LISA SMITH WENGLER
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PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

presents

The Recital Series

Maria Ioudenitch, Violin

Marisa Gupta, Piano

Sunday, April 2, 2023, 2 PM
Raitt Recital Hall

An American with a Russian heart, Violinist **Maria Ioudenitch** completed her Bachelor's at the Curtis Institute of Music and her Master's at New England Conservatory. She is currently finishing her studies at NEC with Miriam Fried as an Artist Diploma candidate. Over the past year, Ioudenitch has received first prizes in the Ysaye International Music Competition, the Tibor Varga International Violin Competition, and the Joachim International Competition, as well as numerous other prizes within these competitions, most notably Joachim's Warner Classics prize, which will lead to a debut album set to release in summer 2022.

Recent solo engagements include the Utah Symphony, Kansas City Symphony, Mississippi Symphony Orchestra, NDR Radiophilharmonie, NFM Leopoldinum, Mariinsky Symphony Orchestra, Lithuania Chamber Orchestra, the Signature Symphony at TCC, Israel Camerata, and the National Orchestra of Uzbekistan. Recent chamber music performances have taken Ioudenitch across South America with Roberto Diaz and to Chicago, New York, Connecticut, and Boston with Miriam Fried.

Maria Ioudenitch has participated in various summer festivals and academies such as the Marlboro Music Festival, Ravinia's Steans Music Institute, the International Summer Academy at Universität Mozarteum in Salzburg, and the International Music Academy in the Principality of Liechtenstein. She was appointed Concertmaster of the Curtis Symphony Orchestra during the 2016-2017 season, ending the season with a tour through Europe featuring Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben*.

Maria Ioudenitch began studying the violin at the age of 3 because there were just too many pianists in the house. Her pianist parents, Stanislav and Tatiana, handed her a tiny violin and the rest is history. Apart from classical music, Maria adores jazz and visual art. Some of her favorite composers and artists include Robert Schumann, jazz composer Oscar Peterson, and surrealist artist Remedíos Varo.

Pianist **Marisa Gupta** has a versatile musical life, comprised of solo and chamber music performances, ranging from rare repertoire of the past to a deep commitment towards music of today, performed with heartfelt conviction and a deep intellectual engagement. Born in the USA of Thai and Indian parentage, pianist Marisa Gupta made her debut performing Prokofiev's 1st Piano Concerto with the Houston Symphony. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including top prizes at the Concours Maria Canals (Barcelona), the Viotti Competition (Vercelli, Italy), Corpus Christi and Kingsville International Music Competitions, a Solti Foundation Award, a Fulbright scholarship for study in the UK, and many others. She was an Edison Visiting Fellow at the British Library (for the study of early chamber music recordings and performance styles) and was named a finalist by the BBC for its New Generations Thinkers Scheme, an initiative inviting leading British thinkers to broadcast on BBC Radio 3.

She has appeared as a soloist and chamber musician in some of the world's leading venues including the Wigmore Hall, Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), Palau de la Música (Barcelona), South Bank Centre, Kings Place (London), The Bridgewater Hall (Manchester), LSO St. Luke's, Warsaw Philharmonic Hall, Bucharest's Ateneul Român, Zipper Hall (Monday Evening Concerts - Los Angeles), LACMA (Los Angeles), Tokyo Opera City, Munegetsu Hall (Nagoya), and other venues throughout Europe, Japan, and the USA. Radio broadcasts include those on BBC Radio 3, BBC TV 4, Radio 4 (Netherlands), Radio Catalunya, KUSC (LA) and KUHF (Houston). She has appeared at numerous festivals including Rockport, Ravinia, Three Choirs Festival, Prussia Cove, Yellow Barn, and many others. Marisa has worked closely with a number of composers, notably Jörg Widmann, Brett Dean, Philippe Hersant, and David Matthews, and has given the US and UK premieres of works by Jean-Frédéric Neuburger, European premieres of major works by Aaron Jay Kernis and Ned Rorem at the Wigmore Hall, and the world premiere of Rhapsodie by Philippe Hersant. Chamber music collaborations include those with Anthony Marwood, Philippe Graffin, Stephen Kovacevich, Nicolas Dautricourt, Lynne Dawson, Tom Meglioranza, Mats Lidstrom, Natasha Brofsky, Eduardo Leandro, Alan Kay, members of the Berlin Philharmonic, COE, Bavarian Radio Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic, Philharmonia, LPO, Hallé, the Verona, Calder, Rolston, and Doric Quartets, Nash Ensemble and many others.

