ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: UNFOLDING IN ONE BREATH:
EXPLORING FREE-FORM AND CONTINUOUS
NARRATIVES IN VIOLIN REPERTOIRE

Yuan-ju Liu, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2026

Dissertation directed by: Professor David Salness, School of Music

The purpose of this dissertation is to provide further context for the three-recital performance project by Yuan-ju Liu, which examines single-movement violin repertoire. Titled *Unfolding in One Breath*, the project centers on violin works characterized by free-form narratives and continuous musical structures within a single-movement framework. The three themed performances—*Poèmes and Ballades*, *Dramatic Monologues, Fantasies and Popular Sounds*—each explore diverse violin repertoire while maintaining the unifying criterion of the single-movement form within the themes.

This dissertation seeks to accomplish three main objectives. First, it aims to explore the evolving desire to experiment and adapt to modern culture and audience expectations, making classical programming accessible and relatable to the community. Second, it examines the historical and compositional backgrounds of each work, with particular attention to the influence of the composers' creative processes. Third, it offers a performer's perspective on preparation and interpretation of each performance and includes surveys gathered from audiences across the three performances.

Video recordings for this dissertation can be accessed in the Digital Repository at the University of Maryland (DRUM).

UNFOLDING IN ONE BREATH:

EXPLORING FREE-FORM AND CONTINUOUS NARRATIVES

IN VIOLIN REPERTOIRE

by

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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
2026

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ACKNOWLEDMENT

First and foremost, I am sincerely grateful to my violin professor, David Salness, for his humor, wisdom, and expertise. His teaching and approach to music have profoundly shaped me, both as a violinist and as a teacher. I feel incredibly fortunate to have been part of Professor Salness's final studio at the University of Maryland and to call him my teacher.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to my former teachers, Janet Sung and Robin Scott, whose guidance and insight have been invaluable throughout my studies in the United States.

I am deeply grateful to my colleagues at UMD, whose musicianship and friendship mean so much to me. I offer special thanks to my two exceptional piano collaborators, Dr. Yurong "Ria" Yang and Dr. Jessica McKee, whose artistry and support have made my performances possible.

My heartfelt thanks go to the audiences who attended the performances and generously shared their feedback. Their engagement and perspectives have been invaluable, playing an essential role in shaping both my development as a performer and the direction of this study.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to my family in Taiwan, my wife, Allyson, and my friends for their constant support, encouragement, and love throughout my journey.

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PROGRAMS

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Ballade for violin and piano in C minor Op.73 (1907) Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912)

Poème élégiaque in D minor, Op. 12 for violin and piano (1892) Eugène Ysaÿe (1858-1931)

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Poema autunnale (1925) Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)

Ballade No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 23 (1836) Frédéric Chopin (1910-1849)

Recital No. 2 Dramatic Monologues:

Prelude ou Improvisation (Op.posth) Charles-Auguste de Bériot (1802-1870)

Sonata-Monologue for violin solo (1975) Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978)

Rapsodia Panameña (1988) Roque Cordero (1917-2008)

Sonata No. 2 for solo violin (1958) Grażyna Bacewicz (1909-1969)

No.3 Fantasies and Popular Sounds:

Tzigane (1924) Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

The Red Violin Chaconne for Violin and Piano (1997) John Corigliano (b. 1938)

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INTRODUCTION

The inspiration for my dissertation grew out of a performance experience that stayed with me. In the spring of 2025, students of David Salness collectively presented all six solo sonatas of Eugène Ysaÿe in a public performance at the University of Maryland. I performed the third and final movements of Sonata No. 1, *Allegretto poco scherzoso* and *Finale: Con brio*.

Working through the six sonatas as a class under Prof. Salness's guidance, we looked closely at Ysaÿe's musical language, style, and violin techniques. Curiously, I found myself especially drawn to the Third and Sixth Sonatas. What stood out to me was that both sonatas are written in one movement, where ideas unfold continuously and remain tightly connected throughout. That sense of uninterrupted flow and structural freedom ultimately shaped the focus of this paper. I am interested in how the single-movement form gives performers more expressive freedom, while also allowing for a more cohesive and compelling musical narrative.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic reshaped everyday life in ways we had never imagined before. It changed how we communicate, learn, and work. For a time, much of life moved online—students attended classes through recordings or video calls, and many people had to learn how to work remotely. These shifts did not only affect logistics; they also transformed how we interact with one another and how we process information.

During the pandemic, the performing arts were among the hardest-hit fields. Concerts, tours, and productions were canceled, and for a while, concert halls were completely silent. But the need for connection and meaning didn't disappear. Artists found new ways to share their work—recording performances from home, curating smaller programs, and creating content

specifically for digital platforms. Performances were no longer experienced solely in person, but increasingly accessed through the convenience and accessibility of the internet.

As a concert programmer today, I believe it is both our responsibility and our opportunity to respond to these changes. Audiences appear increasingly drawn to experiences that feel direct, focused, and immediately engaging. For my dissertation recitals, I have chosen to present only single-movement works, each standing independently and representing a variety of composers and genres.

My goal is to create a concert experience that feels concentrated and impactful—almost like sliding through a series of musical posts. Each piece offers a glimpse into a composer's voice and style, and together they form a kind of "tasting" of different musical worlds that I hope audiences will find both engaging and memorable.

Narrative expressions and freeform works

Single-movement works did not emerge abruptly but evolved from instrumental traditions. Early signs of continuous, unified structures can be found in *fantasia*, a genre[1] that developed during the Renaissance. Initially conceived as imaginative instrumental pieces modeled on the contrapuntal style of vocal motets, fantasias—alongside the *ricercare*[2]—became increasingly structured in late sixteenth-century Italy, often unfolding through continuous imitative or fugal writing or through the transformation of a single musical idea.

Over time, fantasias came to embody greater freedom in rhythm, tempo, and harmonic exploration. Although its role in ensemble music declined by around 1700, it remained significant in keyboard traditions, particularly in Germany.[3] Many works of Johann Sebastian

[1] However, its earliest appearances in a musical context focus on the imaginative musical 'idea' rather than on a particular compositional genre
[2] Originally the term 'ricercare' was used for a piece of preludial character for lute or keyboard instrument (as in the expression 'ricercare le corde', 'to try out the strings')
[3] The use of the fantasia declined due to the increased favor of the toccata, capriccio and prelude–fugue pairing.

Bach exemplify this balance of improvisatory freedom and contrapuntal rigor, such as his preludes and fantasia-like works. By the Classical period, fantasias coexisted with more formalized genres such as the sonata. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Fantasia in D minor, K. 397* illustrates the free and improvisatory narrative within a single movement format.

In the nineteenth century, romantic composers increasingly embraced program music[4], or music guided by narrative or extra-musical ideas with expansion of instrumental resources and expressive scope[5]. Works such as Ludwig van Beethoven's *Symphony No. 6 (Pastoral)* and the *Egmont Overture* show efforts to integrate narrative expression within largely abstract forms.

A decisive shift occurs with Hector Berlioz, whose *Symphonie fantastique* establishes program music as a central Romantic genre through its vivid narrative of obsession and hallucination. Similarly, Felix Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream Overture* demonstrates the evocative potential in orchestral writing. In the meantime, Franz Liszt developed the symphonic poem (*Symphonische Dichtungen*)[6] as single-movement orchestral works that unify music with literary, philosophical, or mythological ideas through thematic transformation. Liszt's thirteen symphonic poems not only define a new genre but also profoundly influenced Richard Strauss and Jean Sibelius.

