



2023/ Recital I

**Patrick Goodwin, Violin**

Benjamin Smith, Piano

December 3rd, 2023, at 12:30pm

Walter Hall

**PROGRAMME**

Sonata for Violin and Piano no. 1 in A major, Op. 13

*Allegro molto*

*Andante*

*Allegro vivo*

*Allegro quasi presto*

Gabriel Fauré  
(1845-1924)

*Deux Morceaux* for Violin and Piano

*Nocturne*

*Cortège*

Lili Boulanger  
(1893-1918)

Sonata for Violin and Piano in G minor, L.140

*Allegro vivo*

*Intermède: Fantasque et léger*

*Finale: Très animé*

Claude Debussy  
(1862-1918)

**INTERMISSION**

*Thème et Variations* for Violin and Piano

Olivier Messiaen  
(1908-1992)

Sonata for Violin and Piano, FP 119

*Allegro con fuoco*

*Intermezzo: Très lent et calme*

*Presto tragico*

Francis Poulenc  
(1899-1963)

This recital is in partial fulfilment of the Doctor of Musical Arts in Performance.

Patrick Goodwin is a student of Jonathan Crow.

Born in Windhoek, Namibia, Patrick studied in Cape Town and Chicago where his principal teachers were Farida Bacharova and Olga Dubossarskaya Kaler. Prior to relocating to Canada in 2018, Patrick held the position of concertmaster of the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra and was an adjunct lecturer at the South African College of Music. In addition to his activities as a DMA student, Patrick is an avid chamber musician and maintains an active freelance career in and around Toronto.

## About the Programme

In planning and performing this recital, I am inspired by the violinists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century who premiered works which now hold a central place in the violin repertoire. In an age where music critics and publishers made (and broke) composers' careers, the successful reception of a new work often relied on the success of its premiere. In presenting a recital of French works for violin and piano spanning less than a hundred years, I aim to highlight the remarkable musical developments of the period and underscore the important roles played by the remarkable violinists who championed these works.

### Sonata for Violin and Piano no. 1 in A major, Op. 13

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

The pioneering violinist Marie Tayau was one of the first women permitted to study at the Conservatoire de Paris and subsequently became a regular performer at the newly formed *Société nationale de musique* in concerts dedicated to the performance of French music. It was in one such concert in 1887 that Tayau performed the triumphant official premiere of Fauré's first violin sonata, with the composer at the piano. Fauré composed this violin sonata from 1875 to 1876 and dedicated it to the violinist Paul Viardot (possibly because Fauré had a romantic interest in Viardot's sister, Marianne). Tayau's performance at the Salle Pleyel was, by the Fauré's own account, "perfect", gaining high critical praise for the work. This successful premiere and the subsequent publication of the sonata was a critical point in the composer's budding career.

The sonata is in four movements. Although it is considered an early work, Fauré's novel use of harmony, timbre, and texture foreshadows his enduring musical influences on composers into the twentieth century. The violinist Midori Goto suggests that the *Scherzo*, with its juxtaposition of quick and lyrical sections, directly inspired musical textures found in the shorter violin sonatas by Debussy and Poulenc. This movement was so well-received at its premiere that Tayau and Fauré performed it again as an encore.

### Deux Morceaux for Violin and Piano

Lili Boulanger (1893-1918)

Lili Boulanger was the first woman to be awarded the coveted *Prix de Rome* for composition in 1913. Hailed as a child prodigy, Lili was the younger sister of Nadia Boulanger, the influential teacher, composer, and pianist who went on to teach many of the twentieth century's important musicians including Ginette Neveu, Quincy Jones, and Philip Glass. Lili, who had suffered poor health from childhood, died in 1918 aged only twenty-four. Her sister Nadia stopped composing music shortly after her death.

The *Nocturn* and *Cortège* were composed in 1911 and 1914, respectively. Known collectively as *Deux Morceaux*, these short works evoke the contrasting moods of Parisian cultural life. With an emphasis on tone-colour and harmonic novelty, the young Lili Boulanger's works are in the continued musical traditions of Fauré,

who was at that time director of the Paris Conservatoire and had taught both Boulanger sisters. The influence of Debussy is ever present in Lili's music, never more clearly than in the *Nocturne* which includes a quote from Debussy's *Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune*. The lively *Cortège* was dedicated to the prominent French violinist Yvonne Astruc. Astruc was a champion of works by modern composers and, together with Nadia Boulanger at the piano, made the first recordings of *Nocturne* and *Cortège* for Columbia records in 1930. Recorded at a time when works by women were seldom published, let alone recorded and distributed, these ground-breaking recordings have played a significant role in securing *Deux Morceaux's* deserved place in the concert repertoire.

