

FRIDAY
**FEB
23**
7:30 PM

Templeton Performing
Arts Center

JOHN NOVACEK & LEILA JOSEFOWICZ

DUO RECITAL

ARTISTS



John Novacek
piano



Leila Josefowicz
violin

6:30 PM PRE-CONCERT LECTURE

with Dr. Alyson McLamore

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Sonata for Violin and Piano (1917)

Allegro vivo ("Fast and Lively")

Intermède, fantasque et léger ("Interlude, Whimsical and Nimble")

Finale: Très animé ("Conclusion: Very Animated")

KAROL SZYMANOWSKI

Mythes: Trois poèmes, op. 30 (1915)

La fontaine d'Arethuse ("Arathusa's Fountain")

Narcisse ("Narcissus")

Dryades et Pan ("Dryads and Pan")

INTERMISSION

ERKKI-SVEN TÛÜR

Conversio (1994)

IGOR STRAVINSKY

Divertimento (from *Le baiser de la fée*, 1928;

arr. for violin & piano by Stravinsky and Samuel Dushkin, 1934)

Sinfonia ("Symphony")

Danses suisses ("Swiss Dances")

Scherzo ("Joke")

Pas de deux: Adagio—Variation—Coda ("Dance Duet: Slow—Variation—Ending")

PROGRAM NOTES

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)
Sonata for Violin and Piano (1917)



The old Yiddish saying “Man plans, and God laughs” must have had special resonance for Claude Debussy. He promised his publisher that he would write six sonatas for various combinations of instruments. He completed two of them, while the third was to be a sonata for an American violinist, Arthur Hartmann. However, challenges began to multiply: World War I had begun, so Hartmann made the

judicious decision to return to his homeland. Paris was under bombardment by the Germans, so food and fuel were scarce. As if these factors were not dire enough, Debussy learned that he was suffering from cancer, and his physicians were pessimistic.

Understandably, Debussy was discouraged. Yet, beauty often arises even out of such dark circumstances, and he soldiered on to complete the Violin Sonata in 1917. He warned friends that it was purely “an example of what a sick man could have written during the war,” but it is clear that he was selling his work short. Instead, the sonata reflects what an innovative composer can achieve when he is envisioning new ways of partnering two instruments. Sadly, Debussy’s illness meant he could not continue in this novel direction: the sonata was his last completed work.

KAROL SZYMANOWSKI (1882–1937)
Three Mythes, op. 30 (1915)



Mythes, by Polish composer Karol Szymanowski, wears a Triple Crown of sorts: it requires a wide array of virtuosic and often innovative violin techniques; it thus influenced many other composers; yet it also is very popular, thanks to its depiction of three fables from Greek mythology. In the first, the goddess Artemis transforms the nymph Arethusa into a fountain so she can escape the pursuing

river-god Alpheus. In the second, Narcissus regards his image unceasingly in the mirror-like surface of still water until he is at last turned into a flower. The third myth concerns the flute-playing Pan and the dancing wood-nymphs known as the dryads.

Szymanowski’s *Mythes*—labeled “three poems”—are not “action” dramas, as he carefully explained to an American correspondent in 1923. Rather, he wrote, each is “a musical expression capturing the beauty of the Myth”—focusing on “‘flowing water’ in *Arethusa*, the ‘still water’ in *Narcissus* ... [and] a murmuring forest on a hot summer night, [with] merrymaking and dancing Dryads [and] suddenly the sound of Pan’s flute.” After various disruptions, “everything calms down in the freshness and calmness of the rising sun. In essence, an expression of complete reverie of a restless summer night.”

ERKKI-SVEN TÛÜR (b. 1959)
Conversio (1994)



Erkki-Sven Tüür is an anomaly among the four composers represented on this evening’s program: he is a *living* musician. Another unique aspect is that he is the only person among tonight’s composers who has also been the leader of a progressive rock band. Tüür left the group in his mid-twenties when he found himself drawn more and more to the world of “art” music, but he continues to interweave a

wide array of approaches into his compositions. For instance, in *Conversio*, listeners often think of Irish fiddling at the start—but it is played in a way that resembles the motivic drive and repetition of minimalism.

The Latin dictionary offers contradictory definitions for the word *conversio*: it can be a 1) turning around or periodic return (as in a revolution); or 2) change (as a conversion). Tüür’s *Conversio* has elements of both: rather like a spiral, it moves gradually forward through space, adding new motifs, but circling back to previous ideas before leaving them behind. The composer says that *Conversio* is “a story of creating the listener’s expectations and then not behaving according to those expectations.” By the end, no hint of the energetic Irish flavor is left—only serenity.

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882–1972)
Divertimento (from *Le baiser de la fée*, 1928;
arr. for violin & piano by Stravinsky and Samuel Dushkin, 1934)



Audience members who attended this past summer’s Festival Mozaic will remember Igor Stravinsky’s *L’histoire du soldat* (The Soldier’s Tale) as a particular highlight. In fact, many of Stravinsky’s most beloved works to this day were written to support theatrical or dance productions: *The Firebird*, *Petroushka*, and of course *The Rite of Spring*. It is not a surprise, therefore, that Stravinsky produced an excellent

score for the one-act ballet *Le baiser de la fée* (The Fairy’s Kiss), based on Hans Christian Andersen’s sad tale *The Ice Maiden*. Stravinsky did not produce this score alone, however; he had been commissioned to write the ballet to mark the thirty-fifth anniversary of Pyotr Tchaikovsky’s death, and thus he interwove reinterpreted melodies by the older Russian composer all through the ballet music.

Stravinsky was always one to get as much mileage as possible from his creations, so he soon produced *Divertimento*, an orchestral suite containing about half of the ballet score for concert use. With the help of Samuel Dushkin, who premiered Stravinsky’s Violin Concerto, Stravinsky also adapted *Divertimento* as a violin-and-piano duet. Even with only two performers, the rich diversity of the Stravinsky/Tchaikovsky score is readily apparent, embracing plaintive laments, mounting tension, tender passion, and rollicking folk dances.