Marisa received the Diplôme de Soliste from the HEM Genève in Switzerland, where she studied with Pascal Devoyon. She received her Doctorate at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, focused on the performance of approximately 50 recently discovered solo piano works by the Catalan composer Frederic Mompou. Other important mentors include Richard Goode, Horacio Gutierrez, and John and Nancy Weems.

PROGRAM

Sonata in G Major for Violin and Piano.....*MAURICE RAVEL*

Allegretto
Blues: Moderato
Perpetuum mobile

Blues Dialogues.....*DOLORES WHITE*

Blues feeling
Expressive
Fast and funky
Moderately fast

Sonata for Violin and Piano in G Minor.....*CLAUDE DEBUSSY*

Allegro vivo
Intermède: Fantasque et léger
Finale: Très animé

INTERMISSION

Violin Sonata, Opus 7.....*FAZIL SAY*

Introduction: Melancholy. Andante misterioso
Grotesque: Moderato scherzando
Perpetuum mobile: Presto
Anonymous: Andante
Epilogue: Melancholy. Andante misterioso

Selections from Porgy and Bess.....*GEORGE GERSHWIN*

Summertime
A Woman Is a Sometime Thing
Tempo di Blues

Suite for Violin and Piano.....*WILLIAM GRANT STILL*

II. Mother and Child

Tzigane.....*MAURICE RAVEL*

Program subject to change.

Please turn down or turn off all hearing aides.

Although heard as one work of art, many musical works have three or more movements or sections. A short pause often follows each movement, and during these pauses silence is needed to preserve the flow of the piece. But applause is truly music to a musician's ear at the end of a work, so we hope you will clap to your heart's content after the final movement.

Sonata in G Major for Violin and Piano
MAURICE RAVEL
Born March 7, 1875, Ciboure
Died December 28, 1937, Paris

Ravel began making sketches for his *Violin Sonata* in 1923, the year after he completed his orchestration of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. He was composing a number of works for violin during these years, including *Tzigane*, but the *Violin Sonata* proved extremely difficult for him, and he did not complete it until 1927. The first performance, by violinist Georges Enesco and the composer, took place on May 30, 1927, in Paris while that city was still in a dither over the landing of Charles Lindbergh the week before.

In the *Violin Sonata*, Ravel wrestled with a problem that has plagued all who compose violin sonatas—the clash between the resonant, sustained sound of the violin and the percussive sound of the piano–and he chose to accentuate these differences: "It was this independence I was aiming at when I wrote a Sonata for violin and piano, two incompatible instruments whose incompatibility is emphasized here, without any attempt being made to reconcile their contrasted characters." The most distinctive feature of the sonata, however, is Ravel's use of jazz elements in the slow movement.

The opening *Allegretto* is marked by emotional restraint. The piano alone announces the cool first theme, which is quickly picked up by the violin. A sharply rhythmic figure, much like a drum tattoo, contrasts with the rocking, flowing character of the rest of this movement, which closes on a quietly soaring restatement of the main theme.

Ravel called the second movement *Blues*, but he insisted that this is jazz as seen by a Frenchman. In a lecture during his American tour of 1928, he said of this movement: "while I adopted this popular form of your music, I venture to say that nevertheless it is French music, Ravel's music, that I have written." He sets out to make violin and piano sound like a saxophone and guitar, specifying that the steady accompanying chords must be played strictly in time so that the melodic line can sound "bluesy" in contrast. The "twang" of this movement is accentuated by Ravel's setting the violin in G major and the piano in A-flat major at the opening.

Thematic fragments at the very beginning of the finale slowly accelerate to become a virtuoso perpetual motion. Ravel brings back themes from the first two movements before the music rushes to its brilliant close, which features complex string-crossings for the violinist.

Blues Dialogues
DOLORES WHITE
Born 1932, Chicago

Dolores White first attended Howard University and then transferred to Oberlin, where she received her bachelors degree. She earned her masters from the Cleveland Institute of Music and later studied piano with James Friskin at Juilliard. She has taught at Wooster College, Hartt School of Music, Cleveland Music School, and Cuyahoga Community College. White has created a small but well-crafted body of music that combines the European classical tradition with folk music of different nations and traditions, and her works have been performed by the Dallas Symphony, Detroit Symphony, and others. White's husband Donald, a cellist, was the first African-American musician to be hired by one of the leading American orchestras when he joined the Cleveland Orchestra in 1957; he played with that orchestra until his retirement in 1995.

