

Joshua Bell

Alessio Bax, piano

Friday, October 20, 2017

7:30 pm



Photo: Shervin Lainez III

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JOSHUA BELL, violin ALESSIO BAX, piano

Sonata for Violin and Piano in F Major (1838) Felix Mendelssohn
Allegro Vivace (1809-1847)
Adagio
Assai Vivace

Sonata No. 3 in C Minor for Violin and Piano, Op. 45 Edvard Grieg
Allegro molto ed appassionato (1843-1907)
Allegretto Espressivo alla Romanza
Allegro Animato

INTERMISSION

Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano in G Major, Op. 78 Johannes Brahms
Vivace Ma Non Troppo (1833-1897)
Adagio - Piu Andante - Adagio
Allegro Molto Moderato

ADDITIONAL WORKS TO BE ANNOUNCED FROM THE STAGE

Program is Subject to Change

Joshua Bell records exclusively for Sony Classical - a MASTERWORKS Label
www.joshuabell.com

Mr. Bell appears by arrangement with Park Avenue Artists and Primo Artists.
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*Mr. Bell & Mr. Bax will personally autograph
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Photo: Chris Lee

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Photos: Lisa-Marie Mazzucco

JOSHUA BELL

With a career spanning more than 30 years as a soloist, chamber musician, recording artist, and conductor, Joshua Bell is one of the most celebrated violinists today. An exclusive Sony Classical artist, Bell has recorded more than 40 albums garnering Grammy, Mercury, Gramophone, and Echo Klassik awards. Named the Music Director of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields in 2011, he is the only person to hold this post since Sir Neville Marriner formed the orchestra in 1958.

In the fall he joins the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and partakes in the New York Philharmonic's celebration of Leonard Bernstein's centennial, performing Bernstein's *Serenade* led by Alan Gilbert. A nine-city North American recital tour with pianist Alessio Bax includes Chicago's Symphony Center and Washington, D.C.'s Strathmore Center. He makes appearances with the Vienna Symphony and the Monte-Carlo Philharmonic and performs multiple concerts at London's Wigmore Hall with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields. In spring 2018, Bell continues with the Academy in tours covering the United Kingdom, the United States, and Asia, with highlights in London, New York, San Francisco, Tokyo, Seoul, Beijing, and Shanghai. With pianist Sam Haywood, he performs 10 recitals in Europe and America that take them to the Philharmonie de Paris, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, and beyond. On February 7, 2018, Bell reunites with longtime collaborator pianist Jeremy Denk for a recital broadcast live from Carnegie Hall. Further season highlights include the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin and Cristian Măcelaru, the Danish National Symphony with Măcelaru, and an all-Beethoven play/direct program with the Orchestre National de Lyon.

On August 18, Sony Classical released *Joshua Bell - The Classical Collection*, a 14-CD set of albums of classical repertoire that displays Bell's unique range, versatility, and breathtaking virtuosity.

2017 saw the release of the illustrated children's book *The Dance of the Violin*, recalling a seminal moment in Bell's 12-year-old life when, after initially making a mistake at the Stulberg International String Competition, he is given a second chance. Published by Annick Press, the book was written by Kathy Stinson and illustrated by Dušan Petričić. This marks Bell's second appearance in a children's book. The first was *The Man With the Violin*, released a year ago by the same author and illustrator, retelling the story of Bell's famous experiment in Washington, D.C.'s Metro station 10 years ago.

A dedicated arts advocate, Bell is involved with Education Through Music and Turnaround Arts, a partnership between The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

ALESSIO BAX

With his lyrical playing, insightful interpretations, and dazzling facility, Alessio Bax is "among the most remarkable young pianists now before the public" (*Gramophone*). First Prize winner at the Leeds and Hamamatsu International Piano Competitions and a 2009 Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient, he has appeared as soloist with more than 100 orchestras, including the London and Royal Philharmonic orchestras, Houston and Cincinnati symphonies, NHK Symphony in Japan, St. Petersburg Philharmonic with Yuri Temirkanov, and the City of Birmingham Symphony with Sir Simon Rattle.



