



FESTIVAL SEASON 8 JUNE 13 - JUNE 29, 2019

Sonata for Viola and Piano, Op. 11, No. 4 Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)

Composed in 1919.

Premiered in Frankfurt on June 2, 1919 by the composer and pianist Emma Lübbecke-Job.

On June 24, 1915, while he was still a student at the Hoch Conservatorium, Paul Hindemith became concertmaster of the Frankfurt Opera; he was twenty. Despite some managerial trepidation because of his draft status, Hindemith was renewed in his post in June 1917, and he was, indeed, called up for military service only a few weeks later. He was stationed in Frankfurt for several months, living in a local army barracks and receiving special permission to continue playing at the Opera, but at the beginning of 1918, he was transferred to France, where he was assigned to the regimental band. "I play the big drum," he wrote to a friend, "and I am told that never before has this instrument been handled here with such rhythmic precision." He also played in a string quartet that had the regiment's commanding officer as its principal patron. Hindemith was posted to Flanders that summer, and spent the last months of the war serving as a sentry in the trenches and escaping injury only by what he confided to his diary was simple good luck.

Before Hindemith was released from the army early in 1919, he had composed a sonatina for violin and piano. He projected the piece as the first of a series of six violin and piano works to comprise his Op. 11, but as the set was composed during the next year, it came to include a variety of string chamber pieces: another sonata for violin and piano (Op. 11, No. 2), one each for unaccompanied viola (No. 5) and violin (No. 6), and accompanied sonatas for cello (No. 3) and viola (No. 4). These works not only provided the precedent for Hindemith's continuing devotion to the writing of sonatas for various instruments, but were also among the earliest distinctive examples of his unique genius.

The Sonata for Viola and Piano, Op. 11, No. 4 was premiered in Frankfurt by the composer and pianist Emma Lübbecke-Job on June 2, 1919, as part of the first public concert devoted entirely to his music. (Hindemith drifted away from the violin after World War I, but made himself into one of the outstanding violists of his generation, possessed of sufficient virtuosity to give the premiere of William Walton's Viola Concerto in 1929.) "The composer's remarkable melodic ingenuity, his surprisingly assured mastery of form and the powerful impetus of his works entitle us to speak of a creative talent far beyond the average," assessed the critic Karl Holl in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* following the performance. The Sonata was accepted for publication by Schott in Mainz, the first score to be issued during Hindemith's lifelong association with that distinguished firm. This work, a composition of considerable charm and lyricism, is nominally in three movements played without pause, though their cumulative effect is that of an introduction in rhapsodic style (*Fantasie*) followed by a pair of movements that share thematic material. The second movement is a Theme and Variations based on a subject in gently mixed meters that Hindemith noted was "like a folk tune." Four contrasting variations occupy the remainder of the movement. The Finale (with Variations) is an inventive hybrid form: an overall sonata structure (with a vigorous scalar main theme and an arching lyrical second theme) uses two further variations of the second movement's subject in place of the development section; a final variation in driving rhythms serves as the coda.



music, including the operas *Katya Kabanova*, *The Cunning Little Vixen* and *The Makropoulos Affair*, the song cycle *The Diary of the Young Man Who Disappeared*, the two String Quartets (the second of which he titled “Intimate Letters”), the Glagolitic Mass and the Sinfonietta for Orchestra.

It seems fitting, perhaps inevitable, that Janáček’s last work — the Second String Quartet — was the one most closely bound to his love for Kamila. Janáček explained to Kamila that the work’s opening movement depicted “my impression when I saw you for the first time.” The Adagio, he said, concerns “the summer events at Luhačovice Spa in Moravia,” where Janáček saw Kamila for the first time in a year-and-a-half in July 1921. He intended, he continued, to make the third movement “particularly joyful and then dissolve it into a vision that resembles your image.... The finale won’t finish with fear for my pretty little vixen, but with great longing and its fulfillment.”

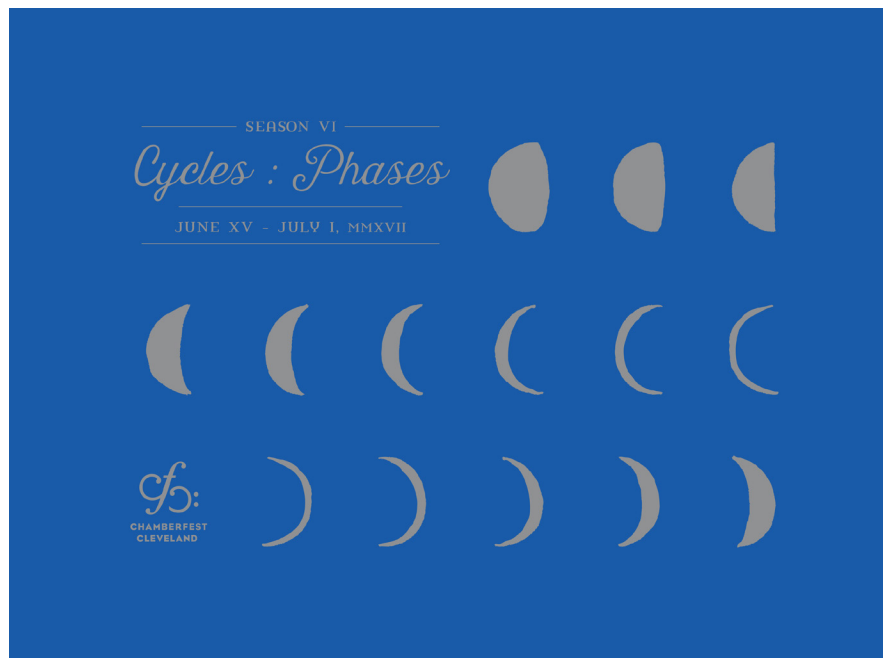
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String Quartet No. 2, “Intimate Letters” Leoš Janáček (1854-1928)

Composed in 1928.