The narrative and expressive qualities of Romantic music also extend to smaller-scale forms, including chamber music and solo instrumental works. Composers adapted principles such as thematic transformation, contrasting moods, and dramatic pacing to more intimate settings. Among these forms, the piano ballad[7] emerges as a particularly vivid example of Romantic narrative expression. Frédéric Chopin wrote numerous ballades and mazurkas that convey poetic

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[4] The term 'program music' was introduced by Liszt, who also invented the expression *Symphonic poem*.
[5] Roger Scruton, "Programme Music," *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane Root (Oxford University Press), accessed April 28, 2026, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.22394
[6] Hugh Macdonald, "Symphonic Poem," *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane Root (Oxford University Press), accessed April 27, 2026, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.27250
[7] A term applied to an instrumental (normally piano) piece in a narrative style. It was first used by Chopin for Ballade in G minor op.23.

and literary inspiration within a single movement. Similarly, Robert Schumann composed character pieces such as *Fantasiestücke* and *Arabeske*, each sustaining drama, emotional tension, and expressive imagery comparable to orchestral tone poems.[8]

Beyond the piano, the violin's expressive range and lyricism made it an ideal vehicle for programmatic storytelling. Exemplary works include Pablo de Sarasate's *Zigeunerweisen* and *Carmen Fantasy*, which demonstrate the instrument's capacity for sustained melody, virtuosic display, and tonal color in the service of narrative expression.

Fundamentally, this dissertation explores the violin's ability to combine narrative, lyricism, and technical virtuosity into fully realized, impactful single-movement works, revealing the instrument's exceptional expressive capacity and depth.

Planning of Dissertation Recitals

As I began to explore repertoire for my dissertation, several works immediately stood out as central to my study: *Poème, Op. 25* by Ernest Chausson, the *Sonata for Solo Violin* by Grażyna Bacewicz, and *Tzigane* by Maurice Ravel. Each of these works showcases the violin's expressive nature and complex virtuosity, while reflecting the distinctive musical language of its composer. I then decided to further expand them into three themed programs: *Poemes and Ballades, Dramatic Monologues,* and *Fantasies and Popular Sounds*. These thematic categories provide a flexible framework for selecting complementary works.

The first recital, centered around *Poème*, is situated firmly within the heart of Romanticism, embracing a wide emotional range and grand, expansive gestures. Violin poems are inherently rhapsodic in character—rich in sonority and often fully orchestrated—offering a broad canvas

[8] *Fantasiestücke* is related to the 19th-century fantasias and first used by E.T.A. Hoffmann for a character named Kreisler in his *Fantasiestücke in Callots Manier* (1814–15).
The title *Arabeske* is used by Schumann to suggest a fluid, organic system of fragments that transcends Classical forms.

for composers to evoke a vivid, narrative atmosphere, shaping an emotional journey marked by ebb and flow. On the other hand, Ballades are focused, often culminating in a powerful, climactic conclusion. Developed by Frédéric Chopin, the ballade merges elements of sonata, variation, and rhapsodic freedom, resulting in a concentrated and dramatic single-movement form that complements the expansive nature of violin poems.

The second recital shifts focus to unaccompanied violin repertoire, introducing a more intimate and introspective sound world. Without accompaniment, the violin assumes a fully self-sufficient voice. As both a composer and virtuoso violinist, Grażyna Bacewicz writes with exceptional idiomatic understanding, employing abstract harmonies and conceptual gestures that expand the expressive capacity of the solo instrument. To create contrast and diversity in sound, much of the solo violin repertoire explores compound melodies, extended techniques, and heightened virtuosity, often reflecting a more contemporary musical language.

The final recital opens with *Tzigane*, a rhapsodic fantasy inspired by Romani musical traditions. Rooted in the popular musical influences of its time yet elevated through Ravel's refined Impressionist language, the work sets the stage for *Fantasies and Popular sounds*. This recital highlights music of flair and character, in which each work draws on popular idioms to create immediate expressive impact. The program ultimately celebrates directness, color, and vitality in music. I hope the clarity and vividness of these works resonate with contemporary audiences, offering an engaging and exhilarating sonic experience.

Performer's perspective on audience reception

All of the selected single-movement works in this project range from approximately 10 to 18 minutes in duration, each unfolding continuously while expressing a distinct musical voice. In

presenting this program, I hoped to explore an alternative approach to creating an effective and engaging concert experience for audiences. Given that the primary audience includes music students, educators, family members, and young parents, it is important to consider prevailing listening habits and cognitive demands. I believe that works within the 10 to 18 minute range strike a balance between structural depth and accessibility for this target audience.

Modern life places continuous and competing demands on time and attention. Musicians frequently sustain multifaceted careers as performers, teachers, freelancers, and entrepreneurs, reflecting a professional landscape that has shifted significantly in recent years. Likewise, many audience members balance full-time work, family responsibilities, and personal commitments, leaving limited capacity for extended, uninterrupted concentration. In this context, contemporary audiences may have less capacity for prolonged focused listening than in the pre-internet era.

Within this framework, thoughtfully structured programs of shorter, self-contained works may better align with contemporary modes of engagement while still offering depth, continuity, and meaningful artistic experience. As part of this dissertation, surveys with Likert scale collected from recital attendees will be incorporated to provide direct insight into audience perspectives on themed programs structured around single-movement works.

POEMES AND BALLADES

Late Romanticism and expanded expression

The late 19th century in Europe was a time of major change in politics, society, technology, and culture. Large empires such as the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, and Russian Empires were facing growing internal problems, while new nation-states were becoming more powerful alongside rising Nationalism.[9] Industrialization changed everyday life through rapid urban growth, the rise of the middle class, and new ways of working and consuming culture. At the same time, new technologies such as the telephone and electricity began to transform daily life.

These changes created a broader audience for the arts. Music was no longer reserved for royalty or aristocracy; the growing middle class increasingly attended salons and concert halls as part of cultural life. As a result, these venues became central to musical performance and exchange, supporting both public concerts and more intimate forms of music-making.[10] At the same time, industrial expansion and emerging political movements, including campaigns for women's rights, reflected a society in transition and helped shape new audiences for music that balanced tradition with modern sensibilities.

Romantic music shaped the early 19th century, with Beethoven as one of its key figure.[11] Composers focused on emotion, strong contrasts, and often drew inspiration from nature, literature, or personal experience. As social and cultural conditions changed, these ideas developed into Late Romanticism, which used richer harmonies, larger orchestral forces, and

[9] "The Birth of the Nation-State Idea," *Nationalism and the Quest for Nation-States in 19th-Century Europe*, BA Notes, accessed April 27, 2026, https://banotes.org/european-history-1789-1945/19th-century-europe-nationalism-nation-states/#the-birth-of-the-nation-state-idea
[10] "Concert," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, accessed April 27, 2026, https://www.britannica.com/art/concert
[11] "Romanticism: Music," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, accessed April 27, 2026, https://www.britannica.com/art/Romanticism/Music

more flexible forms. Composers became more adventurous in pushing tonality further, using increased chromaticism, and combining individual styles with wider European influences.

German and Austrian composers such as Johannes Brahms, Richard Wagner, and Gustav Mahler embodied this transformation through expansive symphonic works. At the same time, French composers like Ernest Chausson, César Franck, and Gabriel Fauré were renowned for their intimate chamber music, merging virtuosity with the expressive depth of Late Romanticism.

Eugène Ysaÿe : Poème élégiaque in D minor, Op. 12 (1892)

Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe[12] (1858–1931) was a leading virtuoso of his time, often compared to Paganini for his exceptional technical command and expressive range. A central figure of the Franco-Belgian violin school, he taught at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels, where he influenced an entire generation of violinists, including Nathan Milstein and Josef Gingold. His *Six Sonatas for Solo Violin, Op. 27* stand as a landmark of the solo violin repertoire, combining formidable technical demands with deep expressive character. Frequently compared to Bach's *Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin*, these works require not only technical precision but also interpretive depth and musical maturity, while expanding the expressive language of the instrument in a distinctly Late Romantic idiom.