After inaugurating a new three-year appointment as Artistic Director of Tuscany's Incontri in Terra di Siena festival in summer 2017, Bax launched Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's 2017-18 season in company with his wife and fellow pianist, Lucille Chung. He continues a full season, highlighted by a pair of high-profile U.S. duo recital tours with violinist Joshua Bell and flutist Emmanuel Pahud, respectively; UK solo recitals at London's Wigmore Hall and the Leeds Festival; collaborations with U.S. orchestras from the Minnesota Orchestra to the North Carolina Philharmonic, on concertos by Gershwin, Grieg, Rachmaninov, Saint-Saëns, and Schumann; and Signum Classics' release of his recording of Beethoven's "Emperor" concerto with the Southbank Sinfonia, paired with rarely heard solo works by the master composer. Bax's celebrated discography for Signum Classics includes works by Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart, Rachmaninov, and Stravinsky, as well as a Russian album and a lullaby collection (*Lullabies For Mila* is dedicated to his daughter, Mila) - all of which have been singled out for distinction by the most discerning critics.

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PROGRAM NOTES

By Marian Wilson Kimber

Felix Mendelssohn: Sonata for Violin and Piano in F Major (1838)

Although today Felix Mendelssohn is remembered as a prodigy who produced remarkably sophisticated compositions at a young age, as an adult he was tormented by a strongly self-critical streak. What Mendelssohn called his “*Revisionsteufel*,” or “revisions devil,” prevented him from allowing some of his creations to see the light of publication. Even such major works as his “Italian” Symphony remained unpublished until after his premature death at thirty-eight, and some pieces exist in more than one version, making it difficult to determine the composer’s intentions.



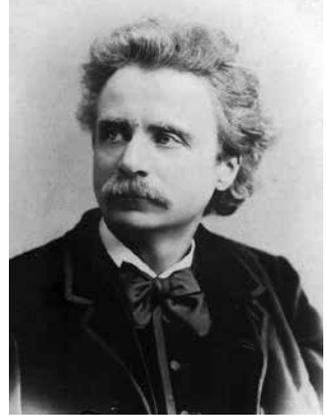
Portrait of Mendelssohn by James Warren Childe, 1839

Such is the case with the Violin Sonata Mendelssohn composed in 1838, a happy and productive period, shortly after his marriage and the birth of his first child. While on a vacation trip to Berlin he wrote to the violinist, Ferdinand David, “I’ve now finished the Violin Sonata, and I imagine we’ll play it together a few times this winter.” As David was the first performer of Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto, completed years later, it is perhaps not surprising that the composer began to conceive of it around the same time as the Sonata. Mendelssohn had the Sonata’s violin part copied for David, but by January of 1839, he had become deeply dissatisfied with the piece, calling it “poor.” By the following summer he was again composing a Violin Sonata, but only a fragment of the first movement survives, and no completed Sonata was ever published until violinist Yehudi Menuhin combined the two versions into a hybrid of his own invention in 1953.

Mendelssohn’s childhood composition teacher, Carl Friedrich Zelter, had predicted that he “might become a great violin player.” But the composer, a virtuoso pianist, was far too busy to devote time to string instruments, though he occasionally played in private, most often the slightly less demanding viola parts of his chamber music. The 1838 Sonata shows evidence of his skills in its violin writing. The Sonata opens vigorously, followed by a more subdued second theme and rapid violin passagework for the exposition’s closing. The center of the *Allegro vivace* dips into the minor, and the transition to the opening material features cadenza-like violin writing prefiguring that of the more famous Concerto. The poignant *Adagio* resembles one of Mendelssohn’s *Songs Without Words*, with a lyrical tune introduced over chordal, then arpeggiated accompaniment. The violin likewise takes up the figuration, which culminates in its brief outbursts midway through the movement. The *Allegro assai* draws on Mendelssohn’s fleeting “elfin scherzo” style, imbedded with his characteristic contrapuntal writing between the pairs of instruments. The finale’s buoyancy is tempered only by brief forays into the darker minor mode, and the Sonata closes brilliantly.

Edvard Grieg: Sonata No. 3 in C Minor for Violin and Piano, Op. 45

Edvard Grieg had already composed two Violin Sonatas with a distinctly Norwegian flavor when he was dazzled by the playing of the nineteen-year old Italian violinist, Teresina Tua, who visited him at his villa near Bergen. To his publisher he wrote, “Not only did she play the violin, she drank champagne, both of which she did wonderfully! ...If ever I again compose anything for the violin she will be to blame.” The composer began his third Sonata during the summer of 1886, completing it the following January. Grieg delayed publication of the new piece until he had read through it several times with a Norwegian violinist, Johan Halvorsen, who, according to the composer, played with “warmth and genuine artistry.” Nonetheless it was Halvorsen’s teacher, Adolf Brodsky of the Leipzig Conservatory, who gave the premiere performance with the composer at the piano, to two enthusiastic curtain calls.