White's *Blues Dialogues* is a suite of four brief movements for unaccompanied violin, each in varying blues styles. Composing blues without the harmonic resources of the piano is a challenge, and that challenge is compounded when they are written for a linear instrument like the violin. White writes music of some brilliance here, as the violin becomes a blues instrument, sliding expressively between keys as it sings these varied movements. The music is easily followed: two moderately paced movements—*Blues feeling* and *Expressive*—give way to two more dynamic movements: *Fast* and *funky* and *Moderately fast*. The last of these shows the influence of Bartók, himself a strong believer in combining classical music with folk idioms.

Sonata for Violin and Piano in G Minor
CLAUDE DEBUSSY
Born August 22, 1862, Saint-Germain-en-Laye
Died March 25, 1918, Paris

Debussy's final years were wretched. He developed colon cancer in 1909 nd underwent a painful operation, radiation therapy, and drug

treatment. It was all to no avail, and the disease took its steady course. The onslaught of World War I in 1914 further depressed him, but it also sparked a wave of nationalistic fervor, and he set about writing a set of six sonatas for different combinations of instruments. It may seem strange that the iconoclastic Debussy would return in his final years to so structured a form as the sonata, but he specified that his model was the French sonata of the eighteenth century and not the classical German sonata. To make his point—and his nationalistic sympathies—even more clear, Debussy signed the scores of these works "Claude Debussy, musicien français."

Debussy lived to complete only three of the projected six sonatas: a *Cello Sonata* (1915); a *Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp* (1916); and the *Violin Sonata*, completed in April 1917. It was to be his final work, and it gave him a great deal of difficulty. From the depths of his gloom, he wrote to a friend: "This sonata will be interesting from a documentary viewpoint and as an example of what may be produced by a sick man in time of war." Debussy played the piano at the premiere on May 5, 1917, and performed it again in September at what proved to be his final public appearance. His deteriorating health confined him to his room thereafter, and he died the following March.

For all Debussy's dark comments, the *Violin Sonata* is a brilliant work, alternating fantastic and exotic outbursts with more somber and reflective moments. In three concise movements, the sonata lasts only about thirteen minutes. Debussy deliberately obscures both meter and key over the first few measures of the *Allegro vivo*, and only gradually does the music settle into G minor. The haunting beginning of the movement feels subdued, almost ascetic, but the dancing middle section in E major is more animated. Debussy brings back the opening material and rounds off the movement with a *con fuoco* coda.

The second movement brings a sharp change of mood after the brutal close of the first. Debussy marks it *fantasque et léger* ("Fantastic [or fanciful] and light"), and the violin opens with a series of leaps, swirls, and trills before settling into the near-hypnotic main idea. The second subject, marked "sweet and expressive," slides languorously on glissandos and arpeggios, and the movement comes to a quiet close. Over rippling chords, the finale offers a quick reminiscence of the very opening of the sonata, and then this theme disappears for good and

the finale's real theme leaps to life. It is a shower of triplet sixteenths that rockets upward and comes swirling back down: the composer described it as "a theme turning back on itself like a serpent biting its own tail." There are some sultry interludes along the way, full of glissandos, broken chords, rubato, and trills, but finally the swirling energy of the main theme drives the music to its animated close.

Debussy may have been unhappy about this music while working on it, but once done he felt more comfortable with it, writing to a friend: "In keeping with the contradictory spirit of human nature, it is full of joyous tumult . . . Beware in the future of works which appear to inhabit the skies; often they are the product of a dark, morose mind."

Violin Sonata No. 1
FAZIL SAY
Born January 14, 1970, Ankara, Turkey

Fazil Say (pronounced "sigh") showed extraordinary musical ability as a child, essentially teaching himself to play several instruments and beginning to compose at age four. Recognizing the boy's talents, his family quickly found him a good piano teacher, and Say soon attracted the attention of visiting artists. He was able to continue his studies in Germany and then embark on a career as a virtuoso pianist. Say has performed in Europe, North and South America, and Asia, and he has become a major recording artist: he has recorded all the Mozart and Beethoven piano sonatas, all Chopin's nocturnes, and Gershwin's *Rhapsody and Blue* (with the New York Philharmonic). Recently, he and violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaya have formed a duo, and they have toured and recorded together.

