

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: SELECTED AMERICAN VIOLIN WORKS
 AND THEIR EUROPEAN CONTEXT

Hyun Park, D.M.A., 2008

Dissertation directed by: Dr. James Stern, Chair
 School of Music

For my dissertation, I did a study and performance of American violin works by Charles Ives, Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, and John Corigliano, along with contemporaneous European works by Paul Hindemith, Béla Bartók, Igor Stravinsky, Sergei Prokofiev, and Francis Poulenc.

The selected American violin works display the development of a distinctively American style and cover a significant formative period (1914-1963) of American classical music. I intend that the European works form a backdrop for setting in relief any distinctly American qualities possessed by the American works. This is because they cover a similar time period and have significant stylistic affinities and shared influences.

My topic stems from a question, “What defines the American Sound?” I attempted to find the answer by looking at the time when American composers consciously searched for their identities, and declared their music to be distinctly American. I found that those distinctive qualities stemmed from three sources: folk music, jazz and hymns. Ives and Copland can be viewed as American in content for their inclusion of such elements, while Bernstein and Corigliano can also be considered as “ideologically American” for their adventurous and eclectic spirit. The simplicity derived from singing a hymn or crooning a popular song; the freedom inspired by jazz; the optimism of accepting all possibilities—these

elements inform the common spirit that I found in the music of these four American composers.

FIRST RECITAL

Sonata for Violin Solo Op.31/2 (1924), Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)

Suite Italienne for Violin and Piano (1932), Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

Sonata for Violin and Piano (1963), John Corigliano (b.1938)

SECOND RECITAL

Second Sonata for Violin and Piano (1914-17), Charles Ives (1874-1954)

First Rhapsody for Violin and Piano (1928), Béla Bartók (1881-1971)

Violin Sonata No.1 in f minor (1938-46), Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

THIRD RECITAL

Nocturne for Violin and Piano (1926), Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

Sonata for Violin and Piano, Op. 119 (1942-3, rev.1949), Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Serenade (after Plato's "Symposium") (1954) by Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)

The pianists were Sun Ha Yoon (Bartók) and Grace Eunae Cho (all other repertoire).

SELECTED AMERICAN VIOLIN WORKS
AND THEIR EUROPEAN CONTEXT

by

Hyun Park

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts
2008

Advisory Committee:

Professor James Stern, Chair
Professor Evelyn Elsing
Professor Gerald Fischbach
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CD 2	Sonata for Violin and Piano, No.2 First Rhapsody Sonata No.1 in f minor, Op. 80	Charles Ives (1874-1954) Béla Bartók (1881-1945) Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)	54'1"
CD 3	Nocturne for Violin and Piano Sonata for Violin and Piano Serenade (after Plato's Symposium)	Aaron Copland (1900-1990) Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)	56'

Performed by
Hyun Park, violin
Grace Eunae Cho, piano
(Sun Ha Yoon, piano for Béla Bartók)

Program notes

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971), *Suite Italienne for Violin and Piano* (1932)

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) is regarded as the most influential composer who developed the new musical traits of the 20th century. Stravinsky turned to *Neo Classicism* after the World War I. His *neo-classical* style developed as he orchestrated music of the eighteenth century composer Pergolesi for Diaghilev's new ballet, *Pulcinella*. In this ballet, he applied the 20th century harmonies and textures while retaining the original structures. *Suite Italienne for Violin and Piano* is an arrangement of several movements from *Pulcinella*. The themes of Pergolesi are fragmented and altered with rapid meter changes, harmonic twists, and full of unexpected turns. The five movements, *Introduzione, Serenata, Tarantella, Gavotta, Minuett et Finale* are disguised as Baroque dance suite in the form, but Stravinsky brings humor and rhythmic vitality to the piece. This version for violin and piano is arranged and premiered with violinist Samuel Dushkin in 1933.