Grieg in 1888, portrait published in *The Leisure Hour* (1889)

Grieg dedicated the published Sonata to the German painter Franz von Lenbach, in thanks for his portrait of the composer’s wife, Nina. The work very shortly became an international success, selling more than two thousand copies the first year it was issued. Grieg often accompanied leading violinists in all three of his Sonatas, performing them with Wilhemina Neruda Hallé in Copenhagen in 1900. He believed the third, which he described as having “wider horizons,” was among his best works, more universal than the nationalistic pieces of his youth.

As the third Sonata was going through the publication process, an anonymous commentator wrote on the manuscript, “Bold and exuberant, the way I like it,” an apt description. From the dramatic opening flourishes in the violin, to the ascending melody that follows, the *Allegro molto ed appassionato* reflects this critical assessment. The quietly delicate second theme radically contrasts the first, and in the central development, the flourishes are serenely extended over rippling piano figuration, building to a tremendous climax. An extended piano solo begins the central *Romanza*, followed by the violin in a tender melody imbued with harmonic richness. The lively center of the movement is influenced by the *halling*, a Norwegian folk dance, and the opening tune’s return soars in the violin’s upper register. The *Allegro animato* features alternation of melodic fragments over churning piano figuration, surging to striking violin double stops. A slower cantabile section builds to yet another loud highpoint, and both moods are heard again, in stormier incarnations, before the fast close.

Johannes Brahms: Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano in G Major, Op. 78

Like Mendelssohn, Johannes Brahms was a highly self-critical composer, though unlike his predecessor, he was known to destroy efforts he believed to be inferior. His three earliest violin sonatas met this fate, even though Brahms had performed one of them with the violinist Eduard Reményi during the tours of his youth. The Violin Sonata, op. 78, was composed in the summers of 1878 and 1879, around the same time the Violin Concerto was created for Brahms’s friend, Joseph Joachim. The earliest surviving autograph source suggests that the Sonata was a deeply personal work, composed when Clara Schumann’s young son Felix’s tuberculosis was worsening. Brahms sent her the opening measures of the second movement, writing, “if you play what is overleaf really

slowly it will perhaps tell you, more clearly than I otherwise could, with what affection I think about you and Felix—even about his violin which is probably silent.” When he sent Clara the completed sonata, she reported that when she played it, she “had a good cry, for joy,” later writing that “the deepest, most tender strings of the soul vibrate to such music.” Nonetheless, when Brahms published the piece, he said that it was “even less fit for the public than !” Unfortunately, reviewers of the earliest performances felt similarly. After a concert by Brahms and violinist Joseph Hellmesberger in Vienna, the critic for the *Wiener Abendpost* complained that “the music flows as turbidly and thickly as formless mist.” However, a more sympathetic critic found the Sonata “the comfortable coming together of two like-minded hearts,” and Brahms advocate Eduard Hanslick described it as “a peaceful landscape where we rest with a kind of melancholy contentment.”



Johannes Brahms, photographed c. 1872 by unknown photographer

The opening sets the nostalgic tone for the entire Sonata. From the first theme, based on a lilting descending motive, emerges a yearning melody that is the emotional heart of the movement. Running lines in both violin and piano create moments of intensity, especially in the central development. The *Adagio*, sweetly plaintive, turns tragically passionate in tone. Brahms drew on two musically intertwined songs from his op. 59, based on poetry by his friend Klaus Groth, for the *Allegro molto moderato: Regenlied* (Rain Song) and *Nachklang* (Reminiscence), heard in the violin’s opening and in the piano. The subtle suggestion of raindrops is due mainly to the piano’s staccato motives, which are tossed between the musical partners. Hanslick found the use of the previous songs, which mourn lost childhood innocence, like an unconscious memory that “Brahms continued working in his mind.” Momentary motivic references to the openings of the first and second movements, like lingering memories, help unify the entire work.

Marian Wilson Kimber is Professor of Musicology in the School of Music and a scholar of music in the long nineteenth century. Her publications have centered on Felix Mendelssohn, Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, elocution with musical accompaniment, and the role of spoken word performance in concert life.