### **Sonata for Violin and Piano in G minor, L. 140**

**Claude Debussy (1862-1918)**

The seminal composer and pianist Claude Debussy created a unique sound-world that paralleled the imagery and symbolism of art and literature of the time. In what the music journalist Alex Ross calls a “velvet revolution”, Debussy's innovative use of colour and harmonic ambiguity had a lasting influence on musical styles of the twentieth century.

The violin sonata was composed while Debussy was suffering from late-stage cancer and heavily depressed about the ongoing First World War. In what was to be his final performance, Debussy premiered the work with violinist Gaston Poulet in May 1917. Poulet, who had worked closely with Fauré, was a well-respected violinist, conductor, and proponent of contemporary music. The sonata is dedicated to Debussy's wife, the singer Emma Bardac.

The three succinct movements include a scherzo-like middle movement and a brilliant finale. The delicate opening of the *Allegro vivo* soon transforms, moving back and forth between tranquility and turbulence. The second movement, *Intermède: Fantasque et léger*, opens with a cadenza-like flourish quickly turning into a scherzo full of mischievous play between the instruments. In the *Finale: Très animé*, Debussy transform the material from the first movement with bursts of virtuosic flair in an almost improvisatory, manner. In a letter to Poulet about the sonata, Debussy notes the influence of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Imp of the Perverse*, which is perhaps illustrated by frequent capricious moments between the instruments.

Debussy was originally pleased with the work, describing the sonata as “filled with tumultuous joy”, but later dismissed it as merely the efforts of a “sick man in a time of war”. Through its joyful exuberance in the face of death, Debussy's violin sonata captures a spirit perhaps prescient of Poulenc's own war-time sonata written decades later.

### ***Thème et Variations* for Violin and Piano**

**Oliver Messiaen (1908-1992)**

Oliver Messiaen is widely regarded as one of the great composers of the twentieth century. Messiaen's innovative use of modes and his incorporation of non-western scales were influenced by the musical language of Debussy and the modern French movement of the early twentieth century. Messiaen's music is generally characterized by a prominent use of harmonic and tone colour, perhaps stemming from his own sound-to-colour synesthetic experiences.

*Thème et Variations* was composed in 1932 and is one of Messiaen's best-known early works. It is dedicated to the composers' first wife, Claire Delbos. Delbos and Messiaen regularly held musical evenings at their Paris home, where the couple first performed *Thème et Variations* on their five-month wedding anniversary. Messiaen composed several works celebrating their happy union. Delbos, an accomplished violinist and composer herself, composed several reciprocal works for organ dedicated to her husband in addition to other works for voice and piano. The future catastrophic events of the Second World War, and his internship in a German camp, would later inspire Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*, perhaps his best-known chamber work. Towards the end of the war Delbos sustained a brain injury which resulted in complete memory loss and was institutionalized until her death in 1959.

The work is in six sections. The theme, *Modéré*, is followed by five variations: *Modéré*; *Modéré un peu vif*; *Modéré, avec éclat*; *Vif et passionné*; and *Très lent*. Messiaen treats the thematic variations with a sense on continuous flow, building the tempo and character through each of the first four. In the final variation the transformed original theme suggests a sense of transcendence that looks ahead to Messiaen's future works.

### **Sonata for Violin and Piano, FP 119**

**Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)**

Pianist and composer Francis Poulenc became a leading figure in Parisian musical life in the years after the First World War. Largely self-taught, his works are characterized by a strong melodic and vocal quality, often juxtaposing serious and popular musical idioms. The early influences of Debussy, and later of Satie and Stravinsky, are ever present in Poulenc's musical language.

Poulenc seldom wrote for solo strings, however, the chance to compose a sonata for Ginette Neveu and dedicate it to the memory of Spanish poet Federico García Lorca, compelled him to complete the work in 1943. Neveu, a celebrated French violinist, was one of the first women performers to rise to international fame after winning first prize in the 1935 Wieniawski competition. It was in occupied Paris in 1943 that she and Poulenc gave the premiere of his Sonata for violin and piano, a work in which Poulenc credited Neveu for many "delicious violinistic details". Inscribed at the top of the *Intermezzo* are Lorca's words "The guitar makes dreams weep" from his poem *The Six Strings*. Poulenc's admiration for Lorca was perhaps rooted in their mutual love of

literature, music, and art. The shared experience of their homosexuality was surely also a source of empathy for Poulenc. In keeping with his musical *penchant* for the macabre, the outer two movements *Allegro con fuoco* and *Presto tragico*, explore the absurdity of life but also the deep despair of loss. In addition to the dedication to Lorca, Poulenc's bold resistance to fascism is evident in his inclusion of quotes from the song "Tea for Two", which had been banned in France by the Nazis.

Poulenc revised the work shortly after Neveu's tragic death in a plane crash in 1949. The ending of the *Presto tragico* represents not only Lorca's execution at the hands of fascist supporters, but Neveu's death too, without whom the sonata would likely never have existed.