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953), *Violin Sonata No.1 in f minor* (1946)

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953) left Russia after the World War I and spent two decades in the North America and Western Europe, but he went back to Russia permanently after the second World War. He pursued the style of *neo-classicism* like Stravinsky, but he also wrote program music under the pressure from the Soviet regime from the time he went back to Russia in 1936. Prokofiev began to compose *Violin Sonata No. 1 in f minor* in 1938 but completed it in 1946 after the birth of second sonata. Compared to the optimistic *Second violin sonata*, this sonata carries uncharacteristically dark, intense and troubled atmosphere. It is written in *neo-classical* approach, but quite

different from music of Stravinsky in spirit. The first movement, the piano plays a haunting opening theme. The theme comes back in the piano part in the latter section of the movement, called *freddo* -cold, chilly-. The muted violin plays the fast scale that covers the full range of the instrument evoking the sound of “wind in a graveyard”. This *freddo* section comes back at the end of the last movement, and makes the whole piece’s mood coherent. The second movement *Allegro brusco* begins with brutal conversations between the violin and piano, as both play strong hammered notes.

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963), *Sonata for Violin Solo* Op.31/2 (1924)

After the World War I, German composer Paul Hindemith (1895-1963) reached a new phase in his compositional style. In 1920s, he composed the series of chamber music which “somewhat eclectic drawing on a wide variety of styles”. He followed the idea of *Neue Sachlichkeit*¹ that believes “a particular work should depend on the character and function chosen for it”. He also turned to *neo-classicism* in this period. Generally, Hindemith’s *neo-classical* works are regarded “very different from the works by Igor Stravinsky labeled with that term, owing more to the contrapuntal language than the Classical clarity of Mozart”². However, *Sonata for Violin Solo*, Op.31/2 composed in 1924 uncharacteristically brings out the classical elements as the last movement adopts a theme from Mozart’s *Lied*, “*Komm, Lieber Mai*”. Without the time signature, the pulse of each movement is suggested in tempo markings and the shape of a long melody is guided with dynamic changes. In this piece, Hindemith uses modernistic harmony and freedom but never loses the style of Bach’s contrapuntal writing and Mozartean phrase structure.

¹ “socio-political and artistic trends that emphasized the democratization of all areas of life”

² “Paul Hindemith.” [Wikipedia](#). 13 Apr. 2008. <

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Francis Poulenc (1899-1963), *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, Op. 119 (1942-3, rev.1949)

In France, the group of young composers called, *Les Six* shared the new musical styles that devoid of German tradition. They advocated choosing subjects from everyday life, learning about styles other than those suited to the concert hall (e.g., circus band, jazz band, or café-cabaret entertainment). Among the six composers, Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) developed individual style that recognizable with bright colors, clear rhythms, diatonic harmonies and musical sarcasm. He is notable in his song writing and his instrumental music also has fluent melodies “with the grace and wit of the Parisian popular chansons”³. He did not enjoy writing for strings. Indeed, he had destroyed two earlier violin sonatas before completing the only survived *Sonata for violin and piano* in 1943. Poulenc remained in occupied France during the World War II, and wrote this violin sonata as an expression of his political opposition during that time. It is, especially, dedicated to Federico Garcia Lorca, the Spanish poet who was shot by fascists during Spanish Civil War in 1936. In that context, the sonata is written with uncharacteristically profound and tragic color. The outer two movements carries headings such as “Allegro con fuoco”, “Presto tragico” expressing both anger and grief on Lorca’s murder with pointed rhythmicity which reminds that of Prokofiev’s first sonata. In the *presto tragico*, the anxiety builds up until the hammered note of piano, evoking the gun shot, indicates the tragic death of Lorca. The beginning theme is rather humorous but sarcastic, in the development the melodies in both violin and piano part become fragmented, and interrupted. These fragmentation and sudden discontinuity remind of that of Stravinsky. The second movement is a gentle elegy carrying a quotation from Lorca’s poem, “the guitar makes dreams weep”. The pizzicato evokes the sound of guitar, and the supple

³ Grout, Donald J., and Claude V. Palisca. A History of Western Music. 2005. , 719

melodies are tender and expressive as chansons. The Sonata was premiered in 1943 with violinist Ginette Neveu and Poulenc himself at the piano.