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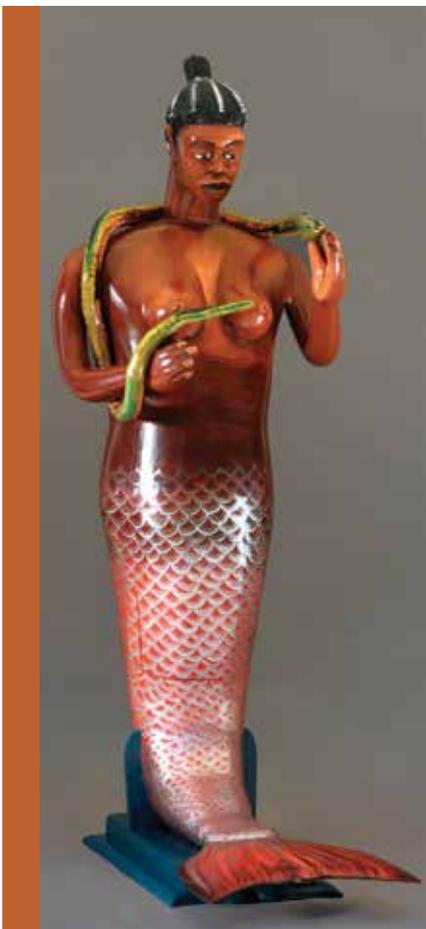
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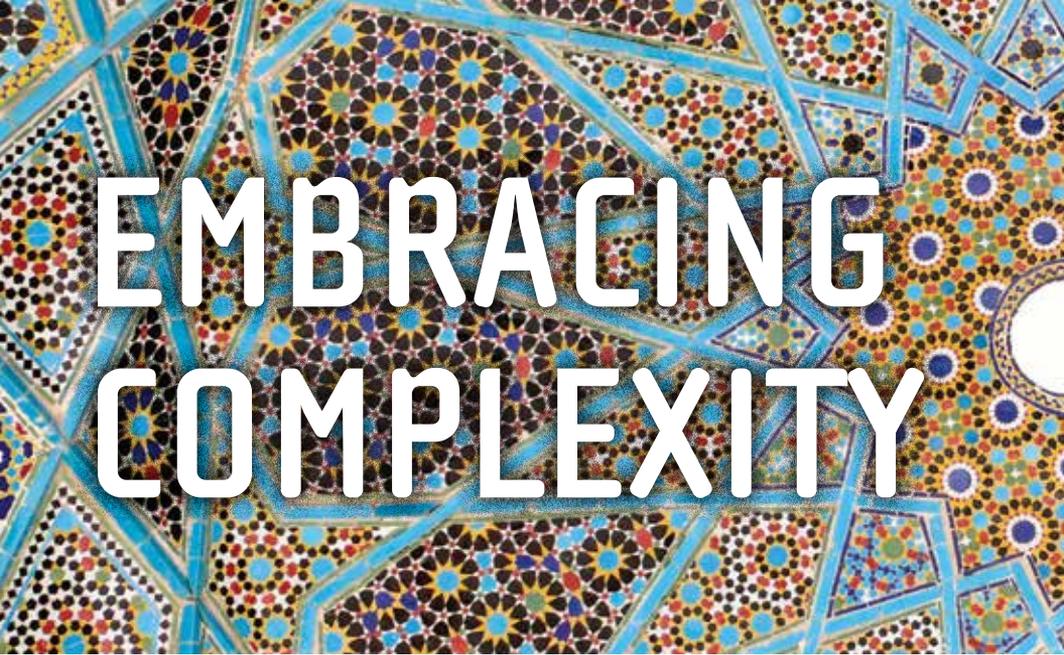
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Join us as Hancher explores and celebrates Islamic art and Muslim artists

Hancher has been awarded a grant from the Association of Performing Arts Professionals (APAP) for the Building Bridges: Arts, Culture, and Identity program. APAP sought projects designed to build knowledge and appreciation for arts and culture with roots in Muslim-majority societies.