Among Ysaÿe's early works that have survived, *Poème élégiaque* embodies a particularly rich vein of melancholy and is often regarded as an important statement of his emerging compositional voice. Its rhapsodic structure —shifting between rising intensity and moments of fading resignation—foreshadows the expressive approach found in his later works.

[12] "Eugène Ysaÿe." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Eugene-Ysaye

Composed around 1892 and dedicated to Gabriel Fauré, *Poème élégiaque* opens in dark, elegiac tones, enhanced by the use of *scordatura*—tuning the violin's G string down to F—which gives the instrument a deeper, more haunting sound. Ysaÿe himself described the piece as a defining step in his compositional voice, stating:

"I think that 'Poème élégiaque' marks a definite step in my work as a composer, for it contains clear evidence of my desire to link music and virtuosity—the true virtuosity which had been neglected since the instrumentalists, departing from the example set by the early masters, had ceased composing themselves and had left this art to those who ignored the resources of the violin."[13]

It begins with a slow, atmospheric introduction, where the orchestra establishes a dark, transparent harmonic backdrop. The violin enters almost as if emerging from this texture, presenting a mournful, highly expressive melodic line that sets the work's elegiac character. After the opening section, a new theme in B-flat minor, titled Scène funèbre (funeral scene), emerges. This section is solemn and profoundly felt, intended to evoke the tragedy from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

The music then grows more agitated, featuring syncopated rhythms and intricate interplay between the violin and orchestra, heightening tension toward the climax. At the peak of the work, the funeral theme comes in *fortississimo* and is shared by both the orchestra and solo violin, creating a dramatic and powerful climax. As the music gradually settles, the final section weaves together the opening lyrical theme and the funeral theme, culminating in a series of sublime descending trills in the violin, which descend into a profound, grave conclusion.

[13] "Hommage à Eugène Ysaÿe," Danzhu Music, accessed April 24, 2026, https://www.danzhumusic.com/movements/hommage-eugne-ysae.

Drawing on his growing experience as a conductor, Ysaÿe returned to the work between 1902 and August 1904, transforming it into an independent version for violin and orchestra.[14]

Ernest Chausson : Poème, Op. 25 (1896)

In 1896, Ernest Chausson composed the work that would secure his place in the violin repertoire, partly inspired by Eugène Ysaÿe's *Poème élégiaque*, written a few years earlier. Chausson was deeply impressed by Ysaÿe's piece, describing it as "different from anything that has appeared before." In response to Ysaÿe's request for a concerto, he wrote: *"I hardly know where to begin with a concerto, which is a huge undertaking, the devil's own task. But I can cope with a shorter work. It will be in very free form, with several passages in which the violin plays alone."*[15]

The seeds of *Poème* can be traced as early as 1890, when Chausson encountered *The Kreutzer Sonata*[16] by Leo Tolstoy, a deeply personal and controversial work exploring jealousy, desire, and the fragility of marriage. The story follows Pozdnyshev, who murders his wife in suspicion after believing she is involved with a violinist with whom she performs Kreutzer Sonata. By the spring of 1896, this literary inspiration merged with another idea: a one-movement concerto for Ysaÿe. The first manuscript of *Poème* bears the inscription *Le chant de l'amour triomphant* ("The Song of Triumphant Love"), referencing a tale by Ivan Turgenev[17]. This story, centered on jealousy, obsession, and desire, depicts a love triangle between two artists and the woman they both desire, where passion takes on an almost supernatural intensity.

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[14] Marie Cornaz, *Preface* to Poème élégiaque and Other Works, by Eugène Ysaÿe, ed. Ray Iwazumi (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, HN 1201, 2021), VII.)
[15] Ernest Chausson, letter to Eugène Ysaÿe (1896), quoted in "Poème," *Grove Music Online*, Oxford University Press.
[16] Leo Tolstoy, *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1889), novella inspired by Beethoven's Violin Sonata No. 9 in A major, Op. 47 ("Kreutzer Sonata").
[17] Jessica Duchen, "Turgenev and His Musical Afterlives," accessed April 24, 2026, https://www.jessicaduchen.co.uk/pdfs/other_pdfs/turgenev2_new.pdf.

Although *Poème* does not follow a literal program, Chausson captures a vivid emotional world through purely musical means. The piece unfolds in a single continuous arc, shaped by tension and release. The violin line begins in a restrained, almost hesitant manner, then gradually expands into more expansive, soaring climaxes before retreating again into a quieter, unsettled character. Shifting harmonies contribute to a constant sense of instability, suggesting an atmosphere of longing, inner conflict, and emotional ambiguity. *Poème* moves fluidly between introspection and intensity, reflecting the expressive freedom of the Late Romantic style.

With its poetic character, emotional depth, and demanding violin writing, *Poème* quickly established itself as an important work in the violin repertoire. Chausson produced three versions of the piece: for violin and orchestra, violin and piano, and a chamber arrangement for violin, string quartet, and piano. Across all versions, its rich harmonic language, lyrical writing, and continuous form give the work a strong narrative quality, allowing it to remain one of the most expressive and enduring works of the Late Romantic violin repertoire.

Ottorino Respighi: Poema autunnale (1925)

Born in Bologna, Ottorino Respighi (1879–1936) has a multifaceted career as a composer, violinist, teacher, and musicologist. When Respighi traveled to Russia in 1900, he played viola in the Russian Imperial Theatre orchestra and studied composition and orchestration with Rimsky-Korsakov, whose focus on brilliant orchestral textures directly shaped Respighi's impressionistic style.

Respighi was a central figure in a broader movement among Italian composers to revive a national tradition of instrumental music in the early twentieth century—a movement known as

the *Generazione dell'Ottanta* (Generation of the 1880s)[18]. This group, which also included Alfredo Casella, Gian Francesco Malipiero, Ildebrando Pizzetti, and Giorgio Federico Ghedini, sought to move beyond Italy's long-standing operatic dominance by drawing inspiration from Baroque and Renaissance figures such as Antonio Vivaldi and Claudio Monteverdi while embracing modern orchestral techniques and forging a new Italian sound. Their efforts led to renewed international recognition for Italian instrumental music such as Respighi's "Roman Trilogy"—*Fountains of Rome*, *Pines of Rome*, and *Roman Festivals*—as well as Alfredo Casella's *La Giara*. In addition to composing new works, they also rediscovered, edited, and performed earlier Italian music, enriching the repertoire and fostering a renewed sense of national identity.[19] Respighi's interest in early music is especially evident in works such as the *Concerto Gregoriano*, by evoking the spirit of Gregorian chant through modal melodies and flowing, chant-like lines.

Composed in 1925, *Poema Autunnale* for violin and orchestra is one evocative and lyrical work, revealing a more intimate and poetic side of the composer. The title, meaning "Autumn Poem," reflects its free, rhapsodic structure, unfolding as a single movement that captures the shifting moods of the season. Rather than adhering to a traditional concerto form, Respighi creates a fluid musical narrative in which modal harmonies and long, lyrical violin lines evoke an archaic, pastoral atmosphere.

