

Beach & Corigliano

Violin Sonatas

Usha Kapoor violin
Edward Leung piano

Amy Beach (1867–1944) & John Corigliano (b.1938)

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Usha Kapoor *Violin*
Edward Leung *Piano*

Amy Beach (1867–1944)

Sonata for Violin and Piano, Op. 34

- | | |
|----------------------|--------|
| 1. Allegro moderato | [9:44] |
| 2. Scherzo | [4:57] |
| 3. Largo con dolore | [8:13] |
| 4. Allegro con fuoco | [8:16] |

Amy Beach

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| 5. Romance for Violin and Piano, Op. 23 | [5:44] |
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John Corigliano (b.1938)

Sonata for Violin and Piano

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|--------------|--------|
| 6. Allegro | [2:55] |
| 7. Andantino | [6:58] |
| 8. Lento | [5:23] |
| 9. Allegro | [8:37] |

Playing time	[60:51]
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Beach & Corigliano: Violin Sonatas

After more than two years spent working on the *Gaelic Symphony* (1894–6), Amy Beach (1867–1944) immediately turned her attention to the new challenge of a large-scale piece of chamber music, the **Sonata for Violin and Piano Op. 34**. It was written between 11 March and 6 June 1896 and cast in four movements. The first performance took place in Association Hall, Boston, on 4 January 1897 at one of Beach's regular appearances at the concerts given by the Kneisel Quartet, and its leader Franz Kneisel, concertmaster of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The premiere, played by Kneisel and Beach, was enthusiastically received in the *Boston Daily Advertiser* by the critic Louis Elson: writing about the first movement of the sonata, he praised its two main musical ideas: the 'stern and majestic' principal theme and a 'subordinate theme of ineffable beauty'. This movement, marked 'Allegro moderato', opens with brooding *pianissimo* piano octaves to present the main theme which is taken up and expanded by the violin, giving way in due course to a more animated extension of the idea characterised by dotted rhythms. The lyrical second theme, in E major, is marked *dolce cantabile* and introduced by the violin over rippling piano arpeggios. The

rest of the movement, using material derived from these ideas, is concentrated, often dramatic and intense in mood. Beach's design is a fluid adaptation of Sonata form, deployed to great effect. In the coda, the initial idea returns to the dark colours of the opening, with the addition of an ethereal descant on the violin.

The second movement, marked 'Molto vivace', is a scherzo-like movement, but in duple (rather than the more customary triple) time. Here the influence of Brahms is apparent in the choice of metre (the scherzo substitutes in both the first and fourth Brahms symphonies are likewise in duple time), but also in the close imitation of the violin and piano lines to create a texture that is both contrapuntally elaborate and at the same time transparent and whimsical. The central Trio section is a complete contrast, beginning with a spacious theme introduced by the piano over a long violin pedal note before both instruments extend this idea, leading back to a reprise of the first section.

The slow movement is marked 'Largo con dolore', and Beach's biographer Adrienne Fried Block has described it as 'at once expressive and dirge-like. The lyrical theme is long-breathed, its sustained tones

propelled by persistent dissonance.' Sophisticated use of dissonance is a feature of much of the sonata, but here it is particularly telling, right from the initial piano statement of the theme, subsequently taken up by the violin in broad, song-like phrases. A forcefully dramatic episode at the centre of the movement leads via trills to a varied reprise of the opening and then a coda in where the music is transformed in a passage in E major, full of radiance and tranquil beauty.

Brusque piano chords introduce the final 'Allegro con fuoco', answered by rushing violin scales. The passionate but tightly controlled main theme is first heard on the violin over agitated piano chords. As the tension subsides, the tempo is marked *più tranquillo*, and a new theme emerges in the piano left hand. The violin takes up this theme (over a more intricate piano accompaniment), working it up to a climax marked *con gran espressione*. What follows next comes as something of a surprise: the development section begins with a fugue based on the first theme. This in turn leads to a varied reprise of the main ideas and a highly-charged coda in which the music turns to A major, bringing the sonata to a triumphant end.