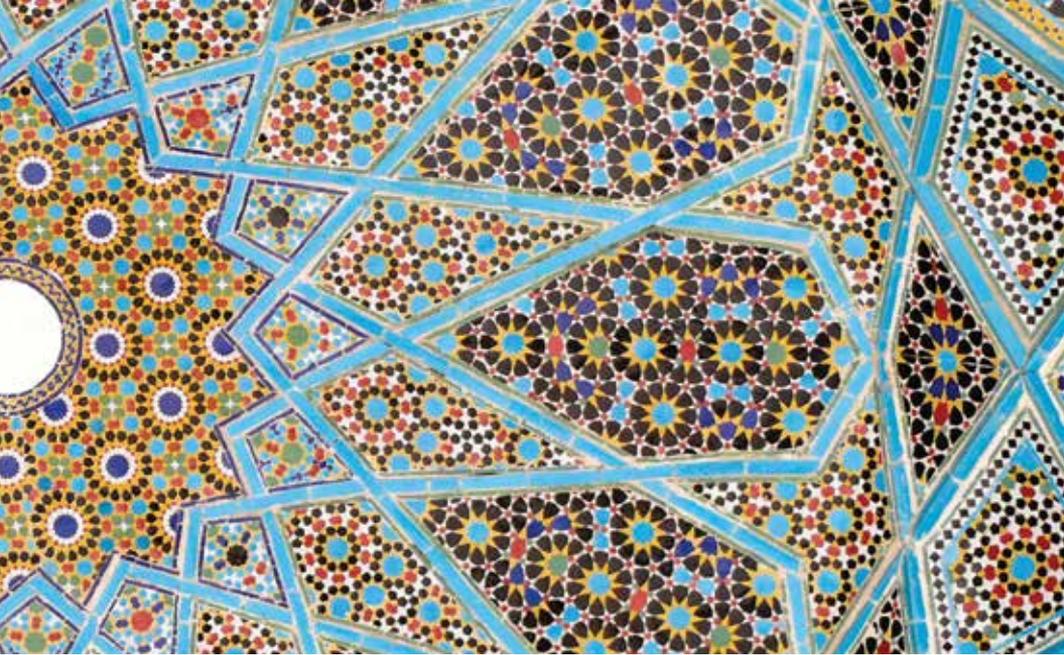
Hancher's project, *Embracing Complexity*, will take a multidisciplinary and collaborative approach to building understanding of contemporary Islamic cultures and Muslim identity. Artists will be in residence at various times over the course of two years and will work with partners both on and off the University of Iowa campus on a broad range of activities including performances, classes, exhibits, discussions, and lectures. The project will also document and explore the experiences of Muslims in Eastern Iowa through sharing of local stories and oral histories. *Embracing Complexity* is in keeping with the University of Iowa's commitment to diversity.

Our goal is to build textured knowledge of Islamic cultures, while creating a greater sense of empathy for the experiences of peoples of diverse racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. We believe this is an urgent program at this moment.

This project is made possible in part by a grant from the Association of Performing Arts Professionals - Building Bridges: Arts, Culture, and Identity, a component of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art.



Image: Iranian glazed ceramic tile work, from the ceiling of the Tomb of Hafez in Shiraz, Iran. Province of Fars. (Credit: Pentocelo)



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Basic Information:

Lindsey Chapman. Senior from Dubuque, Iowa. Graphic Design major with a Arts Entrepreneurship Certificate.

What is your position at Hancher?

I work as an assistant Graphic Designer.

How long have you worked at Hancher?

Just over a month—I'm lucky because I think I have the coolest job on campus!

What is your favorite part about Hancher?

I was welcomed into the Hancher community first as a performer with the Camerata Singers, and continue to feel supported and welcomed as a student employee. The best part about Hancher is the people—the employees, performers, and the audiences are truly some of the best.

Do you have any favorite Hancher show you've worked or attended?

I was a part of the choir in *Pomp, Brass, and Lunacy!* last year which was quite the experience. I watched Tomáš Kubínek's wonderfully odd performance from Hadley Stage, and listened to Wycliffe Gordon play his trombone just a few feet in front of me—an experience unlike any I have had as a performer. I feel very blessed that I got to watch the show while standing on stage with them!

Do you have a favorite spot in Iowa City?

This is a tough one to answer, but I must say Art Building West. And the outdoor seating area at Bread Garden. And the steps on the Old Capitol. And the SOOS in the IMU where I spend the majority of my free time... I guess I can't choose just one!

Do you have any favorite TV shows, movies, bands, or books?

I love all music except country—I just can't hop on that bandwagon.

Do you have any favorite classes you've taken at the University of Iowa?

I took a class this summer called Masterpieces: Art in Cultural Contexts in which we discussed the hidden meanings behind famous western masterpieces. It completely changed the way I think about art!

What are your eventual career goals? How does working at Hancher help you achieve those goals?

I'd love to work in marketing/advertising as a graphic designer, then eventually start my own business. I create marketing content for Hancher every time I work, so I'm definitely getting the experience I need to reach that goal!

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Proceeds of all Showcase sales are used to support Hancher's educational programs.

The Showcase opens one hour prior to a performance's starting time and remains open through and after the performance.

The Showcase is also open on Wednesdays, from 10 am to 1 pm, and on Thursdays, from 4:30 to 7:30 pm, while the Stanley Café is open to the public for Thursday Nights at Hancher.

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- One hour before performances, at intermission, and after performances
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- Thursdays 4:30-7:30 pm

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