The solo violin assumes a distinctly narrative role throughout, at times suggestive of a mythic voice— the spirit of Pan beneath falling golden leaves. The work opens with a warm, glowing orchestral texture, from which the violin emerges gently with double-stops, as if rising out of a hazy autumn landscape. Respighi's mastery of orchestral color is evident in the delicate interplay

[18] Alberto Racanati, La Generazione dell'Ottanta and the Italian Sound (University of Missouri–Kansas City, 2021).
[19] Michael De Sapio, Silent Craftsmanship: The Music of Franco Margola, October 1st, 2024, https://theimaginativeconservative.org/2024/10/silent-craftsmanship-music-franco-margola-michael-de-sapio.html

of woodwinds, shimmering strings, and subtle harmonic shifts, all contributing to an atmosphere of introspection and quiet melancholy.

As the music unfolds, moments of intensity and brilliance suggest gusts of wind or flashes of autumnal color, before gradually subsiding into more subdued, reflective passages. The violin writing remains deeply expressive throughout, emphasizing long, singing lines over overt virtuosity. In its closing moments, the work fades into a calm and introspective stillness, capturing the quiet beauty and transience of the autumn season.

Ballades and Lyricism

With three violin poems at the center of the first recital, the Ballades resonate with the same Romantic heart while projecting a heightened sense of dramatic intensity. The ballades create the sense of a narrative without words[20], allowing music to unfold it's storytelling.

Inspired in part by literary narrative—often associated with the poetry of Adam Mickiewicz[21]—Chopin's ballades unfold not as strict formal structures, but as musical stories. Although Chopin wrote no works for violin, this program includes a compelling counterpart in an arrangement of the G minor Ballade by Eugène Ysaÿe. Other composers such as Samuel Coleridge-Taylor contributed compositions that reflect this same ideal, translating the poetic and storytelling essence of the ballade into his own distinct voice.

Frédéric Chopin: Ballade No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 23 (1836)

Frédéric François Chopin (1810–1849) was a Polish composer and pianist who spent much of his professional life in Paris. Widely regarded as one of the most important figures of the

[20] James Parakilas exams Frédéric Chopin transformed the instrumental ballade from its literary form and created narrative without explicit text.
[21] Mickiewicz's first volume of poems, *Poezye* (1822; "Poetry"), included ballads and romances, is said to define Polish Romanticism.

Romantic era, he is known almost exclusively for works written for solo piano, distinguished by their lyrical quality and capacity for intimacy, drama, and wide-ranging emotional contrast.

His *Ballade No. 1* was the first of four piano ballades and is notable for its narrative flow, dramatic contrasts, and lyrical beauty. Composed around 1831-1836, shortly after Chopin left his native Poland, the work reflects both a sense of exile and a broader expression of longing and national identity. The *Ballade* unfolds in a more fluid, narrative-like manner, moving through contrasting sections of calm reflection, rising tension, lyrical expression, and dramatic intensity.[22]

Robert Schumann once called it "one of his most brilliant works." This rarely heard violin transcription was made in 1916 by Eugène Ysaÿe, during his time in London. Long forgotten like much of his compositional output, it was rediscovered in manuscript form at the Library of Congress and later edited by Jacob Niederhoffer. This version stays faithful to represent Ysaÿe's intentions, baring many of his fingering suggestions. Mr. Niederhoffer wrote "wherever the musical intent was left unclear, I referred back to Chopin's original work and placed suggestions in parentheses for the performers."[23]

Ysaÿe's version stays true to the spirit of Chopin while transforming the work with new color and texture with collaboration of piano and violin. The violin line takes on the virtuosic piano writing—chords, arpeggios, and all—combining technical dazzle and powerful emotions. The result is a striking reinterpretation of a Romantic masterpiece, offering a new perspective on Chopin's genius through the voice of the violin.

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[22] James Parakilas, Ballads Without Words: Chopin and the Tradition of the Instrumental Ballade (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1992), 49–51.
[23] Jacob Niederhoffer, "Ysaÿe's Transcription of Chopin's Ballade No. 1 Op. 23," Violinist.com, April 17, 2017, https://www.violinist.com/blog/Jacob12/20174/21119/.

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor: Ballade for violin and piano in C minor Op.73 (1907)

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912) was a British composer and conductor who occupied a distinctive position in early 20th-century musical life. Of mixed heritage—born in London to an English mother and a father from Sierra Leone—he developed a musical voice that combined the expressive language of European Romanticism with influences drawn from African-American spirituals and African musical traditions. His work gained significant recognition in both Britain and the United States, where he was sometimes referred to as "African Mahler."[24] Among his most celebrated works is the cantata trilogy *The Song of Hiawatha*, which brought him international fame and established his reputation for large-scale choral and orchestral writing. Alongside these monumental works, Coleridge-Taylor also produced a number of smaller chamber pieces, in which his expressively melody-driven voice is apparent.

The *Ballade in C minor* (1907), one of his few works for violin and piano, showcases this more intimate side of his output. Dedicated to the Russian-born violinist Michael Zacharewitsch[25], the piece unfolds in a single movement marked by lyrical breadth and rich harmonic color. From its opening, the violin and piano engage in a close, conversational partnership, presenting themes that are both warm and expansive. The writing features flowing melodic lines and expressive harmonic shifts that give the music a sense of narrative unfolding.

Although the title "Ballade" was widely used by composers at the turn of the 20th century—including Brahms and Debussy—Coleridge-Taylor's approach leans toward the expressive world of late Romantic lyricism. The work is shaped by emotional trajectory than by

[24] "Coleridge-Taylor, Samuel." *Encyclopedia of Invisibility*. Accessed April 28, 2026.
[25] "Michael Zacharewitsch," *Tony Seymour Rare Violins*, accessed April 28, 2026, https://tonyseymour.com/pages/michael-zacharewitsch/

strict structural design, moving through passages of tenderness, increased intensity, and reflective calm.

Zacharewitsch, to whom the piece is dedicated, was an accomplished violinist who studied with major pedagogues such as Otakar Ševčík and Eugène Ysaÿe, and was known for a style of playing noted for its elegance and brilliance. This connection reflects the broader performance culture in which Coleridge-Taylor worked, where close collaborations between composer and performer often shaped the character of new works. In its combination of lyrical writing, expressive depth, and intimacy, the *Ballade in C minor* stands as a refined example of Coleridge-Taylor's musical voice—one that bridges personal expression and the broader Romantic tradition.

Artistic narration of romantic works

I had been familiar with *Poème* by Ernest Chausson for many years and had always wanted to perform it. Discovering *Poème élégiaque* by Eugène Ysaÿe became another important source of inspiration in shaping the overall sound world of the first recital. Both works call for a rich, lush sonority that is difficult to achieve without a strong command of sustaining long tones with the bow, while continuously shaping them to reflect different gestures and emotional nuances.

In the two ballades, my primary focus is to create an introspective and deeply reflective atmosphere, allowing space for contrast when reaching the triumphant and virtuosic climaxes toward the end. In the Chopin Ballade, especially there are many opportunities to explore rubato and the coloring of harmonies. For *Poema autunnale*, I found myself fully embracing the role of narrator and storyteller. The violin transforms into many different instrumental voices: at the opening, it evokes the woodwind section with a sense of freedom and harmonic fluidity; later, it

takes on the warmth and depth of horns as the theme becomes more grounded; in passages with quadruple stops, it suggests the brilliance and resonance of a harp; and in moments where the music transcends reality, it resembles the ethereal quality of a pan flute.

Bringing these works together was an incredibly enriching experience, which allowed me to explore the violin's vast palette of colors and highlight its remarkable versatility in conveying diverse emotions and narratives.

DRAMATIC MONOLOGUES

Unaccompanied works

My interest in unaccompanied works deepened during the pandemic, when opportunities to connect with fellow musicians in person were limited. During that time, I turned to solo repertoire as a way to continue creating and sharing music online. Beyond practicality, solo works became a powerful vehicle for developing personal interpretation and shaping an individual performance voice.