The sonata was published by Arthur P. Schmidt in Boston in 1899 and it soon became known in Europe. On 28 October 1899, it was first performed in Berlin by the pianist Teresa Carreño (dedictee of Beach's 1899 Piano Concerto) and violinist Carl [Karel] Halif. Adrienne Fried Block quotes Carreño's enthusiastic letter to Beach reporting on the performance ('a decided success') and telling the composer that 'I never had a greater pleasure in my life than the one I had in working on your beautiful sonata and having the good luck to bring it before the German public.' Six months later, on 4 April 1900, the sonata was given in Paris by the great Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe with his regular recital partner, the pianist Raoul Pugno. In 1901 the work was heard in London, when the critic in *The Times* described it as 'a sonata of remarkable beauty'. But it is more than that: not only is there the strength and character of Beach's ideas but also the economy and ingenuity with which she uses and develops them: several themes have a close affinity with one another, lending the whole work a musical coherence that makes for an engrossing experience.

Beach's **Romance** was composed in 1893 and dedicated to the American

violinist Maud Powell (who gave the US premieres of both the Tchaikovsky and Sibelius concertos and who commissioned Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's violin concerto). It was written for a performance given by Powell and Beach at the Women's Musical Congress in Chicago on 6 July 1893 when it received such an enthusiastic reception that it was immediately encored. Beach derived the piece from an earlier song (*Sweetheart, sigh no more*) which was performed the next day – an occasion on which the composer herself demonstrated to the large assembly of female musicians how she developed and transformed material from the 1890 song for the *Romance*.

John Corigliano (b. 1938) came from an extremely musical family. His father, John Corigliano Sr., was leader (concertmaster) of the New York Philharmonic from 1943 until his retirement in 1966 and his mother, Rose Buzen, was a pianist. Corigliano has recalled in an interview with *Strings* magazine that some of his earliest musical experiences were listening to concerts in the green room at Carnegie Hall: 'I would hear my father play through the loudspeakers and suddenly tense up every time a difficult passage was coming up, and relax afterwards. I was never

interested in performing because the idea of doing that in front of an audience was too overwhelming, having seen my father getting nervous and later worrying about reviews.' Though his father tried to discourage the idea, Corigliano decided to become a composer (his teachers included Otto Luening, Vittorio Giannini and Paul Creston) and his breakthrough came with the **Violin Sonata**. It won the chamber music competition at the Festival dei due mondi in Spoleto, Italy (founded by Gian Carlo Menotti in 1958), chosen by a jury that included Walter Piston, Menotti and Samuel Barber (who became a mentor to Corigliano). The first performance was given at Spoleto on 10 July 1964, played by Yoko Matsuda (violin) and Charles Wadsworth (piano), and other violinists, including Roman Totenberg, took it up (giving the American premiere in 1965) as did John Corigliano Sr. – particularly appropriate as the work has the dedication 'for my parents'. *The New York Times* described it as 'an engaging, extroverted work with plenty of technical skill (which is not rare in today's music) and personality (which is) behind it.'

Corigliano himself has written that the Violin Sonata was originally called Duo and the work is very much intended for two equal musical partners. He also

noted that 'the listener will recognise the work as a product of an American writer although this is more the result of an American writing music than writing 'American' music – a second-nature, unconscious action on the composer's part.' The sonata is in four movements, the first of which is a virtuosic 'Allegro' driven by propulsive and ever-changing rhythmic elements. Thematically, the most important melodic elements are based on the interval of a second (often D–C sharp–D, but also other pitches). This interval characterises many of the musical ideas later in the sonata, giving the whole work motivic coherence and unity. Marked 'Andantino' (with simplicity), the second movement has a main theme derived from material already introduced in the first, but this is now transformed into something quite different. A second theme – motivically related to the first – provides contrast, and these two ideas are worked up into two dramatic climaxes before the music sinks back to the tranquil mood of the movement's opening. The third movement, 'Lento' (*quasi recitativo*), opens with a powerful and imposing piano introduction which gives way in due course to a violin cadenza. At the end of the movement, the piano returns,

its thematic material once again based on the interval of a second). The urgent and exciting finale is marked 'Allegro'. Broadly a rondo in form, it includes episodes which suggest a breathless *moto perpetuo* and passages underpinned by energetic rhythmic ostinatos. The last few bars, marked to be played 'frantically', punch home the D–C sharp relationship for a hard-hitting close.