Béla Bartok (1881-1971), *The First Rhapsody for Violin and Piano* (1928)

Béla Bartok (1881-1945) synthesized the elements of Hungarian, Romanian, Slovak, and Bulgarian folk music with elements of the German and French classical tradition. (From the decade after World War I, he pushed toward “the limits of dissonance and tonal ambiguity, reaching the furthest point with his two violin sonatas of 1921 and 1922”⁴) *The first Rhapsody for Violin and Piano* was composed in 1928 for violinist Joseph Szigeti whom Bartók had a long- time partnership with. The rhapsody is a medley of dance tunes bringing together the Hungarian gypsy and the Romanian peasant. It is written in two-part form inherited from the gypsy *verbunkos* (recruiting dance), with a slow *lassú* followed by a fast *friss*. Musicologist Paul Griffiths says that Bartok spoke a lot more through the violin than his own instrument piano, because “A solo violinist could do what a pianist could not: embody both high and low art, speak the language of Beethoven and the other languages of village fiddlers and city entertainers”⁵

Charles Ives (1874-1954), *Second Sonata for Violin and Piano* (1914-17)

American composer Charles Ives (1872-1954), “created a personal modernistic idiom by synthesizing international and regional musical traditions”.⁶ He was fluent in American vernacular music, Protestant church music, European classical music, and experimental music. He was “fearless in his use of unconventional approaches to rhythm and harmony, and he took great offense at conventional music dependent on European

⁴ Grout, 831

⁵ "Bartok, Violin concerto no.2, Rhapsodies Nos. 1&2, Shahan and Boulez." Deutsche Gramophon. (1999).

⁶ Grout, 837

style. Instead, he wanted an individualistic and experimental music that reflected his view of America”⁷. Ives also disagreed on Dvorak’s advice for American composers to use African-American or American-Indian music as sources for a distinctively national music. He felt, “as a white New Englander, a more appropriate source was the music regularly heard and sung by people in his own region, from hymns to popular songs”⁸

Ives composed total six violin sonatas, but only four of them are survived. I performed the *Second Sonata* for violin and piano which was written between 1914 and 1917. The three movements of the sonata have descriptive titles. In the first movement, “Autumn”, he quotes a melody from a hymn, “Mighty God While Angels Bless Thee” which become transformed later into “Oh Susannah”. The second movement, “In the Barn” reminds a country barn dance and he uses country-fiddling figuration in tunes “Turkey in the Straw”, “What Shall we do with a Drunken Sailor”, and “The Battle Cry of Freedom”. The third movement, “The Revival” consists of variations on a theme from “Come Thou Font of Every Blessing”.

Aaron Copland (1900-1990), *Nocturne for Violin and Piano* (1926)

Another significant composer who established the true American identity in music was Aaron Copland (1900-1990). Like Ives, he incorporated popular forms of American music such as jazz and folk into his compositions. Copland received early musical training in the United States., but like many other young musicians, he was attracted to the classical history and musicians of Europe. In 1920, he moved to France to study with Nadia Boulanger. Copland flourished under the guidance of Boulanger, and was

⁷ “Charles Ives” *Composers Online*,

⁸ Grout, 840

influenced by music of Prokofiev, Stavinisky, Hindemith, Bartók, and Ravel. When he returned to the United States, he turned to “writing music in a language the broad masses of people could understand, on subjects that were relevant to their lives and concerns”⁹. He found that there was no music more characteristically American than jazz. *Nocturne for Violin and Piano*, composed in 1926 contains the jazz inspired harmonies and rhythms, but Copland also gives it a harmonic intensity and textural sparseness that distinguishes it from pure jazz. The piece is written in A-B-A form followed by a short violin cadenza. The dreamy and bluesy feeling of this piece is created by the flexibility in rhythms indicated to be played as *libramente, presque un toilet* (freely, almost a triplet).

Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990), *Serenade (after Plato’s “Symposium”)* (1954)

Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990) was a major force in twentieth century music. He expanded the audience of classical music while maintaining a deep artistic integrity as a composer, conductor, music lecturer, and pianist. Bernstein’s compositional style is deeply influenced by music of Copland. Since their first encounter at Harvard, Bernstein championed Copland’s works, and Copland encouraged young Bernstein’s career throughout their lives.