Solo instrumental music spans a remarkable range. It can be as expansive as a piano reduction of Gustav Mahler's symphonies or as intimate as Johann Sebastian Bach's *Prelude in C Major, BWV 846*. Solo repertoire is usually freer in form, capable of embodying both great complexity and striking simplicity depending on its purpose.

Within the solo violin canon, several works stand at the pinnacle of the genre—most notably Johann Sebastian Bach's *Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin* and Eugène Ysaÿe's *Six Sonatas for Solo Violin*. Additional landmark contributions include Béla Bartók's *Sonata for Solo Violin, Sz. 117*, Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber's *Passacaglia in G minor*, Georg Philipp Telemann's *12 Fantasias for Violin*, and Sergei Prokofiev's *Sonata for Solo Violin in D major, Op. 115*.

Within these distinguished solo violin works, Bach's *Chaconne* in D minor stands not only as a cornerstone of unaccompanied violin repertoire, but also as the conceptual and structural foundation of this recital program. In this recital, I aim to explore repertoire that shares the *Chaconne*'s architectural scope and expressive depth.

Charles-Auguste de Bériot : Prelude ou Improvisation (Op.posth)

Charles-Auguste de Bériot (1802-1870) was a Belgian violinist, composer, and teacher, and one of the central figures of the 19th-century Franco-Belgian violin school. His violin music—including concertos, romances, and études—is known for its lyrical elegance, clarity of technique, and melodic charm. Later in his career, he became the chief violin professor at the Brussels Conservatory, where he helped shape the Franco-Belgian tradition. Among his most distinguished students were Hubert Léonard, Henri Vieuxtemps, and Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst.[26]

De Bériot believed passionately in the expressive potential of the violin. He famously wrote, *"The true mission of the violin is to imitate the accents of the human voice, a noble mission that has earned for the violin the glory of being called the king of instruments."* His life was marked by extraordinary hardship. In 1852, worsening eyesight forced him to step away from teaching and performing; by 1858, he was completely blind. Later, in 1866, he lost his left arm. In spite of these devastating challenges, de Bériot's impact on violin technique, pedagogy, and repertoire remains profound and enduring.

Prelude ou Improvisation, a posthumous work of unknown date, is a lyrical solo violin piece that embodies de Bériot's vision of the violin as a singing, voice-like instrument. Free in form and improvisatory in spirit, the piece blends expressive melodic lines with delicate ornamentation and moments of understated virtuosity.

[26] Naxos Publishing, "Charles-Auguste de Bériot Biography," accessed April 28, 2026, https://publishing.naxos.com/pages/charles-auguste-de-beriot-biography

Roque Cordero: Rapsodia Panameña (1988)

Roque Cordero (1917-2008) was a Panamanian composer, violinist, and teacher, and one of the most important voices in 20th-century Latin American art music.[27] Born in the Republic of Panama, where he started writing music while still in high school, he founded the National Orchestra of Panama when only 21 years old. He later studied composition in the United States most notably with Ernst Krenek, who encouraged him to explore twelve-tone and serial techniques. Cordero's music fuses modernist procedures with Panamanian folk rhythms and gestures, creating a style that balances intellectual rigor with vivid expressive energy.

One of his best-known and most frequently performed works, *Rapsodia Panameña* is rooted in Panamanian folk melodies, rhythms, and dance traditions, shaped within a free, rhapsodic form. Written early in his career—before his full embrace of twelve-tone composition—the piece is bold, colorful, and rhythmically alive. Syncopation, sharp contrasts, and folk-inspired themes drive the music forward, while classical compositional techniques provide structure and coherence. As a performer, the piece feels both spontaneous and carefully crafted, constantly shifting between raw energy and control.

The work received its world premiere in 1990, performed by violinist Bernard Eichen at Illinois State University[28] during the annual Latin American music recital organized by Cordero himself. Years later, the piece reached a much wider audience through Rachel Barton Pine, who recorded it on her album *Capricho Latino* (2011), bringing renewed attention to Cordero's music. *Rapsodia Panameña* stands as a powerful statement of musical nationalism, bridging Cordero's early folkloric language with the more rigorous modernism of his later works.

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[27] "Roque Cordero," *peermusicclassical*, accessed April 28, 2026, https://www.peermusicclassical.com/composers/.
[28] Illinois State University, *Illinois State University Report*, article 2088, Institutional Repository, Illinois State University, https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2088&context=ur

Aram Khachaturian: Sonata-Monologue for violin solo (1975)

Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978) is celebrated by the Armenian people as the most renowned Armenian composer of the 20th century and the most famous representative of Soviet Armenian culture. He has been described as the "Armenian Tchaikovsky" and "the musical ambassador of Armenian culture."[29] By synthesizing folk music into formal classical compositions, Khachaturian made a notable contribution to the world of music while preserving the robustness of the Armenian culture. Born in Kodzhori (now Tbilisi, Georgia), he studied at the Moscow Conservatory and became best known for his orchestral works, ballets, and film music. His works such as *Gayane Suite*—which includes the iconic "Sabre Dance"—as well as his symphonies, concertos, and chamber music exemplify the energy, rhythmic drive, and vivid color that define his style.

Composed late in his life, the *Sonata-Monologue* is a single-movement work that reveals Khachaturian's mature voice in an especially personal and introspective way. The piece unfolds as a continuous musical soliloquy, moving between lyrical, inward-looking passages and moments of intense drama and virtuosity. Rather than relying on the dance rhythms so often associated with his music, Khachaturian allows the violin to speak almost as a lone narrator, combining folk-inspired gestures with a more modern and searching harmonic language.

Premiered in 1975, the *Sonata-Monologue* is dedicated to the Soviet violinist Viktor Pikaizen[30] (1927–2021), a renowned Ukrainian performer and pedagogue admired for his virtuosity and expressive depth. Born in Odesa, Pikaizen studied at the Moscow Conservatory with David Oistrakh and became a leading advocate for contemporary violin music, premiering works by several Soviet composers, including this solo sonata by Khachaturian.

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[29] "An Armenian National Treasure," An Armenian National Treasure, January 24, 2024, https://www.evanstonsymphony.org/content/armenian-national-treasure.
[30] "Victor Pikayzen," *Grokipedia*, https://grokipedia.com/page/victor_pikayzen (accessed April 28, 2026).

The *Sonata-Monologue* offers a rare glimpse into Khachaturian's more intimate, contemplative side and occupies a unique place in the 20th-century solo violin repertoire that embodies raw, vocal twists and turns. Its folk-inflected gestures invite a high degree of personal freedom. Performing this work feels like sustaining one long, unbroken thought—both technically demanding and emotionally exposed.

Grażyna Bacewicz : Sonata No. 2 for solo violin (1958)

Grażyna Bacewicz (1909-1969) was a Polish composer, violinist, and teacher, and one of the most significant figures in 20th-century Polish music. She wrote extensively for orchestra, chamber ensembles, and string instruments, with the violin holding a particularly central place in her output. Alongside her work as a composer, Bacewicz was an accomplished concert violinist and taught at the Warsaw Conservatory.[31]

Bacewicz's compositional voice evolved through several distinct phases. Her early works, shaped by studies with Nadia Boulanger, are grounded in neoclassical ideals: clear forms, balanced proportions, and contrapuntal clarity. In her middle period, her music gained greater dramatic intensity and rhythmic drive, elements that became essential to her mature style. In her final years, she embraced more modern techniques while maintaining tight formal control. These late works are more abstract and compressed, with heightened chromaticism and dissonance, yet they never lose their sense of direction or purpose. Her works "bridged the gap between neo-romanticism of Szymanowski and modernism of Lutosławski."[32] Admired and respected as an equal by her colleagues and adored by her public, she was an integral part of the Polish cultural world and helped to make the music of her country known throughout Europe.

