

Tuesday, April 8, 2014, 8pm
First Congregational Church

Pinchas Zukerman, *violin & viola*
Yefim Bronfman, *piano*

PROGRAM

Franz Schubert (1797–1828) Sonatina No. 2 for Violin and Piano in
A minor, D. 385 (1816)

Allegro moderato
Andante
Menuetto: Allegro
Allegro

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) Sonata No. 7 for Piano and Violin in C minor,
Op. 30, No. 2 (1802)

Allegro con brio
Adagio cantabile
Scherzo: Allegro
Finale: Allegro

INTERMISSION

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) Sonata for Viola and Piano in F minor,
Op. 120, No. 1 (1894)

Allegro appassionato
Andante un poco Adagio
Allegretto grazioso
Vivace

Funded, in part, by the Koret Foundation, this performance is part of Cal Performances' 2013–2014 Koret Recital Series, which brings world-class artists to our community.

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Franz Schubert (1797–1828)
Sonatina No. 2 for Violin and Piano in
A minor, D. 385

Composed in 1816.

Between 1814 and 1816, Schubert worked as a teacher in his father's school in suburban Vienna. He cared little for the situation, and soothed his frustration by composing; in 1815 alone, he wrote nearly 150 songs, the Second and Third Symphonies, a Mass and other church music, piano pieces, and a half-dozen operettas and melodramas. The torrent of music continued unstaunched, and he stole enough time from his pedagogical duties to compose some 200 pieces between the Third Symphony and the Symphony No. 4 ("Tragic"), completed in April 1816. Music, not teaching, was his passion. Schubert, however, was apparently not yet then quite ready to give himself over completely to his art, so when an advertisement appeared in the *Wiener Zeitung* on February 17, 1816, for a position at the German Normal School at Laibach (now Ljubljana), he submitted the following application (in the third person) in response to the notice:

1. Applicant has been educated at the *Konvikt* [i.e., Imperial and Royal Seminary], and was a Court Chorister and composition pupil of Antonio Salieri, first Court Conductor, on whose kind recommendation he applies for this post.
2. He has gained such thorough knowledge and experience in every type of composition for organ, violin, and the voice that, as the enclosed references testify, he is considered in every way the most capable among all the competitors for the post.
3. He promises the best possible application of his abilities to the carrying out of his duties should he be graciously considered a fitting applicant to fill the post.

According to the Laibach advertisement, the winning applicant "must be a thoroughly trained singer and organist, as well as an equally good violin player." Schubert had already authored literally hundreds of composi-

tions for voice and keyboard that could be used to support his application, but his works for violin had all been within an orchestral or chamber ensemble context. He was trained in violin (though he preferred playing viola in the Schubert household quartet and in the amateur orchestra that sprouted from it), but he had not yet written a piece featuring the instrument, so in March and April 1816 he quickly composed three Sonatinas for Violin and Piano. It is unknown, however, whether he intended these works—conventional in form and idiom, and modest enough in their technique to be accessible to students—to enhance his chances at Laibach or to be played at the convivial *Schubertiads* at which he and his friends met to savor the latest products of his flourishing genius. If nothing else, their propinquity to the Laibach application suggests that Schubert was then seeking not only to move beyond the drawing-room confines of his earlier works but also to carry his nascent reputation to music lovers outside his native Vienna. (Two other works for violin, these with orchestra—the *Concertstück* in D [D. 345] and the Rondo in A [D. 438]—date from that same year.) When Schubert did not get the position in Laibach, he decided that he had had more than his fill of teaching, so he left his father's school that spring to devote his full time to composing and never again held a regular job. His only employment during the remaining twelve years of his life was as a music tutor for two summers on the Hungarian estate of Count Esterházy. Lacking virtually any income, he lived on the charity of his friends. The Violin Sonatinas were among the last compositions that Schubert wrote before retiring from teaching—at age 19.

