



**SOUTHWESTERN
UNIVERSITY**
Sarofim School of Fine Arts

Department of Music
147th Concert Season
Concert No. 29

**From Then to Now:
Violin Music from Mozart to Montgomery**

**Program Notes
Jessica Mathaes, violin
Kiyoshi Tamagawa, piano**

March 7, 2023 | 7:30pm | Alma Thomas Theater

PROGRAM NOTES

Sonata in G major, K. 301 (1778)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

In 1778, 22-year-old Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) was living in Salzburg, where he had held the post of Concertmaster since he was 13. While on a long trip with his mother, Mozart first heard violin sonatas written by Joseph Schuster, which he found exciting and wrote to his sister about back home. He indicated that he often played these works, and that he intended to write six of his own sonatas in this "new" style, which was very well-liked at the time. Mozart traveled to Mannheim, a creative center of the day, and began work on his set of sonatas in this new style. Whereas his earlier "childhood" sonatas more heavily featured the piano, the Mannheim Sonatas tend to present the two instruments as equal partners. The Sonata KV 301 in G major for piano and violin is the first of these works. Following the example of Johann Christian Bach, the sonata is in two movements.

Rhapsody no. 1 for solo violin (2014)

Jessie Montgomery

Jessie Montgomery (b. 1981) is an acclaimed composer, violinist, and educator. She is the recipient of the Leonard Bernstein Award from the ASCAP Foundation and the Sphinx Medal of Excellence. Her works are performed frequently around the world by leading musicians and ensembles. Her music interweaves classical music with elements of vernacular music, improvisation, poetry, and social consciousness, making her an acute interpreter of 21st-century American sound and experience. A composer with a rapidly growing body of work, she is currently composer-in-residence for the Chicago Symphony. An accomplished violinist, she was the second violinist of the Catalyst Quartet until 2020. Rhapsody No. 1 is the first solo violin piece she wrote for herself. It draws on inspiration from the Eugène Ysaÿe solo violin works and is intended to serve as both an etude and a stand-alone work.

Sonata for Violin and Piano (1997)

Fazil Say

Turkish pianist and composer Fazil Say (b. 1970) wrote his Sonata for Violin and Piano as a commission from the Arizona Friends of Chamber Music, and gave the first performance himself at the keyboard with Mark Peskanov on violin. Written in five movements, the first and last movements are entitled *Melancholy*, and are said to represent an inner world of psychological reflections, which take a more concrete form in the inner three movements. The inner three movements take the listener on a journey through Anatolian sounds. The second movement, *Grotesque*, transports us to a scene of Ottoman revelry, evoking the traditional instruments *kanun* and *ud*, Turkish drum rhythms and modes. A heavy object is placed inside the piano on the bass strings to evoke the traditional sounds. The middle movement is a fiery perpetual motion, based on a traditional Black Sea dance called *horon*. In this movement, the violin simulates a small traditional three-stringed instrument called the *kemençe*, which is tuned in fourths, but not to a standardized pitch. The fourth movement is based on a popular folk song, *Odam Kireçtir Benim* ("My room is white-washed"), evoking the lament of a lost love. At the end, the piano plays in an improvisatory fashion while reaching into the keyboard and stopping the piano strings with the left hand, giving the effect of the traditional lute-like *baglama*. After these three inner movements, the listener is transported once again to the inner world of the beginning, as if the memories evoked in the middle tunes have been replaced by the sorrows of the day.

Sonata in C minor, Op. 45

Edvard Hagerup Grieg

Well-known for his incidental music to Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* and regarded as one of the leading Romantic era composers, Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg (1843-1907) counted the three violin sonatas among his favorite works in his own catalogue. A hallmark of Grieg's musical language is his blending of the high Germanic Romantic style with traditional sounding music characteristic of his own Norway. The third and last of his violin and piano sonatas, Grieg's Sonata in C Minor, Op. 45 is highly dramatic, with use of relative major and minor keys, extensive use of the leading tone in the middle movement adding a sense of longing, and the use of "drone" transitions, in which the piano continues to hold the same chord and the music slows down dramatically before introducing a contrasting melody in another key. In turns heroic, rhythmically driving and dancelike, and ethereal, the instruments take the listener on an epic journey of romantic music at its best, with a flavor of Norway evident throughout.