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[31] "Discover the Life and Work of Grażyna Bacewicz," *Australian Chamber Orchestra*, March 2023, https://www.aco.com.au/news/2023-march/discover-grazyna-bacewicz (accessed April 28, 2026).
[32] Judith Rosen, "Grażyna Bacewicz: Her Life and Works," *Polish Music Journal*, vol. 5, no. 1, University of Southern California Polish Music Center, https://polishmusic.usc.edu/research/publications/polish-music-journal/vol5no1/grazyna-bacewicz-life-and-works/ (accessed April 28, 2026).

The *Sonata for Solo Violin No. 2* (1958) is a compelling example of Bacewicz's late, experimental style. In 1957, Bacewicz, David Oistrakh and Louis Persinger were judges to the third Wieniawski International Violin Competition, and in 1958 she served at the first Tchaikovsky Violin Competition. Perhaps it was the exposure of many violin sounds at this time that sparked the creation of this solo sonata. Almost like a study of the tonal possibilities of the violin, the work is concentrated and harmonically bold, yet carefully structured, creating a tightly charged musical narrative. It explores a wide range of violin techniques through sharp contrasts, complex rhythms, and expressive use of register and texture. Rather than relying on overt lyricism, Bacewicz enjoys building intensity through gesture and motivic development. And the result, her music demands both precision and fearless commitment from her performers.

Performer's perspective on unaccompanied performances

Unaccompanied performance places particular emphasis on both interpretive freedom and communicative responsibility, especially when presenting repertoire that is relatively unknown. In the absence of an established performance tradition shaped by numerous recordings, the performer is afforded a rare opportunity to approach the work with a high degree of artistic independence. At the same time, this freedom necessitates deep engagement with the score, requiring clarity of intention, structural understanding, and stylistic awareness in order to convey the music convincingly to an audience encountering it for the first time.

In *Prelude ou Improvisation*, the absence of bar lines in both the prelude and recitative sections immediately places interpretive responsibility on the performer, who must determine the meter and draw upon personal experience to shape what may lie behind the composer's intentions. Only when the material becomes more rhythmically driven do bar lines appear,

suggesting that the piece may be grounded in a 4/4 framework from the outset. At the same time, this notational approach emphasizes the work's improvisatory character and highlights the freedom the composer grants the performer.

Rhapsodic from the very beginning, Aram Khachaturian's *Sonata-Monologue* presents a distinctive approach to narrative freedom. The score features numerous meter changes, which clarify musical accents and indicate where rubato may naturally occur. Often, an additional beat is added at the end of phrases, functioning as an instruction for *retardando* without explicitly notating it. Similarly, the 5/4 measures suggest moments where the musical material requires more temporal space for resonance and reflection, revealing how Khachaturian embeds interpretive intention within the notation itself. The work also incorporates extended techniques, such as striking the screw of the bow against the violin to create a percussive effect and a contrasting sonic atmosphere. Ultimately, this sonata is designed to allow for a highly personalized interpretive experience, shaped by its raw and flexible material. As the title "monologue" suggests, it is inherently introspective in character and execution.

In *Rapsodia Panameña*, its twelve-tone inspiration places particular responsibility on the performer to ensure that the underlying harmonic structure remains perceptible to the listener. Written in close collaboration with a violinist, the score demonstrates a high level of precision in its tempo markings, expressive indications, and violin-specific performance directions. As such, it is both clear and effective when followed closely. However, the Panamanian-influenced rhythms are not inherently idiomatic to the violin and demand a level of precision and articulation more akin to percussion.

As the final piece in the program, Bacewicz's *Solo Sonata* fits the violin with remarkable naturalness. Its idiomatic gestures and instrument-specific effects make the musical ideas feel immediately accessible to the performer. At the same time, the work is characterized by a highly abstract, gestural language: its phrasing and musical groupings do not follow traditional models of sentence structure. Instead, ideas often begin as small fragments that are reiterated and gradually transformed, evolving into something unexpected. Performing works like this requires ongoing experimentation with pacing, as the performer must actively shape and uncover the work's process of transformation in real time.

Across these unaccompanied works, performance is not merely a demonstration of technical control but an active shaping of phrasing, timing, articulation, and tone color that mediates between the written score and the listener's perception. Without accompaniment to supply harmonic context or rhythmic stability, the performer must clarify structure, imply counterpoint, and sustain musical direction independently. In context of my dissertation, unaccompanied repertoire is defined by the performer's expanded interpretive and narrative role.

FANTASIES AND POPULAR SOUNDS

Music as entertainment

Music has long served as one of the most powerful and universal forms of entertainment, shaping how people gather, express themselves, and experience culture. From lively public performances to intimate listening experiences, it functions as both a shared social device and a deeply personal escape. Across time and place, musical traditions reflect the values, struggles, and creativity of the societies that produce them, influencing everything from fashion to identity. At the same time, certain songs and styles rise to widespread popularity, becoming fan favorites that define generations. Beyond entertainment, music also embodies the distinct cultures and artistic intentions of its creators. From folk tradition to the fiery passion of tango, and from Hollywood film scores to opera and Broadway musicals, each pieces selected in this program forges a connection between popular and high art, allowing its influence to extend beyond its original audience.

In this final recital, I hope to highlight the entertainment aspect of live performance. Behind the scenes, countless hours of practice shape each moment on stage, yet it is through performance that music comes alive. Performers do more than present notes—they communicate stories. Each repertoire reflects the composer's identity and cultural influences, but ultimately, it is the performer's showmanship and interpretation that make these ideas accessible and meaningful to the audience.

By opening the concert with Maurice Ravel's *Tzigane*, I aim to spark a dialogue between popular musical idioms and classical music traditions, inviting listeners to experience the vibrant connections between them.

Maurice Ravel : Tzigane (1924)

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937) was a French composer celebrated for his precision, clarity, and masterful orchestration. Often associated with French Impressionism, his music blends rich color and subtle harmonic language with refined elegance. Influenced by Spanish music, jazz, and exotic sounds, Ravel created works that are both refined and vividly expressive, including *Boléro*, *Daphnis et Chloé*, and *La Valse*. He remains one of the most influential composers of the early 20th century.

Composed in 1924, *Tzigane* is one of Ravel's most famous violin works, admired for its virtuosity and vivid character. Originally written for violin and piano—with an optional luthéal attachment to imitate the cimbalom—it was later orchestrated by Ravel, expanding its color and brilliance. The title evokes the romanticized European idea of Romani ("Gypsy") music, which fascinated many composers of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Ravel composed the work for the Hungarian violinist Jelly d'Arányi, known for her expressive playing and charismatic stage presence. She was the great-niece of the legendary violinist Joseph Joachim. After hearing her perform, Ravel was so captivated that he asked her to play "gypsy" folk music; she reportedly played for two hours straight. Deeply inspired, Ravel quickly composed *Tzigane* and premiered it in April 1924. Drawing on Hungarian stylistic elements, the work reflects influences from Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies* and Paganini's *Caprices*. During rehearsal, d'Arányi introduced a striking technique—glissando with trills—prompting Ravel to remark, *"I don't know what she's doing, but I like it."*[33]

[33] Rowan Puig Davis, "Maurice Ravel's *Tzigane*," TŌN (The Orchestra Now), Bard College Conservatory of Music, accessed April 18, 2026, https://ton.bard.edu/maurice-ravels-tzigane/

The piece opens with an extended, rhapsodic solo cadenza filled with improvisatory gestures, double stops, and dramatic flourishes. This leads into a lively, dance-like section rich in rhythmic vitality, exotic harmonies, and brilliant passagework. While inspired by Hungarian and Romani musical traditions, *Tzigane* remains unmistakably Ravel in its precision, color, and craftsmanship. It continues to be a beloved showpiece in the violin repertoire, celebrated for its combination of expressive freedom and virtuosic display.