But Say is just as committed to his career as a composer. He has been especially conscious of Turkey's place at the exact crossroads of East and West and has tried to fuse the classical music of Europe with the folk music of his homeland and the East, often incorporating folk tunes and instruments in his own music. And like Bartók, he has tried to absorb the idiom of folk music to the point where it becomes part of his own compositional voice.

Say's *Violin Sonata No. 1* was commissioned by the Arizona Friends of Chamber Music, sponsored by Jean-Paul Bierny and Chris Tanz, and was premiered in Tucson in February 1997 by violinist Mark Peskanov

and the composer. The five-movement sonata is in the arch form that Bartók favored for some of his major works. It is anchored on its two substantial outer movements, which are basically the same music. Between these anchors are three short movements: two moderately-paced movements surround an extremely fast central movement that becomes the capstone of the arch. This is a difficult work for its performers: at some moments Say writes for a "prepared" piano to be able to create folk instrument-like sounds, and the violinist must sometimes play at the top of the instrument's range, often in artificial harmonics.

Each movement of the sonata has an Italian tempo marking as well as a title that indicates its emotional character. The composer has spoken of this sonata as the record of an inner journey, and his title for the first movement—*Melancholy*—sets the mood for this exploration of memory. The tempo marking *Andante miserioso* further establishes this movement's exotic, if somewhat troubled, mood.

Piano alone leads the way into the second movement, *Grotesque*, which Say says depicts "an old scene of Ottoman revelry." Here the piano has been prepared to mimic the sound of Turkish folk instruments. The meter changes constantly in this movement, leaping between such unusual markings as 16/8, 15/8, 13/8, and 19/8, and the movement ends on a great upward glissando that vanishes into silence.

The central movement is a perpetual motion based on the *horon*, a folk dance from the Black Sea region. Here the composer asks the violinist to mirror the sound of the kemençe, a Turkish folk instrument. Much of the writing in this very fast movement asks the violinist to play in quarter-tones.

The fourth movement is based on the Turkish folk song "Odom kireçtir benim." In the score Say prints the text of that song, whose title translates "My Room Is White-Washed." Piano leads the way here, and the pianist must place the left hand on the instrument's strings to produce the proper sound of the accompaniment to the song. The writing for the violinist here is often in artificial harmonics, set very high in the instrument's range.

The finale—marked *Epilogue*—brings a surprise, for it is simply a *da capo* repeat of the first movement. Of his decision to conclude this way, Say has said: "It is as though the 'memories' that comprise the three middle movements are replaced by the 'sorrow' of today . . ."

Selections from Gershwin's Porgy and Bess
GEORGE GERSHWIN
Born September 26, 1898, Brooklyn
Died July 11, 1937, Hollywood

Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* is regarded today as one of the great works of the American theater, perhaps even The Great American Opera, and so it comes as a surprise to discover that it was anything but a success at the time of its premiere in New York in 1935. Though it ran for 124 performances, the production closed $70,000 in debt, and reportedly Gershwin's royalties were not even enough to cover the cost of having the parts copied. Gershwin was stung by the failure of his "folk opera" to find the success he had hoped for, and he is said to have remarked: "I think the music is so marvelous. I really can't believe I wrote it."

That music truly is "marvelous," and even if *Porgy and Bess* had not been a success in the theater, its music continued to haunt composers. One of those haunted was Gershwin himself, who promptly arranged a suite of orchestral excerpts titled *Catfish Row*, and there have been countless arrangements of excerpts for individual instruments. Some of the best of these were made by an unexpected arranger.

Gershwin was good friends with violinist Jascha Heifetz, who asked Gershwin to write a violin concerto for him. Gershwin's death in 1938 at age 38 prevented this, but nine years later, in 1947, Heifetz arranged six excerpts from *Porgy and Bess* for violin and piano, and this recital offers three of these. The famous *Summertime* comes from the very beginning of *Porgy and Bess*, where this lullaby is sung by Clara, the wife of Jake the fisherman. This is followed by *A Woman Is a Sometime Thing*, sung by Jake, who offers commentary on women and on romance. Tempo di blues comes from the very end of *Porgy and Bess*, as Porgy sets off in pursuit of Bess; it includes *There's a Boat Dat's Leavin' Soon for New York*.

