegro ma non troppo* has something jovial and confidential about it. The alternation of major and minor in the second theme is most striking. It is difficult to imagine anything more enchanting in Beethoven's entire work than the introduction to the rondo theme in D major and the gradual modulation back to F major. The composer presents the rondo theme in various guises, all of them delightful variations on the original theme.

Max Bruch : Kol Nidrei for Violoncello and Piano, Op. 47 (1881)

Max Bruch's Kol Nidrei, like Prokofiev's overture, is a piece of ersatz Judaica, but one that has achieved such prominence among the composer's works that he has occasionally been mistakenly called a “Jewish composer,” which he decidedly was not. He was actually a German Lutheran who is known to have expressed anti-Semitic sentiments, but he was also a confirmed musical armchair traveler, fond of using “exotic” ethnic melodic material.

The Kol Nidre melody was as exotic a tune as a German Protestant was likely to come across, and Bruch (1838-1920) got it more or less the same way Prokofiev got his “Hebrew themes”: it was handed to him by a member of a choir that he directed. He composed this work for cello and orchestra in 1881, the year he went to England to take up the post of director of the Liverpool Philharmonic.

Kol Nidre (“all vows”) is a haunting and rather mysterious Aramaic prayer sung toward the beginning of the Yom Kippur Eve service (and indeed, is such a prominent part of this most important day in the Jewish calendar that Yom Kippur Eve is often called simply “Kol Nidre”). The prayer is a disavowal, in advance, of any vows to God

that may be made in the coming year. Many scholars believe that it became a prominent part of the service during the middle ages, prospectively nullifying oaths of conversion when Jews were often forced to choose between death and conversion to Christianity; others believe its prominence results simply from the captivating nature of its long, wandering melody. Bruch's *Kol Nidrei* (Bruch spelled it thus in German; the "correct" spelling is in the Hebrew alphabet) uses the first few phrases of the traditional song. It does not attempt to maintain a "Jewish" atmosphere for long, heading quickly into the Schumannesque sonic world of mid-20th century Germany, particularly when it moves into major keys.

Isang Yun: Glisses

Isang Yun (1917-1995) was a world renowned Korean-German composer. Son of the poet Ki-Hyon, he began to write music at the age of 14, and received his musical education at the Osaka Conservatory and in Tokyo. He participated in underground activities against the Japanese, was imprisoned in 1943 and lived in hiding until the liberation. In 1945, he helped in the reconstruction of Korean cultural life after the Japanese occupation. The Seoul City Award which he won in 1955 enabled him to travel to Europe for further study; he was a pupil of Ravel in Paris (1956-57) and of Blancher, Rufer and Schwarz-Schiling in Berlin (1957-59). In 1967 he was taken to Seoul, charged as a communist spy and sentenced to death; two years later he was amnestied. He taught composition at the Hannover Hochschule fuer Musik, and became professor in 1973. A member of the Hamburg and Berlin Academies, he received the Kiel Kulturpreis in 1970, and in 1971 took German nationality. Yun's fundamental aim is the development of "Pansori" music through the means of Western music. He combined Far Eastern performing practices with European instruments, and an expression of Asian imagination in terms of contemporary Western techniques. Here novel of glissandos and vibratos gives a deep impression of the Korean soul. Yun composed more than 100 works, which include operas, instrumental solo works as well as numerous pieces of chamber music.

Frederick Chopin: Andante Spianato and Grande Polonaise in E-flat major, Op. 22

Chopin composed "*Andante Spianato*" in 1834, already having completed "*Grande Polonaise*" in 1831 during his unhappy stay in Vienna. Both works were published together in Paris in 1836 and exists in two versions - the concertante with orchestra and one for solo piano. Chopin performed the complete work in Paris on April 26, 1835. The introductory *Andante Spianato* for piano solo, in its poetic harmony, is Chopin at his best. Chopin's life-long love of Polish dance forms were used in his Polonaises of sometimes heroic dimensions. This piece is a favorite solo piece of pianists as one only has to practice one piece to have two works in one's repertoire.

Sergei Rachmaninoff: Vocalise, Op. 34, No. 14

Sergei Vasilievich Rachmaninoff was born at Semyonovo, Russia, on April 1, 1873 and died in Beverly Hills, California, on March 28, 1943. The *Vocalise* in its original version

is the last of a set of fourteen songs on which Rachmaninoff began work in 1910 and which he completed in 1912. There are many arrangement of this beautiful melody for many different instruments including violin, cello, flute, piano, and orchestra.

Rachmaninoff wrote so much bravura piano music and so many dramatic orchestral works that one tends to overlook his greatest strength as a composer—an incredible lyric gift best evident in his more than seventy songs and numerous choral works. *Vocalise* dates from the summer of 1912, which Rachmaninoff spent at Ivanovka, his family's country estate. There he completed a cycle of 14 songs, tailoring each to the talents of an individual Russian singer he knew. The last of the fourteen—dedicated to soprano Antonina Nezhdanovka, a member of the Moscow Grand Opera—was wordless: the soprano was simply to sing the melodic line over piano accompaniment. The song proved popular, and a few years later—at the suggestion of conductor Serge Koussevitsky—Rachmaninoff arranged *Vocalise* for string orchestra. *Vocalise* has haunted performers as well as listeners: in addition to the original versions for voice and for orchestra, there are many transcription for different instruments.

It is easy to understand this music's appeal. *Vocalise* offers Rachmaninoff's most bittersweet lyricism, suffused with a dark, elegiac quality—this music was, in fact, performed at the memorial service following Rachmaninoff's own death.

Pablo de Sarasate: Zigeunerweisen (Gypsy's Air), Op. 20, No. 1

Pablo de Sarasate was the most phenomenal violinist of the 19th century. His playing was distinguished by a tone of unsurpassed sweetness and purity, colored by a unique vibrato. His technique was superb, his intonations perfect, especially in high notes, and his whole manner of playing were so effortless as to appear casual. Deeply inspired by his performances, a number of distinguished composers, including Camille Saint-Saëns and Edouard Lalo, dedicated an astonishing number of violin music to him that include Bruch's Second Concerto and Scottish Fantasy, Saint-Saëns's First and Third Concertos, Lalo's *Symphonie Espagnole*, and Wieniawski's Second Concerto.

Sarasate also achieved fame as a composer of virtuoso violin music. Best known among his 54 compositions is *Zigeunerweisen*, a veritable jewel of violin virtuosity and an indispensable virtuoso repertoire. It reveals luminous overall musical effect on gypsy melodies and showing off the violinist in various guises through the changes of mood and tempo. "Gypsy" and the violin are intimately connected, though the connection is really limited to the Middle European gypsies—those from Hungary in particular—gypsy music having different characteristics in different countries. Gypsy violin (Hungarian) music is what we have here and not the Spanish gypsy music that has so great an influence on what we call Spanish music today.

Zigeunerweisen has three parts: the first part, *Moderato*, carries music with great diversity—beautiful melodies and extreme dynamics in a romantic atmosphere; the second part, *Un poco piu lento*, is a lament of melancholy; and the final *Allegro molto vivace* signifies a gypsy dance with all vibrant energies and enthusiasms in rapid rhythms.