Premiered on September 11, 1928 in Brno by the Moravian String Quartet.

In the summer of 1917, when he was 63, Leoš Janáček fell in love with Kamila Stösslová, the 25-year-old wife of a Jewish antiques dealer from Písek. They first met in a town in central Moravia during World War I, but, as he lived in Brno with Zdenka, his wife of 37 years, and she lived with her husband in Písek, they saw each other only infrequently thereafter and remained in touch mostly by letter. The true passion seems to have been entirely on his side (“It is fortunate that only I am infatuated,” he once wrote to her), but Kamila did not reject his company, apparently feeling admiration rather than love for the man who, with the successful staging of his *Jenůfa* in Prague in 1915 eleven years after its premiere in Brno, was at that time acquiring an international reputation as a master composer. Whatever the details of their relationship, Kamila’s role as an inspiring muse during the last decade of Janáček life was indisputable and beneficent — under the sway of his feelings for her he wrote his greatest



the summer of 1922 at the country home of Fernand and Louise Maillot at Annecy-le-Vieux, and completed in Paris the following February. It was first heard privately at Mme. Maillot's Parisian salon soon thereafter, and given publicly on May 12th.

The Trio's flowing opening *Allegro* is built on two themes similar in mood: the first is a sweet, sad song intoned by the cello; the other is a small-interval theme of undulating motion. These melodies are extended and elaborated, often with superb contrapuntal mastery, so that the entire movement seems to be continuously unfolded from a single, bittersweet emotion. "The long slow movement must surely rank among Fauré's most inspired," according to British musicologist Robert Orledge. Much of the beauty of this music, like that of some fine, old drawing, lies in the very economy of its means, making telling use of every line, stroke and gesture. After two movements of such tender sentiments, the violence of the finale comes as a surprise. The music turns toward brighter tonalities as it nears its end, however, a device that Orledge believed "put across an optimistic message of hope."

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Trio for Clarinet, Cello and Piano in D minor, Op. 120 **Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)**

Composed in 1922-1923.

Premiered on May 12, 1923 in Paris.

Gabriel Fauré's later years were plagued by increasing deafness and infirmity. He tried to keep his ailments secret, especially his loss of hearing, fearing that their discovery would undermine his post as Director of the Paris Conservatoire. He was surprisingly successful at his deception for several years, but by 1919 his condition became obvious enough that he was asked by the French Ministry of Fine Arts, with all possible tact, to resign his position. Through the efforts of Paul Léon, the Fine Arts Minister, a small pension was arranged for him, but his financial outlook still offered a troubling insecurity. To aid his situation, friends and students sponsored concerts and publications in his honor, and he was assigned a number of editing jobs by the publisher Durand, including a new edition of Bach's organ works in collaboration with Joseph Bonnet. Durand also encouraged Fauré to continue composing for chamber ensembles, and he produced a trio for piano, cello and either clarinet or violin and a string quartet in the two years before his death in 1924. The Trio was begun in



Mother Goose for Piano, Four Hands **Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)**

Composed in 1908.

*Premiered on April 20, 1910 in Paris by Christine Verger
and Germaine Duramy.*

“I would settle down on his lap, and tirelessly he would begin, ‘Once upon a time ...’ It was *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Ugly Empress of the Pagodas*, and, above all, the adventures of a little mouse he invented for me.” So Mimi Godebski reminisced in later years about the visits of Maurice Ravel to her family’s home during her childhood. Ravel, a contented bachelor, enjoyed these visits to the Godebskis, and took special delight in playing with the young children — cutting out paper dolls, telling stories, romping around on all fours. Young Mimi and her brother Jean were in the first stages of piano tutelage in 1908, and Ravel decided to encourage their studies by composing some little pieces for them portraying *Sleeping Beauty*, *Hop o’ My Thumb*, *Empress of the Pagodas* and *Beauty and the Beast*. To these he added an evocation of *The Fairy Garden* as a postlude. In 1911, he made a ravishing orchestral transcription of the original five pieces,

added to them a prelude, an opening scene and connecting interludes, and produced a ballet with a scenario based on *Sleeping Beauty* for the Théâtre des Arts in Paris.

The tiny *Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty*, only twenty measures long, depicts the Good Fairy, who watches over the Princess during her somnolence. *Hop o' My Thumb* treats the old legend taken from Perrault's anthology of 1697. "A boy believed," Ravel noted of the tale, "that he could easily find his path by means of the bread crumbs which he had scattered wherever he passed; but he was very much surprised when he could not find a single crumb: the birds had come and eaten everything up." *Laideronnette, Empress of the Pagodas* portrays a young girl cursed with ugliness by a wicked fairy. The tale, however, has a happy ending in which the Empress' beauty is restored. In the *Conversations of Beauty and the Beast*, the high woodwinds sing the delicate words of the Beauty, while the Beast is portrayed by the lumbering contrabassoon. At first the two converse, politely taking turns in the dialogue, but after their betrothal, both melodies are entwined, and finally the Beast's theme is transfigured into a floating wisp. The rapt, introspective splendor of the closing *Fairy Garden* is Ravel's masterful summation of the beauty, mystery and wonder that pervade Mother Goose.

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