Suite for Violin and Piano
II. Mother and Child
WILLIAM GRANT STILL
Born May 11, 1895, Woodville, Mississippi
Died December 3, 1978, Los Angeles

William Grant Still grew up in Little Rock, Arkansas, where his mother was a schoolteacher. Still left college to pursue a career in music, and—after service in the navy during World War I—moved to New York, where he worked with W.C. Handy, Paul Whiteman, and Artie Shaw. He also studied composition with two teachers who could not have been more unlike each other: the conservative Boston composer George Chadwick and the visionary Edgard Varèse. In New York Still played the oboe in theater orchestras and was attracted to the ideals of the Harlem Renaissance, but in 1930 he moved to Los Angeles, which would be his home for the rest of his life. In Los Angeles he worked first as an arranger of film scores but later devoted himself entirely to composition and conducting. Still was a trailblazer in many ways. He was the first Afro-American to conduct a major orchestra (the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl in 1936) and the first to have an opera produced by a major opera company (*Troubled Island*, by the New York City Opera in 1949). His catalog of works includes nine operas, five symphonies, numerous other orchestral works, and music for chamber ensembles and for voice.

Still was passionately committed to African-American causes throughout his life, and his *Suite for Violin and Piano*, composed in 1943, celebrates the work of three African-American artists. The *Suite* was—like *Pictures at an Exhibition*—inspired by art in other forms, but where Mussorgsky was inspired by paintings and sketches, Still was inspired by the work of three African-American sculptors. This concert offers the second movement of the *Suite*.

Sargent Johnson (1887-1967) overcame a difficult childhood–he was sent to several orphanages, and he and his brothers were separated from their sisters when they were all very young. Johnson eventually made his home in San Francisco, where he worked as both sculptor and painter. He created a number of works titled *Mother and Child*, so the exact inspiration for this movement is uncertain. Still's movement has invariably been compared to a lullaby, but this lullaby does not

remain soothing and quickly grows to an animated passage full of double-stops before winding down to its quiet conclusion.

Tzigane
MAURICE RAVEL

In the summer of 1922, Ravel visited England for several concerts of his music, and in London he heard a performance of his brand-new *Sonata for Violin and Cello* by Jelly d'Aranyi and Hans Kindler. Jelly d'Aranyi must have been a very impressive violinist, for every composer who heard her was swept away by her playing—and by her personality (Bartók was one of the many who fell in love with her). Ravel was so impressed that he stayed after the concert and talked her into playing gypsy tunes from her native Hungary for him—and he kept her there until 5 AM the next morning, playing for him.

Tzigane probably got its start that night. Inspired by both d'Aranyi's playing and the fiery gypsy tunes, Ravel set out to write a virtuoso showpiece for the violin based on gypsy-like melodies (the title *Tzigane* means simply "gypsy"). Its composition was much delayed, however, and Ravel did not complete *Tzigane* for another two years. Trying to preserve a distinctly Hungarian flavor, he wrote *Tzigane* for violin with the accompaniment of lutheal, a device which—when attached to a piano—gave the piano a jangling sound typical of the Hungarian cimbalon. The first performance, by Jelly d'Aranyi with piano accompaniment, took place in London on April 26, 1924, and later that year Ravel prepared an orchestral accompaniment. In whatever form it is heard, *Tzigane* remains an audience favorite.

It is unusual for a French composer to be so drawn to gypsy music. Usually it was the composer from central Europe—Liszt, Brahms, Joachim, Hubay—who felt the charm of this music, but Ravel enters fully into the spirit and creates a virtuoso showpiece redolent of gypsy campfires and smoldering dance tunes. *Tzigane* opens with a long cadenza (nearly half the length of the entire piece) that keeps the violinist solely on the G-string across the span of the entire first page. While *Tzigane* seems drenched in an authentic gypsy spirit, all of its themes are Ravel's own, composed in the spirit of the tunes he heard d'Aranyi play late that night. Gradually the accompaniment enters, and the piece takes off. *Tzigane* is quite episodic, and across its blazing

second half Ravel demands such techniques from the violinist as artificial harmonics, left-hand pizzicatos, complex multiple-stops, and sustained octave passages. Over the final pages the tempo gradually accelerates until *Tzigane* rushes to its scorching close, marked *Presto*.

Program notes by Eric Bromberger

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