The three Sonatinas of 1816 (published as Op. 137 by Anton Diabelli in 1836, eight years after the composer's death) show Schubert's devoted study of Mozart's works, but move beyond those "piano sonatas with the accompaniment of violin" in the independence of their instrumental parts. The relationship between the two partners is demonstrated by the beginning of the Sonatina No. 2 in A minor, in which the piano alone presents the slow, arching main theme, and then retreats to an

accompanimental role when the violin takes over the melody. A similar alternation—piano, then violin—is used for the flowing second theme. The development section consists of just a few phrases spun from the arching melody before the piano again takes up the principal theme to start the recapitulation—but in the key of D minor rather than in the expected A minor, a technique with which Schubert experimented in several works of those years (Symphonies Nos. 2, 4, and 5, the “Trout” Quintet) to broaden the range of harmonic and instrumental colors of his instrumental compositions. The songful *Andante* shows the manner in which Schubert transferred the lyrical gifts that blossomed so abundantly in his songs into his instrumental creations. The piano, soon joined by the violin, presents the lovely melody upon which the first and last of the movement’s three formal paragraphs (A–B–A) are built; the central section, more animated in character, is marked by the delicate chromatic harmonies that give Schubert’s music so much of its touching expression. The *Menuetto*, with its surprising dynamic shifts and its melancholy minor key, is pleasingly balanced by the brighter tonality and smooth rhythms of the tiny central trio. The finale is a rondo based on the simple, tender main theme of mostly scale steps announced by the violin at the outset. The episodes separating the returns of the theme provide contrast with two livelier motives: one, started by the piano, uses wider melodic intervals and a few dotted rhythms; the other, assigned alternately to both participants, incorporates running triplet figurations.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)
Sonata No. 7 for Piano and Violin in C minor,
Op. 30, No. 2

Composed in 1802.

In the summer of 1802, Beethoven’s physician ordered him to leave Vienna and take rooms in Heiligenstadt, today a friendly suburb at the northern terminus of the city’s subway system, but two centuries ago a quiet village with a view of the Danube across the river’s rich

flood plain. It was three years earlier, in 1799, that Beethoven first noticed a disturbing ringing and buzzing in his ears, and he sought medical attention for the problem soon thereafter. He tried numerous cures for his malady, as well as for his chronic colic, including oil of almonds, hot and cold baths, soaking in the Danube, pills and herbs. For a short time, he even considered the modish treatment of electric shock. On the advice of his latest doctor, Beethoven left the noisy city for the quiet countryside with the assurance that the lack of stimulation would be beneficial to his hearing and his general health.

In Heiligenstadt, Beethoven virtually lived the life of a hermit, seeing only his doctor and a young student named Ferdinand Ries. In 1802, he was still a full decade from being totally deaf. The acuity of his hearing varied from day to day (sometimes governed by his interest—or lack thereof—in the surrounding conversation), but he had largely lost his ability to hear soft sounds by that time, and loud noises caused him pain. Of one of their walks in the country, Ries reported, “I called his attention to a shepherd who was piping very agreeably in the woods on a flute made of a twig of elder. For half an hour, Beethoven could hear nothing, and though I assured him that it was the same with me (which was not the case), he became extremely quiet and morose. When he occasionally seemed to be merry, it was generally to the extreme of boisterousness; but this happens seldom.” In addition to the distress over his health, Beethoven was also wounded in 1802 by the wreck of an affair of the heart. He had proposed marriage to Giulietta Guicciardi (the thought of Beethoven as a husband threatens the moorings of one’s presence of mind!), but had been denied permission by the girl’s father for the then perfectly valid reason that the young composer was without rank, position or fortune. Faced with the extinction of a musician’s most precious faculty, fighting a constant digestive distress, and unsuccessful in love, it is little wonder that Beethoven was sorely vexed.

On October 6, 1802, following several months of wrestling with his misfortunes, Beethoven penned the most famous letter ever

written by a musician—the “Heiligenstadt Testament.” Intended as a will written to his brothers (it was never sent, though he kept it in his papers to be found after his death), it is a cry of despair over his fate, perhaps a necessary and self-induced soul-cleansing in those pre-Freudian days. “O Providence—grant me at last but one day of pure joy—it is so long since real joy echoed in my heart,” he lamented. But—and this is the miracle—he not only poured his energy into self-pity, he also channeled it into music. “I shall grapple with fate; it shall never pull me down,” he resolved. The next five years were the most productive he ever knew. “I live only in my music,” Beethoven wrote, “and I have scarcely begun one thing when I start another.” The Symphonies Nos. 2–5, a dozen piano sonatas, the Fourth Piano Concerto and the Triple Concerto, Fidelio, three violin and piano sonatas (Op. 30), many songs, chamber works, and keyboard compositions were all composed between 1802 and 1806.

