

ABIGEL KRALIK

Mozaic Artist-in-Residence



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Abigel Kralik, violin with Maxim Lando, piano

Sunday, January 23, 2022 at 2:00 PM
TEMPLETON PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
TEMPLETON, CALIFORNIA

KCBX 
Central Coast Public Radio

New Times

Violin Sonata in E-flat major, op. 18
Allegro, ma non troppo
Improvisation: Andante cantabile
Finale: Andante-Allegro

RICHARD STRAUSS

Ms. Kralik, Mr. Lando

INTERMISSION

Rhapsody No. 1

JESSIE MONTGOMERY

Ms. Kralik

Tzigane

MAURICE RAVEL

Ms. Kralik, Mr. Lando

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— FESTIVAL —
MOZAIC

RICHARD STRAUSS (1864-1949)

Violin Sonata in E-flat major, op. 18 (1887)



Richard Strauss viewed a melodic idea as something that “suddenly falls upon me out of the blue.” However, Strauss possessed a skill that most of us do not: the ability to shape that melody into something marvelous. Some of that talent

probably came from his father Franz, who had risen far above very humble origins to become Germany’s most celebrated horn player.

Franz taught his son a similar ambition and tenacity; he also fed him a steady diet of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert.

With adulthood comes rebellion, and Strauss was soon drawn to the innovations of Brahms and Wagner, even though his arch-conservative father detested those modernists (despite being employed in the orchestra for a production of Wagner’s Parsifal). By age twenty-three, Strauss was on the cusp between old and new—and his Violin Sonata, op. 18, was the result. It is often claimed—incorrectly—that this was Strauss’s last chamber work, but small ensemble pieces did grow few and far between as he turned his attention to large orchestral works and operas. But, it is possible to see an almost “orchestral” intensity in the sonata, in which both violin and piano perform rich, full harmonies and soaring melodies.

Strauss does recall the past in this work: the violin melody resembles an art-song tune in the second movement, with perhaps a brief paraphrase of Schubert’s Erlkönig in the center; the piano’s last six bars quote Beethoven’s Pathétique sonata. After a somber opening, though, the third movement launches into a flourishing tune that foreshadows Strauss’s not-yet-written Don Juan, thus merging the past with the future.

JESSIE MONTGOMERY (b. 1981)

Rhapsody No. 1 for solo violin (2015)



We owe a lot to music’s “Romantic” era. It was in the early 1800s that throngs of listeners first began crowding into concert halls to admire virtuoso performers such as Paganini. By 1840, those performers often began to present solo

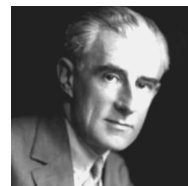
concerts (called “recitals”), letting their individual abilities enthrall audiences, rather than sharing the stage with a variety of musicians. These virtuosos composed hundreds of new works designed to showcase their specific talents—but, as the twentieth century progressed, it became increasingly rare to encounter a concert soloist who also composed.

Jessie Montgomery, however, has revived that older tradition wholeheartedly. In fact, after graduating from Juilliard in 2003, she joined PUBLIQuartet—a quartet comprised of string players who all composed and arranged for their ensemble. Montgomery continued her compositional training at New York University (2012). Then, backed by an MPower grant from the Sphinx Organization (which supports African American and Latinx classical musicians), she released her debut album, *Strum: Music for Strings*, in 2015.

One of the album’s delights is Montgomery’s Rhapsody No. 1. The word “rhapsody” itself evokes the Romantic tradition (in fact, Tzigane’s subtitle is “Concert Rhapsody”), and Montgomery pays homage to a Romantic virtuoso, Eugène Ysaÿe, as well as to Johann Sebastian Bach. Rhapsody No. 1 is the first of six planned works, and the next—Rhapsody No. 2 for viola—debuted in September 2020. In the first rhapsody, Montgomery uses a thoughtful, improvisatory passage to frame a fiery middle section. Even though Montgomery wrote Rhapsody No. 1 to showcase her own virtuosity, it is a testimony to her compositional talent that the rhapsody quickly has entered the repertory of other violinists as well.

MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)

Tzigane (1924)



Anyone who has gone fishing might recognize the pacing of Hungarian verbunkos music: quietly, seductively, the fish is lured into nibbling the bait—and then begins the vigorous struggle to bring the fish ashore. By means of the eighteenth-century verbunkos

dances, light-cavalry recruitment officers went “fishing” in Hungarian villages, seeking young men to join the army. The sergeant would begin to dance, all alone, performing the lassú—a slow, dignified number—but other hussars soon joined in for an increasingly fast and frenzied dance called a friss, climaxing in thrilling leaps and much clicking of spurs. Romani (or “gypsy”) bands provided accompaniment, and their exotic sound appealed to more than just prospective soldiers: for more than two hundred years, composers have imitated the ethnic style in various concert works.

The verbunkos musical tradition lived on into the twentieth century, as Ravel demonstrates in *Tzigane* (French for “gypsy”). He had persuaded the Hungarian violinist Jelly d’Árányi—a great-niece of the nineteenth-century violin virtuoso Joseph Joachim—to play gypsy tunes for him until the wee small hours one morning, thus firing him up to write, as he called it, “a short piece of diabolical difficulty, conjuring up the Hungary of my dreams.” (Ravel’s friend Hélène Jourdan-Morhange called it a “violinists’ minefield.”) Ravel set *Tzigane* first as a chamber work, but he soon devised an orchestral accompaniment, which d’Árányi premiered in 1924 (she had also debuted the earlier scoring with piano). After the violinist plays an extended lassú solo, the accompaniment ripples its way into the rambunctious friss. Like the centuries-old recruiting dance that inspired this piece, *Tzigane* builds inexorably to a wild conclusion.