Serenade (after Plato’s Symposium) was written in 1954 and premiered with Isaac Stern as soloist. It is originally written for solo violin, string orchestra, harp and percussions. At my recital, I performed a version for violin and piano. Bernstein writes about this piece that it “resulted from a re-reading of Plato’s charming dialogue, “The Symposium”. The music, like the dialogue, is a series of related statements in praise of

⁹ Grout, 888

love, and generally follows the Platonic form through the succession of speakers at the banquet.”

Musicologist Jack Gottlieb states that Bernstein developed tonal forms which seems to be a hall mark of many of his works, through his *Second Symphony*, ‘*The Age of Anxiety*’ (1949) and *Serenade* (1954). He calls this technique as “melodic concatenation” where the melody is treated like a chain reaction. For example, a prime figure is subsequently transformed into an accompaniment figure, on top of which a new prime figure emerges. Bernstein has specifically commented on this process: “The relatedness of the movements does not depend on common thematic material, but rather on a system whereby each movement evolves out of elements in the preceding one”. This process is found in the use of ‘Phaedrus’ theme which opens piece. Played by violin solo, this beginning theme is so appealing in simplicity which I found typically American. The solitary line of violin is to be played, as Bernstein indicates, “*simply, molto legato senza portamento*”. This slow theme turns into a fast version played by the orchestra as going into the second part of the movement. The same theme again transforms into accompaniment figure in the fourth movement. In the second movement, Bernstein borrows all of this movement’s thematic material from the first two of his *Five Anniversaries* for piano. The third movement is a “lightning quick scherzo” in which physician, Erixymathus “speaks of bodily harmony as a scientific model for the workings of love-patterns”. In the fourth movement, the moving speech of Agathon is expressed in one of the most beautiful melodic line Bernstein created. It embraces all aspects of love’s powers, charms, and functions. In final movement, a more dramatic tone is struck when Socrates quotes Diotima’s speech on the demonology of love. The famous interruption by

Alcibiades and his band of drunken revelers leads into fast Allegro section and develops into jig-like dance music to joyful celebration. Bernstein says, “If there is a hint of jazz in the celebration, I hope it will not be taken as anachronistic Greek party-music, but rather the natural expression of a contemporary American composer imbued with the spirit of that timeless dinner party”.

John Corigliano (b.1938), *Sonata for Violin and Piano* (1963)

John Corigliano (b.1938) is one of the finest and most widely recognized contemporary American composers. He witnessed and furthered the twentieth century musical tradition that Copland and Bernstein have set, and I believe, he is the bridge between the music of the twentieth century and that of today. Before achieving a success as a composer, he worked as an assistant to the director on Leonard Bernstein’s Young People’s Concerts series. *Sonata for violin piano* was composed in 1963 and it brought him a first recognition as a composer. With this work, he won the first prize in the 1964 Spoleto Festival Competition for Creative Arts, in which Walter Piston and Samuel Barber were on the panel.

Basically tonal and romantic in conception, the violin sonata features polytonal moments and makes use of other twentieth-century rhythmic and metric techniques. It is regarded as “conservative and melodic in style and leans toward contemporary works by Copland, Piston, and Bernstein. The piece consists of four movements, (Allegro-Andantino-Lento-Allegro.)The first movement is follows sonata form. The first theme features large leaps, while the secondary theme is built on jazzy rhythms within a 5/8 meter. The second movement is a reflective and profound *Andantino*, marked as “with simplicity”. The main theme of this movement is borrowed from Bernstein’s *The Age of*

Anxiety. The piano part in the variation IX carries the same theme. The third movement is a recitative, breaking out from intensely lyric music of the second movement. The fourth movement takes rondo form and the episodes between the main theme features references to the first movement.

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Hyun Park *Violin*

Grace Cho and Sun Ha Yoon
Piano

Dissertation: Selected American Violin Works and their European Context

November 9, 2007 at 8PM
Joseph & Alma Gildenhorn Recital Hall
Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center
University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SCHOOL OF MUSIC
presents

Hyun Park *violin*

ACCOMPANIST:
Grace Cho

DISSERTATION:
Selected American Violin Works
and their European Context



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Hyun Park

violin

DISSERTATION TITLE:
Selected American Violin Works
and their European Context

ACCOMPANIED BY:
Eunae Grace Cho



APRIL 10, 2008 AT 5:30PM

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