The Op. 30 Sonatas for Piano and Violin that Beethoven completed by the time he returned from Heiligenstadt to Vienna in the middle of October 1802 stand at the threshold of a new creative language, the dynamic and dramatic musical speech that characterizes the creations of his so-called “second period.” The C minor Sonata, the second of the Op. 30 set, shares its impassioned key with several other epochal creations of those years, notably the Fifth Symphony, Third Piano Concerto, “Pathétique” Sonata, *Coriolan Overture*, and Op. 18, No. 4, String Quartet. The work opens with a pregnant main theme, announced by the piano and echoed by the violin, which, according to British musicologist Samuel Midgley, “is like a taut spring about to snap.” This motive returns throughout the movement both as the pillar of its structural support and as the engine of its tempestuous expression. The second theme is a tiny military march in dotted rhythms. The development section, which commences with bold slashing chords separated by silences (the exposition is not repeated), encompasses powerful mutations of the two principal themes. A full recapitulation and a large coda round out the movement.

The *Adagio*, one of those inimitable slow movements in which Beethoven created music seemingly rapt out of quotidian time, is based on a hymnal melody presented first by the piano and reiterated by the violin. A passage in long notes for the violin above harmonically unsettled arpeggios in the keyboard constitutes the movement’s central section before the opening theme is recalled in an elaborated setting. The coda is dressed with ribbons of scales by the piano. The *Scherzo*, with its rhythmic surprises and nimble figurations, presents a playful contrast to the surrounding movements. The Finale, which mixes elements of rondo (the frequent returns of the halting motive heard at the beginning) and sonata (the extensive development of the themes), renews the troubled mood of the opening movement to close the expressive and formal cycle of this excellent Sonata.

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)
Sonata for Viola and Piano in F minor,
Op. 120, No. 1

Composed in 1894.

As an unrepentant, life-long bachelor (he once vowed “never to undertake either a marriage or an opera”), Johannes Brahms depended heavily on his circle of friends for support, encouragement, and advice. By word and example, Robert Schumann set him on the path of serious composition as a young man; Schumann’s wife, Clara, was Brahms’s chief critic and confidante throughout his life. The violinist Joseph Joachim was an indefatigable champion of Brahms’s chamber music, and provided him expert technical information during the composition of the Violin Concerto. Hans von Bülow, a musician of gargantuan talent celebrated as both pianist and conductor, played Brahms’s music widely, and made it a mainstay in the repertoire of the superb court orchestra at Meiningen during his tenure there as music director from 1880 to 1885. Soon after arriving to take up his post, Bülow invited Brahms to Meiningen to be received by the music-loving Duke Georg and his consort, Baroness von Heldburg, and Brahms was pro-

vided with a fine apartment and encouraged to visit the court whenever he wished. (The only obligation upon the comfort-loving composer was to don the much-despised full dress for dinner.) Brahms returned frequently and happily to Meiningen to hear his works played by the orchestra and to take part in chamber ensembles. At a concert in March 1891, he heard a performance of Weber's F minor Clarinet Concerto by the orchestra's principal player of that instrument, Richard Mühlfeld, and was overwhelmed. "It is impossible to play the clarinet better than Herr Mühlfeld does here," he wrote to Clara. "He is absolutely the best I know." So fluid and sweet was Mühlfeld's playing that Brahms dubbed him "Fräulein Nightingale," and flatly proclaimed him to be the best wind instrument player that he had ever heard. Indeed, so strong was the impact of the experience that Brahms was shaken out of a year-long creative lethargy—the Clarinet Trio (Op. 114) and the Clarinet Quintet (Op. 115) were composed without difficulty for Mühlfeld in May and June 1891.