Astor Piazzolla: Le Grand Tango (1982)

Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992) stands as the central figure in the transformation of traditional Argentine tango through his creation of *nuevo tango*, a style that synthesizes elements of jazz, classical music, and traditional dance rhythms. His music is distinguished by its rhythmic vitality, harmonic sophistication, and intensity of expression.

Although born in Argentina, Piazzolla spent much of his childhood in Greenwich Village, where he was exposed to a broad spectrum of musical influences. At the age of nine, he received a bandoneón as a gift and soon began formal instruction. He later studied with the Hungarian pianist Béla Wilda, who encouraged him to perform the music of Johann Sebastian Bach on the bandoneón—an experience that proved formative in the development of his musical language. During this period, Piazzolla also engaged closely with the scores of Maurice Ravel, Béla Bartók, and Igor Stravinsky, alongside works drawn from American jazz traditions.[34]

A decisive moment in Piazzolla's early career occurred when he submitted his composition *Buenos Aires* to the Fabien Sevitzky Competition. The work elicited strong reactions due to its unconventional inclusion of two bandoneons within a symphonic context, yet it secured him a

[34] "Astor Piazzolla," *Seattle Chamber Music Society*, https://www.seattlechambermusic.org/composers/astor-piazzolla/ (accessed April 28, 2026).

scholarship from the French government to pursue studies in Paris with Nadia Boulanger. Boulanger's mentorship proved pivotal: she urged Piazzolla not to abandon tango, but rather to integrate it with his classical training and affinity for jazz. As she famously remarked, *"Astor, your classical works are well written, but the true Piazzolla is in the tango—never leave it behind."*[35]

Piazzolla ultimately elevated tango from its origins into a sophisticated concert art form. Through the incorporation of techniques such as counterpoint and passacaglia, and by expanding the instrumental resources of the tango ensemble to include instruments such as the saxophone and electric guitar, he redefined the genre's expressive and structural possibilities. This innovative synthesis yielded a musical language that not only transcended earlier conventions but also ensured tango's continued evolution.

Composed in 1982 for cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, *Le Grand Tango* was originally scored for cello and piano and exemplifies Piazzolla's characteristic fusion of tango idioms with classical form and virtuosic writing. The present performance features a violin arrangement by Sofia Gubaidulina, a composer of international stature whose work is noted for its spiritual depth and originality. Her transcription preserves the essential character of the original while illuminating the expressive potential of the violin. The work unfolds in a single, continuous movement comprising contrasting sections that range from lyrical and introspective passages to rhythmically incisive and highly energized episodes. The solo instrument assumes an almost vocal expressivity, while the piano provides both percussive impetus and harmonic support.

[35] Ian Pong, "Astor Piazzolla," *Interlude.hk*, May 8, 2012, accessed April 19, 2026, https://interlude.hk/astor-piazzolla/

Igor Frolov: Concert Fantasy on themes from Porgy and Bess (1991)

Igor Frolov (1937–2013) was a Russian violinist, conductor, and composer born in Moscow into a musical family; his father was a violin teacher and his mother an accompanist at the Moscow Conservatory. He studied with eminent teachers, including David Oistrakh, and developed a career blending classical technique with jazz-influenced elements.[36]

Composed in 1991, *Concert Fantasy on Themes from Porgy and Bess* is a virtuosic chamber fantasy for violin and piano based on melodies from George Gershwin's opera *Porgy and Bess* (1935). Set in the African-American community of Catfish Row, the opera tells the story of Porgy, a disabled beggar, and Bess, a troubled woman torn between two men.[37] The work blends classical music with jazz, blues, and spirituals, featuring iconic songs like *"Bess, You Is My Woman Now," "Summertime," "I Got Plenty o' Nuttin,'"* and *"It Aint Necessarily So."*

In Frolov's fantasy, these beloved themes are transformed into a single continuous medley, showcasing expressive lyricism and dazzling virtuosity. The violin carries the melodies through ornamented passages, rhythmic vitality, and improvisatory flair, while the piano propels the drama to an exhilarating conclusion. This piece has become a concert favorite for its engaging mix of jazz-inflected style and classical brilliance.

John Corigliano: The Red Violin Chaconne (1997)

John Corigliano (b. 1938) is widely regarded as one of America's most distinguished contemporary composers. His music is characterized by a synthesis of expressive immediacy and strong dramatic narrative. Corigliano often combines traditional formal structures with modern compositional techniques while maintaining a deeply personal and emotionally direct voice.

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[36] "Igor Frolov," *Grokipedia*, https://grokipedia.com/page/igor_frolov (accessed April 28, 2026).
[37] "Porgy and Bess," *Houston Grand Opera*, https://www.houstongrandopera.org/on-stage/porgy-and-bess (accessed April 28, 2026).

The Red Violin: Chaconne is derived from Corigliano's Academy Award–winning score for the film *The Red Violin*. The film traces the journey of a remarkable and enigmatic violin across three centuries, following its passage through various owners and historical contexts. Unifying this narrative with a single musical idea, the composer observed,*"For this purpose I used the Baroque device of a chaconne: a repeated pattern of chords upon which the music is built."*[38] Structured as a chaconne—a set of variations over a recurring harmonic progression—the work unfolds as a sequence of transformations of a haunting central theme. This principal idea, often identified as Anna's theme, is a lyrical yet intense melody associated with the violin maker's ill-fated wife and serves as the emotional core of the composition.

At the outset, Corigliano presents the chaconne's harmonic framework, over which the violin and orchestra introduce and gradually elaborate Anna's theme. Episodes of increasing rhythmic vitality—frequently propelled by dotted figures—drive the music toward a series of climactic moments. Midway through the work the violin breaks into an extended solo cadenza that alternates between impetuous virtuosity and lyrical introspection. The return of the chaconne progression builds steadily toward a grand restatement of the opening material, culminating in a brilliant and whirlwind coda.

The violin writing is both technically demanding and highly expressive, while the piano—serving as a reduction of the original orchestral score—provides a richly textured and atmospheric foundation. In its concert form, the work stands as a compelling, self-contained narrative, evoking the imagined history and emotional trajectory of film *The Red Violin*.

[38] John Corigliano, "*The Red Violin: Chaconne for Violin and Orchestra (1997)*," John Corigliano official website, accessed April 19, 2026, https://www.johncorigliano.com/works/the-red-violin-chaconne-for-violin-and-orchestra-1997

Execution of diverse style and influences

This concert features diverse styles and influences, making it the most audience-oriented program of the project. By incorporating popular genres such as tango, jazz, and film music, it seeks to engage broader audiences and invite non-classical listeners into the concert hall. Expanding knowledge of different genres and stylistic versatility is also central to my development as a performer.

Tzigane stands as a signature work in the violin repertoire and a frequent audience favorite, and it reflects a broader trend among classical composers to engage with popular and folk influences within their creative output. Its extended opening cadenza presents significant interpretive challenges, requiring a deep understanding of Ravel's notation, style, and the improvisatory character associated with Hungarian and Romani musical traditions.