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Kapoor-Leung Duo

Usha and Edward met at the Krzyżowa Music Festival in Poland in 2017 where they formed the Kapoor-Leung Duo. Together they are winners of the 2020 Tunnell Trust Music Club Awards and the First Prize at the inaugural 2018 Birmingham International Piano Chamber Music Competition. They present innovative programming in the duo repertoire, especially through their championing of American music.

As a duo, Usha and Edward have performed extensively throughout Germany and the United Kingdom. Performance highlights include their Wigmore Hall debut, a concert tour of Scotland, and appearances at Marden House Concerts, Ulverston International Music Festival, Winchester Chamber Music Festival, and Wye Valley Music. Additionally, they have held duo residencies at Wye Valley Chamber Music Festival and Sophie's Barn in Oxfordshire, England. The Kapoor-Leung Duo are Yehudi Menuhin Live Music Now artists for Germany and the United Kingdom, respectively.

They are grateful to have received guidance from Alasdair Beatson, Mihaela Martin, Pascal Nemirovski, Harald Schoneweg, and Daniel Tong.

Usha Kapoor (violin)

Violinist Usha Kapoor made her solo debut with the Phoenix Symphony in 2011 and has since enjoyed a varied career as a soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician throughout Europe, North America and the United Kingdom.

Usha's concerto appearances include performances with the Collegium Musicum Aschaffenburg, Studio-Orchester Duisburg, San Bernardino Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonie Südwestfalen, and the Junges Sinfonieorchester Wetzlar, among others. She is a frequent guest with the Boulez Ensemble in Berlin, the Krzyzowa Music Festival in Poland, and at the International Musicians Seminar Open Chamber Music in England. She has performed in concert halls such as the Pierre Boulez Saal, Royce Hall and Wigmore Hall.

The recipient of many accolades, Usha has been awarded a Fulbright Grant in the Arts, a Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst Grant in the Field of Music, and a Rachel Barton Pine Career Grant. She has additionally been supported by the Yehudi Menuhin Live Music Now association in Germany. Her media appearances include radio features on Classic FM, Arizona's

89.5 KBAQ and NPR's StoryCorps Archive, as well as multiple television appearances on PBS on their Arts District and *Now Hear This* series.

Usha's primary teachers include Mihaela Martin, Robert Lipsett, Steven Moeckel, and Katie McLin. She is grateful for additional support and guidance from Tasmin Little, Alexander Rumpf, Sybille Tschopp, and Daniel Tong.

Usha was raised in Phoenix, Arizona where she developed a love for nature and the great outdoors. In this recording, she plays on a Bernard Simon Fendt violin, made in London in 1840.

Edward Leung (piano)

Lauded as one of 'Sixteen Incredibly Impressive Students at Princeton University' by Business Insider, American pianist Edward Leung has performed solo recitals and appeared with orchestras across North America, Europe, and Asia.

He has performed at Wigmore Hall, Southbank Centre, International Musicians Seminar at Prussia Cove, Bridgewater Hall, St George's Bristol, Carnegie Hall, and Lincoln Center. He is supported by the Keyboard Charitable Trust, MMSF Piano Fellowship and Live Music Now UK.

A sought-after chamber musician, Edward has collaborated with some of the most important chamber musicians of today, including members of the Artemis, Lindsay, and Elias String Quartets, as well as David Campbell, Willam Hagen, Viviane Hagner, Guy Johnston, Boris Kucharsky, Charles Neidich, Tim Posner, and Rafal Zambrzycki-Payne. He has worked in masterclasses with Ferenc Rados, Richard Goode, Stephen Kovacevich, Joseph Kalichstein, and Nikolai Demidenko.

Edward is the founder of Opus 21, an innovative chamber music collective dedicated to bringing an eclectic repertory

of chamber music to Princeton University and beyond. Hailed by *The Daily Princetonian* for its 'dramatic, exciting performances' and 'a true need in the Princeton arts community', Opus 21 has formed chamber music collaborations with Harvard and Columbia Universities, and has performed at the Harvard Club of New York, Richardson Auditorium, and APAP|NYC.

After studies at Princeton University and the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire with Francine Kay and Pascal Nemirovski, Edward is the Staff Pianist at The Yehudi Menuhin School.

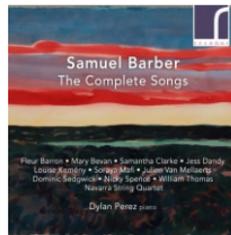


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