During his regular summer retreat at Bad Ischl in the Austrian Salzkammergut in 1894, Brahms was again inspired to write for clarinet. During July he composed two Sonatas for Clarinet and Piano, and invited Mühlfeld to visit him in September to try out the new pieces. They then took the Sonatas to Frankfurt, and there played them for Clara Schumann four times in five days, but her hearing was so bad by that time that they sounded to her, she said, like little more than "chaos." She read them at the piano, however (Clara was one of the 19th century's greatest keyboard virtuosos), and pronounced her love for these latest of Brahms's creations. With this blessing, Mühlfeld and Brahms toured successfully with the Sonatas to several cities; the performance in Vienna on January 11, 1895, was Brahms's last public appearance as a pianist. Simrock, Brahms's publisher in Berlin,

was eager to issue the scores, but the composer would not release them until late in the spring of 1895 so that Mühlfeld would have exclusive performance rights to them during the tour. Except for the *Four Serious Songs* and the set of eleven *Chorale Preludes* inspired by the death of Clara in 1896, these Sonatas were the last music that Brahms wrote.

Though this Sonata was inspired by and conceived for the clarinet, its style and dark coloring also make it appropriate for the viola, and Brahms made an arrangement for that instrument that he instructed Simrock to publish as part of the music's original issue. These late Sonatas are works of Brahms's fullest maturity: economical without being austere, tightly unified in motivic development, virtually seamless in texture yet structurally pellucid, harmonically rich, and, as always with his greatest music, suffused with powerful and clear emotions trenchantly expressed. ("Who can resist an emotion strong enough to penetrate all that skillful elaboration?" asked the composer's friend Elizabeth von Herzogenberg about the Fourth Symphony nine years earlier.) The opening movement of the F minor Sonata follows the traditional sonata-allegro model. The first theme comprises a motive given immediately by the piano in octaves and a wide-ranging melody in the viola; the second theme group begins with a sweeter strain that leads to more animated material to close the exposition. The *Andante* is disposed in a simple three-part (A–B–A) form that perfectly contains the music's ethereal tranquility. The third movement, the gentlest of *Ländlers*, is a reminder of Brahms's unwavering affection for the popular music and dances of Vienna, his beloved adopted home. The last movement is a sonata-rondo, a form that Brahms borrowed from Haydn, who favored it for his symphonic finales.

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Cheryl Mazak

Pinchas Zukerman has remained a phenomenon in the world of music for over four decades. His musical genius, prodigious technique, and unwavering artistic standards are a marvel to audiences and critics. Devoted to the next generation of musicians, he has inspired younger artists with his magnetism and passion. His enthusiasm for teaching has resulted in innovative programs in London, New York, China, Israel, and Ottawa. The name Pinchas Zukerman is equally respected as violinist, violist, conductor, pedagogue, and chamber musician.

Mr. Zukerman's 2013–2014 season includes over 100 performances worldwide, bringing him to multiple destinations in North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia. Mr. Zukerman is currently in his 15th season as Music Director of the National Arts Centre Orchestra of Ottawa, with whom he tours China this fall. In his fifth season as Principal Guest Conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in London, he leads the ensemble in concerts in Spain, Russia, and the United Kingdom, as well as a nationwide tour of the United States. Additional orchestral engagements include the Vienna Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Salzburg Camerata, Israel Philharmonic, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and a return visit to Australia for appearances with the Sydney and Adelaide symphonies and West Australian Symphony Orchestra in Perth. Spring recitals with pianist Yefim Bronfman take place throughout North America, and the Zukerman



Dario Acosta

ChamberPlayers perform at the Ravinia, Verbier, and Miyazaki festivals in addition to their third South American tour.

Over the last decade, Mr. Zukerman has become as equally regarded a conductor as he is an instrumentalist, leading many of the world's top ensembles in a wide variety of the orchestral repertoire's most demanding works. A devoted and innovative pedagogue, Mr. Zukerman chairs the Pinchas Zukerman Performance Program at the Manhattan School of Music, where he has pioneered the use of distance-learning technology in the arts. In Canada, he has established the NAC Institute for Orchestra Studies and the Summer Music Institute encompassing the Young Artists, Conductors, and Composers programs.