In *The Red Violin Chaconne*, the piano reduction provides a more manageable ensemble framework for approaching an otherwise highly complex score. Many passages feature ad libitum entrances, with melodic lines unfolding independently, creating challenges in coordination and timing. The reduction simplifies some of the dense rhythmic textures by limiting the forces to two performers; however, the work remains technically demanding for both violin and piano. It requires precise rhythmic control and advanced technical command, including extended violin techniques such as *col legno*, artificial harmonics, and multiple-stop playing (double, triple, and quadruple stops).

As a bandoneón player, Piazzolla infuses his writing with the instrument's distinctive sound world and expressive character. In preparation of this performance, I prioritize evoking the timbral and articulatory qualities of the bandoneón, particularly in the opening material, to

project a strong tango character. The work also features characteristic gestures, such as repeated-note figures that evoke cicada-like effects, and glissando techniques including *látigo* (“whip”), a fast ascending slide that produces a sharp, percussive rhythmic effect.

With the *Concert fantasy* structured as a medley of songs from *Porgy and Bess*, the performer’s first responsibility is to understand the material in its original context. Each song is associated with specific lyrics and characters within the opera’s narrative, and this awareness directly informs phrasing, articulation, and expressive nuance. Engaging with the text enhances clarity in shaping musical punctuation and in conveying the distinct mood of each section. The jazz-influenced writing presents an additional interpretive challenge. For performers less familiar with jazz idioms, executing swung rhythms and nuanced note groupings can be initially difficult, requiring both stylistic sensitivity and rhythmic flexibility.

In retrospect, this program reflects my ongoing journey in expanding both technical and stylistic fluency as a performer. The stylistically diverse repertoire challenged me to move beyond technical execution and engage more deeply with genre, language, and cultural context. Each piece required a different kind of listening and imagination, shaping how I approach sound, phrasing, and expression. Ultimately, this program represents not only a study in diversity of style, but also a personal exploration of how I can communicate more directly and authentically with audiences through the violin.

AUDIENCE RECEPTION and PERFORMANCE REFLECTION

In the present day, musical culture continues to evolve in response to shifting audience expectations, particularly through the rise of pop concerts and more immersive, multimedia forms of performance. Listeners without formal training in the classical tradition often gravitate toward events that prioritize immediacy, atmosphere, and emotional accessibility. In this dissertation, I argue that this shift can be reflected in programming more single-movement works, whose concentrated and continuous expressive arcs can resonate more directly with contemporary audiences.

Music-making is inevitably shaped by its cultural environment, where genre boundaries are increasingly fluid and cross-disciplinary influences are commonplace. Modern concert practice, therefore, must remain responsive to its cultural moment rather than fixed in inherited conventions. Art sustains its vitality not by preserving the past unchanged, but by engaging actively with the present—reflecting current tastes, technologies, and sensibilities while continuing to communicate meaningfully with its audience.

Insight through audience feedback

During each recital, audience members were given a form titled *"Survey on Listener Engagement with Single-Movement Recital Programming"* and invited to share their feedback. The returned surveys revealed a wide range of responses, highlighting how listeners' perspectives varied according to their musical backgrounds and prior experiences.

The survey included the following questions, with response options of "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Neutral," "Disagree," and "Strongly disagree":

- "I am more familiar with multi-movement works (e.g., symphonies, concertos, sonatas, and suites)."
- "I believe musical themes and ideas are easier to recognize in single-movement pieces than in multi-movement works."
- "After listening to today's recital of single-movement works, I found it easier to stay focused throughout the program."
- "After today's recital, I found single-movement works more effective than multi-movement works in a live concert setting."

The survey, consisting of Likert-scale questions, aimed to evaluate listener familiarity, perception, and engagement with single-movement recital programming. Across all three recitals, a consistent majority of respondents (approximately 79–83%) reported greater familiarity with multi-movement works, confirming this format as the dominant repertoire.

Responses regarding thematic recognition were more varied. Across all three recitals, only a minority of respondents (approximately 21–43%) agreed that themes are easier to recognize in single-movement works, while the remainder remained neutral. This suggests that the structural continuity of single-movement works has no direct relationship to improved thematic recognition.

By contrast, audience concentration showed a clear positive trend. A majority of respondents across all recitals (ranging from 57% to 83%) agreed that the single-movement format made it easier to maintain focus throughout the program. This indicates that uninterrupted musical continuity may play a significant role in sustaining listener attention.

Perceptions of overall effectiveness, however, remained inconclusive. While 43% of respondents in each recital agreed that single-movement works can be more effective, a larger share indicated neutrality (ranging from 48% to 60%), and only a small minority expressed disagreement. These results suggest that although single-movement works may support sustained attention, this does not necessarily translate into a clear sense of greater effectiveness or a preference over other types of programming.

The feedback from the survey offered an direct insight into how musical preferences vary depending on the listener. Classically trained musicians tend to appreciate the complexity of multi-movement works and are less deterred by their longer duration, likely due to their greater familiarity with the repertoire. They also show a stronger appreciation for more abstract and technically complex works, such as Bacewicz's *Solo Sonata* or Chausson's *Poème*. In contrast, family members and parents tend to prefer shorter, more immediately accessible pieces like *Le Grand Tango* or Frolov's *Concert Fantasy*. These results are not surprising, as musical taste is highly subjective and shaped by each individual's background and exposure to music. Overall, while preferences differed across groups, one clear outcome is that audience engagement and ability to concentrate were enhanced by the programming format of my dissertation recitals.

Single Movement Works as pedagogical device

Programming single-movement works has proven to be a highly valuable pedagogical experience for me. Due to their relatively concise scale in both structure and duration, these pieces allow for the exploration of a wide range of styles, genres, and compositional voices within a single concert. This dissertation fosters a deeper comparative understanding of musical language and interpretive approaches across different composers for me. As one of my teachers

once observed, it is not necessary to study the entirety of a composer's output to grasp their musical language; rather, an in-depth engagement with a single work can provide insight into stylistic principles that can be applied more broadly. In this sense, single-movement repertoire offers an efficient yet profound means of cultivating both technical and interpretive awareness.

From a pedagogical perspective, incorporating single-movement or shorter works into the training of younger students may be particularly effective. Such repertoire can facilitate the recognition of compositional styles, support the development of a general approach to different musical eras, and broaden interpretive perspectives. Additionally, given the increasingly demanding academic schedules faced by many students, shorter works may offer a more practical and sustainable means of musical study during the school year, while still allowing for meaningful artistic and technical growth.

Uninterrupted flow and freedom of expression

As I conclude this dissertation, I reflect on the fulfillment of presenting three distinct recital programs encompassing thirteen works, fifteen composers, and a wide range of stylistic influences. This programming approach not only broadened my perspective on future programming possibilities, but also reinforced the creativity and versatility required to navigate diverse musical languages within a unified conceptual framework of single-movement repertoire.

As a performer, I have developed a deeper appreciation for uninterrupted works through this programming experience. The continuous nature of these pieces creates a distinctive performance state, in which I must remain fully engaged and focused for the entire duration, often between 10 and 18 minutes. This sustained concentration not only reinforces a sense of control within the acoustic space, but also encourages a more grounded and fully committed

mental approach to performance. At the same time, it presents clear challenges on stage, as there is no opportunity for mental reset or release of focus. This can create a sense of heightened pressure at the beginning of each work, as well as increased fatigue due to the compact and continuously evolving nature of the material.

As a final thought, the three themed programs—*Poemes and Ballades*, *Dramatic Monologues*, and *Fantasies and Popular Sounds*—offered a rare opportunity for narrative freedom in programming. By approaching each theme as an immersive experience for my listener, I was able to shape a coherent flow within each recital, balancing contrast and continuity between works. In addition, by unifying their single-movement framework, each selected repertoire now connects on an educational level, situating each piece both as an individual work and within the broader themes in my dissertation.

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