Born in Tel Aviv in 1948, Mr. Zukerman came to America in 1962 where he studied at the Juilliard School with Ivan Galamian. He has been awarded the Medal of Arts and the Isaac Stern Award for Artistic Excellence, and was appointed as the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative's first instrumentalist mentor in the music discipline. Mr. Zukerman's extensive discography contains over 100 titles, and has earned him 21 Grammy Award nominations and two awards.

Yefim Bronfman is widely regarded as one of the most talented virtuoso pianists performing today. His commanding technique and exceptional lyrical gifts have won him consistent critical acclaim and enthusiastic audiences worldwide for his solo recitals, orchestral

engagements, and rapidly growing catalogue of recordings.

In the 2013–2014 season, Mr. Bronfman is featured Artist-in-Residence with the New York Philharmonic. Repertoire from Tchaikovsky to Lindberg and including contemporary composers Marc-André Dalbavie, Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Marc Neikrug are included in chamber concerts, with a winter tour to the Far East and a complete Beethoven concerto cycle over three weeks to bring the season to a close in June.

With Pinchas Zukerman, Mr. Bronfman undertakes a short duo tour in the spring to Ottawa, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Diego, Berkeley, and Vancouver. At the Berlin Philharmonic's new spring residency in Baden-Baden, he plays Beethoven under Zubin Mehta, and during the season returns to the orchestras of Los Angeles, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Vancouver, Toronto, Boston, Houston, Dallas, and Detroit, as well as Paris, Munich, Berlin, and Amsterdam. He tours Australia with whose Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra as part of the orchestra's worldwide centenary celebrations.

Mr. Bronfman works regularly with an illustrious group of conductors, including Daniel Barenboim, Herbert Blomstedt, Christoph von Dohnányi, Charles Dutoit, Christoph Eschenbach, Valery Gergiev, Mariss Jansons, Lorin Maazel, Kurt Masur, Zubin Mehta, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Yuri Temirkanov, Franz Welser-Möst, and David Zinman. Summer engagements regularly take him to the major festivals of Europe and the United States.

He has also given many solo recitals in the leading halls of North America, Europe, and the Far East, including acclaimed débuts at Carnegie Hall in 1989 and Avery Fisher Hall in 1993. In 1991, he gave a series of recitals with Isaac Stern in Russia, marking Mr. Bronfman's first public performances there since his emigration to Israel at age 15. That same year, he

was awarded the prestigious Avery Fisher Prize, one of the highest honors given to American instrumentalists. In 2010, he received the Jean Gimbel Lane Prize in piano performance from Northwestern University.

Widely praised for his numerous recordings, Mr. Bronfman was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2009 for his Deutsche Grammophon recording of Esa-Pekka Salonen's piano concerto with Mr. Salonen conducting the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Mr. Bronfman won a Grammy in 1997 for his recording of the three Bartók piano concertos under Mr. Salonen. Mr. Bronfman's performance of Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto with Andris Nelsons and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra from the 2011 Lucerne Festival is available on DVD, and his performance of Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto with the Berlin Philharmonic and Sir Simon Rattle was released on DVD by EuroArts. His recent releases include Magnus Lindberg's Piano Concerto No. 2, commissioned for Mr. Bronfman, with the New York Philharmonic and Alan Gilbert, on *Da Capo*; Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 with Mariss Jansons and the Bayerischer Rundfunk; a recital disc, *Perspectives*, complementing Mr. Bronfman's designation as a Carnegie Hall "Perspectives" artist for 2007–2008; and recordings of the Beethoven piano concertos and the Triple Concerto with violinist Gil Shaham, cellist Truls Mørk, and the Tönhalle Orchestra Zürich under Mr. Zinman, for Arte Nova/BMG.

Born in Tashkent in 1958, Mr. Bronfman immigrated to Israel with his family in 1973, where he studied with pianist Arie Vardi, head of the Rubin Academy of Music at Tel Aviv University. In the United States, he studied at the Juilliard School, the Marlboro Music School, and the Curtis Institute, and with Rudolf Firkušný, Leon Fleisher, and Rudolf Serkin. Mr. Bronfman became an American citizen in July 1989.